Planning for NRM Practice Change Programs

Please note: This is a working draft that is currently being tested by regions involved in the NRM Practice Change project. It will be further refined over time and updates placed on this website (http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/index_000.html). Any comments or suggestions to improve this guide will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Sue Salvin: 02 9241 5655; ssalvin@hassall.com.au

There are many ways by which natural resource management (NRM) practice change programs can be planned. This guide outlines a planning process that uses NRM program logic and the NRM Planning framework that has been developed through the "Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change" project. It may be used as is or elements of it may be incorporated into an existing planning process.

This planning process, which is focussed on use by regional NRM bodies, best applies at the project or program level. For simplicity, we have used the term 'programs' throughout this guide, but 'project' can be substituted if that is your level of focus.

The planning process considers that different people may be involved in different stages of planning. 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.

The process includes 5 key steps, each of which may involve different people or groups of people. There would be value in having at least one person involved through all steps.

Several iterations through these steps may be required, particularly if the program relates to a large and significant or potentially contentious issue. The guide gives suggestions for working through each step and a series of templates and frameworks to facilitate the process are provided as attachments.

Working through this process will provide you with:

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

Further resources and information are available from the Practice Change Project website: http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/index_000.html

5 step process for planning NRM practice change programs

1. Agree on clearly defined desired outcomes
by a strategic, technical group

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2. Background investigation
by program officer/s

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3. Develop a draft program plan and identify areas for further investigation
by implementation working group

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4. Undertake further investigation as required
as required

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5. Review and refine the program plan and develop evaluation plan
Program officer/s and broader group as agreed

Step 1) Agree on clearly defined desired outcomes

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

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 the aspirational goals and resource condition targets that this investment will contribute to. Intermediate outcomes include landscape change and changes in practice, behaviour, knowledge, norms, aspirations, skills, attitudes and confidence.

Second, brainstorm the possible ways to achieve these outcomes and, if possible, the outputs and inputs of the program. Some of the inputs may be determined at this stage (e.g. budget allocation to the program). The outputs and inputs 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 outcomes and 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 outputs and inputs for the program. Any inputs 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 is outlined as Appendix 1 along with a more generic program logic guide.

A generic program logic fact sheet and template can be downloaded from http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/tools.html

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 inputs and outputs
- Clarification of any inputs that have been determined (e.g. budget)
- Completed program logic chart that clearly and simply presents the program intentions.

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

Step 2) Background investigation

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

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 for which questions more information is needed to inform the 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 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 allocated resources should be in scale 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 and what may influence them to adopt the desired practices.
- Identification of key areas that may require further investigation.

Step 3) ***Develop a draft program plan and identify areas for further investigation***

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

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 that require further investigation and the best way to do this such as community consultation or other means. If these are significant gaps you may wish to do this before doing the next stage of the workshop. Alternatively, continue with the following aspects of the workshop in a draft format.

Based on the understanding of how best to foster this change, prepare a **program plan** comprising the practice change planning worksheet and an 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. Attachment 4 may be a useful outline for the implementation plan. IF further investigation is needed, this will be a draft plan, but working through it may help to focus your consultation and investigation.

Revise the **program logic**, providing the detailed inputs and outputs as outlined in the program plan. Check that these will lead to the intended outcomes and state your **assumptions** as to why they will.

Resources: Ideally, involve 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) may also be invited to add focus, a broader understanding and a 'reality check' while also building ownership by engaging them in the planning stage.

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

Tools: Practice change planning worksheet

Implementation plan outline (Attachment 4)

Program logic

Tools and information to assist in choosing suitable mechanisms for fostering change. Some of these are available at http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/tools.html

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 the key questions.

Step 4) Undertake further investigation and consultation as required

Aim: To gain first hand, current knowledge of how to best foster the desired change in practice amongst the target community so as to be in the best position to refine the program plan.

To engage with the community in planning the program.

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:

1. **Direct consultation** with the target community sector/s. For example, a series of semi-structured interviews, focus groups or community forum with key stakeholders sectors, including the people whose practices you are trying to change and the people who influence their decisions.
2. **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 potentially be quite resource intensive if a broad community consultation or pilot program is planned. The resource allocation needs to be suitable for the scale and significance of the program and the degree to which community engagement is vital 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 to undertake this stage. 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 outlined in the guide "Tools to assist in planning for NRM Practice Change" which is available at: http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/tools.html.

Outputs of this step:

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

Step 5) Review and refine the program plan and develop evaluation plan

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

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 this issue 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 may work 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.

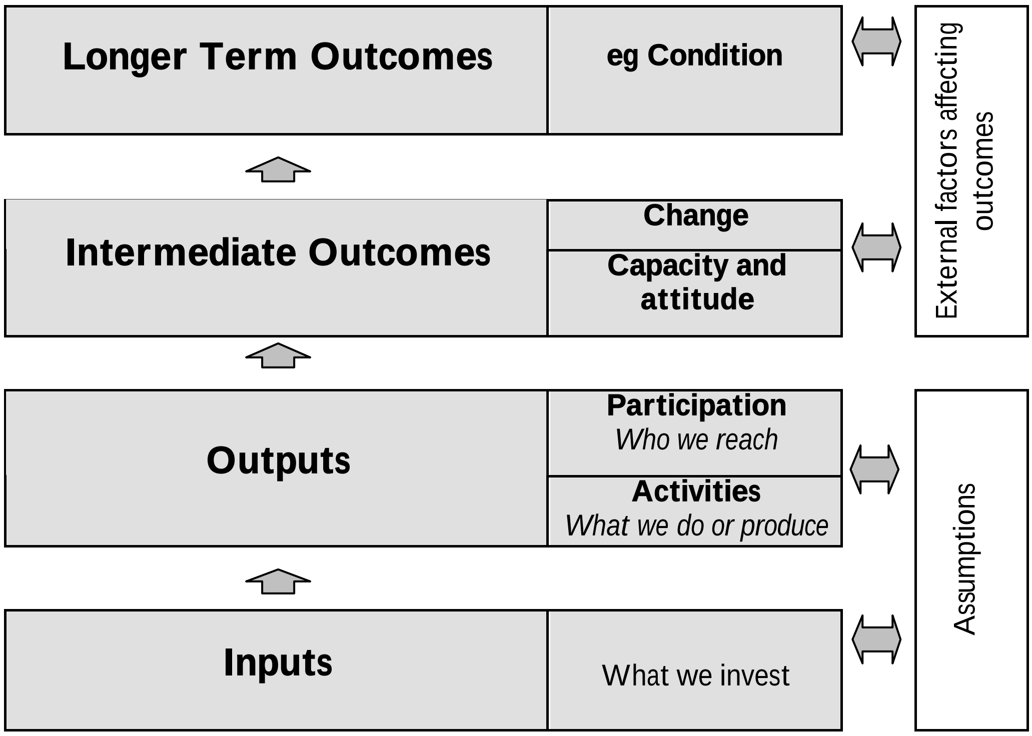
Tools: The attached planning tools used in previous steps

Outputs of this step:

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

Attachment 1: Program Logic

Program logic is a framework that can be used to outline the results of activities, the flow-on effects and how these contribute to achieving the vision for change. Several variations of this framework have been developed, some fitted to a specific theory of change. Following is a very general version which can be used as a 'shell' to which your own theory of change can be fitted.



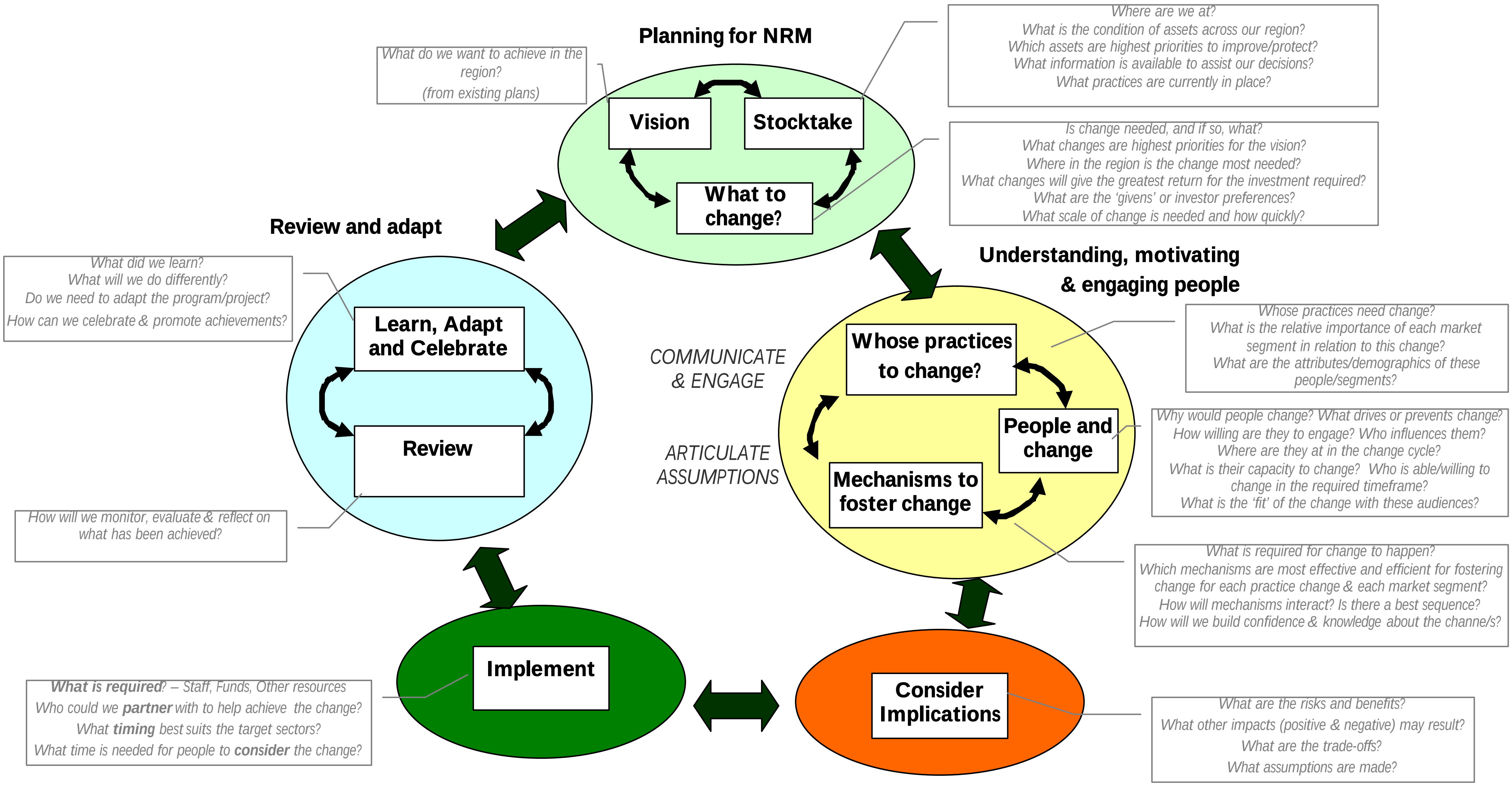
NRM Program Logic

This version of program logic has been specifically tailored for the Australian regional NRM model.

	Outcomes	Definitions	*Example*
Long term goals	**Vision for NRM in the region**	Aspirational vision for the state of the catchment in 20-50 years. Defined in regional strategies, used to guide planning and set a context	*Biodiversity conserved* *Sufficient suitable habitat for specific species in place*
	Improved state of the asset	Condition of the resource is improved in line with regional targets	*X ha of native vegetation* *Connected corridors link X% of native veg habitat*
	Enhanced social state	Land managers, organisations, communities, institutions and industries are better positioned (individually and collectively) to contribute to NRM in their everyday activities	*Farmers willing to manage native vegetation and working together to manage corridors and other NRM issues* *Organisations promote benefits of native vegetation*
Intermediate outcomes	**Landscape or industry changes**	Aggregate of the enduring changes made across the region or industry	*Total ha of native vegetation re-established (and surviving)* *Km of riparian corridors connected*
	Practice change	Ongoing changes in management practice of land managers, organisations, communities, institutions and industries that is carried out in addition to the projects	*Stock excluded as required* *Further trees planted beyond project funds* *Existing native vegetation managed for biodiversity*
	Changes in capacity and willingness	Changes in knowledge, attitude, norms, skills, aspirations, confidence, resource allocation, social networks and partnerships of land managers, organisations, communities, institutions and industries	*Active seeking of opportunities for management and establishment of native vegetation / habitat* *Group formed and active*
Outputs	**Outputs - Biophysical**	Project deliverables – immediate results that are concrete and tangible	*No. trees planted* *Ha fenced*
	Outputs - Non-biophysical	Immediate, non-biophysical result of activities, generally related to people's involvement, eg: • Community plans agreed • EOI responses received • Participation in events • Management agreements	*Revegetation plan agreed* *No. people involved with the tree planting and training exercise* *Km fenced* *Management agreement signed*
Inputs	**Project activities**	Activities carried out directly by the project, eg by staff and project managers	*Media releases and communications* *Revegetation plans developed* *Trees and materials purchased* *Training activity provided*
	Foundational activities	Activities that inform decisions about projects eg regional NRM strategies, investment plans, research, data gathering, planning	*Mapping of areas of habitat and identification of potential corridors and gaps* *Research to identify critical habitat needs*
State Assumptions:		What assumptions underly this logic?	*That training, communication and individual plans are the most effective way to stimulate this change*

Attachment 2: NRM Practice Change Planning Framework

This framework is being developed and tested through the project "Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change".



Attachment 3: Worksheet for working through the framework (Step 2 & 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	**VISION** *What do we want to achieve in the region?*			
	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?*			
	WHAT TO CHANGE? *Is change needed and if so, what?* *Where in the region is this change most needed?* *What practice changes are highest priorities to contribute to the vision?* *What changes will give the greatest return for the investment required?* *What are the 'givens' or investor preferences?* *What scale of change is needed and how quickly?*			
Understanding, motivating and engaging people	**WHOSE PRACTICES TO CHANGE?** *Whose practices need change?* *What is the market and how is it segmented?* *What is the relative importance of each segment in relation to this change?* *What are the attributes/demographics of each segment?*			
	PEOPLE AND CHANGE *Why would they change?* *What drives or prevents these people from changing this practice?* *How willing are they to engage? Who influences these people?* *Who is able / willing to change in the required timeframe?* *What is the 'fit' of the change with these audiences?*			

	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 we build confidence and knowledge?*			
	CONSIDER IMPLICATIONS *What are the risks and benefits?* *What other positive and negative impacts may result?* *What are the trade-offs?* *What assumptions are made?*			
	IMPLEMENTATION *What resources are required? – Staff, Funds, Other* *Who could we **partner** with to help achieve the change?* *Timeliness – What is the best time to suit the target sectors?*			
Review and adapt	**REVIEW** *How will we monitor, evaluate and reflect on what has been achieved?*			
	LEARN, ADAPT AND CELEBRATE *What did we learn?* *What will we do differently?* *Do we need to adapt the program/project?* *How can we celebrate and promote achievements?*			

Attachment 4: Implementation plan template

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	
Intermediate landscape changes	

WHAT are the key outcomes sought?

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 find it most useful to complete the remainder of this template specifically for each mechanism.

WHERE in the region is this program targeted towards?

Geographic area /s	
Land types or landscape location eg steep slopes; riparian zones on first order streams	
Land use types eg 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?	

WHEN will the activities occur?

Provide a timeline, calendar or GANNT chart
Describe any sequence or order of how the different mechanisms will be used.

What are the key BENEFITS of this approach?

What are the key RISKS of this approach and how will the risks be managed?

Potential RISK	Management strategy