

Communiqué 1: Third Steering Committee meeting held on 11 July 2019

This is the first Communiqué of the NSW Government Forest Monitoring Steering Committee, which comprises the NSW Government agencies and independent scientific experts, as outlined under the Program's [Terms of Reference](#).

The third meeting of the NSW Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program discussed submission's received on the draft Program Strategy, approved an approach to better engage with stakeholders and agreed to the selection criteria for the Program's foundational projects.

Submissions

The Steering Committee noted and discussed the feedback provided in the 16 submissions received on the draft [Program Strategy](#). The submission's highlighted overall support for the Program but with diverse views on how to improve the Program Strategy. The attached document provides a [summary of feedback](#) from the submissions received.

The Steering Committee requested the Commission project team to finalise its consideration of feedback on the Program Strategy over the coming month and publish a final strategy in August.

Community engagement

The Steering Committee is committed to increasing engagement with the community on the Forest Monitoring and Improvement Program. To build momentum, the Steering Committee committed to holding regular forums with stakeholders to discuss the work of the program and receive feedback. The first forum is to be held in September this year. These forums will be open to participation from a wide range of stakeholders, such as community organisations, forest managers, industry groups, Aboriginal groups, research organisations, and local government agencies. The forums will provide opportunities for stakeholders to input to the program's prioritisation of investment in monitoring, evaluation and research – and overtime, facilitate joint reflection and review of monitoring, evaluation and research results.

Foundational Projects

The Steering Committee agreed to a selection process and criteria for foundational projects under the Program. Foundational projects will initiate the Program's investment in monitoring of core metrics of forest ecosystem health (such as biodiversity, forest regeneration, water quality), aligned to the objectives of ecologically sustainable forest management in NSW. Foundational projects may also include evaluation and research projects, aimed at improving management.

Project partnerships are encouraged by the Steering Community, between NSW agencies and with external organisations. The projects must align to the aims and principles of the Forest Monitoring Program Strategy, including responding to information needs for decision-making and community preferences, and reporting on align to the Montreal Ecologically Sustainable Forest