

# Best Practice Guidelines for Eco-Opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas

---

7 January 2012

**Prepared for:** Tourism and Protected Areas Forum



PO Box 837  
Jindabyne  
NSW 2627  
Australia

**P:** (61) 02 64562722  
**F:** (61) 02 64562422  
**E:** [enquiries@trctourism.com](mailto:enquiries@trctourism.com)

[www.trctourism.com](http://www.trctourism.com)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Over the past five years there has been growing interest in, and recognition of the benefits offered by developing high quality, sustainable tourism accommodation in or adjacent to government-managed and joint-management protected areas in Australia as well as on other suitable tenures within natural settings such as Crown land reserves and forests. This has resulted in Commonwealth and most State and Territory governments allowing commercial accommodation and other infrastructure-intensive tourism experiences to be developed in and around protected areas and Crown land. Joint managed parks and indigenous lands are also offering new opportunities for partnerships and sites for tourism experiences. Legislative and institutional barriers still exist in a few jurisdictions.

A number of government tourism agencies, park agencies and other relevant stakeholders have developed policies and processes to make land available for the development of quality tourism accommodation with some jurisdictions being more advanced than others. To date, the limited amount of development that has occurred through these initiatives has been accommodation-focused; however it is recognised that similar principles and processes could support the development of other tourism experiences (eg tourism attractions, restaurants and cafes) in and close to protected and natural areas.

The term '*Eco-Opportunity*' is used in these Guidelines to collectively describe sustainable tourism experiences in, or close by, protected areas. The guidelines relate to approaches to offering or making available land in, or close-by, protected areas for eco opportunities. Whilst the term Eco-opportunities includes activities which might not rely on specific sites (eg. a guided product without infrastructure), the greatest issues lie where the opportunity does require a site located within national park (whether identified by entrepreneurs or Government).

The basic premise of any development or Eco-Opportunity within a protected area, national park or similar setting is to showcase the natural and/or cultural values and to ensure an exceptional visitor experience. The opportunity must provide significant benefit to the protected area and improved outcomes for the community

The Tourism and Protected Areas Forum (TAPAF)<sup>1</sup> recognises that over the next few years there is likely to be growth in the development of Eco-Opportunity-style programs across Australia.. This has prompted TAPAF to consider the need for a collaborative and more consistent approach to the development of Eco-Opportunities and the marketing of these opportunities to potential

---

<sup>1</sup> TAPAF is an informal group that has representation from all Australian jurisdictions with officers from State, Commonwealth and Territory tourism and protected area managers and Crown Land management agencies.

investors so as to achieve economies of scale, greater market penetration and a high profile for such investment opportunities, all of which are designed to lead to higher conversion rates.

Numerous factors vary between jurisdictions as how such opportunities are able to be presented including (but not limited to):

- different legislative and policy frameworks;
- varying land tenure;
- disparate resourcing for Eco-Opportunity initiatives, and
- the strategic importance of the Eco-Opportunity sites being made available.

While acknowledging such factors, TAPAF is seeking to achieve a level of uniformity in the processes involved to collaboratively market the Eco-Opportunity concept. It believes that documenting the principles and processes which are deemed 'best practice' would benefit all jurisdictions individually and assist in developing a collaborative approach to developing and marketing these opportunities.

## **1.2. Benefits of Eco-Opportunities in and near protected areas**

Eco-Opportunities can provide significant benefits for protected area management, visitors and local communities.

Well-managed Eco-Opportunities operated by private enterprise are able to offer a level and type of visitor experience, service and innovation that is often difficult for government agencies to provide to protected and natural area visitors within their in-house resources and expertise. For instance, commercial accommodation and guided tours may provide opportunities for visitors to experience, and learn about and become advocates for unique places they may not otherwise be able to visit.

Land management agencies benefit by being freed up to concentrate on planning, management and regulation of protected areas rather than provision of services. A partnership approach between land management agencies and private enterprise is now taken in many protected areas throughout the world. Commercial operators deliver visitor services under leases, licences or permits from land management agencies, adhering to requirements to operate in a sustainable way that is compatible with protection of natural and cultural values and other reserve management objectives. Many Eco-Opportunity operators also deliver visitor interpretation and education and may assist reserve management in other ways (such as vegetation and wildlife management or monitoring). Eco-Opportunity facilities in and near protected areas in many countries have acted as catalysts to stimulate local tourism development, resulting in social and economic benefits for local communities and increased revenue for reserve management. Such benefits may flow from the use of local produce and suppliers, employment of local people and stimulus for local business formation.

### 1.3. Purpose of this document

This document provides overarching principles and guidelines for promoting and facilitating Eco-Opportunity developments across Australia. These could be in protected areas, national parks, joint managed parks, indigenous protected areas, other natural areas or near them.

It is supported by a Background Report which addresses the rationale for each principal and process being included in the guidelines and the benefits which can be anticipated from a collaborative approach to marketing individual Eco-Opportunity sites.

### 1.4. Structure of the document

The document includes three key sections:

Sections 2.1 documents the Guiding Principles for attracting and facilitating Eco-Opportunities;

Section 2.2 provides considerations for the various stages of the investment process;

Section 2.3 offers Guidelines for the overall approach and is linked to the background report (*Best Practice Guidelines for Tourism Development Opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas*) and relevant examples;

Section 3 provides advice in relation to taking a national approach to seeking investment.

The Guidelines are presented according to the key stages typically involved in an Eco-Opportunity investment process.

***Pre-proposal*** – at this stage governments develop or have in place policies, procedures and processes to promote and make decisions on tourism proposals. Governments may also market and promote opportunities.

***Land array/site identification*** – land with potential for Eco-Opportunities is identified, with particular sites or an array of areas. This can be initiated by investors who approach governments with a proposal or through government-led identification of areas prior to seeking investor interest.

***Pre-release site readiness*** – where governments choose areas/sites for release, investigation of site suitability (or due diligence) is needed to assess the readiness of the area/site for tourism development in terms of legislative, planning and physical factors. Site readiness investigations will also be needed prior to detailed concept development in an investor-led approach.

***Approach to investors*** – governments make specific approaches to attract investors, either through seeking interest in a particular site or area, or generally signalling a willingness to receive and consider proposals from investors. Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales have approached investors through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for specific sites, requiring applicants to address selection criteria.

This stage may be used to choose a small group of applicants for detailed development of their concepts for the site.

**Concept development** – a small group of applicants or a single applicant (eg. in an investor-led approach) develop their concepts for a site for further consideration by government. Environmental, social and economic sustainability is demonstrated.

**Concept design and lease negotiations** – investors whose concepts are accepted by government proceed to site design and negotiation with government on the terms and conditions for their lease of (or other agreement for) the site and conduct of tourism operations. This stage will generally occur in tandem with the **planning and environmental approval process**, which is required to give final approval to a proposal.

Flowcharts of the key stages for an investment process (either investor-led or government-led) are provided in Figures 1 and 2.

## 1.5. Definitions

The following terms are used in these Guidelines.

An *Eco-Opportunity* is a high quality, sustainable visitor facility or product operated in or near a protected area and with a focus on experiencing and understanding the character and values of the place. In many cases, clients are offered exclusive experiences. Examples of Eco-Opportunities include accommodation, guided tours or a combination of both, and attractions.

A *government-led* process refers to the initiation by government of a process seeking investors in an Eco-Opportunity, such as through release of an Expression of Interest (EOI).

An *investor-led* approach refers to an approach to government initiated by an investor seeking consideration of proposal for an Eco-Opportunity.

*Joint-management* refers to various arrangements under which protected areas are managed in partnership between government land management bodies and indigenous owners.

A *protected area* is 'a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values'. This is the definition adopted by the International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2008 as covering a range of methods and public or private arrangements under which areas are conserved (see Dudley, N (ed) (2008), *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland, IUCN. In Australia, protected areas may include government-managed national parks, nature reserves, conservation reserves and similar arrangements and parks and reserves managed jointly with indigenous owners.



## **2. Guidelines and Principles**

### **2.1. Overarching Guiding Principles**

The primary objective for Eco-Opportunities is to promote sustainable tourism opportunities which consider the sense of place of the destination at the same time as providing business models that reflect a triple bottom line approach to sustainability. These opportunities aim to make positive contributions towards conservation of the environmental and cultural values of a protected or natural area while assisting in the development of sustainable contemporary visitor infrastructure and experiences which enhance visitor satisfaction and appeal and provide benefits for local communities, especially indigenous people.

Encouraging investment in Eco-Opportunities in protected and natural areas is a positive approach to ensuring vibrant visitor destinations, meeting consumer needs, encouraging healthy lifestyles, support for conservation and contributing to the economy. The process needs to be undertaken as a partnership between Government and the private sector if a successful outcome is to be achieved for all parties.

Fundamental to success are the following:

- Recognition that sustainable, landscape appropriate and brand aligned Eco-Opportunities can add to the visitor offer and experience, and that appropriate sustainable developments will have environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Land managers being known to be open to appropriate proposals for Eco-Opportunities in protected and natural areas as well as offering suitable sites where a need has been identified;
- Adopting a triple bottom line sustainability-driven approach that is objective and minimises political determination of proposals;
- Where sites are to be selected and offered by land managers, the choice of high quality sites is essential if an exceptional visitor experience is to be offered;
- Recognising and allowing for the vision, innovation and market knowledge of entrepreneurs and investors through offering choice in site options without being overly prescriptive;
- Minimising the level of investment by Governments or investors before it is clear that a site will be available for and capable of development;
- Supporting investors in proceeding to development through a case management approach that allows for efficient dealings with multiple Government agencies;

- Government being sensitive to the fragile feasibility aspects of many Eco-Opportunity sites and offering adequate tenure terms to support business viability.
- The desirability of stakeholder and community engagement, understanding and support to achieve sustainable and beneficial Eco-Opportunity developments.

## **2.2. Considerations for stages of the process**

### **2.2.1 Pre proposal**

***Information needs to be readily accessible to interested parties regardless of whether a process is Government or investor led.***

- Clear advice must be provided that articulates that only sustainable, landscape appropriate and brand aligned developments that enhance the visitor experience are appropriate.
- Legislative requirements related to developments on public land, issue of leases and licences and project approvals should be readily available and specified.
- The steps that will be applied to the process (whether investor or Government initiated), including relationships to environmental impact assessment and other approvals, should be clearly described.
- Clear objectives, standards, and criteria should be applied to consideration of proposals at all stages of the decision-making process.
- Guidelines for decision-making processes should be published to ensure availability to potential investors and the public.

### **2.2.2 Land Array/Site Identification**

Relevant tourism and commercial expertise should be obtained in the choice of sites to ensure sites have commercial potential. This can involve the agency having the right staff in house (tourism and commercial expertise) or contracting it in.

#### ***Investor perspective***

- Land/site offerings should be as broad as possible – ideally landscape/park wide.
- A site should reflect a sense of the place, relate to the experiential aspects of the product, and be attractive to visitors.
- A site should have:
  - ease of access for transport of visitors and services;
  - access to a water supply;

- a footprint adequate to the scale of the development and able to encompass self-contained sustainable infrastructure;
- reliable access to the experiential undertakings of the protected area or natural area surrounding, or adjacent to, the site.
- There should be flexibility for specific site choice and design within the boundaries of a designated development area.

***Land manager's perspective***

- A site should be compatible with the requirements of government legislation, policies and park management and cultural heritage plans.
- Development of a site should be compatible with other park operations or visitor needs.
- There should be a demonstrable need for the proposed experience, including benefits for the local community.
- A site should be capable of sustainable development that:
  - is compatible with the natural and cultural values of the land and its surroundings;
  - utilises sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, energy and water that protects ecological integrity and environmental quality;
  - is of appropriate form and scale to maintain the quality of the visual landscape;
  - adds to the overall visitor offer and is appropriate to the visitor use and character of the site and its surrounds.
- Community support for the opportunities needs to be fostered through transparent processes, community consultation and promotion of community benefits.

**2.2.3 Pre-release Site Readiness**

- While site readiness and confidence in the availability of a site will be important to investors, over investment in due diligence needs to be avoided until it is clear there will be an interest in the site.
- A risk management approach to site readiness needs to be taken where only those key issues that will stop development are addressed before seeking expressions of interest. These might include plan of management or planning regulations (or ability to amend these); indigenous land issues; threatened species, availability of water.

- Other constraints that may be manageable or variable through siting, design or infrastructure (such as energy supply, roads etc.) should not be researched in detail until there is a known interest in the site, when the approach and financing of due diligence can be negotiated/shared with proponent(s).

#### **2.2.4 Approach to Investors**

- Decision-making frameworks developed for Eco-Opportunities should be applicable to both investor-led approaches and government-led EOI or equivalent processes and should be developed and published up-front.
- In a Government led approach to investors, the first stage is to seek interest and evaluate interested parties on their business and capacity to deliver sustainable, landscape appropriate and brand aligned experiences.
- Pre-qualifying selection criteria are needed to assess applicants before deciding whether to proceed with more detailed development and assessment of proposals.
- Government agencies involved in Eco-Opportunity rollouts should ensure complete familiarity with private investor investment criteria and key project concerns.
- Where there are several applicants, an additional assessment stage following preliminary concept submission is required to reduce the applicants to a select group (ideally 2 or 3).

#### ***Pre-qualifying Assessment criteria***

Prequalifying criteria need to focus on three key areas:

- Operator reputation, experience and capacity to deliver triple bottom line brand values;
- Sustainable business model;
- Suitable brand aligned concept.

Avoid detailed sustainability criteria at the EOI stage.

#### ***Preliminary Concept Assessment criteria.***

Preliminary Concept Assessment criteria need to focus on the capacity of the concept to achieve sustainable outcomes.

- Commercial viability and sustainability of the project over time.
- Provision for the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, energy and water, including waste management and avoidance of pollution (recognising that the cost gap

between renewable power supply and traditional power generation remains cost prohibitive in many cases).

- Form and scale of buildings and structures appropriate to the site character and landscape setting and which minimise the environmental footprint.
- Potential partnerships and contribution to local communities.

Information on the relative roles of the investor and the land manager in bringing the proposal to fruition and suggested support mechanisms and/or financial incentives might also be sought.

### **2.2.5 Concept Development**

Concept development needs to be offered to a small number of proponents only (maximum 3). The cost benefit of competing at this stage may preclude some good operators.

- A case management approach for government procurement and approval processes is important to provide clarity and consistency and reduce costs and time for investors.
- Investors need to be confident that their commercial-in-confidence and intellectual property are protected.
- Processes related to procurement, approval and administration of Eco-Opportunities should meet government probity requirements for equity, transparency and consistency.
- Adequate resources and appropriately experienced government staff are required to oversee successful Eco-Opportunity processes.

#### ***Final assessment criteria***

Final assessment (which may require a broader skill set than that within the land management agency) needs to focus on long term benefits and there needs to be recognition that Eco-Opportunity projects in most cases require several years to establish themselves and achieve financial viability. There also needs to be recognition of the wider community benefits and the multiplier effects of a project as opposed to just the financial returns to government. In most cases, financial returns to government may take several years to become material. With this in mind, some of the final assessment criteria might include:

- A re-evaluation of the proposal against environmental and financial sustainability criteria;
- Return on investment (social and conservation) to government and the community;
- Benefits to joint management partners and indigenous communities;
- Measures to manage impacts and relationships with other visitors to the area, including minimal impact practices related to client activities;
- On-ground needs of operators and park staff and the potential for an effective long term relationship;

- Level of improved protected area perception and appreciation by the public as a result of the project.

#### **2.2.6 Concept Design and Lease/Agreement Negotiations**

- Adequate resources and appropriately experienced government staff are required to negotiate successful Eco-Opportunity processes and to work with the investor and Government to shape the final concept.
- There should be site tenure appropriate to the capital investment and return on that investment (eg. 30 to 50 years for major infrastructure), and ideally the possibility of, or incentives for, tenure extension.
- Government assistance in many cases will be important to ensure higher levels of Eco-Opportunity conversion.
- Consideration could be given to offering incentives to developers within the leasing/agreement arrangements that could include some arrangements or possible options for the developer to take up any nearby activity or development opportunities as well as incentives such as contracts for assisting the management of remote areas. This could assist in improving product viability in the marketplace as well as supporting land managers in the management of remote areas.
- Financial leniency provisions in the first 5 years of operation are desirable to assist developers in making capital investments on the site and in establishing themselves in the marketplace.
- Case management and cross departmental coordination is important to ensure that all government agencies get behind the new development.
- Support for other State agencies (eg. Sustainability Department or similar, Government architects etc.) should be encouraged.
- Any operational or touring permits and licenses important to the experiential offering should be tied to the tenure period.

## 2.3 Guidelines for attracting investment

STAGE	GOOD PRACTICE	DISCUSSED IN EXPLNATORY REPORT (section of report and relevant case studies)
Pre-proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide high level priority and government commitment to investment in Eco Opportunities.</li> <li>• Create awareness of the tourism investment environment for protected areas/natural areas as a signal to potential investors (international, national, state) including the types of opportunities likely to be considered and desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Have clear decision-making frameworks, guidelines, key criteria for Eco-Opportunities and investment processes publicly accessible and readily available.</li> <li>• Establish partnerships between tourism and land management agencies to work with investors.</li> <li>• Embed an appropriate level of tourism expertise in the agencies to advise on and assess eco-tourism opportunities or buy in appropriate expertise.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanatory Report section 4.2.</b></p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><i>The SA Government declared Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island a Project Of State Significance in order to streamline the regulatory, approval and funding support processes (Case Study 8).</i></p> <p><i>NSW framework for tourism development in parks (Case Study 1), including sustainability guidelines for the assessment process and sustainability assessment criteria.</i></p> <p><i>Victorian Design Guidelines for Nature-based tourism (see section 6, References).</i></p> <p><i>Alberta (Canada) Tourism, Parks and Recreation Ministry (Case Study 2), which publicises its commitment to tourism investment and has a dedicated branch to assist applicants and facilitate applications.</i></p> <p><i>The Naturebank program in WA, where the Department of Environment and Conservation and Tourism WA work in partnership to choose Eco-Opportunity sites and expert consultants are used to advise on site selection.</i></p>

<p>Land Array/Site Identification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise agency responsiveness to unsolicited approaches from investors for proposals that meet key pre-qualifying criteria.</li> <li>Identify opportunities suited to Eco-Opportunities (broad areas and/or precincts) in plans of management and other planning documents.</li> <li>Where desire for a broader experience base suggests a need for Eco-Opportunities, seek appropriate expertise to evaluate broad precinct options and preliminary market demand to meet experience needs.</li> <li>Maximise the scale of the site footprint to allow for flexibility/choice (from a landscape/park approach to maximum available scale of a single or specific site).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanatory Report section 4.3</b></p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><i>Designation of tourism precincts and a potential Eco-Opportunity site in the Draft Litchfield plan of management (Case Study 3).</i></p> <p><i>Development of a visitor precinct and publicising tourism opportunities adjoining a high use visitor area in the Cradle Valley Development Plan (Case Study 4).</i></p> <p><i>Specification of suitable types of development and their parameters for park zones by Kenya Wildlife Service (Case Study 5).</i></p> <p><i>Three Capes model of paid investor input to assess commercial feasibility and model (Case Study 6).</i></p>
<p>Pre-release Site Readiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a risk management approach to pre-release site readiness (due diligence) that minimises investment that may be wasted if the site is not taken up.</li> <li>Address most likely impediments in priority order of risk—eg. significant planning constraints, indigenous cultural issues, water, community views.</li> <li>Avoid investment in concepts or elements that need to result from the vision of the investor (. concept designs for buildings, defining experiences etc.), and recognise that an investor will do their own commercial due diligence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanatory Report section 4.4</b></p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><i>Risk management to the timing of due diligence proposed for NT signature lodges (see Case Study 3: Litchfield National Park).</i></p> <p><i>Issues involved in high cost infrastructure for adaptive re-use of existing sites in developing a tourism opportunity at Denniston, New Zealand (Case Study 7).</i></p>

## Approach to Investors

- Ensure political support and government commitment to the process, including a case management approach by one officer between government agencies.
- Provide details of what the likely lease/license/agreement terms will be at this stage of the process.
- Appoint a probity auditor and establish a confidentiality process to ensure transparency and protect the intellectual property of the proponent(s).
- In a government-led process, use a two or three stage approach that allows for government confidence in the suitability of available site options and negotiation of a government/investor approach to site readiness investigation (due diligence).
- Minimise the cost to investors in the first stage through targeted information requirements and be clear on the assessment criteria as well as the time and potential costs in proceeding through the process.
- Short list to a maximum of three proponents.

## Explanatory Report section 4.5

### Examples

*Targeted information and assessment criteria in an EOI in the Mount Hart EOI under WA's Naturebank program.*

*Appointment of a probity auditor a requirement in WA and NSW.*

*Dedicated staff for investment processes in the Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation Ministry (Case Study 2).*

*Offering and advertising measures to attract investors in Kenya (Case Study 5).*

<p>Concept Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree with proponent(s) on the process and responsibility for site due diligence, including Government support for clearances.</li> <li>• Proponent(s) develops a concept plan, including how they will achieve environmental, social and economic sustainability criteria.</li> <li>• Selection of one proponent occurs after assessment of concepts.</li> <li>• Government undertakes community consultation to ensure positive community engagement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanatory Report section 4.6</b></p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><i>Sustainability criteria for assessing tourism development applications in legislation and details on their interpretation provided in the NSW framework (for new sites) (Case Study 1).</i></p> <p><i>Mount Hart EOI natural and social environment performance criteria for assessment of application (for a pre-existing site) (see section 6, References).</i></p> <p><i>Wildman Wilderness Lodge adjacent to the Mary River National Park in the NT had to demonstrate environmental and cultural criteria in order to access the national park for tours and activities.</i></p> <p><i>Longitude 131 in Central Australia was the first tourism project to pass through the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act for proving minimal impact on a World Heritage National Park.</i></p>
<p>Concept Design &amp; Lease Negotiations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a government case management system to ensure efficient approach to approvals processes.</li> <li>• Ideally the government and proponent will have recognised the key commercial lease terms and conditions from the beginning of the process and it is details only to be negotiated at this stage.</li> <li>• Lease/agreement terms and conditions need to recognise the levels and timeframe of investment and appropriate rights of renewal.</li> <li>• The final concept and terms and conditions should reflect commitment to the environmental, management and social outcomes of government.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanatory Report section 4.7</b></p> <p><b>Examples</b></p> <p><i>Streamlined approvals process adopted for Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island (Case Study 8).</i></p> <p><i>Lease content and potential conditions and incentives discussion in Explanatory Report, section 4.7.2 and Case Studies 5 (Kenya) and 8 (Southern Ocean Lodge).</i></p>

### 3. Attracting investment at a National Level

The increased availability and visibility of Eco-Opportunities across Australia has encouraged the Tourism and Protected Areas Forum to consider promoting a national approach to realising these opportunities by recommending a level of consistency and uniformity in the processes and policies adopted by individual jurisdictions, and to leverage investment attraction activities with the aim of securing quality investment, environmental and social outcomes.

The benefits of such an approach are:

- a co-ordinated approach designed to avoid duplication of effort;
- a more unified outside (international Investor) view of nationwide opportunities;
- less confusion at both Government and Investor level of what Eco-opportunities exist and how best to materialise them;
- a clearer path for entrepreneurs and investors with an idea or a desire to develop in protected or natural areas.

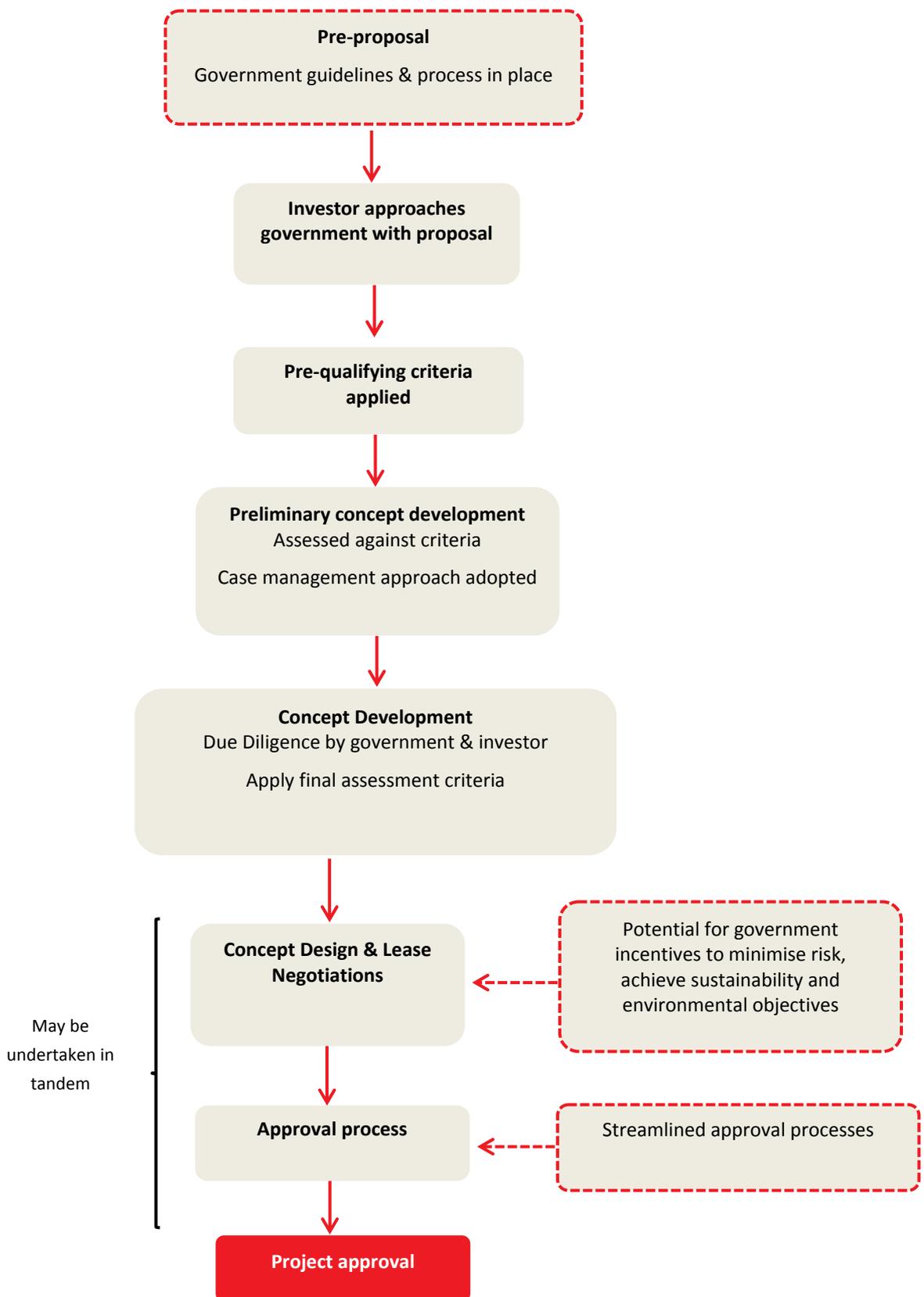
Attracting investment at a national level will require a number of actions including those that have been identified in the 2011 report *Framework Guide to facilitate Tourism Investment* (The Allen Consulting Group, 2011).

Tourism Australia has recognised that a national approach to tourism investment in protected areas is required if we are serious about attracting international investors or even significant Australian investors (C Davidson pers.comm).

Specific needs related to attracting investment in Eco-opportunities in protected and natural areas will include:

- central coordination between Tourism Australia and the state agencies (agreement already reached for quarterly meetings between Tourism Australia and State Tourism Organisations on investment issues);
- funding support;
- the development of an Australian Tourism Investment Prospectus for use in promoting Australian investment. For natural area it will need to identify;
  - those states that wish to attract investment into protected and natural areas;
  - any specific sites that are open for investment and what approvals are in place and still outstanding;
  - parks or areas where there is a clear need/desire for investment.
- State agencies reviewing plans of management /planning regulations that require change to allow for Eco-opportunities and prioritising for destinations that are likely to be attractive to investors.
- a joint approach to investors with Austrade

**Figure 1: Decision process for investor-led process**



**Figure2: Decision process for government-led process**

