

SREBA Beetaloo Regional Reference Group

Terms of Reference

1. Context

The Beetaloo Regional Reference Group (BRRG) has been established by the Minister on 27th October 2020 to provide input and feedback to the Northern Territory Government on the Strategic Regional and Environmental Baseline Assessment (SREBA) in the Beetaloo Sub-basin.

Meetings will be held as often as necessary to conduct the business of the BRRG. Meetings will be held three times per year, however more frequent meetings may be required during the initial stages of the SREBA studies.

2. Purpose, Scope and Objectives

The BRRG is to function as a consultative forum for community views and input regarding the SREBA studies for the specific region. The BRRG will:

- provide input and guidance to the Northern Territory Government on the SREBA research and studies undertaken in the region;
- provide local advice, input and feedback on project plans and implementation for researchers and specialists contracted by government to undertake SREBA research;
- act as a liaison point for Northern Territory Government, researchers, and specialists undertaking studies in the region;
- provide a medium through which key stakeholders can communicate their views about the SREBA studies directly to DEPWS;
- provide one mechanism for communication of results and findings from the SREBA studies to the regional community.

2.1 Scope

The scope encompasses the location-specific SREBA research and baselines studies within the Beetaloo Sub-basin.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the BRRG are to:

- provide a forum for members to discuss issues of community interest related to SREBA baseline research and studies;
- draw on local knowledge and enhance the community voice in guiding and shaping SREBA baseline research and studies within the scope of the BRRG;
- build community understanding of SREBA-related projects or activities;
- communicate SREBA activities, projects and outcomes to local communities, and to relay local community feedback on these to DEPWS, researchers and specialists;

- contribute to the development of the final SREBA study reports and regional baseline report and provide feedback on these.

3. Membership

The BRRG will consist of a maximum of 12 people appointed by the Minister, including the Chair. An independent Chair will be appointed and relevant local and regional organisations will be invited to nominate representatives to the group. Nominations will be sought from regional organisations with local knowledge and experience in the following areas:

- Regional development
- Aboriginal enterprise
- Pastoral industry
- Horticultural industry
- Regional and/or local business
- Aboriginal cultural knowledge
- Environmental health and/or community health
- Water use, planning and management
- Biodiversity conservation
- Relevant local government
- Relevant local land councils

3.1 Terms of appointment

The term of membership will be for a period of two (2) years subject to compliance with these terms of reference, with the option for extension. Upon completion of the SREBA baseline studies, the BRRG may be retained to provide input on future development. A review of the terms of reference for the specific BRRG may be undertaken at this stage.

3.2 Vacancy

In the event of a member vacancy, the Minister will seek nominees from local and regional organisations to ensure the composition of the SREBA BRRG meets the requirements outlined in this Terms of Reference. In the event of termination the Minister will seek nominations from local and regional organisations.

3.3 Termination

Members may terminate their membership at any time. Members should provide their notice of termination in writing to the Minister.

Members are required not to use the BRRG for any public lobbying or political purposes, including use of social media to promote specific campaigns or strategies. Any material breach of this Terms of Reference may result in termination of membership.

A member may be removed from the BRRG if they are absent from three (3) consecutive meetings.

3.4 Remuneration

Non-government members are entitled to sitting fees at a pro-rata rate equivalent to a Class C3 statutory body as outlined in the classification structure determination. Members are entitled to be reimbursed reasonable fuel and accommodation expenses incurred to attend these meetings, as approved by the Chair, upon production of receipts.

If a member presides at the meeting as an alternate chair, they are entitled to the Chair's sitting fee rate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The BRRG is accountable for:

- fostering collaboration with, and disseminating accurate information to, the community;
- maintaining at all times the focus of the group on the agreed scope and purpose;
- monitoring and reporting community feedback on the conduct of SREBA studies.

Members will commit to:

- attending all scheduled BRRG meetings and if necessary nominate a proxy. The proxy is not eligible to be paid sitting fees;
- sharing communications and information across their networks and organisations;
- providing timely feedback and guidance;
- notifying members of the BRRG, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to significantly affect the BRRG or SREBA studies.

Members of the advisory group will expect:

- to be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner;
- open and honest discussions.

4.1 Role of Chair

The role of the Chair is to:

- lead and direct activities of the BRRG;
- advise members of their roles and responsibilities;
- conduct meetings to foster effective consideration of issues referred to or raised by the BRRG, and which represent the diversity of views in the BRRG;
- ensure accurate reporting of information and any recommendations of the BRRG to the CEO;
- settle meeting dates and agendas for meetings;
- assist in the preparation of public communiques from each meeting.

The Chair is the primary media spokesperson for the BRRG. The Chair may nominate an alternate Chair from the existing members in the event the chair cannot attend the meeting.

4.2 Member responsibilities

Members are required to:

- attend and participate in meetings;
- adhere to the terms of reference;
- represent community views and provide information and advice on items and issues relating to the baseline studies and research for the SREBA;
- act with honesty, good faith and integrity;
- abide by the Terms of Reference;
- actively participate in meetings;
- represent the interests of their local community rather than individual interests or issues;
- assist in the preparation of public communiques from each meeting;
- act ethically and be respectful of differing views within the BRRG;
- declare interests which may constitute a conflict, and not seek to obtain a benefit, pecuniary or otherwise, from the information received by being a member of the BRRG.

4.3 Privacy, confidentiality and sensitivity

To maximise transparency and enhance value of the BRRG discussions, members may receive information deemed as confidential or sensitive. Members shall not distribute papers deemed confidential or disclose confidential information, and may be required to sign a disclosure of interests.

It is the responsibility of both the Chair and the BRRG member raising/discussing an issue to identify matters of a confidential or sensitive nature.

The personal information of all members will be managed in accordance with the Northern Territory Government's privacy standards. Members will not use information disclosed at meetings for personal purposes or gains for either themselves or others (including financial gains) and maintain confidentiality of all information provided where required.

The Chair is the primary media spokesperson for the BRRG.

Members are required not to use the BRRG for any public lobbying or political purposes, including use of social media to promote specific campaigns or strategies. Any material breach of this Terms of Reference may result in termination of membership.

4.4 Responsibilities of DEPWS

The responsibilities of DEPWS in supporting the BRRG is to provide administrative support which includes the following:

- provide administrative support to the chair, including minute taking, agenda preparation, filing, coordinating correspondence and communication, meeting preparation and logistics;
- assist in the preparation of public communiques from each meeting and publish them;

- provide relevant technical information and analysis from various agencies, researchers and specialists;
- ensure that technical information and analyses are presented in forms accessible to all members of the BRRG;
- book the venue and accommodation for members to attend meetings and organise payment of any remuneration.

5. Operating arrangements

Meetings will be held as often as necessary to conduct the business of the BRRG. Meetings will be held three times per year, however more frequent meetings may be required during the initial stages of the SREBA studies.

A quorum for a meeting of the BRRG shall comprise half the membership including proxies.

Members may nominate to the Chair a proxy to attend meetings in their place if they are unable to attend the whole or part of a meeting. The proxy has the same participating rights as the member for the duration of the meeting.

The Chair may invite a non-member to attend meetings to observe and provide advice. Subject-matter experts may also be invited to attend meetings from time-to-time, for particular projects or issues.

5.1 Agendas and Minutes

The Chair will set the agenda for each meeting and circulate to the BRRG at least 5 working days prior to each meeting.

Members will be asked to provide updates to the group on any SREBA activities in their local areas.

Members can also request items be added to the agenda. New agenda papers are to be submitted to the Chair and the secretariat 3 days before the meeting.

Minutes will be recorded and will be circulated to members within one week of the meeting and will be filed as a record of the meeting. A public communique will be developed for each meeting to summarise the outcomes of each meeting, to be published on the DEPWS and other Northern Territory Government websites.

6. Reporting arrangements

The BRRG will develop a public communique to be made available on NTG website. It is the intent that the communique will be interpreted into Aboriginal languages, in accordance with availability and advice from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service.

Researchers will be invited to present information to the BRRG, and the BRRG will provide feedback and guidance to DEPWS researchers and external organisations contracted to carry out SREBA studies.

6.1 Disclosure

The following information will be published on the DEPWS website:

- Member and associated organisation
- The Terms of Reference
- Public communiques