

Program Logic and the Practice Change Planning Framework in Regional NRM

Two tools that can be helpful for planning and evaluating investments in natural resource management (NRM) practice change are Program Logic (attachment 1) and the NRM Practice Change Planning Framework (attachment 2).

This article outlines how these tools can be used together for planning regional NRM.

In summary

Program logic helps you plan **what** your program intends to **achieve** and **evaluate** if this has been achieved. The planning framework helps you to plan the details of **how** this will happen and your implementation approach and to test and clarify your **assumptions**. They work well when used together in planning programs for fostering NRM practice change.

Understanding the tools

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.

Commonly used for monitoring and evaluation, it can also be valuable during program planning stages to clarify expectations and identify the links between activities and outcomes.

Program logic is used in a wide range of sectors and there are several variations of the model. The basic form of program logic is essentially an open shell within which you can develop and define your own theory of change.

Program logic has been adopted by the Australian Government NRM team as the framework for evaluating their investment in NHT3. It is also being used by many regional NRM bodies.

The **Practice Change Planning Framework** presents a cycle of key questions for a regional NRM organisation to consider when planning their investment in NRM practice change, primarily at a program or project level. It focuses on the people element of change – understanding the key stakeholders and designing, implementing and adapting programs that can be most effective in fostering change.

The framework is being developed, tested and refined through the “Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change” project.

What is the link between these tools?

Program logic essentially presents the summary of what you planned to happen or how it did happen. This is useful at a ‘headline’ or strategic level.

The practice change planning framework then helps during the planning stages to identify **how** you will actually go about achieving this and questioning the **assumptions** you have made in the program logic.

It helps to understand who you are targeting for change, why they would or wouldn’t make this change, what mechanisms might be effective and what other implications may result from your planned investment.

In essence, program logic helps you outline a strategic overview of what you will do and what you expect to achieve. The practice change planning framework then helps you to identify the ‘who, why and how’ elements of your implementation plan. It also helps in identifying and clearly articulating the assumptions that you have made about why you believe that the planned inputs and outputs will lead to the desired outcomes.

These two tools can be used effectively in partnership, possibly involving different groups of people. When used iteratively throughout the life of a program they can assist with adaptive management.

More information

Practice Change Planning Framework:
http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/info.html

Program logic fact sheet and templates:
http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/tools.html

A Practice Change Planning Process presenting a series of steps of how these two tools can be used together is in development and will be posted at:

http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/info.html#2tool

For information on the project:
http://www.hassall.com.au/australian_division/info.html#2tool

Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change

Attachment 1: Program Logic for Regional NRM

| | 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 | <i>Biodiversity conserved Sufficient suitable habitat for specific species in place</i> |
| | Improved state of the asset | Condition of the resource is improved in line with regional targets | <i>X ha of native vegetation Connected corridors link X% of native veg habitat</i> |
| | Enhanced social state | Land managers, organisations, communities, institutions and industries are better positioned (individually and collectively) to contribute to NRM in their everyday activities | <i>Farmers willing to manage native vegetation and working together to manage corridors and other NRM issues Organisations promote benefits of native vegetation</i> |
| Intermediate outcomes ↑ ↑ ↑ | Landscape or industry changes | Aggregate of the enduring changes made across the region or industry | <i>Total ha of native vegetation re-established (and surviving) Km of riparian corridors connected</i> |
| | Practice change | Ongoing changes in management practice of land managers, organisations, communities, institutions and industries that is carried out in addition to the projects | <i>Stock excluded as required Further trees planted beyond project funds Existing native vegetation managed for biodiversity</i> |
| | 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 | <i>Active seeking of opportunities for management and establishment of native vegetation / habitat Group formed and active</i> |
| Outputs ↑ | Outputs - Biophysical | Project deliverables – immediate results that are concrete and tangible | <i>No. trees planted Ha fenced</i> |
| | Outputs - Non-biophysical | Immediate, non-biophysical result of activities, generally related to people's involvement, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community plans agreed • EOI responses received • Participation in events • Management agreements | <i>Revegetation plan agreed No. people involved with the tree planting and training exercise Km fenced Management agreement signed</i> |
| Inputs ↑ | Project activities | Activities carried out directly by the project, eg by staff and project managers | <i>Media releases and communications Revegetation plans developed Trees and materials purchased Training activity provided</i> |
| | Foundational activities | Activities that inform decisions about projects eg regional NRM strategies, investment plans, research, data gathering, planning | <i>Mapping of areas of habitat and identification of potential corridors and gaps Research to identify critical habitat needs</i> |
| State Assumptions: | | | <i>That training, communication and individual plans are the most effective way to stimulate this change</i> |

Adapted from NRM Program Logic frameworks prepared by the Australian Government NRM Team, Clear Horizon and the University of Wisconsin

Making Successful Investments in NRM Practice Change

Attachment 2: NRM Practice Change Planning Framework

These are iterative steps carried out in cycles – presented here in a linear mode for simplicity.

| | Step | Key questions | Related program logic step* |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Planning for NRM | VISION | <i>What do we want to achieve in the region? (from existing plans)</i> | Vision |
| | STOCKTAKE | <i>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?</i> | Long term Intermediate Foundational |
| | WHAT TO CHANGE? | <i>Is change needed, and if so, what? Where in the region is this change most needed? What practice changes are highest priorities for 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?</i> | State of asset Landscape and practice changes Foundational |
| Understanding, motivating and engaging people | WHOSE PRACTICES TO CHANGE? | <i>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?</i> | Intermediate Outputs Foundational |
| | PEOPLE AND CHANGE | <i>Why would they change? What drives or prevents the 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?</i> | Intermediate Outputs Foundational |
| | MECHANISMS TO FOSTER CHANGE | <i>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?</i> | Inputs Foundational |
| | CONSIDER IMPLICATIONS | <i>What are the risks and benefits? What other impacts (positive and negative) may result? What are the trade-offs? What assumptions are made?</i> | All |
| | IMPLEMENTATION | <i>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? What time is needed for people to consider the change?</i> | Inputs Foundational |
| Review and adapt | REVIEW | <i>How will we monitor, evaluate and reflect on what has been achieved?</i> | All |
| | LEARN, ADAPT AND CELEBRATE | <i>What did we learn? What will we do differently? Do we need to adapt the program/project? How can we celebrate and promote achievements?</i> | All |

* NB The linkages between the program logic and the planning framework will vary depending on the program being planned and the situation. The framework helps clarify the how, why and assumptions in the program logic and clearly plan the inputs and outputs required.