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Conservation Value Measure

What is the Conservation Value Measure?

The Conservation Value Measure (CVM) is a computer based spreadsheet that allows field officers to objectively score box gum grassy woodland on different properties. The CVM was developed using the latest grassy woodland ecological research and has been recently reviewed by expert economists and ecologists.

What makes up the Conservation Value Score (CVS)?

Each participating property receives a CVS which is calculated by combining individual patch scores for environmental significance, management actions, and security and duration of outcomes.

1. Environmental significance

The environmental significance score measures key ecological characteristics of box gum grassy woodland at the regional scale, landscape scale, and site scale. In this way it considers connectivity through the landscape as well as the condition of the particular box gum grassy woodland site.

The site scale scores compare the vegetation found on a particular site with ecological benchmarks based on the listing of the ecological community as defined under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The closer your site is to the benchmark the higher your score will be.

The vegetation characteristics scored in the Conservation Value Measure include:

- the number of different species found on the site
- number of mature trees
- length of fallen logs
- the cover of native overstorey, mid-storey and understorey plants
- exotic understorey plant cover and any evidence of regenerating overstorey plants.

2. Management actions

Field officers will discuss with the land manager what management actions are required and desirable to improve or maintain the site. Certain management actions are requirements for participation in the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project, while others are optional (see Chapter 6). If your site is degraded you can expect to be required to undertake more management in order to improve its condition than you would if your site were in better condition.

The field officer will discuss the mix of required and optional management actions identified in Chapter 6 with the land manager. The CVM assigns a score based on the management actions that are agreed. In assigning a score, the CVM takes into account the current condition of a patch.



▲ Field officers training to lay out plots and record environmental attributes of a patch (Photo: Paul Ryan)

3. Security and Duration of Investment

The Conservation Value Measure also assigns a score based on the length of the contract proposed by the land manager. Under the current round of the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project, contracts of between ten and fifteen years are being offered to land managers with patches recognised as being either State 1 or State 2 under the State and Transition Model. Land managers with a State 3 patch, or with a State 3 zone within a patch, will only be offered a fifteen year contract. The longer the contract, the higher the score allocated by the Conservation Value Measure to duration of management.

The Australian Government is committed to the long term protection of box gum grassy woodland, so land managers who are willing to place a covenant over the site will receive a substantial weighting for security in the Conservation Value Measure.

Conservation Value Index

When the Conservation Value Score for a site is divided by the land manager's bid price a value is calculated known as the Conservation Value Index (CVI). Every participating bid will have its own Conservation Value Index. In the evaluation process, all bids are ranked according to their individual CVI from highest to lowest in a value for money continuum.

Do I see the scores for the individual elements on my site?

No, you will not see the scores for the individual components of the Conservation Value Score. However, once you have confirmed with the field officer the management actions you are prepared to undertake, you will be provided with the overall Conservation Value Score for the site as part of the bid application package. The Conservation Value Index can only be calculated after you have submitted a bid price.