**For each of the criteria, please detail your answers to assist the panel of reviewers. Overall response to criteria should be no more than 3 pages.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Cat(5)** | **Yes** | **No** | **Maybe** | **Details** |
| Name of Study Site/ Sampling Program/ Proposing team members |  |  |  |  |  |
| State briefly the objectives, rationale and significance of the proposed sampling plan | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| Are the proponents aware of and prepared to cover the costs for compulsory metadata (how)(1) | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| What kind of samples will be collected? (e.g. soil, water, sediment, other) | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the sampling take place in a National Park or a Marine Park or another conservation area? | **O** |  |  |  |  |
| Have permits/authorisations been obtained? (National/ Marine Park, restricted managed area or private property e.g. farm) | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| How many samples will be (have been) collected? Provide brief details:(2)- Number of sampling locations- Number of depths- Number of replicates- Temporal resolution- Number and types of analyses (e.g. 16S, metagenomics, etc.)**- Total number of samples for each analysis type** | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the proposed program leverage external co-investment? (e.g. grants, contributions from stakeholders) | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the site/sampling program have tangible benefits or importance for end-users/stakeholders? | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| Is there involvement with indigenous communities?  | **O** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the sampling site have economic importance? | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the sampling site have human health importance? | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the sampling site have wider scientific relevance? | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| Will sample acquisition continue current monitoring programs and/or leverage sampling/monitoring activities of stakeholders? Or is it a new program? | **O** |  |  |  |  |
| Does the proposal align with national/international efforts(3) | **I** |  |  |  |  |
| Is there additional metadata from the requested initiative’s metadata collected with the samples (e.g. biogeochemical cycling rate measurements, etc.) | **O** |  |  |  |  |
| If the project/investigator has previously supplied samples to the initiative (or prior programs: BASE, MM) how has prior data been used to inform and rationalise this proposal. What are the outcomes from previous support(4) | **C** |  |  |  |  |
| Details of any additional points/information that should be considered | **O** |  |  |  |  |

**(1)** The list of compulsory metadata for each sample type is provided by the Australian Microbiome initiative (<https://www.australianmicrobiome.com/protocols/>). Cost incurred per sample may be around $135. Provision of additional metadata beyond the compulsory requirements may enhance selection.

**(2)** Project sample numbers should be sufficient to provide adequate representation of a unique environment or to answer scientific question raised. All samples must have amplicon sequencing, requests for other analysis types (e.g. metagenomics) must include rationale as to why the analysis method is appropriate and how numbers have been informed by taxonomic census (amplicon) data.

**(3)** Where a project is supported or forms part of a broader national/international effort, these samples may be prioritised over same or similar stand-alone projects

**(4)** The Initiative encourages the use and application of data products. Evidence of outputs (policy/area management, publications) generated by previous initiative support will enhance new proposals.

**(5)**Criteria categories: **C**: **critical**: The criteria are core to the initiative mission and activities, and must have been addressed clearly (if applicable). Proposals that do not present considered answers will not be supported through the initiative or will (rarely) be placed on a waiting list depending of merit. **I**: **important**: The criteria are strongly considered for the initiative core activities. Proposals that do not present considered answers will likely not be supported and be placed on a waiting list. **O**: **optional**, value add: The criteria will help assessors for the selection of proposals. Proposals with relevant value add activities will favourably influence the recommendation for support during the proposal assessment.