



Guideline for Implementing Deforestation-free Assessments in Australia

IN LINE WITH THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

August 2025

About the Authors

This Guideline was produced by WWF-Australia. WWF-Australia is supporting environmental stewardship by Australia's agricultural producers.

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Prepared with input from the AFi Backbone team



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Introduction

The **Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)** assists companies to align their strategies with the goals of the Paris Agreement and accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy. A survey of SBTi companies found that by setting Science Based Targets, companies had strengthened brand reputation, increased investor confidence and increased innovation.¹

In Australia, key beef retailers such as Coles, Woolworths, ALDI and McDonalds have set (or are setting) Targets under SBTi, joining over 11,000² companies globally. For food and agriculture companies, the SBTi includes Forest, Land, and Agriculture (FLAG) targets with criteria and recommendations for FLAG target setting³. More than 270 companies so far have set FLAG targets, which includes targets for elimination of deforestation and conversion in supply chains, including a commitment to achieve no-deforestation for primary deforestation-linked commodities by 31 December 2025, and a phasing out of all land use change within 5-10 years to meet emissions reduction targets⁴. Additionally, "The Agriculture Sector Roadmap to 1.5°C" launched at COP27 aims to accelerate existing action by the agri-commodity sector on deforestation and conversion to align with global climate goals, in a way that contributes to food security, economic development and farmer livelihoods. Leading agri-commodity companies have signed-up, including major companies operating in Australia such as JBS and Cargill⁵.

As such, there is growing demand for deforestation assessments in Australia. To service the demand, clarity on what is, and what is not, considered deforestation is required.

The **Accountability Framework Initiative (AFi)**⁶ provides guidance for companies on what is considered deforestation and what can be considered deforestation-free. AFi supports companies to eliminate deforestation, ecosystem conversion, and human rights abuses from commodity supply chains and to apply best practice. The AFi provides core principles, guidance, and definitions that collectively comprise the Accountability Framework. By following the Accountability Framework, companies can mitigate climate and nature-related risks⁷ and protect critical ecosystem services and assets such as carbon storage, biodiversity, water supplies, and support the wellbeing of local people and communities. Companies adopting and implementing Accountability Framework-aligned deforestation commitments can credibly demonstrate their brand's ethical sourcing practices, addressing reputational concerns for consumers and stakeholders.

The Accountability Framework's definitions are incorporated into many leading multi-stakeholder and civil society initiatives, such as the SBTi, SBTN, Greenhouse Gas Protocol, and the Taskforce on nature-related financial disclosures (TNFD)⁸. Framework definitions relevant to deforestation can be found in **Appendix A**.

This document provides guidance for undertaking a deforestation-free assessment to determine compliance with Accountability Framework-aligned supply chain policies, and the supporting evidence that a producer can provide to strengthen their claim. These guidelines are based on the Accountability Framework and provide a context-specific interpretation for application to Australian grazing systems and landscapes. This Guideline was prepared with input from AFi Backbone Team to ensure alignment between this document and the Accountability Framework. As these guidelines are applied, updates may be required to provide further clarity.

Note: the clarification provided in this document may not be relevant to the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) in all cases. Please refer to pages 14-15 of the Accountability Framework's Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation and Conversion for more information.⁹

1 <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/blog/six-business-benefits-of-setting-science-based-targets#:~:text=As%20consumers%20become%20increasingly>

2 <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/target-dashboard>

3 <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/SBTiFLAGGuidance.pdf>

4 https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Explainers/AFi_Explainer_-_No-Deforestation_Commitments_with_SBTi_FLAG.pdf

5 <https://www.tropicalforestalliance.org/ag-sector-roadmap-updates>

6 <https://accountability-framework.org/>

7 When the Bee Stings: Counting the cost of nature-related risks, December 9, 2023, BloombergNEF
<https://tnfd.global/knowledge-bank/when-the-bee-stings-counting-the-cost-of-nature-related-risks/>

8 <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

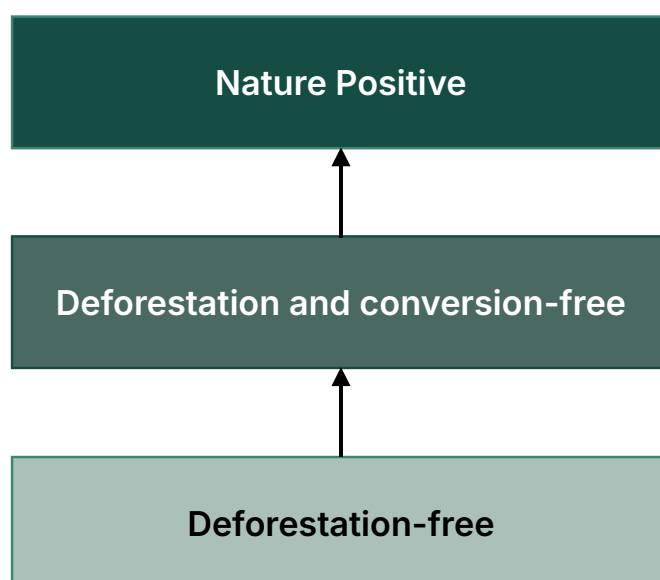
9 https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Operational_Guidance/AFi_Operational_Guidance_-_Applying_Definitions_April_2023_-_English.pdf

Deforestation and Nature Positive

Nature underpins our global economy, livelihoods, and survival. More than half of global gross domestic product comes from industries that are moderately to highly dependent on nature, such as agriculture.¹⁰ However, humanity is causing a rapid loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services on which we, nature and our economies depend.¹¹ Nature loss and climate change are intrinsically linked.¹² Given the 1.5°C goal under the Paris agreement led to targets and plans for climate action, the worsening nature crisis drove efforts to consider what a science-based quantitative goal for nature would look like.¹³ This evolved into the development of the concept of nature positive: *'halting and reversing biodiversity loss, through measurable gains in the health, abundance, diversity and resilience of species, ecosystems and processes. We are calling for all to take action to support the global goal of being nature positive by 2030, measured against a 2020 baseline.'*¹⁴

The following framework articulates that achieving deforestation-free and deforestation and conversion-free (DCF) status is fundamental to demonstrating a nature positive approach (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Deforestation-free and deforestation- and conversion-free are fundamental components of Nature Positive.



-
- 10 World Economic Forum (2020) Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy, in collaboration with PWC, January 2020. \$44 trillion in economic value.
- 11 Bradshaw, C.J.A., et al. (2021) Underestimating the Challenges of Avoiding a Ghastly Future. *Frontiers in Conservation Science*. 1 doi=10.3389/fcosc.2020.615419; Richardson, K., et al. (2023) Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. *Sci. Adv.* 9(37) eadh2458. doi:10.1126/sciadv.adh2458; Xu and Zhao., 2023. Impact of energy depletion, human development, and income distribution on natural resource sustainability. *Resource Policy*, 83:103531. DOI:10.1016/j.resourpol.2023.103531; Annual change in GDP by 2050 due to changes in all ecosystem services under three scenarios (million US\$, 2011 baseline), Johnson, J.A., et al. 2020. *Global Futures: modelling the global economic impacts of environmental change to support policy-making*. Technical Report, January 2020. <https://www.wwf.org.uk/globalfutures>
- 12 IPCC (2019) Special Report on Climate Change and Land. <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>; Pörtner, H.O., et al. 2021. IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop report on biodiversity and climate change; IPBES and IPCC. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.4782538.
- 13 Locke, H. et al. (2021) A Nature-Positive World: The Global Goal for Nature, April 2021.
- 14 <https://www.naturepositive.org/about/>

Using These Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to support users in assessing whether their production unit is likely to be deforestation-free, in alignment with the Accountability Framework.

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with forest loss mapping of a reasonable accuracy to detect forest loss (at least 10m resolution). If forest loss has been detected, this document allows the forest loss to be assessed to determine if it would be considered deforestation in line with the Accountability Framework. As these guidelines explain, forest loss may not be deforestation for multiple reasons, such as if the forest detected, failed to meet the definition of a 'natural forest' (see [Appendix A](#) and [Step 4](#)).

The Vegetation Monitoring & Assessment Program (VMAP), developed by the Australian National University (ANU), offers forest loss mapping and a Deforestation Indicator Tool. This program helps landholders identify whether forest loss has occurred on their property and provides an indication of whether that loss is likely or unlikely to be considered deforestation in line with the Accountability Framework.

Please note, the Accountability Framework provides comprehensive guidance, including [Core Principles](#) for setting, implementing, and monitoring effective commitments on deforestation, ecosystem conversion, and human rights. Please also visit the AFi website for more information.

Importantly, as stated in the Accountability Framework's [Core Principle 3.4¹⁵](#), company commitments are additional to applicable law. As such, all activities in the area in which the assessments are undertaken must comply with all applicable law, including but not limited to environmental, worker safety and human rights law.

Frequency of assessments

As per the Accountability Framework, assessments of deforestation-free status should be conducted with sufficient frequency and intensity to detect meaningful change¹⁶. Given that most spatial datasets used to monitor forest loss are updated annually, conducting assessments on an annual basis is generally considered a reasonable frequency. This approach ensures that companies maintain credible oversight of their supply chains and can respond to any changes in forest cover in a timely manner. Higher-risk contexts may warrant more frequent or detailed assessments.

Third-party assessments

Per the Accountability Framework, to establish that a supply chain is deforestation-free, a company should monitor and verify compliance against clearly defined metrics. Verification should follow good practices and may require assessments by a suitably qualified person, which are in line with the relevant company commitments (i.e. SBTi company targets). Verification reports (or summaries thereof) should also be made publicly available to ensure transparency.

Evidence to support assessments

It is in the interest of the producer to maintain accurate and clear records, information and photos to support deforestation-free assessments. Information such as stock records, georeferenced photos and ecological assessments are likely to improve confidence and certainty of assessments. A declaration would also be required with an example template provided in [Step 7](#).

¹⁵ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/core-principles/3-specification-of-commitments/>

¹⁶ https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Operational_Guidance/OG_Monitoring_Verification-2020-5.pdf#downloadResource, pg. 26

Important Terminology

This section outlines definitions that are critical to understanding the difference between forest loss detected by remote sensing tools, and deforestation, and how that relates to properties and commodities (see also **Figure 2**). See also **Appendix A** for further definitions.

Forest loss: Remote sensing-based mapping will detect where there has been 'forest loss' — that is, areas where forest was present in one year and not present in the following year.

Cutoff date: is the date after which deforestation or conversion renders a given area or production unit non-compliant with no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments. When setting deforestation-free commitments, supply chain actors are required to identify their cut-off date. The Accountability Framework recommends 2020 as the cutoff date for deforestation-free supply chains¹⁷. However, in Australia, deforestation-free supply chains were not operational until after June 2025. Supply chain actors may therefore look to set a different cutoff date, where 2020-2025 may be considered a grace period for Australian supply chains.

Assessable 'forest loss': is loss that has occurred since the cutoff date.

Deforestation, forest, natural forest: Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation relates to the loss of 'natural forest'. *"Natural forests possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function"*¹⁸. Therefore, only the loss of natural forest that occurred after the cutoff date could potentially be considered deforestation. As such, it is important to understand if the forest is a natural forest. This can be assessed using **Step 4** of this Guideline. Natural forest loss may also not meet the Accountability Framework's definition of deforestation, such as removing species not native to the site (i.e. weed control within a natural forest) or if there has been a natural disaster. This can be assessed using **Step 5** of this Guideline.

Deforestation event: Where natural forest loss meets the Accountability Framework's deforestation definition and has occurred since the cutoff date, it is considered a 'deforestation event'. This Guideline explains how to assess whether forest loss is considered a deforestation event (**Step 5**).

Production unit: A 'production unit' (**Step 1** of this Guideline) is the full extent of a property under one management that could be assigned a deforestation-free status. As there may be multiple areas of forest loss detected on a production unit, assessment is required of each area of forest loss to determine which are considered deforestation and therefore a deforestation event. For a production unit to be considered deforestation-free (**Step 6**), either no forest loss has been detected since the cutoff date OR any forest loss detected since the cutoff date is not considered a deforestation event according to **Steps 4 and 5** of this Guideline. Where a deforestation event has occurred on a production unit, a make-good process is required to remedy the deforestation event (see **Make-good approach** section).

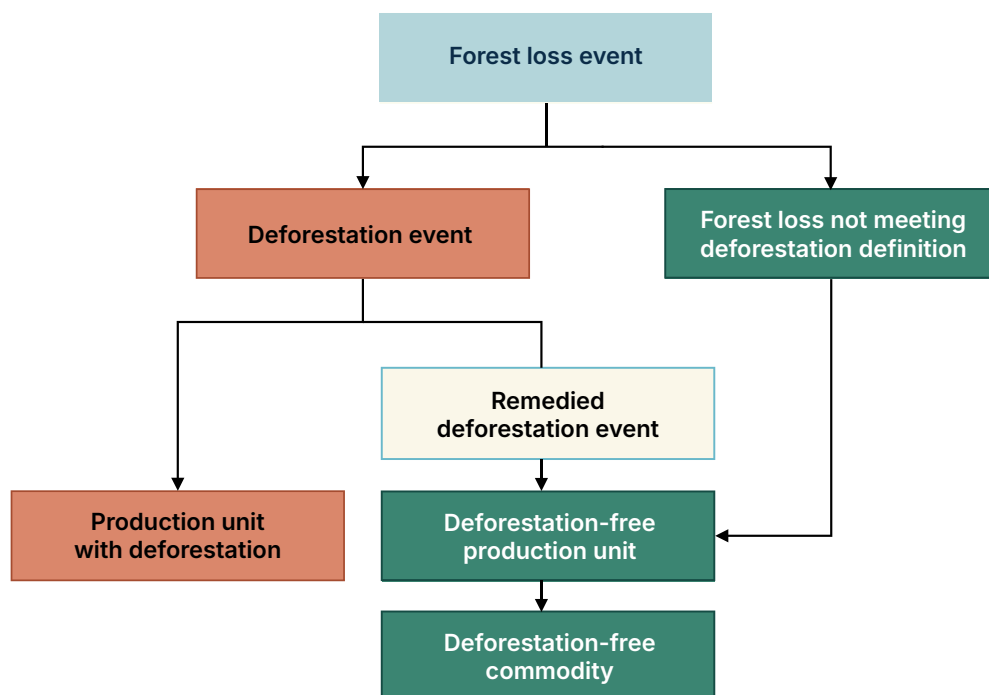
Deforestation-free commodities: For a producer to provide a deforestation-free commodity, such as beef, to a supply chain, producers need to be able to demonstrate that their produced commodity has only come from only deforestation-free production units for the extent of the lifetime of that commodity, in line with the relevant requirements. This Guideline does not address the process of traceability, including livestock traceability.

Make good: A process to remedy a deforestation event. This process is still under development (see **Appendix B**).

¹⁷ https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Operational_Guidance/AFi_Operational_Guidance_-_Cutoff_Dates_Sept_2023_.pdf, pg 8

¹⁸ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/natural-forest/>

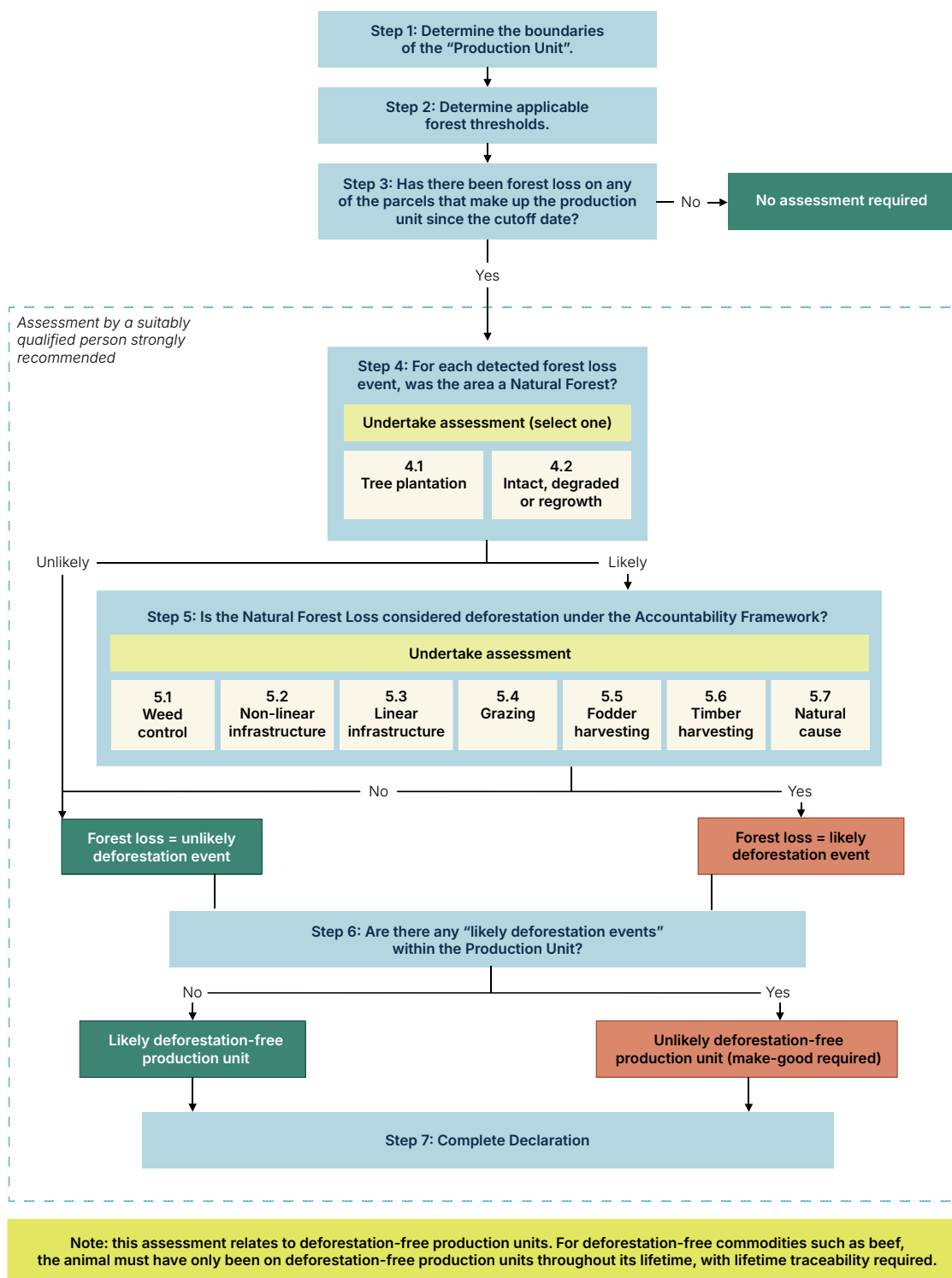
Figure 2: The difference between forest loss, deforestation and what can be considered deforestation-free



Steps to assess deforestation-free production units

This section provides guidance for those wanting to determine if their production unit is likely deforestation-free in line with the Accountability Framework. **Figure 3** provides an overview of the steps to assess deforestation-free status, with each step and terminology explained further below.

Figure 3: Steps for assessing whether a production unit is deforestation-free.



Step 1: Determine the boundaries of the “production unit”

The assessment of deforestation-free relates to the ‘production unit’ i.e. the full extent of the area under one management (defined below). Therefore, determining the boundaries of a production unit (i.e. the area that the assessment relates to) is the first step in the deforestation-free assessment.

Explanation:

- The assessment of deforestation-free relates to the ‘production unit’.
- Production units are defined by the Accountability Framework as:

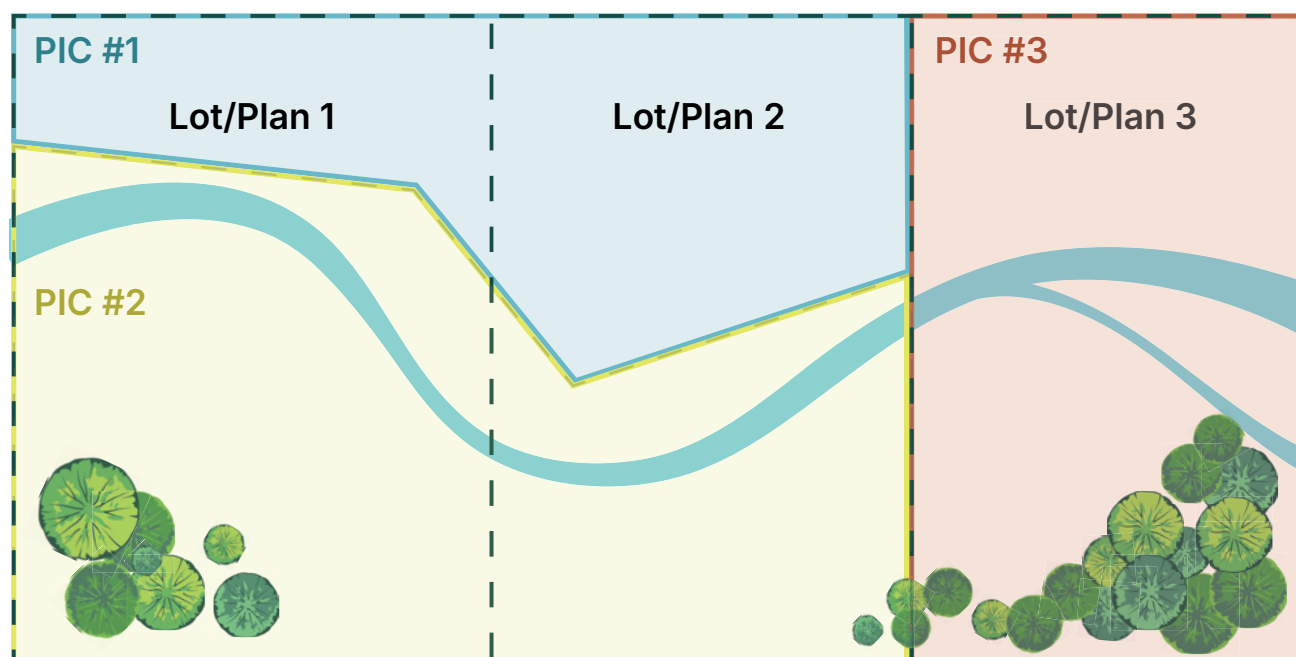
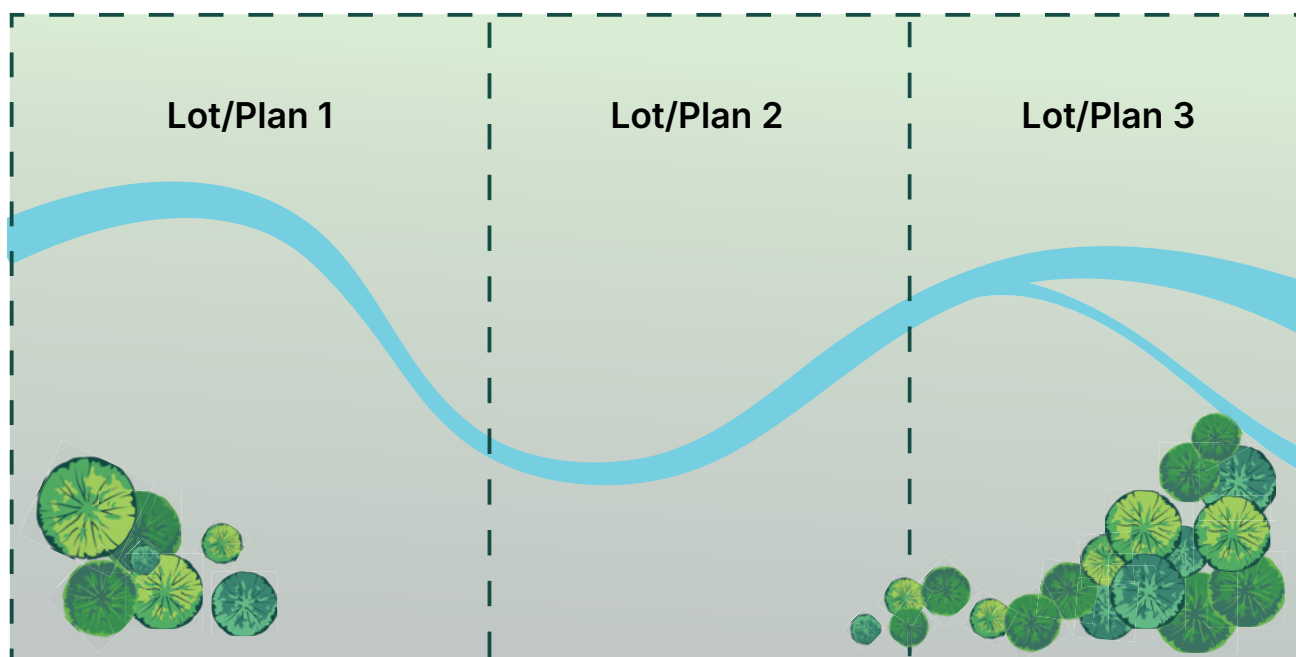
“Production unit”¹⁹

A plantation, farm, ranch, or forest management unit. This includes all plots used for agriculture or forestry that are under one management, located in the same general area, and share the same means of production. It also includes natural ecosystems, infrastructure, and other land within or associated with the plantation, farm, ranch, or forest management unit.

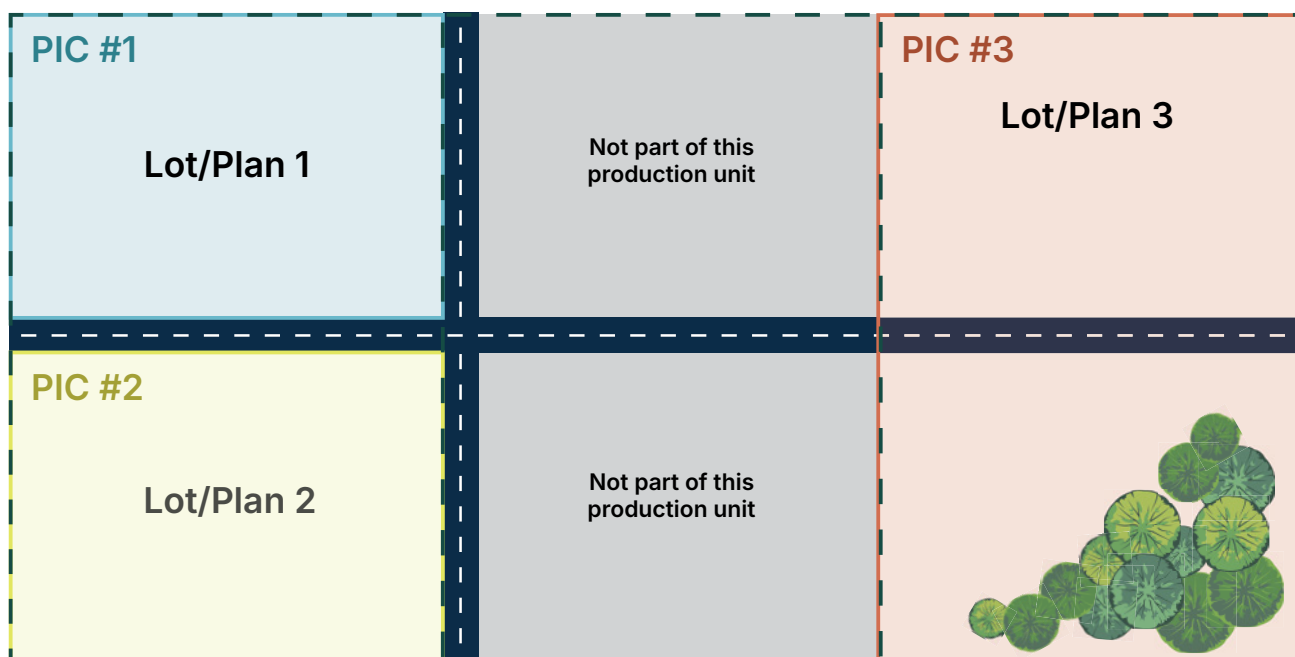
- A production unit can be a contiguous land area (regardless of any internal subdivisions) or a group of plots interspersed with other land units the same area or landscape and under the same management.”
- For clarity, a single Property Identification Code (PIC) or a Title Boundary do not necessarily constitute a ‘production unit’. Where multiple titles (parcels) or PICS occur under the same management, they are to be combined to form one production unit (**Example 1**). The plots may occur in the same area or landscape, under the same management, with other properties in between those plots (**Example 2**).

¹⁹ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/production-unit/>

Example 1:



Example 2:



Assessment requirements:

Undertake assessment of the identified production unit against the definition of a 'production unit'.

Step 2: Determine applicable forest thresholds

To determine what is considered a forest, areas of more than 0.5 hectare, with specific forest thresholds (tree height and percentage of canopy cover) are used. The Accountability Framework recommends applying the forest thresholds of trees that have reached 5 metres high and 10 percent canopy cover, used by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other global guidelines. However, as below, legitimate national definitions can also be used.

Per the Accountability Framework:

Forest²⁰ Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Forest includes natural forests and tree plantations. For the purpose of implementing no-deforestation supply chain commitments, the focus is on preventing the conversion of natural forests.

Note: while 'land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use' is exempt, where forest meets the thresholds and occurs on agricultural land, it requires further assessment (see **Step 4.2**). In Australia, the presence of mature trees (at least 15 years old) that meet the forest thresholds, means that agriculture cannot be considered the predominant use, even if there is grazing in the understorey. The presence of mature trees that reach the forest thresholds means that the area is to be considered a 'natural forest'.

While the FAO thresholds can be used, the Accountability Framework definition also allows for the use of legitimate national definitions:

*"Quantitative thresholds (e.g., for tree height or canopy cover) **established in legitimate national or sub-national forest definitions may take precedence over the generic thresholds in this definition.**"*

Therefore, what is considered forest could follow the Australian Government's forest thresholds of trees that have reached 2m high and 20% canopy cover²¹.

Under the Accountability Framework, a supply chain actor can choose which threshold for forest height and canopy cover they will apply. It is important that the person undertaking the assessment understands the forest thresholds required by the supply chain actor.

Assessment requirements:

Completed declaration as per **Step 7**.

²⁰ https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Definitions_doc/Definitions-2020-5.pdf pp 10

²¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015C00577> pp. 11.

Step 3: Determine if there has been assessable forest loss

Explanation:

- Forest loss is where forest of the selected height, cover and area thresholds has been removed (and therefore no longer meets the threshold, cover, or area thresholds of a forest).
- When forest loss has occurred after a cutoff date (the date from which deforestation must not occur), it must be assessed to determine whether deforestation occurred. Post-cutoff date deforestation would mean any commodities produced on the relevant production unit would not be deforestation-free. January 1st 2020, is recommended, or required, as a cutoff date by the Accountability Framework, SBTi, and EUDR, among other instruments.²² However, in Australia, deforestation-free supply chains were not operational until after June 2025. Supply chain actors may therefore look to set a different cutoff date, where 2020-2025 may be considered a grace period for Australian supply chains.
- If an area does not meet the forest thresholds at the cutoff date but grows to meet the forest thresholds post the cutoff date, the area is considered a forest. If this area is lost, it would be a forest loss event and must be assessed in the following steps as to whether it is deforestation.
- Forest loss relates to gross forest loss across a production unit. A “zero net” approach is not allowed. A producer may not cut down 50 hectares of forest in one area, then plant 50 hectares in another, and claim net deforestation-free.
- Importantly, forest loss may not meet the criteria for deforestation, such as harvesting a tree plantation. **Steps 4-5** are required to determine whether forest loss would likely to be a deforestation event (see **Figure 3**).

Assessment requirements:

Completed declaration as per **Step 7**.

22 https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/OG_Cutoff_Dates-2020-5.pdf

Step 4: For each detected area of loss, was the area a Natural Forest?

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation relates to the loss of 'natural forest'. *"Natural forests possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function."*²³ (see **Appendix A** for full definition)
- The Accountability Framework defines deforestation as the "loss of natural forest".²⁴
- Clearing of natural forests would likely be deemed deforestation.
- Clearing of vegetation that meets the height and canopy cover thresholds as per **Step 2**, but that lacks the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site (i.e. is not natural forest) is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"). Such clearing may include harvesting a tree plantation or controlling non-native woody weeds that have met the forest thresholds.

²³ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/natural-forest/>

²⁴ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/deforestation/>

Step 4.1 Undertake a TREE PLANTATION assessment

An area that meets the definition of a tree plantation is not considered a Natural Forest.

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation relates to the loss of natural forest.
- The Framework defines 'tree plantation', and states that the categories 'natural forest' and 'tree plantation' are mutually exclusive.²⁵
- Forest loss of a 'tree plantation' is therefore not considered deforestation.
- A tree plantation is defined as:

"Tree Plantation"²⁶

A forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding that lacks key elements of a natural forest native to the area, such as species composition and structural diversity.

- Tree plantations generally have one or a few tree species and tend to include one or more of the following characteristics:
 1. planted on cleared land
 2. harvested regularly
 3. trees are of even ages
 4. products from the plantation are managed and processed for commercial production.
- Forest loss of a 'tree plantation' is therefore not considered deforestation.
- Tree plantations can consist of trees planted for timber, pulp, non-timber forest products (e.g., rubber latex), or ecosystem services (e.g., soil stabilisation). Plantations dominated by agricultural species (e.g., fruits or oil palm) are considered agriculture, not tree plantations.
- For the purpose of this Guideline, plantations are areas that have been deliberately seeded.

Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

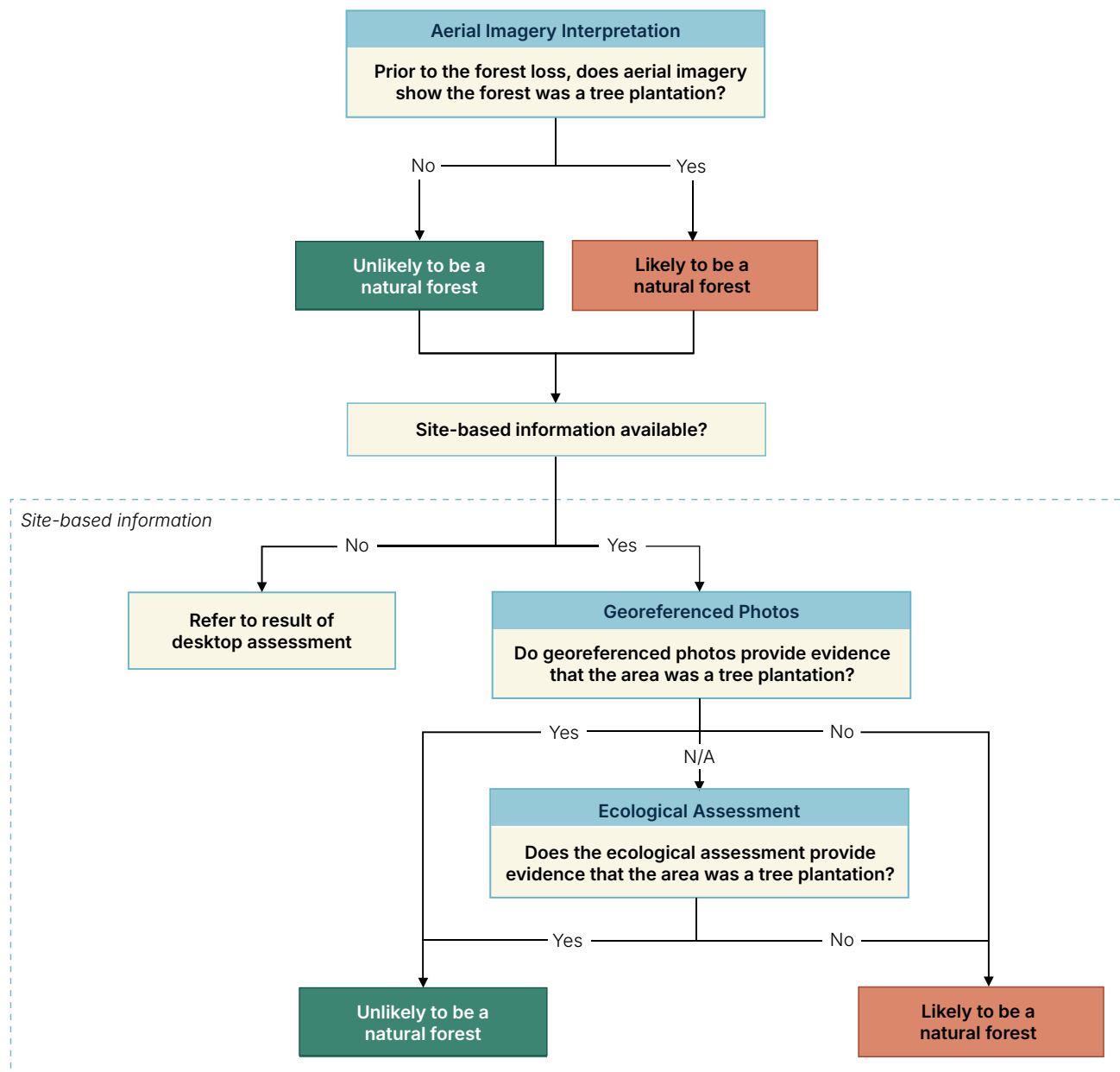
Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

²⁵ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/natural-forest/>

²⁶ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/tree-plantation/>

Figure 4.1: Tree Plantation Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Aerial Photo Interpretation

Determine if the area represents a tree plantation. A tree plantation is typically composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding (possibly in rows), with one or a few tree species, and trees of even ages.

Georeferenced Photos

To demonstrate that the forest loss is of a tree plantation and therefore “unlikely a natural forest”, provide geolocated and time stamped photographs showing the vegetation meets the definition of a tree plantation. This can include evidence that the forest:

- was established through planting and/or deliberate seeding
- lacks key elements of a natural forest native to the area e.g. lacks the local species composition and lacks structural diversity.
- contains trees of even ages, and with even spacings.

Ecological Assessment

To demonstrate that the forest loss is of a tree plantation and therefore “unlikely a natural forest”, provide an ecological assessment completed by a suitably qualified person that demonstrates: the forest:

- was established through planting and/or deliberate seeding
- lacks key elements of a natural forest native to the area, e.g. lacks the local species composition and lacks structural diversity.
- contains trees of even ages, and with even spacings.



Photos for illustrative purposes only



PHOTOGRAPH: © HENRIQUE FERRERA

Example — Tree Plantation

This example is of a tree plantation, not a natural forest. The area is predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding that lacks key elements of a natural forest native to the area, such as local species composition and structural diversity. It has one species of tree with the trees of even ages.

Step 4.2 Undertake a NATURAL FOREST (including regrowth) assessment

An assessment is needed to determine if a forest meets the definition of a 'natural forest' as per **this step (4.2)**.

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation relates to the loss of 'natural forest'. *"Natural forests possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function."*²⁷ (see **Appendix A** for full definition)
 - Natural forests include:
 - a. Primary forests** that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history
 - b. Regenerated (second-growth) forests** that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging) but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained much of the species composition, structure, and ecological function of prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems
 - c. Managed natural forests** where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist in the presence of activities such as: + Harvesting of timber or other forest products, including management to promote high-value species + Low intensity, small-scale cultivation within the forest, such as less-intensive forms of swidden agriculture in a forest mosaic
 - d. Forests that have been partially degraded** by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species, or others) but where the land has not been converted to another use and where degradation does not result in the sustained reduction of tree cover below the thresholds that define a forest or sustained loss of other main elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and ecological function.

Vegetation likely to be considered a Natural Forest:

Mapped vegetation at State and Territory level

- Vegetation that meets the forest thresholds and is classified as remnant or high value regrowth (or analogous classification) by the relevant government authority, such as in the following datasets, is expected to have the structure function and composition of a natural forest.
 - **ACT:** The ACT Vegetation Map
 - **NT:** Vegetation resource survey index
 - **NSW:** NSW State Vegetation Type Map
 - **QLD:** Regulated Vegetation Maps
 - **SA:** Biological Survey of South Australia data
 - **TAS:** TASVEG
 - **VIC:** Native Vegetation Regulation Map
 - **WA:** Native Vegetation Extent

²⁷ <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/natural-forest/>

Managed natural forest

For further information on managed natural forest see **Section 5.5** on fodder harvesting and **Section 5.6** on timber harvesting.

A mature canopy, comprising trees at least 15 years old and meeting forest thresholds, may be classified as natural forest, including when situated on agricultural land.

Summary:

- The 15-year period is identified in Australia as areas that are likely to be considered a 'natural forest'.
- Where the mature canopy is at least 15 years old, further assessment is required to determine if the area meets the definition of 'natural forest'.
- Forests with a degraded ground or shrub layer can still be considered natural forest if the mature canopy is present.
- When the forest thresholds are met, presence of mature trees overrides agricultural use under the forest definition, even with understorey grazing.

Details

- The 15-year period is identified in Australia as it corresponds with the criteria for "high value regrowth" specified by Queensland's Vegetation Management Act 1999²⁸ and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) Brigalow Significant Impact Guidelines²⁹ and is measurable. Additionally, research concerning the benefits of regrowth for 30 threatened animal species in Queensland found that regrown forests and woodlands offer valuable habitat and food resources for some of the species within three years, with an average of 15 years across the studied species³⁰.
- A mature tree (minimum 15 years old) is recognized as an essential structural component of a 'natural forest' in Australia. Large native trees, especially those containing hollows, serve important ecological functions within agricultural systems, including carbon storage, provision of microclimates (for example, enhancing soil nutrients and plant species richness), in hydrological cycles, and supplying food, shelter, and habitat—particularly for fauna reliant on hollows³¹. At the landscape level, these keystone structures contribute to tree cover, connectivity for wildlife, and local genetic resources for restoration³². Many Australian eucalypts may require up to 250 years to form suitable hollows, making larger trees irreplaceable within landscapes and ecosystems³³.
- Where the mature canopy is at least 15 years old, further assessment is required to determine if the area meets the definition of 'natural forest'. For example, photos could show that Brigalow regrowth remains a monoculture at 15 years. This is unlikely to be considered 'natural forest'. However, Brigalow regrowth that displays a transition toward greater structural diversity would likely be considered a 'natural forest'.
- While the definition of 'forest' (see **Appendix A**) excludes areas predominantly used for agriculture, in Australia the presence of mature trees (at least 15 years old) indicates that agriculture is not necessarily the predominant land use, even if grazing occurs in the understorey.
- As per the definition of 'natural forest', forests with partial degradation may still be regarded as natural forest.

28 <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/maps/vegetation-categories>

29 <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/brigalow-regrowth.pdf>

30 Thomas, H., Simmonds, J.S., Ward, M., Eyre, T.J., and Maron, M. (2025) The value of regrowth forests and woodlands for threatened fauna species *Biological Conservation* 307: 111131 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2025.111131>.

31 Lindenmayer, D.B., Blanchard, W., McBurney, L., Blair, D., Banks, S., Likens, G.E., Franklin, J.F., Laurance, W.F., Stein, J.A.R. and Gibbons, P. (2012) Interacting Factors Driving a Major Loss of Large Trees with Cavities in a Forest Ecosystem. *PLoS ONE* 7(10): e41864.; Lindenmayer, D.B. and Laurance, W.F. (2017) The ecology, distribution, conservation and management of large old trees. *Biological Reviews*, 92(3):1434-1458.; <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0041864>; Manning, A.D., Fischer, J. and Lindenmayer, D.B. (2006) Scattered trees are keystone structures – Implications for conservation, *Biological Conservation*, 132(3): 311-321, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2006.04.023>.

32 Dorrough, J. and Moxham, C. (2005) Eucalypt establishment in agricultural landscapes and implications for landscape-scale restoration, *Biological Conservation*, 123(1): 55-66, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2004.10.008>; Manning, A.D., Fischer, J. and Lindenmayer, D.B. (2006) Scattered trees are keystone structures – Implications for conservation, *Biological Conservation*, 132(3): 311-321, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2006.04.023>.

33 Gibbons P, Lindenmayer DB (2002) Tree hollows and wildlife conservation in Australia. Melbourne: CSIRO Publishing.

If a forest has a degraded or removed ground and/or shrub layer, but retains its mature canopy, it can be considered a partially degraded natural forest. Such degradation may result from various factors, such as grazing, weed impact, or weed control activities.

Regrowth clearing cycles

- If an area meets the forest thresholds, but is less than 15 years old, and there is evidence of previous clearing for agriculture (such as Brigalow regrowth clearing cycles) as well as evidence that the area does not have the structure, function and composition of forest native to the site (such as monoculture Brigalow regrowth), this would not be considered a Natural Forest.

Activities such as grazing, weed control, fodder harvesting and infrastructure installation may be allowed in a 'natural forest'

- A forest that has been impacted by weeds and/or weed control activities but where the mature canopy of native species has been retained would still be considered a 'natural forest.' A forest that is grazed but where the mature canopy has been retained would still be considered a 'natural forest'. While such areas require assessment, agricultural activities can co-exist within a 'natural forest' if compliant (see **Step 5**).
- Where the forest thresholds have been met, and the forest is at least 15 years old, but the canopy species are a non-native woody weed species (such as prickly acacia), this would not be considered a natural forest, and forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Altered ecosystems from changing climate or fires regimes

- Changes in ecosystem processes (e.g. changed fire regimes, changing climate) can result in the vegetation at the site shifting to a new or altered ecosystem. If that ecosystem is serving the functions of a forest analogous to that of forest ecosystems in the region and meeting the forest thresholds, this would be considered a forest, regardless of prior land cover. Noting that areas of forest with a canopy less than 15 years old are unlikely to have the characteristics of a natural forest e.g. clearing of forest encroachment into a grassland that is less than 15 years is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.



Photo for illustrative purposes only
PHOTOGRAPH: [PEXELS]

Example — Natural Forest, partially degraded

This example is of an area with a mature canopy cover that meets the recommended tree height and canopy cover thresholds and is at least 15 years old, but the understorey has been degraded or completely removed. This would be considered a Natural Forest that has been partially degraded, and clearing the mature canopy would be considered deforestation. While the definition of Natural Forest excludes areas predominantly used for agriculture, the presence of mature trees in this system means that agriculture cannot be considered the predominant use, even if there is grazing in the understorey. The presence of mature trees that reach the forest thresholds means that the area is to be considered a Natural Forest.



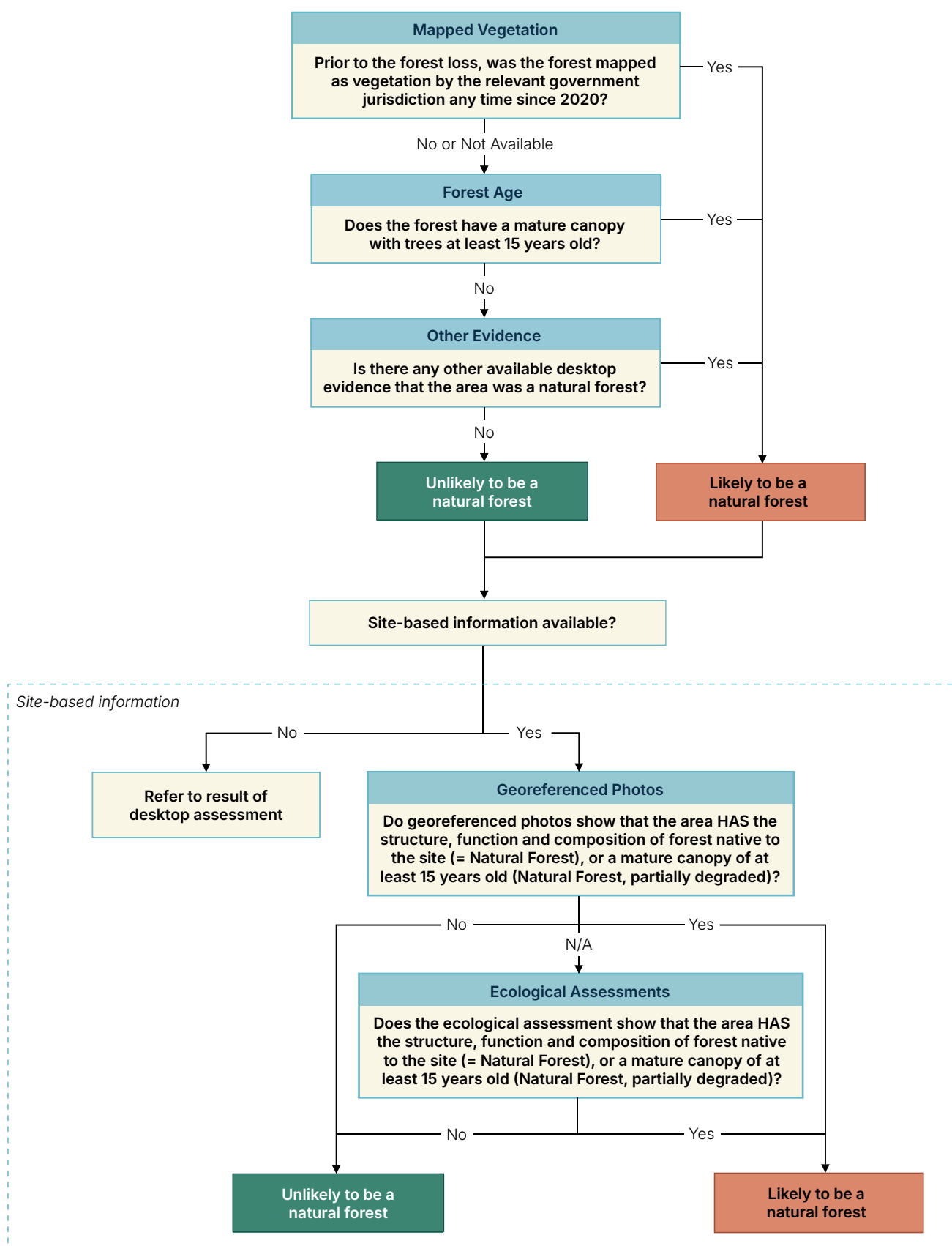
Photo for illustrative purposes only
PHOTOGRAPH: BRODIE CROUCH

Example — Regrowth (Not a natural forest)

This example is of an area where the overstorey is composed of vegetation that has been cleared within the last 15 years (and prior to the cutoff date) and is now regrowing. This would NOT be considered a Natural Forest and clearing this area after the cutoff date would NOT be considered deforestation. This area has previously been converted to agriculture, and agriculture can be considered the predominant use, even though it has been rested (left temporarily fallow).

Figure 4.2: Natural Forest (Including Regrowth) Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on decision framework and evidence requirements:

Mapped Vegetation

Determine if the area is mapped as remnant or high value regrowth (or analogous classification) by the relevant government authority in the following datasets.

- **ACT:** The ACT Vegetation Map
- **NT:** Vegetation resource survey index
- **NSW:** NSW State Vegetation Type Map
- **QLD:** Regulated Vegetation Maps
- **SA:** Biological Survey of South Australia data
- **TAS:** TASVEG
- **VIC:** Native Vegetation Regulation Map
- **WA:** Native Vegetation Extent

Determine if the area is mapped by the Federal Government as remnant or high value regrowth (or analogous classification) by the relevant government authority in the following datasets.

- **Federal:** National Vegetation Information System (NVIS), Protected Matters Search Tool Map

Forest Age

Determine if the forest had a mature canopy with trees at least 15 years old through reviewing aerial images for the 15 years prior to the date of clearing. Evidence shall be provided to show if the area has been cleared within the 15-year period.

Other Evidence

Other evidence may provide information about whether the forest was a natural forest. This could include:

- a. Clearing records demonstrating clearing cycles
- b. Comparing the aerial imagery of the site pre-clearing to a reference site. This would include
 - i. Determine the vegetation type native to the site by checking the relevant state/territory government mapping.
 - ii. Identify an existing mapped patch of vegetation of the same vegetation type (i.e. a reference site).
 - iii. Determine if the area (pre-clearing) appears to be comparable to the reference site, that is the same vegetation type and has been mapped by the relevant state/territory government. This may help identify if the forest was composed of woody weeds (and therefore unlikely a natural forest).

Georeferenced Photo

Provide geolocated and time stamped photographs showing if the area has retained the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site (=Natural Forest) and/or if the area has maintained mature canopy cover with a ground layer and shrub layer that has been degraded or completely removed (=Natural Forest, partially degraded). Where possible, compare the photo to a reference site photo of the same vegetation community.

Ecological Assessments

Provide an ecological assessment, completed by a suitably qualified person, demonstrating that the area has retained the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site (=Natural Forest) and/or if the area has maintained mature canopy cover with a ground layer and shrub layer that has been degraded or completely removed (=Natural Forest, partially degraded).

Step 5: Determine if the forest loss meets the definition of deforestation under the Accountability Framework

Mapping will detect where there has been 'forest loss', areas where forest was present in one year and not present in the following year. Some forest loss is allowable, if in line with the Accountability Framework, such as for weed control or if there has been a natural disaster. Where forest loss is not exempt under the Framework and has occurred since the cutoff date, it is considered a 'deforestation event'. This Guideline explains how to assess whether forest loss is considered a deforestation event (**Figure 2**).

Step 5.1 Undertake a WEED CONTROL assessment

In areas determined to be a 'natural forest', forest loss that relates to removing weeds while maintaining the structure, function and composition of the natural forest and species native to the site is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event. ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation is the *loss of natural forest as a result of*:
 - i. *conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use;*
 - ii. *conversion to a tree plantation; or*
 - iii. *severe and sustained degradation.*
- Note: Weeds are species not native to the given site, but they may be Australian native species in an area where they don't naturally occur.
- Weeds may be present within a natural forest. For example, lantana or blackberry growing in the ground or shrub layer, or camphor laurel interspersed in the canopy layer.
- Weed control within a natural forest that is not targeted to the weed species could be considered severe and sustained degradation.
- Forest loss due to weed control would be "unlikely a deforestation event" if:
 - i. the activity/ies targeted the weed species, while maintaining the native species in the canopy (a key component of a natural forest, as per **Step 4.2**;) and
 - ii. the activity/ies maintained the native ground layer species and shrub layer species as much as possible.
- **Note:** this step relates to activities within a natural forest. Areas of non-native woody-weed species that exceed the forest thresholds are to be assessed in **Step 4.2**.

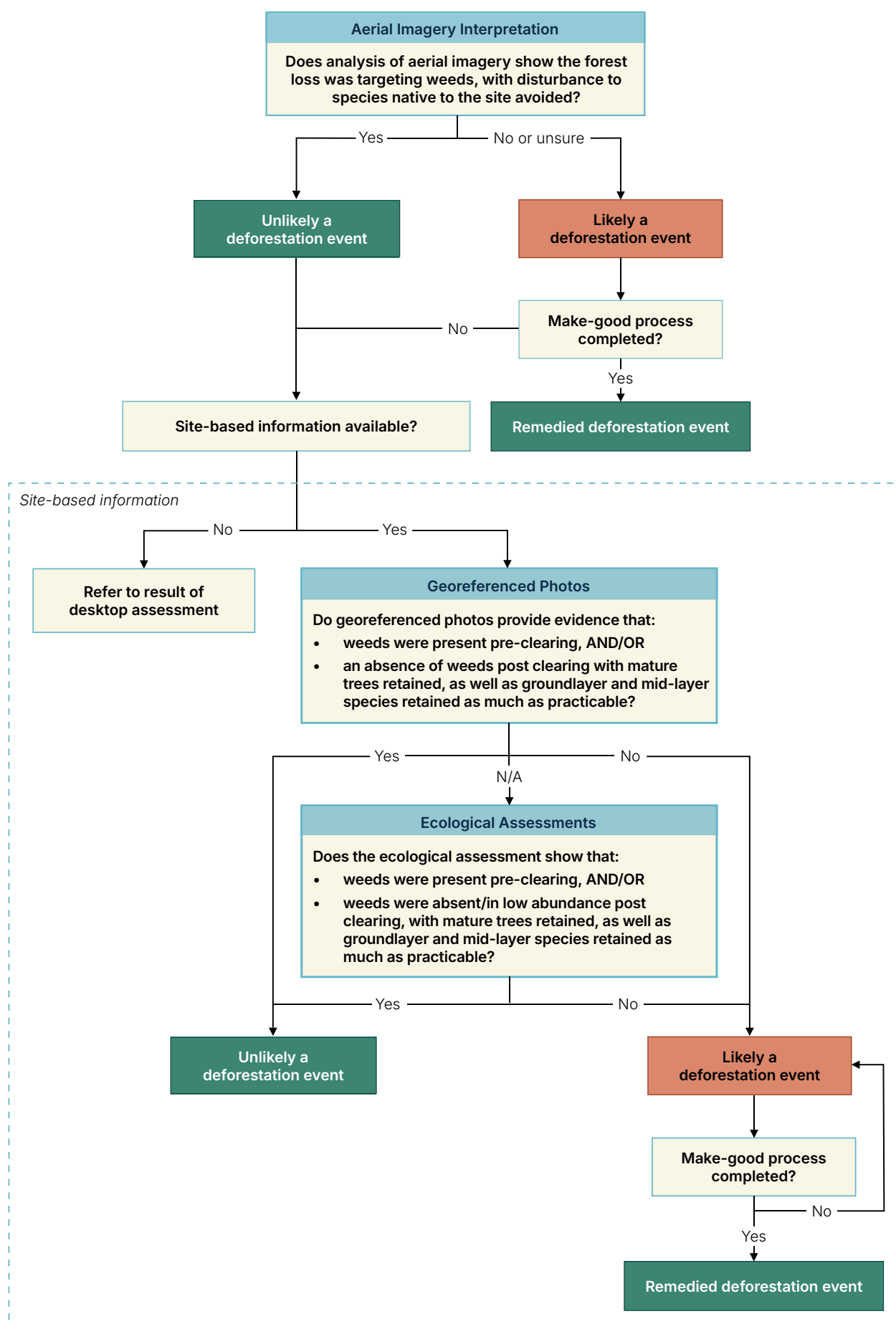
Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person, is strongly recommended.

Figure 5.1: Weed Control Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Weed Identification

Determine if the target species was **not native** to the given site (i.e. a weed), including identification of the pre-European vegetation type and species associated with this.

Note: Weeds are species **not native** to the **given site**, but they may be Australian native species in an area where they don't naturally occur.

Aerial Photo Interpretation

1. Find an aerial image of known weed infestation of the same species at the site being assessed.
2. Determine if the vegetation at the site was likely to be weeds with reference to #1
3. Determine if the forest loss was confined as much as possible to the weed infestation

Georeferenced Photos

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide geolocated and time stamped photographs showing the vegetation before and after weed control, showing tree clearing/forest loss was of a species not native to the given site, and the structure, function and composition was not negatively impacted. That is, mature canopy trees (at least 15 years old) have been generally maintained, with native species in the shrub layer and ground layer retained where practicable.

Where the photographs were taken only after the weed control, determine if the canopy species have been generally maintained, with native species in the shrub layer and ground layer retained where practicable.

Ecological Assessment

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide an ecological assessment, completed by a suitably qualified person, ideally before and after the weed control. Where the assessment was done after the weed control, it must be demonstrated that the area has structure, function and ecological composition. That is, mature canopy trees (at least 15 years old) have been generally maintained, with native species in the shrub and ground layer retained where practicable.

Step 5.2 Undertake a NON-LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE assessment (minimal level)

Forest loss, in a 'natural forest', due to installing non-linear infrastructure e.g. for a shed or dam, that complies with 'minimal level' criteria explained below, is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

Under the Accountability Framework, 'minimal level' of forest loss is not considered deforestation. **Minimal level**³⁴ is defined as:

A small amount of deforestation or conversion that is negligible in the context of a given site because of its small area and because it does not significantly affect the conservation values of natural ecosystems or the services and values they provide to people.

- Minimal levels of deforestation or conversion at the site scale do not necessarily violate no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments. However, this provision does not sanction substantial conversion of forests or natural ecosystems to enlarge commodity production areas.
- To be considered consistent with no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments, minimal levels must generally meet the following conditions:
 1. Not exceed cumulative thresholds that are small both in absolute terms (e.g., no more than a few hectares) and relative to the area in question (e.g., no more than a small proportion of the site). Levels of conversion or deforestation should be assessed cumulatively over space and time; multiple small instances of conversion may lead to a producer being considered non-compliant with commitments.
 2. Not result in the loss of important biological, social, or cultural values, for instance as defined by the High Conservation Value framework.
 3. If planned in advance, be specified as a result of an integrated and participatory land-use planning process that follows good practices for achieving positive environmental and social outcomes (e.g., as specified in Core Principle 7).
 4. If not planned in advance (e.g., if resulting from unauthorised encroachment or other unforeseen activities), are addressed through effective actions to prevent repetition and to remediate harms and restore lost conservation values to the extent necessary.
- Even when minimal levels of deforestation or conversion may not be cause for exclusion from ethical supply chains, they may still require remediation (including restoration and/or compensation) to the extent that they result in negative impacts to conservation values or human rights.

To operationalise this definition, linear and non-linear infrastructure have been considered separately. This is due to the different constraints for each. For example, the location of a fence or firebreak (considered linear infrastructure) is often required in a specific location, e.g. along a boundary. Whereas there may be greater flexibility in choosing the location for a shed (non-linear infrastructure).

The following guidance operationalises this definition for non-linear infrastructure in the Australian context. A minimal level of deforestation is considered the **smaller** of the following two criteria on a given site:

- Forest clearance that makes up 2% or less of the natural forest cover of the production unit (consistent with *a small proportion of the site* underlined in the definition above); OR

34 Accountability Framework initiative, 2024. The Accountability Framework Terms and Definitions https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Definitions_doc/AFI_Definitions_Feb_2024_.pdf, pg 13

- Forest clearance that totals less than 3 hectares (consistent with *a few hectares* underlined in the definition above) of the natural forest cover.
- These thresholds must not be breached cumulatively over time as tracked from the cutoff date. As an example, if the cutoff date is 1st January 2020 and 1ha of natural forest loss occurs in 2021 on a specific production unit, and 1ha of natural forest loss occurs on that same production unit in 2022, a total of 2ha of natural forest loss must be considered in this assessment step.
- The clearing must not result in the loss of important biological, social, or cultural values as per the Accountability Framework. This includes, but is not limited to, loss of endangered vegetation types and threatened species habitats (see **Appendix C**).
- The **Table 1** below provides an example of the thresholds that apply to different areas of natural forest, per production unit. The smaller of the criteria, and therefore the allowable 'minimal level' is highlighted in green. For example, if you have an area of natural forest across a production unit that is 10 ha, you can clear 2000m² in total from the cut-off date. For 150ha of natural forest on a production unit, the amount is a maximum of 3ha in total from the cut-off date.

Table 1: Examples of the thresholds that apply to different areas of natural forest per production unit

Total natural forest area occurring on the Production Unit (ha)	2% of total natural forest area occurring on the Production Unit (ha)	3ha (a few hectares)
1	0.02 (200m ²)	3ha
5	0.10 (1000m ²)	3ha
10	0.20 (2000m ²)	3ha
20	0.40 (4000m ²)	3ha
40	0.80 (8000m ²)	3ha
80	1.60 (16,000m ²)	3ha
150	3 (30,000m ²)	3ha
160	3.20	3ha
320	6.40	3ha
640	12.80	3ha
1,280	25.60	3ha
2,560	51.20	3ha
5,120	102.40	3ha
10,240	204.80	3ha
20,480	409.60	3ha
40,960	819.20	3ha

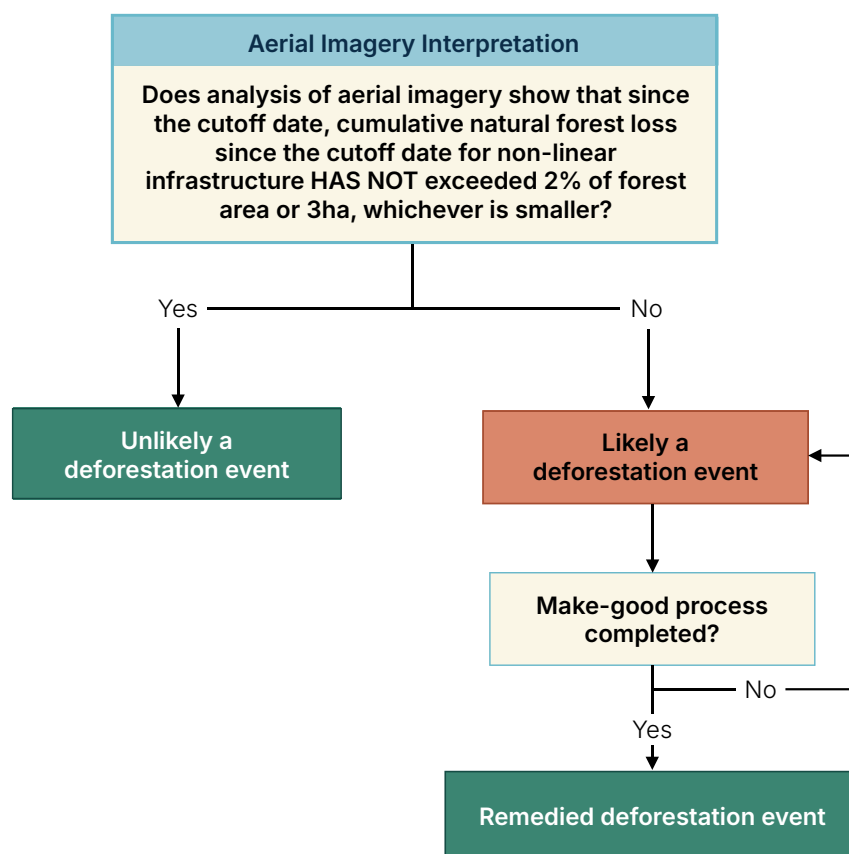
Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

Figure 5.2: Non-Linear Infrastructure (Minimal-Level) Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Aerial Imagery Interpretation

1. Determine the area of natural forest across the entire production unit (all 'natural forest' since the cutoff date, including areas that have reached the forest thresholds post cutoff date).
2. Determine the area of natural forest loss since the cutoff date related to non-linear infrastructure.
3. Determine the area and percentage of natural forest loss for the production unit.
4. Determine whether the result has exceeded 2% of natural forest area or 3ha (whichever is smaller).

Step 5.3 Undertake a LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE Assessment (minimal level)

Forest loss, in a 'natural forest', due to installing linear infrastructure (e.g. fence or fire break) that complies with 'minimal level' criteria explained below, is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

Under the Accountability Framework, 'minimal level' of forest loss is permitted. **Minimal level**³⁵ is defined as:

A small amount of deforestation or conversion that is negligible in the context of a given site because of its small area and because it does not significantly affect the conservation values of natural ecosystems or the services and values they provide to people.

- Minimal levels of deforestation or conversion at the site scale do not necessarily violate no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments. However, this provision does not sanction substantial conversion of forests or natural ecosystems to enlarge commodity production areas.
- To be considered consistent with no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments, minimal levels must generally meet the following conditions:
 1. Not exceed cumulative thresholds that are small both in absolute terms (e.g., no more than a few hectares) and relative to the area in question (e.g., no more than a small proportion of the site). Levels of conversion or deforestation should be assessed cumulatively over space and time; multiple small instances of conversion may lead to a producer being considered non-compliant with commitments.
 2. Not result in the loss of important biological, social, or cultural values, for instance as defined by the High Conservation Value framework.
 3. If planned in advance, be specified as a result of an integrated and participatory land-use planning process that follows good practices for achieving positive environmental and social outcomes (e.g., as specified in Core Principle 7).
 4. If not planned in advance (e.g., if resulting from unauthorised encroachment or other unforeseen activities), are addressed through effective actions to prevent repetition and to remediate harms and restore lost conservation values to the extent necessary.
- Even when minimal levels of deforestation or conversion may not be cause for exclusion from ethical supply chains, they may still require remediation (including restoration and/or compensation) to the extent that they result in negative impacts to conservation values or human rights

To operationalise this definition, linear and non-linear infrastructure have been considered separately. This is due to the different constraints for each. For example, the location of a fence or firebreak (linear) is often required in a specific location, e.g. along a boundary. Whereas there may be greater flexibility in choosing the location for a shed (non-linear). The following guidance operationalises this definition for linear infrastructure in the Australian context.

- Thresholds have been designed to meet the minimal level definition:
 - Forest loss must not be more than 2% of the natural forest cover of the production unit present at the cutoff date, consistent with the Accountability Framework for minimal level of *"a small proportion of the site"* (in the definition above).
 - The 2% threshold may be exceeded for the purpose of establishing a firebreak. Clear justification and demonstration that clearing was unavoidable and minimised is required in a declaration. An example declaration is provided in **Step 7**.

35 <https://accountability-framework.org/the-accountability-framework/definitions/minimal-level/>

- These thresholds shall not be breached either annually, or cumulatively over time as tracked from the cutoff date. That is, if the cutoff date is 2020, and 1ha of natural forest loss occurs in 2021 on a specific production unit, and 1ha of natural forest loss occurs on that same production unit in 2022, a total of 2ha of natural forest loss must be considered in this assessment step.
- It must be demonstrated that the forest loss was avoided as much as practicable.
- The clearing must not result in the loss of important biological, social, or cultural values as per the Accountability Framework. This includes, but is not limited to, loss of endangered vegetation types and threatened species habitats (see **Appendix C**).
- The below table provides an example of the thresholds that apply to different areas of natural forest per production unit.

Table 2: Thresholds that apply to different areas of natural forest per production unit.

Natural forest area (ha)	2% of TOTAL natural forest area
1	0.02
5	0.10
10	0.20
20	0.40
40	0.80
80	1.60
160	3.20
320	6.40
640	12.80
1,280	25.60
2,560	51.20
5,120	102.40
10,240	204.80
20,480	409.60
40,960	819.20

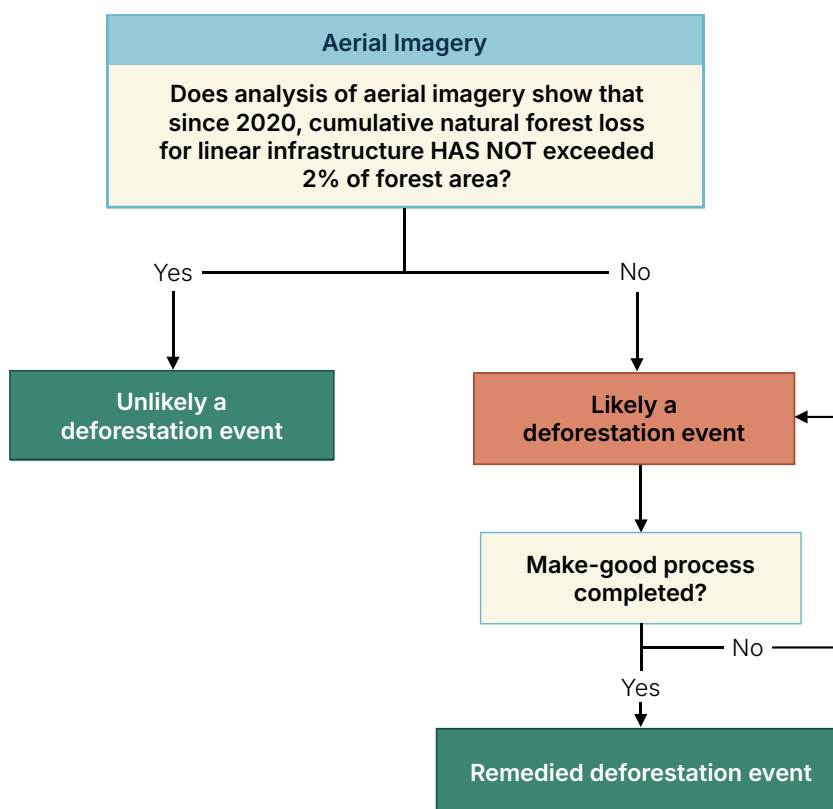
Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

Figure 5.3: Linear Infrastructure (minimal level) Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Aerial photo interpretation

1. Determine the area of natural forest across the entire production unit (all 'natural forest' since the cutoff date, including areas that have reached the forest thresholds post the cutoff date).
2. Determine the area of natural forest loss since the cutoff date related to non-linear infrastructure.
3. Determine the area and percentage of natural forest loss for the production unit
4. Determine whether the result has exceeded 2% of the natural forest area.

Step 5.4 Undertake a GRAZING assessment

Grazing in a 'natural forest' that does not cause deforestation including *severe and sustained degradation* is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- *Deforestation is defined as:*

Loss of natural forest as a result of:

- conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use;*
- conversion to a tree plantation; or*
- iii. severe and sustained degradation***

- Therefore, for grazing to be considered a deforestation event (without direct removal of the forest canopy), the grazing would need to have caused severe and sustained degradation.
- From the cutoff date, any area that meets the forest thresholds and is grazed, the grazing must be managed to ensure that the native species in the ground layer, shrub layer and overstorey layer have not been negatively impacted by that grazing.
- Note: grazing relates to total grazing pressure, which includes grazing pressure from pest animals.

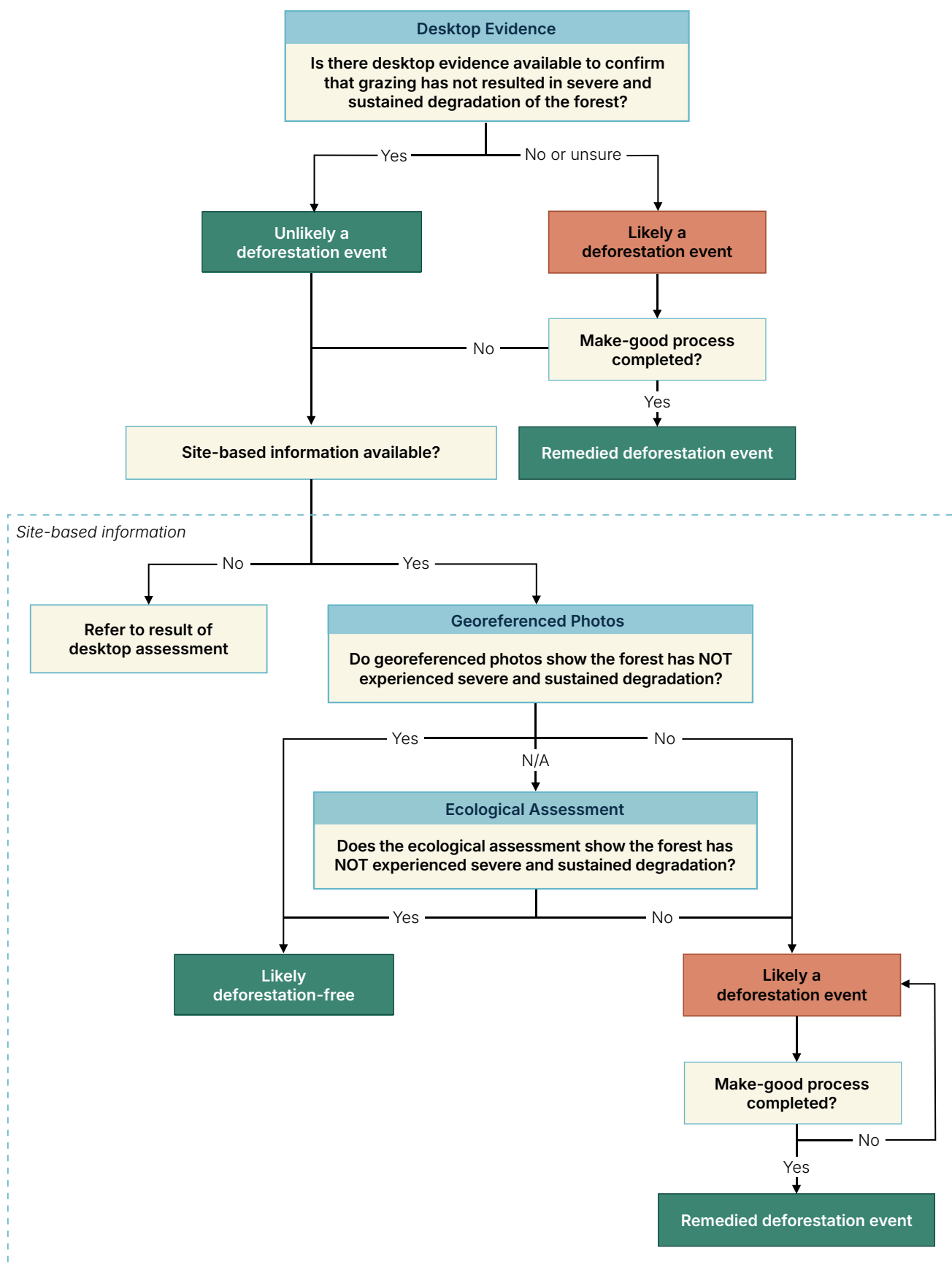
Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

Figure 5.4: Grazing Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Desktop evidence

Determine if the area has experienced severe and sustained degradation. This could include:

- a. Stock records demonstrating carrying capacity relative to seasonal averages.
- b. Pasture biomass records demonstrating ground cover thresholds relative to Natural Resource Management regions thresholds, as per the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework methodology³⁶
- c. Comparing the aerial imagery at the cutoff date to the detected event, to provide evidence of whether grazing has likely caused severe and sustained degradation.

Georeferenced photos

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide georeferenced photos showing the forest has not experienced severe and sustained degradation, and showing the site has retained the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site.

Ecological assessment

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide ecological assessment showing the forest has not experienced severe and sustained degradation. This may include assessment that compare the impacted site and a reference site, demonstrating that the impacted site has retained the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site (and is analogous to the reference site).

36 <https://www.sustainableaustralianbeef.com.au/globalassets/beef-sustainability/documents/absf-annual-update-2023-web.pdf>

Step 5.5 Undertake a FODDER HARVESTING assessment

In states or territories where fodder harvesting is legislated or allowed, fodder harvesting in a 'natural forest' that does not cause deforestation including *severe and sustained degradation*, is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

- Deforestation is defined as:
 - *Loss of natural forest as a result of:*
 - i. *conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use;*
 - ii. *conversion to a tree plantation; or*
 - iii. ***severe and sustained degradation***
- Fodder harvesting may occur in states and territories where fodder harvesting is legislated or allowed. Fodder harvesting must be done in a manner that does not result in deforestation, including severe and sustained degradation.
- Therefore, for fodder harvesting to be considered a deforestation event, it would need to have caused severe and sustained degradation.
- From the cutoff date, any area that meets the forest thresholds and has fodder harvesting, the area must be managed to ensure that the native species are allowed to regenerate.

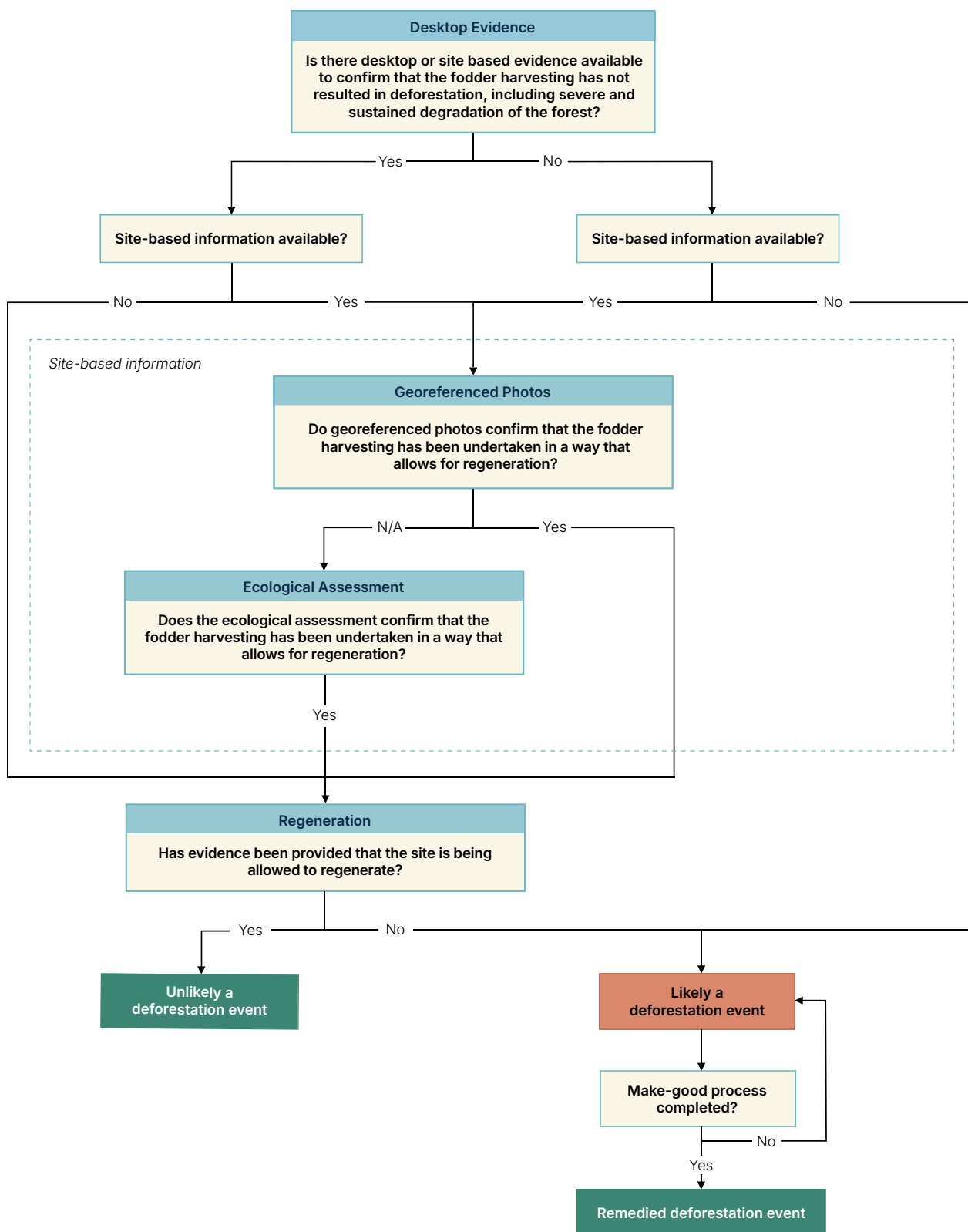
Assessment requirements:

Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

Figure 5.5: Fodder Harvesting Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Desktop evidence

Evidence that the area has not resulted in 'deforestation' including severe and sustained degradation. This could include evidence that the forest loss was of a similar area and configuration to what is legislated in the relevant jurisdiction.

Site-based evidence:

- **Georeferenced photos**
To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event") provide georeferenced photos that show the fodder harvesting has been undertaken in a way that allows for regeneration and/or is regenerating.
- **Ecological assessment**
To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide an ecological assessment that shows the fodder harvesting has been undertaken in a way that allows for regeneration and/or is regenerating.
- **Regeneration**
To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide sufficient evidence to confirm that the area:
 - has not been converted to agriculture; and
 - is being allowed to regenerate, such as evidence of regrowth of the harvested area.

Step 5.6 Undertake a TIMBER HARVESTING assessment

Harvesting timber in a Natural Forest in a way that maintains most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and function over time is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Explanation:

- Under the Accountability Framework, deforestation is the *loss of natural forest as a result of*:
 - i. *conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use;*
 - ii. *conversion to a tree plantation; or*
 - iii. *severe and sustained degradation.*
- As per the Framework, Natural Forests include 'managed natural forest', which include:
 - a. forests that are managed for harvest (of timber or other forest products) or for other services in a way that maintains most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and function over time, and
 - b. forests undergoing selective harvest where high value species are planted or promoted³⁷.
- Therefore, if timber is harvested from a Natural Forest in a way that maintains most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and function over time, it is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").
- Maintaining the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and function must include allowing trees and other locally appropriate vegetation to regrow, whether via regeneration or restoration. If timber is harvested from a forest and trees are not allowed to regrow or an agricultural use is introduced, it is likely that this would constitute a deforestation event.
- Ecological thinning (i.e. thinning of vegetation that, ecologically, is too dense/of a density not typical of that ecosystem), when done in a manner that maintains or enhances the ecosystem composition, structure and function of the forest is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event").

Assessment requirements:

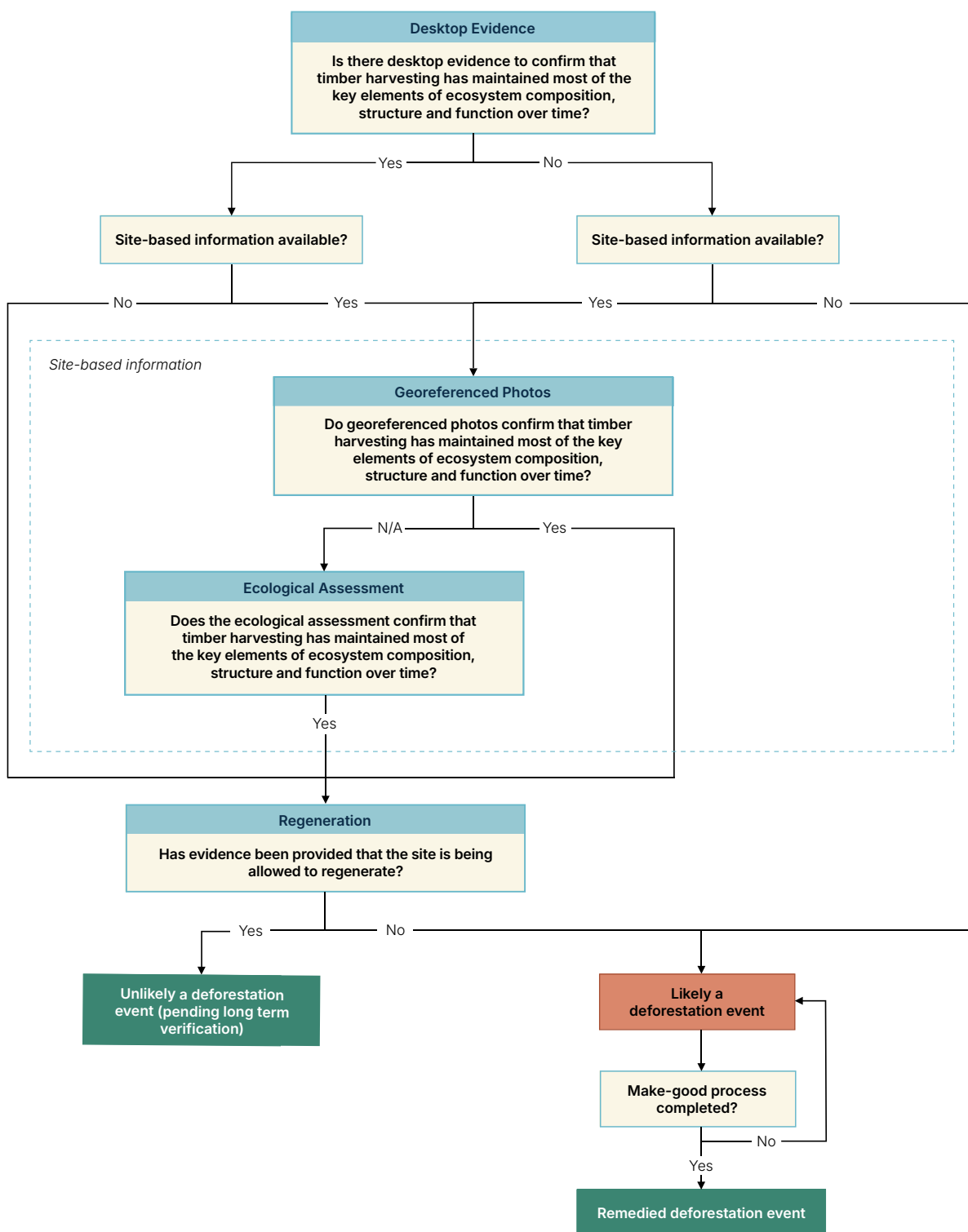
Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

37 https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Operational_Guidance/OG_Applying_Definitions-2020-5.pdf
pg 11

Figure 5.6: Timber Harvesting Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Desktop evidence

Determine if the area has maintained most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure and function over time. This could include:

- a. Sustainable timber harvesting plan (or equivalent) from the relevant government authority.
- b. Comparing the aerial imagery at the cutoff date to the detected event, to provide evidence of whether timber harvesting has/has not impacted the site with respect to maintenance of most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure and function over time. For example, has the diversity of species been maintained, have some large trees been retained, has the harvesting been done in a manner that minimises disturbance, is there evidence that regeneration is occurring?

Georeferenced photos

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide georeferenced photos to confirm that timber harvesting has maintained most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure and function over time. For example, has the diversity of species been maintained, have some large trees been retained, has the harvesting been done in a manner that minimises disturbance.

Ecological assessment

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide an ecological assessment confirming that timber harvesting has maintained most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure and function over time. This may include assessment that compare the impacted site and a reference site, demonstrating if the impacted site has/has not maintained most of the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure and function over time (and is analogous to the reference site).

Regeneration

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide sufficient evidence to confirm that the area:

- has not been converted to agriculture; and
- is being allowed to regenerate, such as evidence of recruitment.

Step 5.7 Undertake a NATURAL CAUSE assessment

Forest loss, in a 'natural forest' that occurs because of a natural cause is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), if the forest is allowed to regenerate after the natural cause. Conversely, if forest loss occurs as a result of a natural cause, but the land is subsequently used for intensive agriculture (e.g. cleared and/or ploughed), then that would likely be considered a deforestation event.

Note: while the guidance for this step may be useful for self-assessment, it is recommended that assessment and evidence is provided by a suitably qualified person.

Explanation:

The AFi Backbone team has provided the following clarification³⁸:

Q: *Is a forest that experiences degradation through natural disasters considered deforestation?*

A: *If a forest has experienced a natural disaster and is then subsequently converted into agricultural land (after the cut-off date), it would be considered deforestation. Conversely, if the affected forest is allowed to regenerate, it would not be deemed deforestation.*

Importantly, maintaining the key elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and function must include allowing trees and other locally appropriate vegetation to regrow, whether via regeneration or restoration. If forest and trees are not allowed to regrow or an agricultural use is introduced at a level that inhibits regeneration, it is likely that this would constitute a deforestation event.

Assessment requirements:

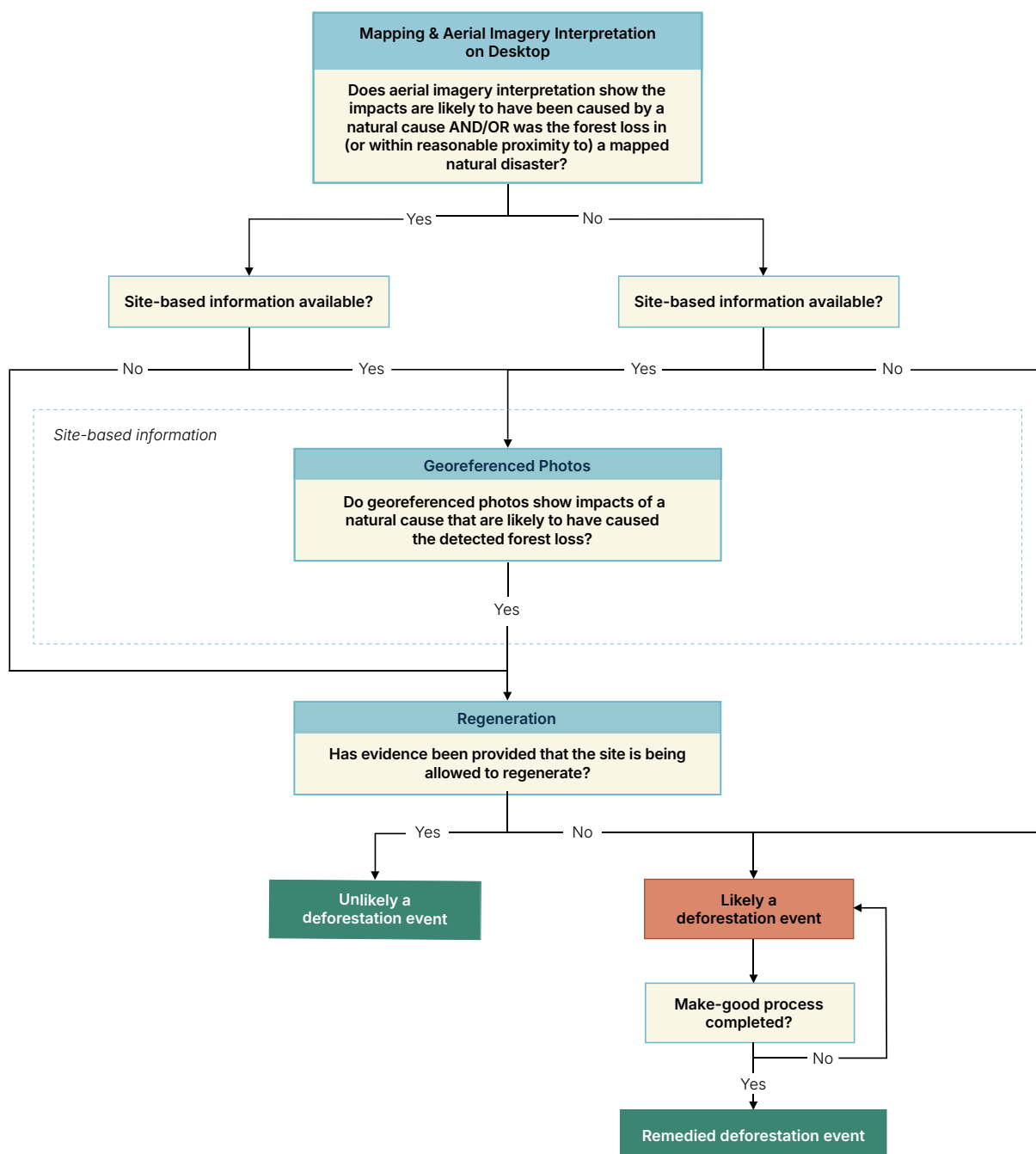
Completion of the following decision framework, with evidence provided to support each decision. A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found in **Step 7**.

Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

³⁸ Questions and answers to help clarify application definition of deforestation in Australia. Prepared by the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi) Backbone Team 24 April 2024

Figure 5.7: Natural Cause Assessment

Desktop Assessment



Guidance on Decision Framework and evidence requirements:

Mapping and aerial imagery interpretation

In some cases, the natural cause or natural disaster is visible in aerial imagery. In these cases, imagery with date of image noted should be provided.

For natural disasters, determine if the area has been mapped by a legitimate source as an area that has experienced a natural disaster at a time that correlates with the loss event, such as fire impact areas and flood impact areas, or drought declarations.

Georeferenced photos

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide time stamped and geo-referenced photos that show the forest loss was due to a natural cause.

Regeneration

To demonstrate that the forest loss is unlikely to be considered a deforestation event ("unlikely a deforestation event"), provide sufficient evidence to confirm that the area:

- has not been converted to agriculture; and
- is being allowed to regenerate, such as evidence of a lack of grazing pressure.

This could include evidence of fencing, stock records showing the area has been omitted from grazing, aerial imagery showing regeneration.

Where grazing occurred in the area prior to the natural cause, and has continued following the natural cause, it must be demonstrated that the grazing it is not impeding regeneration of the forest.



Example – Natural disaster (fire)

This example is of forest loss due to a natural disaster. The forest loss was in an area mapped by the relevant jurisdiction as an area impacted by fire. If this area is allowed to regenerate, it would be considered "unlikely a deforestation event".

Step 6: Final Production Unit Assessment

Having completed **Steps 4 and 5** for each forest loss event and determined whether there are any deforestation events, the final assessment required is to determine whether the production unit is deforestation-free.

For a production unit to be considered deforestation-free, either:

- no forest loss has been detected since the cutoff date; OR
- forest loss events detected since the cutoff date are not considered a deforestation event according to the assessments under **Steps 4 and 5**, as either:
 - any forest loss events detected since the cutoff date are not considered a deforestation event, according to the assessments under **Steps 4 and 5**; and/or
 - any forest loss events detected since the cutoff date that are considered deforestation have been remedied in line with **Appendix B** (where applicable).

Explanation

- In line with the Accountability Framework, the assessment of deforestation-free relates to the entire 'production unit'. A 'production unit' (defined in **Step 1**) is the full extent of a property under one management.
- There may be multiple areas of forest loss detected on a production unit. Assessment (**Steps 4 and 5**) is required of each area of forest loss to determine which are considered deforestation and therefore a deforestation event.
- Having determined whether there are any deforestation events, a determination can be made as to whether a production unit is deforestation-free.

Assessment requirements:

- Based on the assessments undertaken in **Steps 4 and 5** for each forest loss event, determine whether the production unit is deforestation free.
- A production unit can only be considered a deforestation-free production unit if ALL forest loss events were NOT considered deforestation. The datasets used to assess one forest loss event can likely be used to assess additional events within the property, such as aerial imagery and vegetation mapping.
- **Note:** For deforestation-free commodities such as beef, the animal must have only been on deforestation-free production units throughout its lifetime, with lifetime traceability required.
- A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification.

Step 7: Complete Declaration

A declaration with supporting evidence in line with this Guideline would be required for full verification. An example declaration can be found below. Given the complexity of evidence required for this step, evidence provided by a suitably qualified person is strongly recommended.

Deforestation-free Declaration

This declaration must be completed in line with the “Guideline for implementing deforestation-free assessments in Australia, in line with the Accountability Framework (AF)” (the Guideline).

This declaration is a legal document that must be made truthfully and accurately completed and signed by a person that owns and/or is responsible for the production unit and able to attest to the accuracy of the information within, at which time it is binding on that person completing the declaration. Evidence to support the assessment should be attached to this declaration, clearly identifying the evidence that relates to each forest loss event.

I.....OWN
and/or I am responsible for the production units identified in this declaration and operate under the trading name/s:

Production Unit

Record the lot and plan details of each lot/plan included in the production unit:

1.	11.	21.
2.	12.	22.
3.	13.	23.
4.	14.	24.
5.	15.	25.
6.	16.	26.
7.	17.	27.
8.	18.	28.
9.	19.	29.
10.	20.	30.

☐ More than 30 lot/plans are included in this production unit, and a list is provided as an attachment.

Forest Thresholds

The deforestation-free assessment has used the following forest thresholds:

- ☐ AFi forest definition (more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent); or
- ☐ Australian forest definition (more than 0.2 hectares with trees higher than 2 metres and a canopy cover of more than 20 percent).

Forest Loss

- ☐ I have used mapping of a reasonable accuracy (at least 10m resolution) to detect forest loss.
- ☐ The forest loss included in the assessment attached to this declaration accurately reflects all known forest loss on my production unit.

Assessment

I have assessed ALL forest loss events, and I have attached these assessment/s to this declaration.

Select:

- ☐ This production unit is deforestation-free as no forest loss events have occurred since the cutoff date.
- ☐ This production unit is deforestation-free, as:

☐ any forest loss events that have occurred since the cutoff date are not considered a deforestation event, according to the assessments under Steps 4 and 5 of the Guideline; and/or

☐ any forest loss events detected since the cutoff date, that are considered deforestation, have been actioned in line with Appendix B of the Guideline (where applicable).
- ☐ This production unit is not deforestation-free, as forest loss has occurred since the cutoff date, and at least one forest loss event is considered a deforestation event in line with the Guideline, and has not been remedied.

Declaration

Iof
Full name Full address (not P.O. Box)

.....
Address continued

declare that:

- ☐ I own and/or I am responsible for the production units identified in this declaration.
- ☐ I have read and understood all parts of this document and the Guideline.
- ☐ All relevant information in my possession available to evidence the steps in accordance with the Guideline, has been provided.
- ☐ All information I have provided in this document is true and correct.

Signature Date

Telephone number: Fax number:

Email:

Appendix A – Definitions

Accountability Framework

SBTi uses definitions based on the Accountability Framework³⁹. The definitions in this section are from the Accountability Framework. If there are updates to these definitions, the updated definitions in the Framework prevail⁴⁰.

Term	Definition
<u>Deforestation</u>	<p>Loss of natural forest as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; ii. conversion to a tree plantation; or iii. severe and sustained degradation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This definition pertains to no-deforestation supply chains that generally focus on preventing the conversion of natural forests. - Severe and sustained degradation (scenario iii in the definition) constitutes deforestation even if the land is not subsequently used for a non-forest land use. - Loss of natural forest that meets this definition is considered to be deforestation regardless of whether or not it is legal. - The Accountability Framework's definition of deforestation signifies 'gross deforestation' of natural forest where 'gross' is used in the sense of "total; aggregate; without deduction for reforestation or other offset.
<u>Deforestation-free</u> (No-deforestation / Deforestation-free / Zero deforestation)	<p>Commodity production, sourcing, or financial investments that do not cause or contribute to deforestation (as defined by the Accountability Framework).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-deforestation refers to no gross deforestation of natural forests, which the Accountability Framework specifies as the appropriate policy and goal on this topic for companies and supply chains. • In the context of the Accountability Framework, deforestation refers to the loss of natural forest (see definition of deforestation). • The terms 'no-deforestation' and 'deforestation-free' are used in favour of 'zero deforestation' because 'zero' can imply an absolutist approach that may be at odds with the need sometimes to accommodate minimal levels of conversion at the site level in the interest of facilitating optimal conservation and production outcomes (see definition for minimal level).
<u>Degradation</u>	<p>Changes within a natural ecosystem that significantly and negatively affect its species composition, structure, and/or function and reduce the ecosystem's capacity to supply products, support biodiversity, and/or deliver ecosystem services.</p>

39 [SBTiFLAGGuidance.pdf \(sciencebasedtargets.org\)](#) pp59-62

40 https://accountability-framework.org/fileadmin/uploads/afi/Documents/Definitions_doc/Definitions-2020-5.pdf pp5

Term	Definition
<u>Forest</u>	<p>Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Forest includes natural forests and tree plantations. For the purpose of implementing no-deforestation supply chain commitments, the focus is on preventing the conversion of natural forests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative thresholds (e.g., for tree height or canopy cover) established in legitimate national or sub-national forest definitions may take precedence over the generic thresholds in this definition. The Accountability Framework should not be interpreted as weakening or qualifying any protection or provision of national forestry laws, including when these laws apply to legally classed forests that are tree plantations or presently have little or no tree cover. As stated in Core Principle 3.4, company commitments are additional to applicable law, and when both apply to the same topic, the highest (more protective) standard prevails. The AFi advocates that natural forests be distinguished from tree plantations for the purpose of conducting forest inventories and quantifying forest loss and gain. This will facilitate comparability between government forest monitoring and the tracking of supply chain commitments focused on human-induced conversion of natural forests.
<u>Minimal level</u>	<p>A small amount of deforestation or conversion that is negligible in the context of a given site because of its small area and because it does not significantly affect the conservation values of natural ecosystems or the services and values they provide to people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal levels of deforestation or conversion at the site scale do not necessarily violate no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments. However, this provision does not sanction substantial conversion of forests or natural ecosystems to enlarge commodity production areas. To be considered consistent with no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments, minimal levels must generally meet the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not exceed cumulative thresholds that are small both in absolute terms (e.g., no more than a few hectares) and relative to the area in question (e.g., no more than a small proportion of the site). Levels of conversion or deforestation should be assessed cumulatively over space and time; multiple small instances of conversion may lead to a producer being considered non-compliant with commitments. Not result in the loss of important biological, social, or cultural values, for instance as defined by the High Conservation Value framework. If planned in advance, be specified as a result of an integrated and participatory land-use planning process that follows good practices for achieving positive environmental and social outcomes (e.g., as specified in Core Principle 7). If not planned in advance (e.g., if resulting from unauthorised encroachment or other unforeseen activities), are addressed through effective actions to prevent repetition and to remediate harms and restore lost conservation values to the extent necessary.

Term	Definition
<u>Minimal level</u> (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even when minimal levels of deforestation or conversion may not be cause for exclusion from ethical supply chains, they may still require remediation (including restoration and/or compensation) to the extent that they result in negative impacts to conservation values or human rights.
<u>Natural Forest</u>	<p>A forest that is a natural ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural forests possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function. Natural forests include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary forests that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history. Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging) but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained much of the species composition, structure, and ecological function of prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems. Managed natural forests where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist in the presence of activities such as: + Harvesting of timber or other forest products, including management to promote high-value species + Low intensity, small-scale cultivation within the forest, such as less-intensive forms of swidden agriculture in a forest mosaic. Forests that have been partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species, or others) but where the land has not been converted to another use and where degradation does not result in the sustained reduction of tree cover below the thresholds that define a forest or sustained loss of other main elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and ecological function. The categories "natural forest" and "tree plantation" are mutually exclusive, though in some cases the distinction may be nuanced. Please see the Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation, Conversion, and Protection of Ecosystems for further discussion of boundary cases. For the purpose of corporate no-deforestation commitments, the focus is on preventing the conversion of natural forests.
<u>Naturally regenerating forest</u>	See Natural forest.
<u>Primary forest</u>	See Natural forest.

Term	Definition
<u>Production Unit</u>	<p>A plantation, farm, ranch, or forest management unit. This includes all plots used for agriculture or forestry that are under one management, located in the same general area, and share the same means of production. It also includes natural ecosystems, infrastructure, and other land within or associated with the plantation, farm, ranch, or forest management unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A production unit can be a contiguous land area (regardless of any internal subdivisions) or a group of plots interspersed with other land units the same area or landscape and under the same management.
Suitably Qualified Person	<p>Note: not an Accountability Framework definition.</p> <p>A person who has professional qualifications, training, skills or experience relevant to the nominated subject matter and can give authoritative assessment, advice and analysis to performance relative to the subject matter.</p>
<u>Tree Plantation</u>	<p>A forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding that lacks key elements of a natural forest native to the area, such as species composition and structural diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree plantations generally have one or a few tree species and tend to include one or more of the following characteristics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> planted on cleared land. harvested regularly. trees are of even ages. products from the plantation are managed and processed for commercial production. Tree plantations can consist of trees planted for timber, pulp, non-timber forest products (e.g., rubber latex), or ecosystem services (e.g., soil stabilisation). Plantations dominated by agricultural species (e.g., fruits or oil palm) are considered agriculture, not tree plantations. There exist a range of 'boundary cases' where sites have some characteristics of tree plantations and some characteristics of natural forests. Please see the Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation and Conversion for more information on such cases.
Weeds (Invasive species)	<p>Note: Not an Accountability Framework definition.</p> <p>A species not natural to the given site. In some cases, weed species may also be native species outside of areas where they would naturally occur.</p>

Appendix B — Recommended criteria for a “make-good” approach to remedy deforestation events in Australia

IMPORTANT: This section is to be read in conjunction with information on the AFi website, in particular the [Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation](#) and the [Operational Guidance on Supply Chain Management](#). These documents include information that should be considered by supply chain actors when implementing a make-good process, such as grievance mechanisms, restoration plans and managing non-compliances.

Introduction

If deforestation has occurred on a production unit since the cutoff date (see Important Terminology section of this Guideline), commodities produced on that land cannot be considered deforestation-free under the Accountability Framework. The purpose of a remedy (make-good process) is to enable landholders to undertake restoration activities that address deforestation events, in alignment with the Accountability Framework.

Remedy Status

Deforestation is considered remedied once a restoration plan is made and initiated.

Criteria

To operationalise a robust process in the Australia context, the following criteria should be met.

Participation Criteria

1. Intensity and Scale

The Accountability Framework Operational Guidance on Supply Chain Management includes levels of intensity of the non-compliance. Only “Less Intense” or “Moderately Intense” are eligible for remedy. This includes consideration of level of impact to natural ecosystems and their conservation values, as well as human rights impacts (co-harms) resulting from the deforestation, including how the deforestation has impacted Indigenous Peoples or other local communities.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Supply Chain Management - Section 4.2 Addressing supplier non-compliance

2. Persistence

A central tenet of the Accountability Framework is that commodity production, sourcing, and financing must not cause or contribute to new deforestation or conversion. Accordingly, restoration or compensation—or plans or commitments to restore or compensate—may not be used to justify or offset new deforestation or conversion associated with agriculture or forestry. To ensure a good process does not sanction or enable continued deforestation:

- Each production unit is eligible for only one make-good restoration plan.
- Make-good is only applicable to deforestation that occurred within one year of the supply chain's public commitment. This prevents ongoing deforestation and avoids the creation of a pseudo offset scheme.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation - Purpose and summary.

Restoration Criteria

1. Restoration activities only

Only forest restoration is considered a valid remedy (which could be via re-planting or natural regeneration requiring active management including fencing). Conserving existing forest is not eligible as this cannot be considered additional in the context of a deforestation-free property.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation – Section 2.2 Principle 4 relating to “additionality”

2. Restoration within same production unit

Restoration must occur within the same production unit where deforestation took place. See Step 1 of this Guideline for details on how to identify a production unit.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation – Section 2.2 “proximate” restoration (p.8) and Section 2.2 Principle 10 relating of the “effective management arrangements”

3. Restoration of the same ecosystem type.

The restored forest must match the ecosystem type that was lost. For example, cleared riparian vegetation must be replaced with restored or regenerated riparian vegetation. This ensures forest on the same landforms and of a similar structure, function and composition to the cleared forest is restored. Restoration plantings must include diverse species ie. grasses and forbs, shrubs and trees indigenous to the site.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation – Section 2.2 Principle 3 relating to “like-like equivalence” and Section 2.2 Principle 4 relating to “additionality”

4. Minimum Restoration Ratio of 1:2

Given a replanted forest lacks much of the habitat value of a natural forest, there is a significant lag time for habitat values when a forest is restored. For example, hollows are a key habitat feature, and can take up to 200years to form. To address this lag, a ratio of at least 1:2 is considered reasonable. Nest boxes could also be used to supplement habitat.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation – Section 2.2 Principle 5 relating to “ratio of areas”

5. Monitoring and Securing Restoration Outcomes

Restoration must be supported by long-term agreements (at least 15 years), financing, management, and monitoring. Conservation covenants may be suitable. Failed restoration efforts e.g. low levels of survivorship of seedlings, must be repeated.

A monitoring plan must be in place to ensure that much of the structure, function and composition of the forest native to the site is being re-established.

Accountability Framework alignment: Operational Guidance on Environmental Restoration and Compensation – Section 2.2 Principle 6 relating to “long lasting (and ideally permanent)” outcomes

6. Completion of a Declaration

A formal Declaration must be completed by the landholder or responsible party, addressing all 11 Accountability Framework principles, including those related to human rights and inclusivity.

Appendix C – Areas of Important Biological, Social, or Cultural Values

Australian Capital Territory: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Australian Capital Territory	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offset areas listed on the Offsets Register kept in accordance with section 242 of the <i>Planning Act 2023 (ACT)</i>. 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) (Cth)</i>. The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999) (Cth)</i> that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection due to environmental value	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas identified for protection in a Land Management Agreement made under the former <i>Planning and Development Act 2007 (ACT)</i> or <i>Planning Act 2023 (ACT)</i>. Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i>. Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p>

Type	Australian Capital Territory	Federal
Compliance areas (continued)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to an order for regulatory compliance under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> (ACT), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an order to restore cleared vegetation. an order to rehabilitate land. Land subject to a controlled activity order under the <i>Planning Act 2023</i> (ACT). 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the Environment Protection and <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Critical habitat	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to an order for regulatory compliance under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> (ACT), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an order to restore cleared vegetation. an order to rehabilitate land. Land subject to a controlled activity order under the <i>Planning Act 2023</i> (ACT). 	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Areas identified as sensitive in the ACT Blue-Green Network adopted by the ACT Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide, including Sensitive Ecological Communities, Waterbodies and Creek Lines and the Urban ACT Ecological Network.</p>	N/A.
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from ACT Environment Grants. Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.
National Heritage places	<p>Territory laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the under the <i>Environment Protection and</i></p>

Type	Australian Capital Territory	Federal
National Heritage places (continued)		<p><i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p> <p>Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).</p>
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	See Federal.	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	Territory laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	Places or objects registered under the <i>Heritage Act 2004</i> (ACT) as identified in the ACT Heritage Register, maintained under the Act.	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> (ACT).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2014</i> (ACT), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).

Type	Australian Capital Territory	Federal
Threatened species habitat (continued)	<p>In the ACT, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas identified on the ACT Environment Map: https://apps.vertigisstudio.com/web/?app=71d40a83bb1341c88b7207517f0ce213 • areas identified in the ACT Threatened Fauna Habitat dataset: https://www.data.act.gov.au/Environment/ACT-Threatened-Fauna-Habitat/dkn6-f5xe/about_data • areas identified on the ACT Threatened, Protected and Rare Plants dataset: https://www.data.act.gov.au/Environment/ACT-Threatened-Protected-and-Rare-Plants/tbs5-nm69/about_data 	<p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>Territory laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

New South Wales: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	New South Wales	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas protected by a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement made under Part 5, Division 2 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW) (i.e. offset sites). • Land identified as a set aside in a mandatory code compliant certificate issued under the <i>Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018</i>. • Land subject to a condition of development consent requiring the land to be set aside for conservation purposes under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (NSW). • Land set aside for offsetting purposes under the former, now repealed <i>Native Vegetation Act 2003</i> or <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i>. 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Agreements made under Part 5, Division 3 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW). • Wildlife Refuge Agreements made under Part 5, Division 4 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW). • Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). • Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. • Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>

Type	New South Wales	Federal
Compliance areas (continued)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to an order for regulatory compliance (e.g. stop work order, interim protection order remediation order) under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW). Land subject to a development control order under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (NSW). 	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Critical habitat	<p>An area declared to be an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value under section 3.1 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW). These areas are listed on a Register maintained under section 9.7 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>; and an area declared to be critical habitat under section 220T of the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> (NSW).</p>	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Land mapped as category 2 vulnerable and category 2 sensitive land on the Native Vegetation Regulatory map made under Part 5A of the <i>Local Land Services Act</i>.</p> <p>This includes: Category 2 Vulnerable land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steep or highly erodible land. Protected riparian areas. Land susceptible to erosion, or land that is otherwise environmentally sensitive. <p>Category 2 sensitive land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a private land conservation agreement. A set aside under the Land Management Code. Land subject to a biocertification conservation measure. Land comprising an offset under a Property Vegetation Plan or set aside under a code under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 2003</i>. Coastal wetlands and littoral rainforests (<i>Coastal Management Act 2016</i>) High conservation grasslands. 	N/A.

Type	New South Wales	Federal
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High conservation grasslands. • Core Koala habitat identified in a plan of management (Koala Habitat Protection State Environmental Planning Policy). • Critically endangered plants and critically endangered ecological communities • Ramsar wetlands (see Ramsar Wetlands). • Land subject to remedial action or conservation measures under the Biodiversity Conservation Act. • Land subject to a property, trust or conservation agreement. • Land recommended for listing as an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value. • Land subject to a Private Native Forestry Plan or Private Native Forestry PVP that is in force. • Conservation Areas under the Southern Mallee Land Use Agreement • Native vegetation that must be retained under the <i>Plantation and Reafforestation Act 1999</i>. • Land subject to a condition of development consent requiring the land to be set aside for conservation purposes under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>. • Rainforest and old-growth forest. 	N/A.
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land restored or maintained using funds from the NSW Environmental Trust 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot. • Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.
National Heritage places	State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].

Type	New South Wales	Federal
National Heritage places (continued)		Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	An area declared to be an Area of Outstanding Biodiversity Value under section 3.1 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW). These areas are listed on a Register maintained under section 9.7 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> .	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B]
State or territory heritage areas	Places or objects registered under the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> (NSW), as registered on the State Heritage Register maintained under that Act. Aboriginal objects and declared Aboriginal places are protected and managed pursuant to s 28 of the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> (NSW) but are not specifically declared or listed as heritage. Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws.	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW) or <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> , having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).

Type	New South Wales	Federal
Threatened species habitat (continued)	<p>In NSW, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Bionet Threatened Biodiversity Profile Data Collection https://datasets.seed.nsw.gov.au/dataset/nsw-bionet-threatened-entity-profile-data-collection8f027 SEED - The Central Resource for Sharing and Enabling Environmental Data in NSW https://www.seed.nsw.gov.au/ 	<p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>State laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

Northern Territory: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Northern Territory	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	Areas set aside as offsets, including areas set aside as offsets under the Northern Territory Offsets Framework, including for projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2019</i> (NT).	Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth) that have offset conditions.
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Territory Conservation Agreement entered into under the Territory Conservation Agreements program. 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a rehabilitation direction under the Pastoral Land Act 1992 (NT). Land subject to an order to remedy a contravention or failure under the Planning Act 1999 (NT). Land subject to an environment protection notice issued under the Environmental Protection Act 2019 (NT). 	Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Type	Northern Territory	Federal
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a rehabilitation direction under the Pastoral Land Act 1992 (NT). Land subject to an order to remedy a contravention or failure under the Planning Act 1999 (NT). Land subject to an environment protection notice issued under the Environmental Protection Act 2019 (NT). 	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Critical habitat	<p>Areas declared as essential habitat under section 37 of the <i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976</i> (NT).</p>	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Land that is 'environmentally significant' or 'sensitive vegetation' as defined in the Land Clearing Guidelines - Northern Territory Planning Scheme.</p> <p>This is defined as sensitive or significant vegetation communities such as rainforest, vine thicket, closed forest or riparian vegetation (clause 3.2 of the Northern Territory Planning Scheme). The terms are used in these guidelines to also include mangroves, monsoon vine, forest, sandsheet heath and vegetation containing large trees with hollows suitable for fauna habitat.</p>	N/A.
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managed or restored using funding from the Northern Territory government. This may include funding under the Land Management and Conservation Fund. Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.

Type	Northern Territory	Federal
National Heritage places	Territory laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p> <p>Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).</p>
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An area declared to be a protected environmental area under sections 35 and 36 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 2019</i> (NT). Sites of Conservation Significance identified by the Northern Territory government: https://nt.gov.au/environment/environment-data-maps/important-biodiversity-conservation-sites/conservation-significance-list 	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)
Ramsar wetlands	Territory laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	<p>Declared heritage places or archaeological sites within the meaning of the <i>Heritage Act 2011</i> (NT).</p> <p>Sacred sites within the meaning of the <i>Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989</i> (NT).</p>	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Type	Northern Territory	Federal
Threatened species habitat	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976</i> (NT), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).</p> <p>In the NT, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment data held by the NT Government: https://nt.gov.au/environment/environment-data-maps/environment-data 	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).</p> <p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>Territory laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

Queensland: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Queensland	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas declared as Category A under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld). • Land subject to a condition of development consent requiring the land to be set aside for conservation purposes under the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> (Qld), <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> (Qld), <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld), or the <i>Environmental Offsets Act 2014</i> (Qld). • Offsets required under the State Government Supported Infrastructure Koala Conservation Policy. • Offsets required under Queensland offset policies prior to the introduction of the <i>Environmental Offsets Act 2014</i> (Qld). • Offsets under local government laws. 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)</i> (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)</i> (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Refuges established through a Conservation Agreement entered into with the Minister under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>. • Special wildlife reserves established through a Conservation Agreement entered into with the Minister under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>. • Areas protected for conservation via a statutory covenant entered into with the State or local government. • A Voluntary Declaration made under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>. • Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). • Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. • Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).

Type	Queensland	Federal
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas declared as Category A or subject to a restoration notice under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld) or enforcement notice under the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> (Qld). • Land subject to a rehabilitation or restoration enforcement order under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> (Qld). 	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Critical habitat	<p>Critical habitat or an area of major interest identified in a Conservation Plan made under Part 7, Division 7 of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld), or critical habitat or an area of major interest identified in a Regulation made under section 175(2)(j) of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld).</p> <p>Note: Records of these areas can be found on the Register maintained under section 133 of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld) and on records kept by registrar of titles under section 134 of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld).</p> <p>Also see Essential Habitat mapped under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld).</p>	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected remnant vegetation: as shown on a regional ecosystem or remnant map as an endangered regional ecosystem, an of concern regional ecosystem or a least concern regional ecosystem (category B on Regulated vegetation management maps). • High value regrowth vegetation - land mapped as high value regrowth vegetation (category C on Regulated vegetation management maps). • Regrowth watercourse area - land mapped as Regrowth watercourse area (category R on Regulated vegetation management maps). The main purpose of designating and managing Category R vegetation is to protect and improve water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef by minimizing erosion and runoff from these area. • Essential habitat: as shown on the Essential Habitat Map under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld). 	N/A.

Type	Queensland	Federal
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetlands, watercourse and drainage features: as shown on a Vegetation management wetlands map or Vegetation management watercourse and drainage feature map certified under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld). Koala priority areas and koala habitat areas: as shown on the koala habitat areas and koala priority areas map, shown on vegetation management reports and maps. https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/maps/map-request. Coastal management districts and coastal wetlands under the <i>Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995</i> (Qld). Areas referenced in maps of environmentally sensitive areas as Category A or B under Schedule 19 of the <i>Environmental Protection Regulation 2019</i> (Qld) where not listed above. Environments, species or area mapped under local government laws. 	
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Queensland Land Restoration Fund. Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot. 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.
National Heritage places	State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p> <p>Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).</p>

Type	Queensland	Federal
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Refuges established through a Conservation Agreement entered into with the Minister under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld). Special wildlife reserves established through a Conservation Agreement entered into with the Minister under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld). Areas subject to an Interim conservation orders under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld). 	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	<p>Cultural heritage protected and/or registered under the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> (Qld) or <i>Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> (Qld).</p> <p>Heritage listed under the <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i> (Qld).</p> <p>Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws.</p>	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Endangered, of concern or least concern regional ecosystems under the <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i> (Qld).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (Qld), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals) or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc).</p> <p>In Qld, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> areas identified in QldGlobe: https://qldglobe.information.qld.gov.au/ 	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).

Type	Queensland	Federal
Threatened species habitat (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas identified in the Biomaps: https://apps.information.qld.gov.au/Storymaps/Biomaps/ • areas identified in Protected plants flora survey trigger maps: https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/map-request/flora-survey-trigger/ • various areas mapped under regional ecosystem and vegetation mapping, including wetland mapping, koala and Great Barrier Reef catchment area mapping: https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/resources/maps-imagery-data/online#regional_ecosystem_database_and_map • areas identified under local government mapping. 	<p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	State laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].

South Australia: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	South Australia	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <p>Offset areas (Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) areas), such as those protected by a Heritage Agreement entered into under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991</i> (SA) or a Biodiversity Agreement under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2025</i> (SA).</p> <p>Note: On commencement of the Biodiversity Act 2025, heritage agreements will be replaced by biodiversity agreement. At this stage, no commencement date has been confirmed. The South Australian Government has advised that different parts of the Act will be proclaimed gradually with full implementation expected to take around 2 years from the date the Bill was passed (18 June 2025). For updates, see the South Australian government’s website: https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/biodiversity/biodiversity-act</p>	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas subject to a Native Vegetation Heritage Agreement under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991</i> (SA) or Biodiversity Agreement under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2025</i> (SA). 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>

Type	South Australia	Federal
Compliance areas (continued)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to an order for regulatory compliance (e.g. an order where native vegetation has been cleared under the <i>Native Vegetation Act 1991</i> (SA) or <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2025</i> (SA). Land subject to a make good order under the <i>Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016</i>. 	<p>For example:</p> <p>Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).</p>
Critical habitat	Critical habitat declared under Part 6 of the <i>Biodiversity Act 2025</i> (SA).	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Land captured in the following overlays in the SA Planning and Design Code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Significant Native Vegetation Areas Overlay - which applies to areas identified by the Department for Environment and Water as having significant stands of native vegetation including selected reserves, national parks and heritage agreements. The overlay includes a 50-metre buffer area to capture development and clearing near these areas. Regulated and Significant Trees Overlay - which applies to areas where regulated and/or significant tree controls were prescribed in the former <i>Development Regulations 2008</i>. The overlay applies primarily to areas located within Metropolitan Adelaide and parts of Greater Metropolitan Adelaide. 	N/A.
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managed or restored using funding from the South Australian government, which may include funding under the Native Vegetation and Heritage Agreement Grants program. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust. Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot.

Type	South Australia	Federal
National Heritage places	State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p> <p>Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).</p>
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	See Federal.	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	<p>Places and objects of non-Aboriginal heritage significance under the <i>Heritage Places Act 1993</i> (SA), registered on the South Australian Heritage Register.</p> <p>Aboriginal Sites and objects related to the protection or preservation of Aboriginal heritage as entered into the Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988</i> (SA).</p> <p>Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws.</p>	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	On commencement of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2025</i> (SA), Threatened ecological communities may also be declared under the provisions of that Act.	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Type	South Australia	Federal
Threatened species habitat	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species protected as threatened under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i> (SA), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals) or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc).</p> <p>In SA, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas identified on the South Australian government's NatureMaps https://data.environment.sa.gov.au/NatureMaps/pages/default.aspx <p>Note: On commencement of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2025</i> (SA), the process for listing of threatened species will be regulated under that Act. At this stage, no commencement date has been confirmed. The South Australian Government has advised that different parts of the Act will be proclaimed gradually with full implementation expected to take around 2 years from the date the Bill was passed (18 June 2025). For updates, see the South Australian government's website: https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/biodiversity/biodiversity-act</p>	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).</p> <p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>State laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

Tasmania: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Tasmania	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An area set aside as an offset under the <i>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</i> (Tas), including through consent conditions or areas subject to an Agreement made under Part 5 of that Act. An area identified as an offset in accordance with the '<i>The use of offsets to compensate for the loss of significant biodiversity values within forest practices plan</i>' (FPA Offsets Policy). These are likely to be identified in a Forest Practice Plan made under the <i>Forest Practices Act 1985</i> (Tas). 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation covenant entered into under Part 5 of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> (Tas). Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An order to carry out restoration work made under the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> (Tas). 	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>

Type	Tasmania	Federal
Compliance areas (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to an enforcement notice under the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (Tas). 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth).
Critical habitat	Areas determined to be critical habitat under Part 3, Division 4 of the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> (Tas).	Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas.	<p>Vulnerable land as defined in the Forest Practices Regulations 2017 (Tas)</p> <p>vulnerable land means land that –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> is within a streamside reserve or a machinery exclusion zone within the meaning of the Forest Practices Code; or has a slope of more than the landslide threshold slope angles within the meaning of the Forest Practices Code; or is within the High or Very High Soil Erodibility Class within the meaning of the Forest Practices Code; or consists of, or contains, a threatened native vegetation community; or is inhabited by a threatened species within the meaning of the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995 ; or contains vulnerable karst soil within the meaning of the Forest Practices Code; or contains an area of trees reserved from the harvesting of timber or the clearing of trees under a forest practices plan where the period specified in the plan has expired. 	N/A.

Type	Tasmania	Federal
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas. (continued)	<p>Land identified in the Natural Assets Code of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme – State Planning Provisions</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a priority vegetation area: meaning land shown on an overlay map in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule, as within a priority vegetation area waterway and coastal protection area: meaning land shown on an overlay map in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule as within a waterway and coastal protection area; or within the relevant distance from a watercourse, wetland, lake or the coast shown in the Table C7.3 of the Natural Assets Code (but does not include a piped watercourse or piped drainage line) significant habitat, meaning: the habitat within the known or core range of a threatened fauna species, where any of the following applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. is known to be of high priority for the maintenance of breeding populations throughout the species' range; or b. the conversion of it to non-priority vegetation is considered to result in a long-term negative impact on breeding populations of the threatened fauna species 	
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funding from the Department of State Growth. Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.
National Heritage places	<p>State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p>

Type	Tasmania	Federal
National Heritage places (continued)		Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas subject to a land management plans and agreement for protecting threatened species made under Part 3, Division 7 of the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> (Tas). • An area subject to an interim protection order made under Part 4 of the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> (Tas). 	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of State historic cultural heritage significance on the Heritage Register maintained under the <i>Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995</i> (Tas). • Protected sites declared under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975</i> (Tas). • Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws. 	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened native vegetation communities listed under <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i> (Tas).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> (Tas), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).

Type	Tasmania	Federal
Threatened species habitat (continued)	<p>In Tasmania this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Natural Values Atlas (NVA) https://www.naturalvaluesatlas.tas.gov.au/ the Biodiversity Values Database (BVD) https://fpa.tas.gov.au/planning/biodiversity/biodiversity_values_database 	<p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>State laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

Victoria: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Victoria	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas required to be set aside as offsets under condition of approval under the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> (Vic). 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A conservation covenant entered into under the <i>Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972</i> (Vic). A Land Management Cooperative Agreement (also known as a s. 69 Agreement under the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1970</i> (Vic). Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <p>Land subject to an enforceable undertaking under the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic) to remediate any harm or carry out specified activities or projects for the protection and conservation flora or fauna.</p> <p>An enforcement order under the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> (Vic).</p>	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).

Type	Victoria	Federal
Critical habitat	Areas determined to be critical habitats under section 20 of the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic). A register of critical habitat determinations is maintained under section 42 of the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic).	Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Land captured in the following overlays under the Victoria Planning Provisions (except where clearing might be exempted from requiring a permit under these layers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO), which is designed to protect significant native vegetation in urban and rural environments; The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO), which applies where vegetation protection is a part of a wider objective to protect the environmental significance of an area, such as coastal or riparian habitats; The Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO), which is applied more broadly than a VPO and aims to identify and conserve the character of a significant landscape; The Heritage Overlay (HO), which aims to conserve and enhance places of natural and cultural significance. 	N/A.
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managed or restored using Victorian government funding, including under programs such as the BushBank program and Victorian Landcare Grants. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust. Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot.
National Heritage places	State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA]

Type	Victoria	Federal
National Heritage places (continued)		Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	For example: Land subject to Habitat Conservation Order made under the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998</i> (Vic).	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	Places and objects of state-level cultural heritage significance under the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> (Vic), maintained on the Victorian Heritage Register. Aboriginal places and objects maintained on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Vic) Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws.	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened communities of flora or fauna listed under the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).	Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).

Type	Victoria	Federal
Threatened species habitat (continued)	<p>In Victoria this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Biodiversity Atlas https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorian-biodiversity-atlas 	<p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6
World Heritage properties	<p>State laws and policies may also refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].</p>

Western Australia: Examples of areas that may constitute “Areas of important biological, social, or cultural values”

This table provides examples of areas with important biological, social or cultural values. It is guidance only and not to be relied upon as legal advice. The information provided may be superseded by policy or law changes in individual jurisdictions. Users should use this table for guidance only and consider other information as relevant, including government websites. Users should obtain independent legal advice where required.

Type	Western Australia	Federal
Areas set aside as offsets	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved offset areas required by a condition of consent <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA). The <i>WA Environmental Offsets Register</i> provides a central public record of all offset agreements in Western Australia. 	<p>Areas set aside as offsets, as required by a condition of approval under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth). The Offsets Register is a register of projects approved under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</i> (1999) (Cth) that have offset conditions.</p>
Areas subject to voluntary or negotiated agreement for protection (due to environmental value)	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a Biodiversity Conservation Agreement under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA). Land subject to a Biodiversity Conservation Covenant under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA). Land subject to a conservation covenant and agreements to reserve under the <i>Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945</i> (WA). Properties registered with Land for Wildlife. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas protected under a Conservation Agreement entered into under Chapter 5, Part 14 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). Indigenous Protected Areas, subject to an Indigenous Protected Area agreement entered into with the Federal government. Properties registered with the Wildlife Land Trust (a national network of privately owned wildlife sanctuaries).
Compliance areas	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a remediation order made under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA), or an order for restoration under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA). Land subject to a vegetation conservation notice under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA). 	<p>Areas protected under compliance orders, or off-limit to clearing due to previous illegal clearing.</p>

Type	Western Australia	Federal
Compliance areas (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a soil conservation notice under the <i>Soil and Land Management Act 1945</i> (WA). 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land subject to a conservation order or remediation determination made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Critical habitat	Habitat listed as critical habitat under Part 4, Division 1 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA). A register of critical habitat is maintained under section 57 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA).	<p>Areas identified on the Register of Critical Habitat under section 207A of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).</p> <p>https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicregisterofcriticalhabitat.pl</p>
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas	<p>Environmentally sensitive areas identified under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA), including those identified in the Environmental Protection (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) Notice 2005.</p> <p>Note: Amendments made to the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> in 2021 mean that in future, ESAs will be prescribed in regulations. However, until these changes are in place, the <i>Environmental Protection (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) Notice 2005</i> remains in effect.</p> <p>Areas identified in the Principles for clearing native vegetation set out in Schedule 5 of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA), being areas where native vegetation should not be cleared if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> it comprises a high level of biodiversity; or it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna; or it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora; or it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a threatened ecological community; or it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared; or 	N/A.

Type	Western Australia	Federal
Environmentally sensitive or vulnerable areas (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland; or g. the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation; or h. the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area; or i. the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water; or j. the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. 	
Land containing native vegetation grown or preserved using public funds	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land managed and restored using funds from the WA Government's various grant programs, including the Community Stewardship Grants program, Tree Recovery Package, Savings Native Species grants, Emergency Actions for Threatened Species Grants and any relevant past grants programs. Land subject to funding under the Federal Enhancing Remnant Vegetation Pilot. Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust. 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Land restored or maintained using funds from the Federal Natural Heritage Trust.</u>
National Heritage places	<p>State laws and policies may refer to National Heritage places, being those listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.</p>	<p>National Heritage places listed on the National Heritage List made under the under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision AA].</p> <p>Places and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> (Cth).</p>

Type	Western Australia	Federal
Other declared areas or habitat protection measures	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas that may be subject to specific conditions for land management and conservation under a diversification lease or pastoral lease under the <i>Land Administration Act 1997</i>. 	Land subject to a Conservation Order made under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Ramsar wetlands	State laws and policies may refer to Ramsar wetlands (being those designated under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). See Federal.	Declared Ramsar wetlands (A wetland, or part of a wetland, designated by the Commonwealth under Article 2 of the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance kept under that Article is a declared Ramsar wetland) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision B].
State or territory heritage areas	<p>Places of state cultural heritage significance pursuant to the <i>Heritage Act 2018</i> (WA).</p> <p>Aboriginal cultural sites and objects of significance as registered on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS), pursuant to the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972</i> (WA).</p> <p>Local heritage managed under local government and planning laws.</p>	N/A.
Threatened ecological communities	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA).	Threatened ecological communities, being those listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).
Threatened species habitat	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (WA), having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).</p> <p>In Western Australia, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data WA's Threatened and Priority Fauna dataset https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/threatened-and-priority-fauna Data WA's Threatened and Priority Flora dataset https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/threatened-and-priority-flora 	<p>Known habitat of threatened species, being species listed as threatened under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) having regard to relevant mapping or data (e.g. government data portals), or as might otherwise be known to the landholder (e.g. from personal sightings etc.).</p> <p>For federal maps, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia - Species of National Environmental Significance Database: https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/78fbb7d2-7dce-425f-bc1d-13549f08c0e6

Type	Western Australia	Federal
World Heritage properties	State laws and policies may refer to World Heritage property, being property listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth). See Federal.	Property declared to be a World Heritage property under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) [EPBC Act, Part 3, Division 1, Subdivision A].

