

2004

# Guide for integrating capacity building into regional NRM planning



The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to regions in integrating capacity building into their regional planning process, based on the principles of the National Capacity Building Framework. It a resource for regional planners, to support the adoption of a strategic and systematic approach to planning NRM capacity building activities.

## Capacity building statements

The following are important points to consider in integrating capacity building into regional natural resource management (NRM) planning.

- Capacity building is a process – a means to an end – by which individuals, groups and communities further develop their understanding, ability and motivation to undertake actions leading to sustainable NRM.
- Capacity building should not be considered in isolation of on-ground actions. Rather it should specifically support effective on-ground implementation and uptake of NRM practices.
- Given that strategic NRM outcomes will only be achieved in the longer term, capacity building provides important intermediate outcomes related to attitude, behaviour and practice change, and increased engagement in sustainable NRM. In the NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, these intermediate outcomes are measured as Management Action Targets.
- The full range of capacity building activities can be considered under the broad headings of awareness raising, information and knowledge, skills and training, and facilitation and support. Together these activity areas aim to build people's *ability* to act as well as their *motivation* to act, and this should contribute to greater and more effective community engagement in the development and implementation of regional NRM plans.
- Regions need to consider capacity building in relation to:
  - capacity to develop regional INRM plans, through community engagement, and
  - capacity to implement actions arising from these plans.
- Planning for capacity building should include systematic prioritisation, justification and targeting of activities and audiences.
- It is not expected that all capacity building details would be included in an integrated NRM (INRM) plan. Rather, the aim is that capacity building be strategically addressed in the planning process at the appropriate level for each region.

## Capacity building questions

In light of the above statements, detailed consideration should be given to the following questions during the regional planning process:

- **What** – specific behaviour and practice changes (intermediate outcomes) are required to achieve priority regional NRM outcomes?
- **What** – are the specific, critical capacity building activities that will most effectively support the achievement of these changes, and what is the justification for their choice?
- **What** – pre-requisite and co-requisite activities are required in order to successfully undertake these capacity building activities? What has already been done and is the proposed activity building on this?
- **Where** – geographically within the region should capacity building activities be targeted in order to best achieve priority regional NRM outcomes? This necessitates an understanding of socio-economic demographics, in addition to the biophysical characteristics of the region.
- **Who** – within these areas should be specifically targeted for involvement in capacity building?

- **When** – should specific capacity building activities be undertaken and in what order? Which are time critical and which cannot be undertaken until others have been completed?
- **Which** – are the most appropriate delivery mechanisms in terms of level (local, regional, state, national), delivery party (government, regional body, community support network, educational institution, industry or other organisation/group) and approach?
- **How much** - information is it necessary to include in the INRM plan in order to substantiate the capacity building decisions, assumptions and proposed actions? Evidence is required that a strategic and systematic process has been followed in determining capacity building needs for a region.

## Potential capacity building activities

Capacity building activities for a region should be tailored to the specific needs identified during NRM planning. However, there are many potential capacity building activities that are generic to all regions. These could include (*a more thorough list of possible activities are available in Appendix 1 of the National Capacity Building Framework*):

### **Awareness Raising** for example:

- Informal awareness raising and educational activities such as preparation and distribution of electronic and print materials and presentations at local forums, field days
- Formal education activities, through vocational training institutions or through the education sector and school curriculum

### **Knowledge and Information** for example:

- Evaluation of the underpinning biophysical and socio-economic science
- Evaluation of biophysical and socio-economic data needs and availability
- Collection and management of data according to needs
- Research and development into areas such as:
  - catchment biophysical functions such as salinity mapping and groundwater flows
  - model and tool development including decision-support systems
  - socio-economic research and analysis
  - alternative production systems

### **Skills and Training** for example:

- Identification of knowledge and skills required, and currently available, for planning and implementing effective NRM
- Identification of existing and required training materials and programs
- Development and delivery of training materials and courses, in partnership with institutions, private sector and community organisations, in priority areas, such as:
  - Integrated NRM planning (including use of models, decision-support and socio-economic impact analysis tools, people management, facilitation, negotiation and conflict resolution etc.)
  - on-ground implementation skills such as salinity control measures
  - application of market-based instruments and Environmental Management Systems

### **Facilitation and Support** for example

- Provision of needs-responsive, specialised technical support;
- Targeted facilitation to support and enhance community involvement in development and implementation of regional plans, including facilitator, coordinator and extension networks;

- Programs for promoting and supporting engagement of specific relevant stakeholder groups such as local government, indigenous communities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and special interest groups;
- Recognition and incentive programs and other motivational activities.

## Participants in capacity building

When planning for capacity building, a range of strategies for reaching various target participants should be considered, avoiding the “one size fits all” approach. Although overarching planning will take place at the regional level, most on-ground action will remain in the hands of individual landholders, land managers and local groups. Consequently capacity building activities in a regional plan (or associated capacity building plan or sub-regional plans) will need to be targeted to reach specific stakeholders within the region. The targeting process should consider in particular, those people who are not currently engaged in sustainable NRM but whose participation is critical for realising regional NRM outcomes.

Potential participants in capacity building could include:

- landholders specifying subsets such as landholders practicing a specific form of land use (eg pastoralists, dairy farmers) or located within a specific priority sub-region;
- other resource users e.g. rural and urban residents within the region, students
- community groups e.g. Landcare groups, Indigenous communities
- regional organisations, e.g. catchment boards, industry groups
- government officers including local government
- facilitators, coordinators and other community support officers
- technical and financial advisers and consultants
- off-site users eg urban water users residing outside the region

## Additional mechanisms for facilitation of behaviour change

Capacity building activities alone may not lead to the desired change. Application of additional mechanisms may be necessary to encourage change, and may include:

- **Market based instruments** – e.g. voluntary conservation agreements resulting in effective uptake of on-ground action through economically viable landholder action;
- **Environmental Management Systems** – contributing to regional NRM outcomes through factoring environmental considerations into action planning at all levels;
- **Legal instruments** – including incentives and disincentives such as tax rebates, rate relief, fines

## Monitoring and evaluation of capacity building

It is essential to track the outcomes of capacity building, such as attitude, behaviour and practice change, as a means of assessing progress towards long-term NRM outcomes. Regional NRM plans should therefore contain a monitoring and evaluation component in line with the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. In the context of this Framework, intermediate outcomes related to capacity building are known as Management Action Targets.

Monitoring and evaluation of capacity building has three purposes:

- **To measure level of achievement of intermediate outcomes** – to assess the degree to which capacity building activities have resulted in the desired attitude, behaviour and practice changes; e.g. percentage increase in individuals’ willingness to pay local government rates to support protection of biodiversity, or number of farmers in a particular

area who have prepared and implemented whole farm plans that address regional NRM priorities.

- **For adaptive management** – to assess the effectiveness of capacity building initiatives and identify desired changes to the approach; e.g. assessing the uptake of a new NRM practice as a result of a training course, and making necessary modifications to the training course and its delivery approach accordingly.
- **For program accountability** – to account for financial expenditure against activities and outputs; e.g. number of courses delivered and individuals trained in subject X.

In developing the capacity building component of monitoring and evaluation the following points should be considered:

- Monitoring and evaluation should include on-going systematic monitoring as well as periodic evaluations.
- Monitoring and evaluation activities need to be prioritised, simple, cost-effective and do-able.

The collection of information for monitoring and evaluation should be the basis of the regular reporting procedure for those implementing the NRM plan. For example, much of the information required for monitoring behaviour change in local landholders is already available, in the minds and written reports of community support networks. The use of simple forms to systematically record this information can make both day-to-day reporting easier, and more useful for tracking change over the short and long-term. Some data will be required for national aggregation, in order to monitor and evaluate program outcomes at the national level.

# Stages for planning capacity building

