



Australian Government
Land & Water Australia

Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts

NRM Practice Change: A Planning Process

March 2009

5 step process
for planning NRM practice
change programs

STEP 1

Agree on clearly defined
desired outcomes

STEP 2

Background
investigation

STEP 3

Draft a program plan
and identify further
investigation needs

STEP 4

Undertake further
investigation
as required

STEP 5

Review and refine the
program plan and develop
evaluation plan

Description

There are many ways by which natural resource management (NRM) practice change programs can be planned. This guide outlines a planning process that uses the NRM Practice Change Planning Framework and NRM program logic. The planning process may be followed as is, adapted or elements of it may be incorporated into existing planning processes. It applies best at a program or project level (for simplicity, we have used the term 'program' throughout.)

The approach is to start with strategic level planning to identify the outcomes desired, and then research the situation to inform the development of an implementation plan. Different people may be involved in different stages. Suggestions for working through each step and templates and frameworks are provided.

Benefits

Working through this process will provide you with:

- A program plan comprising:
 - An Implementation Plan
 - Documented rationale and assumptions
 - A Program Logic
 - Targets
 - An Evaluation Plan
- A shared understanding of how the program will be implemented and why.

Limitations

The planning process may not fit with all existing organisational systems (but elements can be adapted). It relies initially on background knowledge of staff.

When to use

In program or project
planning

Companion Tools

NRM Practice Change
Planning Framework
NRM Program Logic

What is required?

✓✓ Skills	Facilitation, research, understanding
✓ Resources	Staff time for workshops and background investigation. Independent facilitation or research may be sought. Different people may be involved in each step, a coordinator/champion needs to be involved in all five steps. Refer to each step for detail. Worksheet and template.
✓✓ Information	Information is sought firstly from team members with further investigation sought to fill gaps.

✓ = LOW LEVEL

✓✓ = MEDIUM LEVEL

✓✓✓ = HIGH LEVEL



CLIENTS|PEOPLE|PERFORMANCE

GHD Hassall

Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change

A RESEARCH PROJECT FUNDED BY LAND & WATER AUSTRALIA, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AND PARTICIPATING REGIONAL NRM BODIES

STEP**1 Agree on clearly defined desired outcomes**

Several iterations through the five steps may be required, particularly if the program is large and/or involves a significant or potentially contentious issue.

Aim To clearly identify and reach common understanding about what the program aims to achieve.

Who By a strategic, technical group.

Process Workshop - a participative discussion or workshop involving key team members and other key stakeholders to identify the intended outcomes and how these contribute to the regional targets.

A program logic framework is ideal for this planning and can later be used as the framework for evaluating achievements. Structure the discussion to complete the higher levels of a program logic template first, i.e. identify the intended intermediate and longer term outcomes of the program. The longer-term outcomes relate to improvements in the state of both biophysical and non-biophysical asset(s) that the investment will contribute to. Intermediate outcomes include landscape and industry changes, practice change and changes in capacity and willingness (knowledge, attitudes, norms, skills, aspirations and confidence).

Second, brainstorm the possible ways to achieve these outcomes and, if possible, the immediate outcomes (outputs) and foundations (inputs) for the program. Some of the foundations may be determined at this stage (e.g. budget allocation to the program). The immediate outcomes and foundations will be refined in the next steps so ensure the focus is on defining clearly agreed intended outcomes.

Clearly state your assumptions and logic as to how the intermediate outcomes will contribute to the longer-term and aspirational outcomes, including the vision and targets defined in your regional plan.

Considerable discussion at this stage is valuable. Ensure that the discussion concludes with a clear table that states the agreed intended outcomes and, if suitable, draft immediate outcomes and foundations for the program. Any foundations that have been determined at this stage (e.g. budget) should be defined.

Resources 2 - 20 people with strategic and technical roles (may include board members and management team) and a facilitator (a team member or independent)

Time: from 2 hours up to one day. This will depend on the scale, significance and complexity of the program.

Tools An NRM Program Logic fact sheet and template is available from the project website.

Outputs of this step

- Agreement on the intended outcomes of the program and how this contributes to the regional vision/ targets
- Shared understanding of the intent of the program and the need for change
- Brainstorm of ideas on how to achieve this or drafted immediate outcomes and foundations
- Clarification of any foundations that have been determined (e.g. budget)

2 Background investigation

Once you've set the higher level outcomes, focus next on the detail of how you will achieve it, and in particular who you will engage with and how.

Aim To inform the planning process and underpin the assumptions by gathering suitable background understanding and information about how best to achieve outcomes, who to involve, the types of mechanisms to use and factors that may enable or block the change.

Who By program officer/s.

Process Use the NRM Practice Change Planning Framework (Attachment 2) and Worksheet (Attachment 3) to work through from the intended outcomes agreed in Step 1, identifying for all of the questions:

- What do we know or believe?
- Do we need to source further information, and if so, from where?

From this, prioritise those questions for which more information is needed to inform planning decisions. Source this information where it exists, using a mixture of local information and knowledge and national, state or industry data sets. Some issues may remain as areas for further investigation as the information may not exist and/or community consultation may be needed to adequately understand these elements for this particular issue and community sector.

Update the Worksheet (Attachment 3) to present a summary of the information that has been gathered and the areas requiring further investigation.

Resources 1-2 project officers spending 1 day – 1 week drawing together the background information. It may help to draw on other team members' knowledge at this stage. The resources allocated should be commensurate with the size of the program.

Tools Practice Change Planning Framework and Worksheet, provided as Attachments 2 and 3.

Existing information and data sources – e.g. surveys, ABS statistics, local council information.

Refer to http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/tools.html for links to existing information sources and a guide to the tools and data that may be relevant for each stage of the planning framework.

Outputs of this step

- Summary of key knowledge about the target sector(s) and what may influence their adoption of the desired practices.
- Identification of key areas that may require further investigation.

Aim To develop an agreed program implementation plan suitable for the people you are trying to influence and the issue of focus.

Who By implementation working group.

Process Workshop to gain input from a broader sector of people into understanding the need for, and planning, the program.

Prior to the workshop, circulate the intended outcomes or program logic prepared in Step 1 and the Worksheet summary prepared in Step 2. Work through the Worksheet again using the further insight and understanding gained from workshop participants.

Identify areas and key questions requiring further investigation and the best way to do this, such as community consultation or other means. If there are significant gaps you may wish to address them before the next stage of the workshop. Otherwise continue with the remainder of the workshop as follows.

Based on the understanding of how best to foster the change required, prepare a program plan comprising the practice change planning Worksheet (Attachment 3) and an implementation plan. Attachment 4 may be a useful outline for the implementation plan. Identify how the program will be implemented, when, by who, with who, the resources to be allocated to each component and any key risks and how these will be managed. If further investigation is needed, this will be a draft plan, but working through it will help focus consultation and investigation.

Revise the program logic, providing the detailed outcomes and foundations as outlined in the program plan. Check that these will.

Resources Ideally, include in the workshop all key staff and partners who will be involved in implementing the program. Other stakeholders (e.g. some of the target sector[s]) may also participate to add focus, a broader understanding and a 'reality check' while also building ownership in the planning.

The knowledge and understanding of workshop participants is a key resource.

Tools Practice change planning Worksheet (attached)
Implementation plan outline (attached)
Program logic
Tools and information to assist in choosing suitable mechanisms for fostering change. Some of these are available from the project website
Your organisation's theory of change.

Outputs of this step

- An agreed or draft program plan designed to suit the specific needs of the issue and target sector(s).
- Shared understanding of the program plan and rationale.
- Identification of areas requiring further investigation and key questions.

- Aim** To gain first hand, current knowledge of how to best foster the desired change in practice amongst the target community.
- To engage the community in planning the program.
- Who** As required.
- Process** The process used will need to be designed to suit the key questions identified in Step 3 and the resources available for the investigation.
- Either of two key approaches is likely to be the most suitable:
- Direct consultation with the target community sector(s). For example, a series of semi-structured interviews, focus groups or a community forum with key stakeholders sectors, including the people whose practices you are trying to change and the people who influence their decisions.
 - Pilot implementation program with a community sample to trial the effectiveness of the planned approach and gain feedback on this for broader implementation.

Resources This stage could be quite resource intensive if a broad community consultation or pilot program is planned. The resource allocation needs to be commensurate with the scale and significance of the program and the importance of community engagement at this stage.

This stage may be undertaken by members of your own team and/or members of a partner agency that will be involved in program implementation. Alternatively you may contract another provider. There are merits with each approach – having your own or your partner organisation’s staff involved builds a first hand understanding, community relationships and corporate knowledge which can flow through to the implementation stage. Contracting an external provider however is less demanding on your team’s time and they may be more open to detecting and scoping new ideas. If this is a large investigation or consultation phase, an ideal compromise might be a joint approach, contracting an external provider to design, facilitate, analyse and report this phase in collaboration with an internal team that undertakes some/most of the consultation/pilot testing.

Tools A range of different tools can be used depending on the specific need and preferred approach.

Some potential tools are available via the project website.

Outputs of this step

- Detailed, current knowledge about how best to foster the required practice change with each community sector.
- Ground truthing and ‘reality check’ of your plan.
- Recommendations for revising the implementation plan.
- Community members engaged.

Aim To finalise a robust program plan and logic that will guide the implementation and evaluation of the program.

Who Program officer/s and broader group as agreed.

Process Drawing from the insights gained in steps 1 to 4, revise the program plan and logic ensuring it matches local needs and is the best approach for the issue at hand and the available resources.

Develop specific, measurable targets for each key activity and output in the plan. Based on this, develop a plan for how you will evaluate the success of the program both during the program and at its completion. Identify opportunities to use these evaluation findings to adapt and improve the program.

Resources 1-2 people working together to refine the plan and develop the evaluation plan. This may then be circulated back to a broader group (ideally all of those people who have been involved in the workshops to date) for comment.

Note: If team members had not been involved in step 4 then a brainstorming session may be desirable to identify key implications of the findings of step 4 and what this means for the program design.

Tools Practice change planning Worksheet (attached)

Implementation plan outline (attached)

Program logic

Tools and information to assist in choosing suitable mechanisms for fostering change. Some of these are available from the project website

Your organisation's theory of change.

Outputs of this step

- A Program plan comprising:
 - An implementation plan.
 - Rationale and assumptions described in the Practice Change Planning worksheet.
 - A program logic.
 - Targets.
- An Evaluation plan.
- A common understanding across team members of how the program will be implemented and why.

Worksheet for working through the framework (Step 2 and 3)

	What do we believe?	What assumptions have we made?	What do we need to investigate further? How will we do this?
Planning for NRM	<p>VISION What do we want to achieve in the region?</p>		
	<p>STOCKTAKE Where are we at? What is the condition of assets across our region? Which assets are highest priorities to improve/protect? What information is available to assist our decisions? What practices are currently in place?</p>		
	<p>WHAT TO CHANGE? Is change needed and if so, what? What changes are highest priorities for the vision? Where in the region is this change most needed? What changes give the greatest return for the investment? What are the 'givens' or investor preferences? What scale of change is needed and how quickly?</p>		
Understanding, motivating and engaging people	<p>WHOSE PRACTICES TO CHANGE? Whose practices need change? What is the relative importance of each segment in relation to this change? What are the attributes/demographics of these people/segment?</p>		
	<p>MECHANISMS TO FOSTER CHANGE What is required for change to happen? Which mechanisms are most effective and efficient for fostering change for each practice change and each market segment? How will mechanisms interact? Is there a best sequence? How will we build confidence and knowledge?</p>		

	What do we believe?	What assumptions have we made?	What do we need to investigate further? How will we do this?
Understanding, motivating and engaging people	<p>PEOPLE AND CHANGE</p> <p>Why would people change? What drives or prevents change? How willing are they to engage? Who influences them? Where are they at in the change cycle? What is their capacity to change? Who is able / willing to change in the required timeframe? What is the 'fit' of the change with these audiences?</p>		
Consider Implications	<p>CONSIDER IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>What are the risks and benefits? What other impacts (positive and negative) may result? What are the trade-offs? What assumptions are made?</p>		
Implementation	<p>IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>What is required? – Staff, Funds, Other? Who could we partner with to help achieve the change? What timing best suits the target sectors? What time is needed for people to consider the change?</p>		
Review and adapt	<p>REVIEW</p> <p>How will we monitor, evaluate and reflect on what has been achieved?</p>		
	<p>LEARN, ADAPT AND CELEBRATE</p> <p>What did we learn? What will we do differently? Do we need to adapt the program/project? How can we celebrate and promote achievements?</p>		

Implementation Plan for NRM Practice Change Programs

NAME OF PROGRAM _____

WHY is the program needed? (Refer to the NRM program logic chart for definitions)

Vision it will contribute to

Longer term regional changes

WHAT are the key outcomes sought?

Intermediate landscape changes

Changes in practice

Change in capacity and willingness

HOW will these outcomes be achieved?

Key mechanisms to be used to enable change

How will you raise awareness of the need for change?

How will you ensure uptake of these mechanisms?

Are different mechanisms targeted to different sectors of the community or areas?

If so, provide a matrix checklist of mechanism by sector /area. You will find it most useful to complete the remainder of this template specifically for each mechanism.

Towards WHERE in the region is this program targeted?

Geographic area(s)

Land types or landscape location
e.g. steep slopes; riparian zones on first order streams

Land use types *e.g. grazing lands*

WHO will be involved? Be as specific as possible about the sector(s) and people

WHO will the program target?

WHO will deliver the program?

WHO will help spread the message?

For further information

This fact sheet is one of a series prepared for the Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change project.

For further fact sheets and information visit the NRM Practice Change website:

www.hassall.com.au/australian_division

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Published by Land & Water Australia © March 2009

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