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Guidelines for regional natural resource management planning in Queensland



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Part One – Introduction

1.1 About these Guidelines

Guidelines for Regional Natural Resource Management Planning in Queensland describe the planning aspects of Queensland's Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) arrangements associated with implementing the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) and the Natural Heritage Trust Interim Financial Agreement (THE TRUST IFA). It is anticipated that these guidelines will also be relevant to the implementation of the Natural Heritage Trust when its Bilateral Agreement is signed. Guidance provided is particularly relevant to the planning activities of Regional NRM Bodies.

1.2 Purpose of guidance

These guidelines serve to provide Regional NRM Bodies, Government decision makers and other interested parties with a description of plan accreditation requirements under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) and the Natural Heritage Trust Interim Financial Agreement for:

- *processes* to develop Regional NRM Planning outputs;
- *planning principles* to be met in the development of Regional NRM Planning outputs; and the
- *content* of Regional NRM Planning outputs.

As such, these guidelines provide guidance for preparing Regional NRM planning outputs, and requirements to be satisfied for making accreditation recommendations and decisions on Regional NRM Planning outputs.

To set the context for Regional NRM planning, these guidelines also briefly describe Regional NRM arrangements.

1.3 Basis of guidance

Accreditation requirements, including process requirements and the principles and content of Regional NRM Planning outputs described in these guidelines, are derived from decisions made by the Joint Australian/Queensland Steering Committee (JSC) and particularly from key policy documents including the:

- Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ);
- NAPSWQ Bilateral Agreement and Attachments;
- The extension of the Natural Heritage Trust Interim Financial Agreement (the Trust IFA);
- draft Natural Heritage Trust Extension Bilateral Agreement and Attachments; and
- Queensland Cabinet noted CEOs' Committee for Land and Resources paper titled *The future design and operation of Regional NRM Planning*.

*These key policy documents may be accessed at:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/joint/index.html>*

1.4 Authority of guidance

These guidelines were developed following consultation with Regional NRM Bodies, Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), the State Coordination Group, and the Joint Steering Committee.

1.5 More detailed guidance

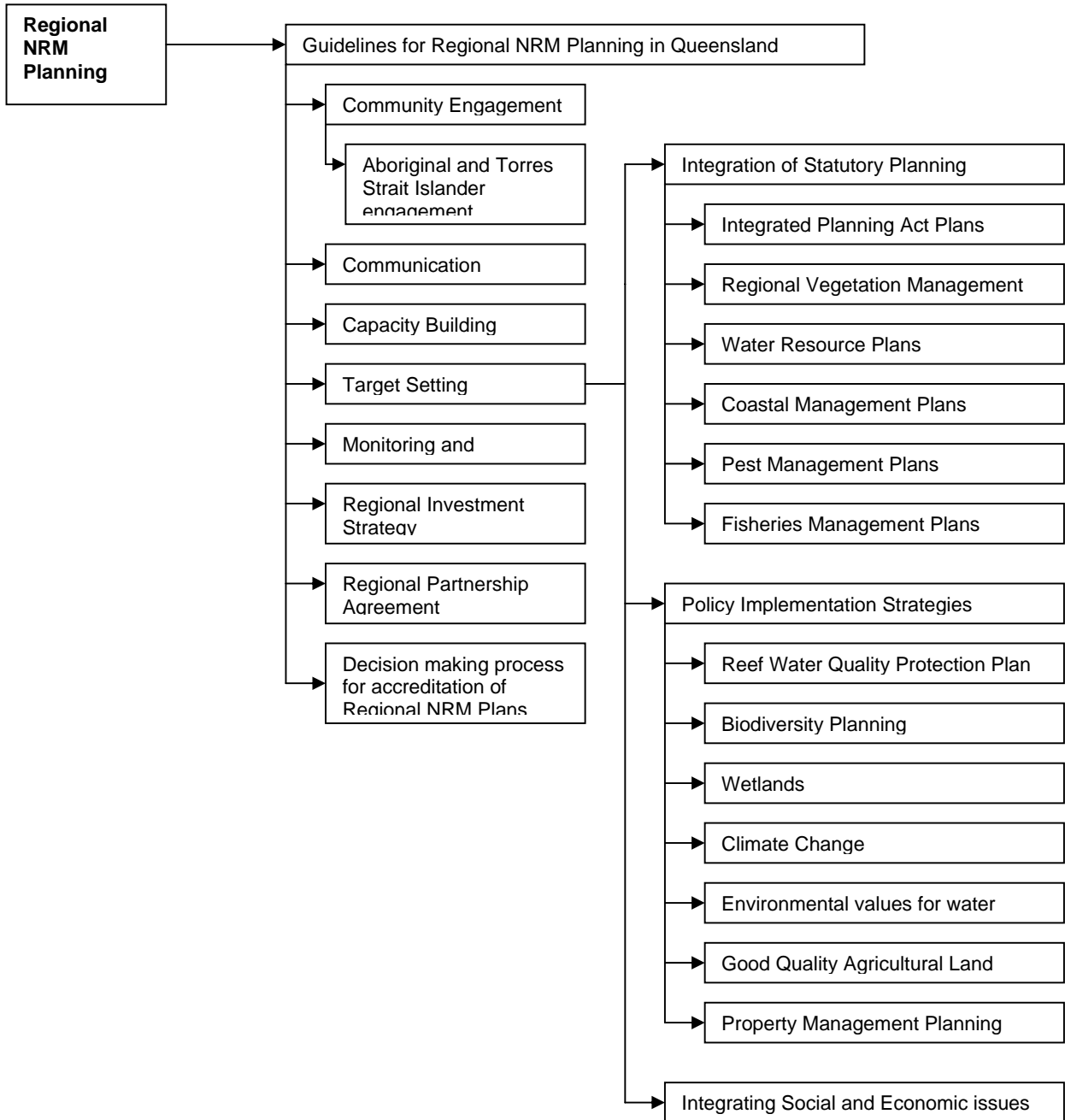
Throughout these guidelines weblinks and references are provided to other Regional NRM documents and modules that provide greater detail on aspects of Regional NRM planning.

Because Regional NRM arrangements and planning are evolving and improving the information in these guidelines and associated modules will be periodically reviewed and updated.

The modules currently prepared or under development are listed below and are available on the Regional NRM website.

*The Regional NRM Website is located at:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au>*

Regional NRM planning guidance modules



1.6 Summary of guidance

Part one – introduces the purpose, basis and authority of these guidelines, and provides directions to information of greater detail.

Part two – provides a description of **Regional NRM arrangements** in Queensland to set the overall context for Regional NRM Planning.

Section 2.1 presents a background to Regional NRM philosophies and trends, and key characteristics of healthy Regional NRM arrangements in Queensland.

Section 2.2 outlines key participants in Regional NRM planning and implementation.

Section 2.3 describes Queensland's NRM Regions.

Section 2.4 provides a summary of funding opportunities available to prepare and implement Regional NRM Plans and support the operations of Regional NRM Bodies.

Part three – presents the objectives of **Regional NRM planning** and describes the preparation of planning phase outputs, including *process*, *principles*, and *content* requirements to be satisfied for accreditation.

Sections 3.1 – 3.6 describe broad characteristics of Regional NRM planning. They outline planning policy contexts, scope and objectives, preparation and accreditation, and review, as well as assistance for preparing plans.

Section 3.7 describes *processes* required to be followed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans, and introduces the outputs prepared during the planning phase such as the Community Information Paper (CIP), the Regional NRM Plan, Regional Investment Strategy (RIS), and Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA).

Section 3.8 describes *planning principles* required to be demonstrated and adhered to for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans, such as: involving stakeholders; covering the full range of NRM issues; being underpinned by science; focussing on causes not symptoms of NRM issues; including implementation strategies for agreed NRM policies; and being consistent with other planning processes.

Section 3.9 describes *content* required to be developed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans, such as setting targets, identifying actions to achieve targets, and providing for continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement of the Regional NRM Plan.

Part four – provides a Glossary, Acronym List and Appendices.

Part two – regional NRM arrangements

2.1 Background

As signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment, the Australian and Queensland Governments are committed to seeking to achieve Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD is development which aims to meet the needs of Australians today, while conserving ecosystems for the benefit of future generations. To achieve ESD, Australians need to develop ways of using environmental resources which form the basis of the economy in a way which maintains and, where possible, improves their range, variety and quality. At the same time Australians need to utilise those resources to develop industry and generate employment. NRM is a significant component of ESD and effective NRM is critical to achieving and maintaining ESD.

*For more information on ESD refer to:
<http://www.deh.gov.au/esd/>*

Queensland faces significant NRM issues including biodiversity loss, loss of productive land, salinity, and degraded water resources. There are limited human and financial resources to address these issues and previous and some existing NRM arrangements have not always accounted for economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Problems with previous and some existing NRM arrangements include numerous, overlapping, single issue, regional planning activities; no significant coordination of data and regional science effort; community participation characterised by multiple consultations but little investment in community engagement or implementation capacity; government agencies with exclusive or primary responsibilities for planning and implementation; and a lack of identified and integrated funding and other resources for implementation of NRM plans.

To improve this situation the Australian and Queensland Governments have concluded that NRM arrangements should be more integrated, regionally based, and provide a significant degree of responsibility for NRM planning and implementation to regional community stakeholders in partnership with governments. Joint Australian and Queensland government programs such as the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ) and the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (the Trust) have consolidated an approach that requires community-based Regional NRM Bodies to assume significant responsibilities for regional NRM, including the preparation of Regional NRM Plans, and the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of these plans in partnership with governments.

NAPSWQ and the Trust have also initiated a move from an approach based on investment in individual NRM projects, to an approach based on strategic investment in NRM at a regional scale with funding provided directly to Regional NRM Bodies on the basis of accredited Regional NRM Plans and associated Regional Investment Strategies (RIS). This seed funding provides the basis to attract other funding to fully implement Regional NRM Plans.

The involvement of Regional NRM Bodies in natural resource management planning and implementation is consistent with Queensland's 'community engagement' agenda and recognises:

- the strong interrelationships between the various natural resource and environmental degradation issues occurring in regions that call for integrated management responses;
- regional planning as an effective way to engage all stakeholders and to build on activity at the property and local levels, while also complementing state and national activity;
- an approach that can be adapted to suit specific circumstances – enabling social, economic and environmental dimensions of a region to be considered in an integrated way;
- the regional scale as an appropriate scale for negotiating trade-offs, resolving conflict and for determining priorities and shared investment arrangements,
- regional community responsibilities for sustainable NRM, and
- the broader, worldwide trend towards regional autonomy, service devolution and self - reliance in which integrated economic, social and environmental planning is seen as crucial to a region's sustainable future.

The introduction of the NAPSWQ and the Trust therefore provides the Queensland Government with a requirement, as well as an opportunity, to design and establish NRM arrangements that are regionally based, partnership driven, integrated, adaptive, effective, and sustainable. Regional NRM arrangements characterised by these qualities are referred to as "healthy regional NRM arrangements."

Current research concludes that the health of Regional NRM arrangements depends on:

- the collective understanding NRM stakeholders have of their region's NRM issues;
- institutional support for stakeholders to negotiate their way through issues, and
- the capacity of stakeholders to participate in the NRM process.

Regional NRM arrangements propose that supporting and combining these three elements will achieve significantly better NRM outcomes than the disaggregated arrangements that typify previous and some existing NRM arrangements. Regional NRM Bodies assume a central role in ensuring the success of the arrangements by increasing stakeholder understanding of and capacity to participate in NRM, and by engaging and aligning institutional support.

As part of its contribution to the partnership for regional sustainability the Queensland Government intends to develop Regional NRM arrangements characterised by the key elements of:

- integrated and efficient research and development, information delivery and regional monitoring;
- effective partnerships, structures for negotiation and ways to integrate effort; and
- planning and management strengths in all institutions involved in NRM.

The Queensland Government will support Regional NRM arrangements by addressing the two key challenges of:

- optimising the coordination and interconnection of regional NRM planning arrangements with existing planning processes and statutory instruments, and
- providing effective whole of government support to Regional NRM Bodies and Regional NRM Planning.

Regional NRM arrangements will evolve and mature over time. Close monitoring of the success or otherwise of the arrangements will be required. The focus however should not only be on Regional NRM Bodies but on the totality of Regional NRM arrangements - the capacities of NRM stakeholders, their activities within a region, and the linkages and information flows between them.

The Queensland Cabinet will review the progress of these emerging arrangements in June 2004.

2.2 Regional NRM participants

A central philosophy of healthy regional NRM arrangements is that NRM stakeholders competently participate in well-informed regional NRM planning and implementation processes in partnership with other participants. The arrangements seek to involve all NRM stakeholders, including those who may have had a limited role in NRM previously.

NRM stakeholders include landholders and primary producers, community groups, local governments, traditional owners, conservation groups, and academia. Other participants in Regional NRM planning and implementation include Regional NRM Bodies, the Regional Groups' Collective (RGC), Regional Coordination Groups (RCG), the Queensland Regional NRM Taskforce, the Australian Government Regional NRM Team, the State Coordination Group (SCG), the Joint Australian/Queensland Steering Committee (JSC), and Australian and Queensland Ministers with NRM responsibilities.

An outline of the roles and responsibilities of each participant group is presented in Appendix One.

For a diagrammatic representation of the roles, responsibilities and relationships between these participants refer to:

http://www.nrme.qld.gov.au/regional_planning/rep_groups/index.html

2.3 Queensland NRM regions

Regions based primarily on major river basins and associated marine areas are considered the most appropriate and effective geographic units for NRM. Queensland has been progressively moving towards managing natural resources on a regional basis for a number of years, and this progression has been accelerated and consolidated with the introduction of NAPSWQ and the Trust.

NAPSWQ was agreed in March 2002 and identified four Queensland NRM priority investment regions. These regions were Burdekin-Fitzroy; Lockyer-Burnett-Mary; Condamine-Balonne-Maranoa; and Border Rivers. These NRM regions were based on major river basins with a high salinity risk.

The Natural Heritage Trust Extension Interim Financial Agreement of June 2003 identified fifteen Queensland NRM regions covering all of the State and surrounding marine areas. The 15 Queensland NRM regions are based primarily on major river basins and associated marine areas and include areas under Australian and Queensland Government jurisdiction.

An area within a Queensland NRM region that was originally a NAPSWQ region is subject to the same NRM planning, accreditation and funding requirements as other areas except the NAPSWQ area attracts both NAPSWQ and the Trust funds for planning and implementation. Therefore, where a Queensland NRM Region does not include any NAPSWQ area it is not eligible for any NAPSWQ funding. Where a Queensland NRM Region does include a NAPSWQ area, NAPSWQ funding may only be invested in the NAPSWQ area of that region and only for the purpose of achieving the objectives of NAPSWQ.

*Maps of Queensland NRM regions and NAPSWQ areas may be viewed at:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/general/maps.html>*

*For more information on the geographic areas included within Queensland's NRM regions refer to Attachment B of the Natural Heritage Trust Extension Interim Financial Agreement at:
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/joint/pdf/framework_for_natural_heritage.pdf*

Queensland Regional NRM Bodies are listed on the following page.

Queensland's fifteen NRM Regions, Regional NRM Bodies, and regions with NAPSWQ areas are presented in the Table below.

| Region | Regional Body | NAPSWQ/Trust |
|-------------------|---|---------------|
| Torres Strait | Torres Strait NRM Regional Body | Trust only |
| Cape York | <i>Cape York does not yet have a Regional NRM Body but is supported by the CYP NHT Secretariat and CYIAG.</i> | Trust only |
| Wet Tropics | Far North Queensland NRM Board | Trust only |
| Northern Gulf | Northern Gulf Regional Management Group | Trust only |
| Southern Gulf | Southern Gulf Catchments Inc. | Trust only |
| Burdekin | Burdekin Dry Tropics Board | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| Mackay Whitsunday | Mackay Whitsunday NRM Group | Trust only |
| Desert Channels | Desert Channels Queensland Inc. | Trust only |
| Fitzroy | Fitzroy Basin Association | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| South West | South West NRM Inc | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| Maranoa Balonne | Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc. | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| Border Rivers | Queensland Murray Darling Committee Inc. | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| Condamine | Condamine Alliance | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| Burnett Mary | Burnett Mary Regional Group for NRM Inc. | NAPSWQ& Trust |
| South East | South East Queensland NRM and SEQ Western Catchments Group Inc. | NAPSWQ& Trust |

2.4 Funding Opportunities

Accredited Regional NRM Plans will provide a framework for investing in NRM activities, lead to improved outcomes, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of Queensland's natural resource base. Funds attached to NAPSWQ and the Trust will be a major source of funding to maintain Regional NRM Body operations.

NAPSWQ is a seven-year, \$700M Australian Government NRM program. State and Territory Governments will match Australian Government NAPSWQ funding dollar for dollar. The Australian and Queensland Governments have each committed \$81M (\$162M in total) to be spent on achieving the objectives of NAPSWQ in Queensland.

The \$2.7B Natural Heritage Trust is Australian's largest ever environmental action program. This figure includes the additional \$1B provided by the Australian Government for the period 2003 – 03 to 2006 - 07 under the Natural Heritage Trust Extension. State and Territory Governments will match Australian Government Trust funding with cash or 'in-kind' contributions. In-kind contributions are non-cash support such as:

- technical assistance for Regional NRM planning and implementation;
- administrative assistance for financial accounting, governance systems, and
- monitoring and evaluation procedures; and the provision of ongoing technical services such as water quality monitoring and data.

Funds are available under the Natural Heritage Trust Extension Interim Financial Agreement are fully committed. Additional funds are likely to be available on conclusion of successful bilateral agreement negotiations for the delivery of the Natural Heritage Trust Extension in Queensland.

Funding under the Australian Government National Landcare Program (NLP) will also be available to Regional NRM Bodies and will complement the Trust and NAPSWQ funds. Appropriate projects may include community and industry on-ground actions where they will significantly increase the uptake of sustainable resource management practices, enhance the skills of natural resource managers, promote the implementation of best management practice and improve the integration of NRM into business and property management plans at the enterprise level.

Australian Government NLP Community Support investments are expected to be matched in-kind by the recipients of the investment. Investment proposals will be given a higher priority during assessment where the matching contribution is more than the minimum required.

Natural Heritage Trust Competitive Regional Funding

Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust funds will also be distributed through a Competitive Regional Funding process. Competitive regional funding provides an opportunity to invest in significant multi-regional, multi-jurisdictional outcomes. Competitive regional funding is likely to be provided for a small number of large, multi-regional, and where necessary, multi-year projects that will result in major, measurable and lasting change in the underlying resource condition. (An individual Regional NRM Body is eligible to compete for this funding for intra-regional projects. However, if intra-

region projects are of sufficiently high priority to be competitive they are more likely to attract investment through priority action funding, pre-accreditation funding, or the Regional Investment Strategy.)

Natural Heritage Trust Statewide funding

The statewide component of the Natural Heritage Trust is intended to address state-wide priority, broad scale issues which are delivered most effectively and efficiently at State or multi regional level and where delivering outcomes would generally require a high level of coordination and joint investment across a number of regions within the State.

Other funding sources

Other Government and non Government NRM funding parties and programs exist and Regional NRM Bodies should place significant emphasis on identifying and attracting these opportunities for investment in the implementation of Regional NRM Plans. The attraction of alternative funds will become increasingly important to the operation of Regional NRM Bodies and Regional NRM planning and implementation as NAPSWQ and the Trust funds are phased out. The achievement of healthy Regional NRM arrangements will require identifying and accessing adequate financial and other resources to implement NRM processes over the long term.

The Regional NRM Taskforce will work in partnership with Regional NRM Bodies and the Regional Groups Collective to strategically plan for the security of future funding, including the attraction of further funding sources.

*Further information about funding may be accessed at:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/funding/community/index.html>*

Part Three – Regional NRM Planning

3.1 Background

Regional NRM arrangements require Regional NRM Bodies to develop Regional NRM plans through an interactive process in partnership with regional community stakeholders and with guidance and support from the Australian and Queensland Governments. The Australian and Queensland Governments will jointly accredit the Regional NRM Plan, agree to the Regional Investment Strategy (RIS), and, together with Regional NRM Bodies, agree responsibilities in the Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA).

Regional NRM planning provides a strategic framework through which Regional NRM bodies can:

- identify NRM issues in their region,
- identify their aspirations for NRM,
- assess the social, economic and biophysical drivers of NRM issues,
- develop targets that reflect their NRM aspirations,
- identify actions to achieve these targets,
- develop processes to monitor and evaluate actions and report on outcomes,
- achieve ownership of the solutions, and
- convince potential investors that proposed results will be achieved.

Key outputs required to be developed by Regional NRM Bodies during the planning phase include the:

- Community Information Paper (optional);
- Regional NRM Plan;
- Regional Investment Strategy (RIS); and
- Regional Partnership Agreement.

It is recognised that significant regional NRM planning has previously occurred in many regions and Regional NRM Bodies may need to:

- refine existing plans where these provide an adequate base and appropriate regional coverage;
- develop new 'overarching' plans to coordinate, reference, update and fill gaps in existing plans; or
- prepare new plans.

A Regional NRM Plan can therefore be a framework that brings together a series of planning documents covering different issues, themes and geographical areas. It is also understood that Regional NRM Bodies will be at various stages of planning and implementation capability. The availability of factual information and analysis on which to prepare and base a Regional NRM Plan will also vary across regions. Regional NRM Plans may therefore vary in the level of analysis and scientific data they contain when they are accredited, but over time should continue to be reviewed and improved.

3.2 Planning policy context

The scope, objectives, preparation processes, principles and contents of Regional NRM Planning outputs, including the accreditation requirements of Regional NRM Plans, are determined by key policy documents relating to NAPSWQ and the Trust including the:

- Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on the NAPSWQ;
- NAPSWQ Bilateral Agreement and Attachments;
- Natural Heritage Trust Extension Interim Financial Agreement;
- draft Natural Heritage Trust Extension Bilateral Agreement and Attachments; and
- Queensland Cabinet noted CEOs' Committee for Land and Resources paper titled *The future design and operation of Regional NRM Planning*.

In addition, various Australian and Queensland Government policy teams have developed a range of frameworks defining significant aspects of regional NRM planning. These frameworks include the:

- National Capacity Building Framework;
- Community Engagement Framework;
- National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets; and
- National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

3.3 Planning scope and objectives

The minimum scope and objectives of Regional NRM planning outputs, as defined by NAPSWQ and the Trust, are described below. Regional NRM Bodies are encouraged to develop their Regional NRM Plan to not only satisfy the minimum scope and objectives but to also include other NRM priorities identified by their regional stakeholders such as air quality or cultural heritage associated with natural resources. However funding to implement the additional scope and objectives is unlikely to be available through NAPSWQ or the Trust and alternative funding sources may need to be identified.

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

The Purpose is to establish arrangements necessary to motivate and enable regional communities to use coordinated and targeted action to:

- prevent stabilise and reverse trends in salinity, particularly dryland salinity, affecting the sustainability of production, conservation of biological diversity and the viability of our infrastructure; and
- improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment.

*For more information on NAPSWQ refer to:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/drivers/NAPSWQswq/index.html>*

Natural Heritage Trust Extension

The three Overarching Objectives, and their associated areas of activity that define the scope of the Trust investment, are:

- Biodiversity Conservation - the conservation of Australia's biodiversity through the protection and restoration of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems and habitat for native plants and animals. Associated activities are:

- protecting and restoring the habitat of threatened species, threatened ecological communities and migratory birds;
- reversing the long-term decline in the extent and quality of Australia's native vegetation;
- protecting and restoring significant freshwater, marine and estuarine ecosystems;
- preventing or controlling the introduction and spread of feral animals, aquatic pests, weeds and other biological threats to biodiversity; and
- establishing and effectively managing a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas.
- Sustainable Use of Natural Resources - the sustainable use and management of Australia's land, water and marine resources to maintain and improve the productivity and profitability of resource based industries. Associated activities are:
 - improving the condition of natural resources that underpins the sustainability and productivity of resource based industries; and
 - securing access to natural resources for sustainable productive use.
- Community Capacity Building and Institutional Change - support for individuals, landholders, industry and communities with skills, knowledge, information and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use and management. Associated activities are:
 - encouraging the development of sustainable and profitable management systems for application by land-holders and other natural resource managers and users;
 - providing land-holders, community groups and other natural resource managers with understanding and skills to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management; and
 - establishing institutional and organisational frameworks that promote conservation and ecologically sustainable use and management of natural resources.

For more information on the Trust, including Bushcare, Rivercare, Landcare and Coastcare programs, refer to:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/drivers/nht/index/html>
 and
<http://www.nht.gov.au/>

3.4 Plan preparation and accreditation

The accreditation of a Regional NRM Plan will be an agreement between the Australian and Queensland Governments and a Regional NRM Body that, at a particular point in time, a Regional NRM Plan is sufficiently developed so as to provide a sound basis on which investments may be made.

The key policy documents outline the *processes*, *principles* and *content* requirements for the preparation and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans and other planning phase outputs.

For accreditation, the *content* of Regional NRM Plans must:

- set targets at the regional scale, consistent with the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets;
- identify strategic, prioritised and achievable actions to address the range of NRM issues and achieve the regional targets; and
- provide for continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement, consistent with the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

For accreditation, the *content* of Regional NRM Plans must also be prepared with adherence to *planning principles*. The principles are that Regional NRM Plans must:

- have effective involvement of all key stakeholders in plan development and implementation;
- cover the full range of natural resource management (NRM) issues;
- be underpinned by scientific analysis of natural resource conditions, problems and priorities;
- focus on addressing the underlying causes rather than symptoms of problems;
- include strategies to implement agreed NRM policies to protect the natural resource base; and
- demonstrate consistency with other planning processes and legislative requirements applicable to the region.

For further information on *content* requirements refer to section 3.9 of these guidelines, and for further information on principle requirements refer to section 3.8.

Regional NRM planning outputs must also be prepared through an agreed *process*, and Regional NRM Plans must be prepared through these agreed processes for accreditation. For further information refer to section 3.7 of these guidelines.

The JSC will assess a draft Regional NRM Plan and confirm that it has satisfied all accreditation requirements before the plan will be recommended to Ministers for accreditation.

3.5 Plan review processes

To achieve continuous improvement Regional NRM Plans cannot be static and Regional NRM Bodies will be required to periodically review their Regional NRM Plan as new information and knowledge comes to hand, or as community aspirations change about regional sustainability. Reviews of Regional NRM Plans will also need to meet accreditation requirements outlined in this document.

3.6 Assistance in preparing planning phase outputs

Government agencies will provide support and assistance to Regional NRM Bodies for the preparation of Regional NRM Plans. Regional Coordination Groups will be the main point of interface to negotiate this assistance. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resource, Mines and Energy have each produced a directory of the products and services they make available to Regional NRM Bodies for natural resource management, planning and implementation. These documents should be referred to in the negotiation of assistance.

These documents may be accessed at:
http://www.nrme.qld.gov.au/regional_planning/NAPSWQ/priority_docs/pdf/general_guidance/prospectus.pdf

NAPSWQ and the Trust also provide that State level activities will occur to address issues that are common across all or many regions and will be useful for and inform plan preparations. Such activities include information management and support systems, research and development, technical support and training communication, monitoring and evaluation, and salinity mapping. Most of these State level activities are funded under NAPSWQ and their application is often only relevant to or available for regions containing NAPSWQ areas. However, some of the NAPSWQ State level activities are equally relevant to and useful for all regions and the areal extent of some activities is being extended to all regions.

3.7 Processes for preparing planning phase outputs

This section describes *processes* required to be followed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans, and the roles of participants in those processes.

The RIS should be prepared in parallel with the Regional NRM Plan and be submitted for approval at the same time as the Regional NRM Plan is submitted for accreditation. This requirement may vary for NRM regions containing NAPSWQ areas. Government strongly encourage that the RIS is submitted at the same time as the Plan.

The RIS is not formally accredited. The JSC will recommend to responsible Australian and Queensland Ministers that particular actions identified in the RIS are suitable for investment.

Stages 1 – 3 (see following) are highly recommended preliminary stages of the planning process.

Stages 4 – 9 (see following) are compulsory and are accreditation requirements for Regional NRM Plans.

Where a Regional NRM Body has commenced Regional NRM Planning it is not expected that the planning process be recommenced to satisfy processes and outputs described in this document if they have already reached a described stage and have not satisfied all earlier requirements. However, in this situation, there is a need to

demonstrate that planning activity has been consistent with advice received from government liaison officers, negotiate an agreed planning process with the JSC and demonstrate the effectiveness of any alternative process already followed.

The key planning phase outputs prepared through *planning processes* are:

- Community Information Paper (optional);
- Regional NRM Plan;
- Regional Investment Strategy; and
- Regional Partnership Agreement.

Key stages in the *process* of preparing planning phase outputs are:

Stage 1: Plan Scoping, Regional Overview and Communication Plan

A Regional NRM Body should undertake a plan scoping exercise, develop a regional overview, and develop a communication plan consistent with the guidance provided in section 3.9 of this document.

Stage 2: Preparation of Community Information Paper

Following plan scoping and the development of a regional overview and communication plan the Regional NRM Body should present this information in a Community Information Paper consistent with the guidance provided in section 3.9 of this document.

Stage 3: Release of Community Information Paper for comment

The Regional NRM Body should publicly release the Community Information Paper and notify the community of its availability for comment and input over a period of not less than six weeks. This will inform the broader community of the Regional NRM Body's intention to prepare a draft Regional NRM Plan, raise awareness of issues, and provide an opportunity for any interested individual or organisation to submit comments for consideration and participate in the Regional NRM Plan's preparation.

Stage 4: Preparation of draft Regional NRM Plan

After considering submissions received in response to public consultation on the Community Information Paper, the Regional NRM Body should develop a draft Regional NRM Plan consistent with the guidance provided in section 3.9 of this document. Queensland and Australian Government Liaison Officers must be consulted during draft plan development.

Stage 5: Submission of draft Regional NRM Plan to JSC for approval for release

When satisfied that the draft Regional NRM Plan is adequate for public release and comment the Regional NRM Body must submit the draft Regional NRM Plan to the JSC for preliminary assessment and approval for release.

Stage 6: Release of draft Regional NRM Plan for comment

Following JSC approval, the Regional NRM Body should publicly release the draft Regional NRM Plan and notify the community of its availability for comment and input over a period of not less than six weeks. This will inform the broader community of the Regional NRM Plan's proposed content and demonstrate its

consistency with planning principles, and provide an opportunity for any interested individual or organisation, Regional Coordination Groups and Queensland and Australian Government Liaison Officers to submit comments for consideration and participate in the Regional NRM Plan preparation.

Stage 7: Preparation of revised draft Regional NRM Plan

Following the close of the public consultation period the Regional NRM Body should consider all submissions received and work co-operatively with all stakeholders to revise the draft Regional NRM Plan to take account of comments received and resolve any conflicts. The full consultation process, including the process for resolving conflicting submissions, should be documented as part of the revised draft Regional NRM Plan.

Stage 8: Accreditation

When satisfied that all comments received on the draft Regional NRM Plan have been considered and suitably accounted for the Regional NRM Body should submit the revised draft Regional NRM Plan to the JSC for final assessment and recommendation to the relevant Ministers for accreditation.

The JSC will assess the revised draft Regional NRM Plan against accreditation requirements, and if necessary, work with the Regional NRM Body to identify and resolve any issues of concern. When satisfied, the JSC will recommend the Regional NRM Plan to the responsible Australian and Queensland Ministers for accreditation

Stage 9: Regional Investment Strategy and Regional Partnership Agreement

Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) requirements and a Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA) between the Australian and Queensland governments and the Regional NRM Body will be developed, consistent with guidance provided in section 3.9 of this document, and supporting modules.

Following accreditation of the Regional NRM Plan, agreement on investments in the RIS, and the finalisation of an RPA, the Regional NRM Body should notify stakeholders of the accreditation of the Regional NRM Plan and make copies of it and the RIS available.

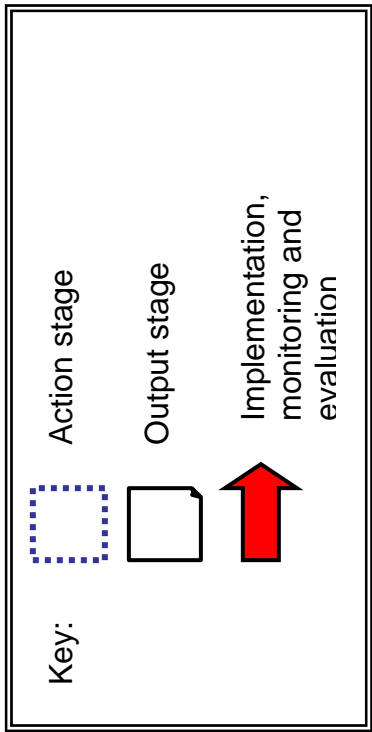
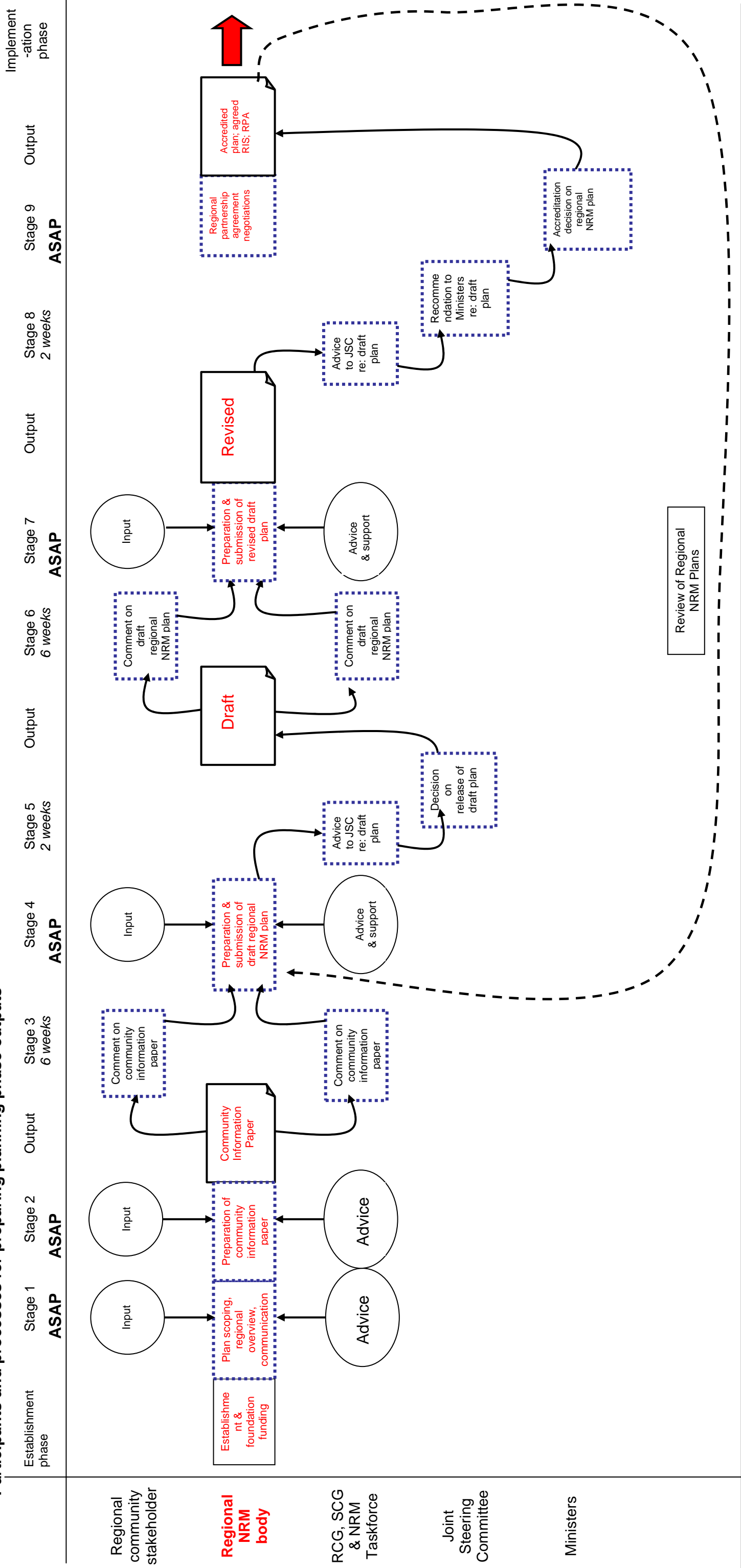
Post planning phase

The accreditation of a Regional NRM Plan, agreement on investments in the RIS, and the completion of a Regional Partnership Agreement mark the end of the first planning phase. Regional NRM investment, implementation, monitoring and reporting as set out in the Regional NRM Plan, RIS and RPA can then commence.

However, Regional NRM Plans will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and the RIS will be updated every year to identify new funding priorities. The Regional NRM Plan review process will commence at Stage 4 with the drafting of an amended Regional NRM Plan and will progress through to Stage 9.

A diagrammatic representation of this process and the roles of participants follows.

Participants and processes for preparing planning phase outputs



3.8 Principles for preparing planning phase outputs

Section 3.7 described *processes* required to be followed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and the accreditation of Regional NRM Plans. This section describes the *planning principles* required to be demonstrated in the preparation of planning phase outputs, particularly in the preparation of the *content* of outputs. These principles must be demonstrated for the accreditation of Regional NRM Plans.

Planning principles require that the preparation of planning phase output *content* must:

1. Have effective involvement of all key stakeholders in plan development and implementation.
2. Cover the full range of NRM issues.
3. Be underpinned by scientific analysis of natural resource conditions, problems and priorities.
4. Focus on addressing the underlying causes rather than symptoms of problems.
5. Include strategies to implement agreed NRM policies to protect the natural resource base.
6. Demonstrate consistency with other planning processes and legislative requirements applicable to the region.

The *planning principles* are elaborated below including guidance on the rationale, accreditation requirements, and links to other modules prepared on this topic.

Planning Principle One: Effective involvement of all key stakeholders in plan development & implementation

Rationale

It is important that there is regional community stakeholder 'ownership' of both problems and solutions if regional approaches to NRM are to be effective. The accreditation requirements therefore aim to ensure that consultative community engagement processes are adopted in the development of the Regional NRM Plan. If community members consider they have not had adequate opportunity to provide input to Regional NRM Plan development, including the definition of problems, the setting of targets and priority actions, and the development of new management systems, then it is unlikely that the Regional NRM Plan would be fully supported or successfully implemented.

Accreditation Requirements

Regional NRM Plans must demonstrate:

- key processes to ensure effective involvement of all key stakeholders in plan development and implementation; including local government, state agencies, land managers, industry, communities, indigenous people, academic/scientific sector and environmental groups;
- that a well-planned, comprehensive consultation process took place with broad public awareness of the process; and that there were adequate arrangements for involvement by individuals and groups, and clear timelines for comment. (Community participation programs should take into account and, where possible, build on previous or current consultation activities in each region);

- that the participation arrangements were appropriate to the region and the specific needs and nature of its community, including local government (for example, arrangements need to take account of population, distance, and any special needs of particular groups);
- that all relevant stakeholders are committed to targets and actions proposed in the Regional NRM Plan and RIS; and
- that the commitment and support of specific stakeholders critical to the implementation of particular actions identified in the Regional NRM Plan and RIS has been secured. The roles, responsibilities, capacity, specific commitments and cost-sharing arrangements of these stakeholders should be included in the plan:
 - this would include securing local government commitment to implement the actions for which they have responsibility (eg. amendments to statutory planning schemes or changes to public land management practices);
 - where relevant, plans should also provide evidence of effective liaison arrangements with management authorities responsible for conservation areas within the region (for example, national parks, World Heritage properties, and other protected areas).

Links to supporting modules

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| <p><i>Communication Plan module:</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html</p> |
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| <p><i>Community Engagement module:</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/guidance_pdf/guidelines_engagement.pdf</p> |
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| <p><i>Capacity Building module:</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/guidance_pdf/capacity_plans.pdf</p> |
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Planning Principle Two: Cover the full range of NRM issues

Rationale

Regional NRM Plans are required to cover the full range of NRM issues – across terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems as relevant – given the interconnected nature of natural resource issues and problems. Success in managing or preventing natural resource and environmental degradation will come from the development of better management systems that take account of the interrelationships between the various social, economic, biophysical and institutional factors. Regional NRM Plans should also consider and address impacts external to the region. This could include, for example, water quality impacts that a particular land use may be having downstream or on the Great Barrier Reef, or increased salinity levels outside the region because of land use in a recharge area.

Accreditation Requirements

As well as defining boundaries and coverage, Regional NRM Plans must provide:

- an overview of the region's natural, cultural, social and economic resources including current management practices – a core suite of information could include:
 - regional biophysical characteristics: landscape, geology, soils, vegetation, biodiversity, hydrology, climate (including climate change projections and impacts) and reference data sources/maps as possible;
 - production/economic issues;
 - social/demographic characteristics;
 - land use and tenure;
 - identified environmental and heritage values, including regional natural resource assets of international, national or state value, such as sites of natural heritage significance (eg. Matters of national environmental significance defined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* such as Ramsar wetlands, threatened species and ecological communities, and migratory species) and sites of cultural heritage significance; and
 - infrastructure (such as roads) and sites of cultural heritage significance potentially at risk from land degradation problems such as salinity.
- an analysis of the biophysical, social, institutional and economic factors affecting environmental and resource degradation within the region, including a description of the upstream inputs to, and downstream impacts from the region.

Major descriptions and sources of information for the above items may be in a variety of forms and locations. To avoid overly large plans, background and source information may be referenced provided it is publicly available, and this does not detract from the readability or usefulness of the plan. Plans should also document major information sources relevant to the region, including other plans and strategies (for example, regional water or vegetation management plans, or threatened species recovery plans).

For more information on the identification of regional natural resource assets refer to Appendix 2.

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Planning Principle Three: Scientific analysis of natural resource conditions, problems and priorities

Rationale

An adequate scientific base to underpin plans is important to ensure that community and government investments are directed to the most effective actions aimed at achieving the best outcomes.

Accreditation Requirements

Regional NRM Plans must demonstrate that:

- a range of options has been determined based on thorough technical analysis;

- all the environmental, cultural heritage, social and economic implications of these options have been assessed as part of the cost benefit analysis;
- proposed actions have been determined based on best available knowledge and information; and
- proposed actions will achieve regional targets and contribute to nationally agreed natural resource management outcomes identified in the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets.

To achieve the above, plans should be based upon a thorough analysis, carried out at the catchment/regional level, of natural resource conditions, problems and priorities, and include:

- a review of existing regional science and information for adequacy;
- baselines from which to measure change, consistent with indicators developed under the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and targets under the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets;
- an indication of actions required to fill identified information gaps;
- use of natural resource mapping such as of salinity, hydrology, vegetation cover/condition, biodiversity, land capability and terrain and modelling technologies where relevant;
- incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, where appropriate, in accordance with agreed protocols and with prior approval of the Indigenous custodians of the knowledge;
- analysis and where relevant modelling of proposed actions and their economic, social, environmental and cultural heritage impacts, with trade-offs clearly outlined, and potential solutions to adverse social and economic consequences; and
- Indications of how proposed strategies/actions are explicitly related to modelling scenarios, where these have been adopted to assist decision-making or priority setting.

It is recognised that 'perfect' information for developing integrated catchment/regional plans may not exist and that action should not be unduly delayed in a quest for better and better data:

- where there is insufficient scientific information available to fully meet this requirements and where the timeframe does not allow for its collection, the gaps should be specified, together with a strategy for future inclusion in the plan;
- consistent with a precautionary approach to addressing natural resource management issues, appropriate plans may be accredited and actions financed on information available. However, adaptive management approaches should be adopted and plans and strategies should be continually developed and improved as information and modelling techniques become available.

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Planning Principle Four: Addressing the causes rather than symptoms of problems

Rationale

Actions identified in the plan should be primarily focussed on addressing the causes of natural resource degradation identified in the initial analysis and overview of the region's issues. However, this should not preclude immediate action, where appropriate, on preventative, enhancement or restorative activities.

Plans should include strategies to achieve long-term improvements in natural resource management practices. These could be pursued through the development and implementation of innovative mixes of activities and incentives – tailored to each region's social, economic and environmental circumstances. Strategies to conserve and enhance ecosystem structure and function will also be important in order to maintain the ecosystem services which underpin biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use.

Governments recognise that a range of policy and management responses will be required to achieve the outcomes sought from Regional NRM Plans. Accordingly, governments are willing to explore a range of approaches and innovative solutions to bring about change.

Accreditation Requirements

Regional NRM Plans must include strategies to address the causes of NRM issues.

Specific strategies could include:

- identifying key threats/threatening processes, and undertaking preventative action in areas of high risk to reduce the prospect of additional or future natural resource management problems;
- defining terms and conditions under which further development may occur within existing planning regimes; and
- introducing economic and market based incentives and motivational mechanisms to facilitate fundamental change in the management of land, water, and vegetation resources.

Plans should indicate how community support can be developed and maintained, thereby helping to guarantee effective implementation of the Regional NRM Plan as well as achieve fundamental changes in resource use. This could be pursued through effective community involvement, communications programs, and recognition and consideration of community interests.

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Planning Principle Five: Strategies to implement agreed NRM policies to protect the natural resource base

Rationale

Where regions have responsibilities under Australian and/or Queensland Government land, vegetation, water, reef, marine and/or coastal policies and/or frameworks, governments will be looking at how these responsibilities are reflected in the Regional NRM Plan. It is expected that actions proposed in the Regional NRM Plan will contribute to these policies and frameworks and enable them to be taken forward and implemented at the regional level.

Bilateral agreements under government funding programs may commit Queensland Government and regions to specific improvements in policy frameworks or acceleration of actions under existing policy frameworks. Governments expect that Regional NRM Plans will show how these commitments will be met at the regional level and will work closely with the Regional NRM Bodies to ensure that Regional NRM Plans are developed with consideration of key NRM policy requirements.

For example, for regions covered by the NAPSWQ Intergovernmental Agreement, requirements for water management will include meeting any caps on extractive use of water introduced by the Queensland Government and implementing improvements in environmental flows in accordance with the COAG water reforms. The NAPSWQ Intergovernmental Agreement also requires Queensland to institute controls, which at a minimum prohibit land clearing in the priority regions where it would lead to unacceptable land or water degradation.

Accreditation Requirements

Targets and actions in Regional NRM Plan must demonstrate how they are consistent with and contribute to agreed Australian and Queensland strategies and policies (where applicable) such as:

- the COAG Water Reform Framework;
- the National Water Quality Management Strategy, including agreement on water quality environmental values and Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality;
- vegetation/habitat policies, plans, instruments, including the National Framework for the Management and Monitoring of Australia's Native Vegetation;
- management strategies for weeds of national significance;
- recovery/threat abatement/conservation management plans for threatened species and ecological communities;
- coastal management policies, strategies and plans;
- strategies for greenhouse abatement and/or carbon sinks including the National Greenhouse Strategy and Queensland Greenhouse Policy framework;
- regional and site specific Indigenous and historic heritage legislation, policies and plans;
- Council Of Australian Governments Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan and associated Primary Industry and Natural Resources Management Plans;
- World Heritage management principles and ensure that actions will not have a significant impact on the values of World Heritage property;
- Murray Darling Basin initiatives including the Basin Sustainability Plan;
- the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan; and
- National datasets pertaining to wetlands and migratory birds.

Links to supporting modules

Reef Water Quality Protection Plan

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Biodiversity Planning

http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/guidance_pdf/biodiversity.pdf

Wetlands

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Climate change

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Environmental values for water quality

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Good Quality Agricultural Land

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Linkages from regional NRM planning to property planning

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/policy.html>

Planning Principle Six: Consistency with other planning processes and legislative requirements

Rationale

Regional NRM Plans can perform an integrating or coordinating function for other NRM plans and planning processes and the targets and actions proposed in those plans. An appropriate and effective Regional NRM Plan must necessarily align with the planning frameworks of national, state and local government plans and programs. However, Regional NRM Plan accreditation processes will not over-ride the requirements of Australian and Queensland Government legislation, and Regional NRM Plans should still comply with Australian/Queensland/regional/local statutory and non-statutory planning frameworks and instruments.

Where there is a cross-over of issues between processes, Regional NRM Bodies may simply refer to ('call up') existing NRM strategies in other plans, or negotiate with other bodies on target levels and taking over implementation responsibility for some strategies (allowing the other plans to 'call up' the new Regional NRM Plan.) Regional NRM Bodies could also work together on joint strategies, including research thereby value adding to each other's Regional NRM Plans. Using and building on plans that are already available or being prepared will save time and resources and also foster a coordinated and integrated approach to natural resource planning and management within a region. Agreed arrangements with other existing planning bodies should be specified in the Regional NRM Plan.

Nevertheless, the influence of plans on each other needs to be two-way and iterative, that is, existing plans, including statutory plans, may need to be amended to reflect the targets and strategies in Regional NRM plans as well as *vice versa*. Over time, a two-way interaction between these other plans and Regional NRM Plans needs to develop so that plans become aligned and targets and strategies are consistent.

Accreditation Requirements

It is unlikely that Regional NRM Plans will achieve accreditation unless they demonstrate consistency with or enhance the objectives of existing statutory planning and management strategies. Ongoing consultation with statutory bodies, including Australian, State and local government agencies, during the development of the Regional NRM Plan should ensure this is achieved.

If significant inconsistencies occur between Regional NRM Plans and plans produced through other planning processes, Regional NRM Plans should explain the rationale for the inconsistency and include appropriate measures to address negative impacts arising from proposed strategies and actions.

Links to supporting modules

Integration of Regional Planning Processes
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/integration.html>

Integrated Planning Act Plans
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/integration.html>

Regional Vegetation Management Plans
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/target_integrating_pdf/vegetation.pdf

Water Resource Plans
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/integration.html>

Coastal Management Plans
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/integration.html>

Pest Management Plans
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/target_integrating_pdf/pest.pdf

Fisheries Management Plans
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/target_integrating_pdf/fisheries.pdf

For information on other plans relevant to a region refer to the Forms of Planning website.

Forms of Planning
<http://nrm.dnr.qld.gov.au/planning/index.html>

3.9 Content of planning phase outputs

Section 3.7 described *processes* required to be followed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans. Section 3.8 described the *planning principles* required to be demonstrated and adhered to for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans.

This section describes *content* required to be developed for the preparation of planning phase outputs and accreditation of Regional NRM Plans.

Planning phase outputs required to be prepared are the:

1. Community Information Paper (optional)
The preparation of the *content* of a Community Information Paper is the first step in preparing the *content* of a Regional NRM Plan.
2. Regional NRM Plan
The *content* of Regional NRM Plans must:
 - set targets at the regional scale, consistent with the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets;
 - identify strategic, prioritised and achievable actions to address the range of NRM issues and achieve the regional targets; and
 - provide for continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement, consistent with the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
3. Regional Investment Strategy
The *content* of a Regional Investment Strategy is fully consistent with and complementary to the *content* of a Regional NRM Plan and describes how investments will be made to initiate actions and achieve targets described in the Regional NRM Plan.
4. Regional Partnership Agreement
The *content* of a Regional Partnership Agreement reflects the agreement between the Australian and Queensland Governments and a Regional NRM Body on the obligations and implementation responsibilities for an accredited Regional NRM Plan.

Output One: Community Information Paper (Optional)

Rationale

The engagement of regional community stakeholders is critical to the preparation and accreditation of a Regional NRM Plan. To adequately engage stakeholders Regional NRM Bodies must inform them of regional NRM issues, the planning process and how stakeholders can participate in the process. It is considered best practice if Regional NRM Bodies engage and inform stakeholders as early in the planning process as possible and prior to the drafting of the Regional NRM Plan. The preparation of a Community Information Paper is considered an effective method of engaging and informing stakeholders although other methods may be used according to what is regionally appropriate.

Accreditation Requirements

The development of a Community Information Paper is not compulsory so there are no accreditation requirements. However the preparation of a Community Information Paper will significantly assist Regional NRM Bodies in the development of a Regional NRM Plan and demonstrate how they have satisfied planning principles when seeking accreditation of the Plan. To develop and prepare *content* for a Community Information Paper a Regional NRM Body should undertake a plan scoping exercise, develop a regional overview, and develop a communication plan.

Plan Scoping and Regional Overview

Plan scoping and regional overview development processes should provide a description of the full range of NRM information, values and issues for a region including:

- an overview of the region's natural resources including a broad profile of natural resource baseline conditions and trends;
- NRM information gaps and possible strategies to address those gaps;
- the range of known NRM issues, including risks to key assets;
- a preliminary profile of social and economic factors, including an analysis of the relationship between social and economic outcomes and activities which depend upon or affect natural resource allocation, management and use;
- possible strategies to address the identified NRM issues;
- a review of existing relevant plans/strategies, legislative requirements and an assessment of their relevance to the proposed Regional NRM Plan; and
- preliminary identification of appropriate targets for natural resource management issues.

For more information on the identification of regional natural resource assets and risks refer to Appendix 2.

A review of existing planning activities may include Australian, Queensland and Local Government NRM planning and policy frameworks such as the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, Regional Vegetation Management Plans, and Pest Management Plans. In doing this, existing NRM strategies, targets and actions can be identified and incorporated into the Regional NRM Plan during the preparation process, or opportunities for interaction can be identified.

The review may involve the Regional NRM Body establishing the availability of key regional, Queensland and Australian datasets followed by an initial review to profile the key resource, social and economic considerations relevant to the Regional NRM Plan. Where existing regional and catchment profiles or regional information systems exist, these could be updated. The review should include an assessment of the risks to regional assets, including risks to primary production, social capital and infrastructure and to conservation and biodiversity assets in the region.

The principles of covering the full range of NRM issues; strategies to implement agreed NRM policies to protect the natural resource base; and consistency with other planning

processes and legislative requirements are particularly relevant to plan scoping and preparing a regional overview.

It is recognised that a comprehensive suite of baseline data may not be available for the range of NRM issues in all regions. Addressing information gaps and/or upgrading data are legitimate priority actions for a Regional NRM Plan.

Community Engagement

A Communication Plan should also be developed by the Regional NRM Body describing processes for sector and stakeholder involvement and public consultation during the preparation of the Regional NRM Plan and RIS. For accreditation of a Regional NRM Plan, a Regional NRM Body will need to demonstrate that it has adequately involved all stakeholders, including Indigenous communities, in the development of the draft Regional NRM Plan and that generally there is appropriate stakeholder support for the draft Regional NRM Plan. The *principle of effective involvement of all key stakeholders in plan development and implementation* is particularly relevant to the preparation of a communication plan.

Where possible, linkages should be made with consultation processes for other regional and local planning processes, maximising the potential for integrated NRM planning.

Links to supporting modules

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| <p><i>National Capacity Building Framework</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/national/pdf/cap_build_framework.pdf</p> |
|--|

Following the completion of a plan scoping exercise and the completion of a regional overview and a communication plan, significant information should be compiled in a Community Information Paper to inform the general community of the region's NRM issues and invite community comment and participation in the development of the draft Regional NRM Plan.

Output Two: Regional NRM Plan

Regional NRM Plans are the most significant output of the planning phase and will require significant time, skills and resources to prepare. It is considered best practice if the content of Regional NRM Plans is similar to the indicative contents outlined below.

Sections 1, 2, 3 & 8 are highly recommended, but not compulsory, contents of a Regional NRM Plan. Inclusion of these sections may significantly assist the accreditation process.

Sections 4, 5, 6, & 7 are compulsory and must be included as accreditation requirements.

1. *Acknowledgements*
2. *Executive Summary*
3. *Introduction*
4. *Regional Overview*
5. *Targets*
6. *Actions*
7. *Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Review*

8. References / Appendices / Glossary

Plan Content One: Acknowledgements

Rationale

Acknowledging the contribution of participants in the preparation of a Regional NRM Plan contributes to maintaining positive relationships and recognises efforts made. Regional NRM Bodies should record significant participants and contributors to the Regional NRM Plan preparation process.

Accreditation Requirements

Nil

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is an Acknowledgements section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- What is the page number/section reference to the Acknowledgements section?

Plan Content Two: Executive Summary

Rationale

The executive summary provides an abbreviated version of the Regional NRM Plan's key components and findings so that the Plan's audience can quickly comprehend issues raised and targets and actions proposed.

Accreditation Requirements

Nil

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is an Executive Summary section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- Does the Executive Summary concisely outline the context, process for development, and rationale for key findings, targets and implementation actions contained in the Regional NRM Plan?
- What is the page number/section reference to the Executive Summary section?

Plan Content Three: Introduction

Rationale

An Introduction to the Regional NRM Plan provides an opportunity to:

- detail the geographic extent of the Region and the composition of the Regional NRM Body;
- introduce the Region's NRM issues;
- outline the purpose and scope of the Regional NRM Plan;

- outline the sections contained in the Regional NRM Plan and their relationship to the RIS; and
- describe the plan preparation process, including the community consultation process, the involvement of key stakeholders and the resolution of controversial issues.

Accreditation Requirements

Nil

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is an Introduction section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- What are the page number/section references to the Introduction.
- Does the Introduction:
 - effectively introduce key contents and provide a sound context and foundation for interpreting the Plan;
 - demonstrate the effective involvement of all stakeholders to ensure Regional NRM Plans are accurate, comprehensive, well coordinated and able to be implemented;
 - demonstrate how controversial issues were solved; and
 - demonstrate a commitment by stakeholders to implementing the Plan?

Plan Content Four: Regional Overview

Rationale

Regional NRM Plans are required to cover the full range of NRM issues – across terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, estuarine and marine ecosystems as relevant – given the interconnected nature of natural resource issues and problems. The Regional Overview provides the information basis for establishing NRM condition, trends and issues in a region.

Regional NRM Plans should also consider and address impacts external to the region. This could include, for example, water quality impacts that a particular land use may be having downstream, or increased salinity levels outside the region because of land use in a recharge area.

The regional overview should include analysis of relevant regional information, including a broad profile of natural resource condition and trends, related cultural, social and economic issues and an outline of past and current natural resource activities. The desired outcome from developing this component of the Regional NRM Plan would be a qualitative and quantitative description of the natural resource management issues facing the region; their cause, extent and severity; and the impacts of these issues to use as a basis for setting objectives and targets.

The regional overview should include an assessment of the risks to regional assets, including risks to primary production, infrastructure and conservation and biodiversity

assets in the region. The regional overview should also include an assessment of impacts/risks to downstream systems (eg estuaries, the Great Barrier Reef) and placed in the context of wider scale ecosystem and conservation functions and goals (eg habitat for migratory birds).

The regional overview should take a holistic or systems view of the interaction of the natural, economic and social characteristics. This will help later on in the planning process in focusing on causes, rather than symptoms, in choosing actions.

Compiling this information should involve an initial review of the key natural, cultural, social and economic resource considerations, followed by an assessment of the availability, adequacy and integrity of relevant regional and national resource condition and socio-economic datasets. This should lead to identifying relevant information gaps. Regional NRM Plan should include an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with a range of strategies to fill these gaps.

Accreditation Requirements

As well as defining boundaries and coverage, Regional NRM Plans should provide:

- an overview of the region's natural, cultural, social and economic resources including current management practices – a core suite of information could include:
 - regional biophysical characteristics including landscape, land capability and terrain, geology, soils, salinity, vegetation cover/condition, biodiversity, hydrology, climate (including climate change projections and impacts), and reference data sources/maps and modelling technologies;
 - production/economic issues;
 - social/demographic characteristics;
 - land use and tenure;
 - identified environmental and heritage values, including regional natural resource assets of international, national or state value, such as sites of natural heritage significance (eg. Matters of national environmental significance defined in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* such as Ramsar wetlands, threatened species and ecological communities, and migratory species) and sites of cultural heritage significance; and
 - infrastructure (such as roads) and sites of cultural heritage significance potentially at risk from land degradation problems such as salinity;
- an analysis of the biophysical, social, institutional and economic factors affecting environmental and resource degradation within the region, including a description of the upstream inputs to, and downstream impacts from the region;
- incorporated Indigenous knowledge, where appropriate, in accordance with agreed protocols and with prior approval of the Indigenous custodians of the knowledge;
- give a scientific analysis of natural resource conditions and trends, problems and priorities at the regional level;
- an assessment of the risks to regional assets. Include an assessment of impacts/risks to downstream systems (eg estuaries, the Great Barrier Reef, other

- marine systems) and place in the context of wider scale ecosystem and conservation functions and goals (eg habitat for migratory birds) and
- outline processes and commitments to fill data gaps or improve knowledge and processes.

Social and Economic assessments should be transparent, clearly documenting:

- the information used;
- the methodologies used and their rationale;
- the specific application of any analysis techniques used and the assumptions made;
- how any input / feedback from stakeholders was considered and incorporated into the assessment, and;
- the findings of the assessment, including clarification of the likely accuracy of the findings.

Specific expectations of Social and Economic assessments are that:

1. The assessment undertaken is cognisant of the relevant sections of the NAPSWQ bilateral agreement and guidelines for the development of Plans.
2. Without requiring the use of any particular information or methodologies, the assessment should demonstrate the use of broadly accepted relevant information and methodologies. Information on this issue can be sourced from available guidance products, any other relevant documentation and professional advice / input from recognised practitioners in the fields of social sciences and economics.
3. Where strategies and proposed actions are likely to have significant impacts, advice should be sought on appropriate approaches to assessment. This advice may include, but is not limited to, problem specification, the provision of data, assistance with the development of terms of reference for assessments and peer review of assessments.
4. Where Regional Bodies do not have any “in-house” expertise in social and economic assessment, the JSC will seek evidence of the astute use of recognised social science and economic practitioners in the development of the Plan.
5. Social and economic issues should be considered, and where necessary, specifically incorporated at each stage of the Plan development process (Plan scoping, target setting, strategy development, investment strategy development, and monitoring and evaluation).
6. It is expected that the social and economic assessment will become more detailed and robust as the development of the Plan progresses, particularly with respect to investments that may have significant impacts.
7. A social and economic profile of the region should be undertaken to identify general social, cultural and economic trends and to enable the determination of any impacts of proposed investments. This profile should include trend information wherever possible. The profile should demonstrate an understanding of any social and economic dependencies on and linkages to the use and health of the resource base.
8. The social and economic profile of the region including trends should help establish the ‘do nothing more’ or base case against which the impacts of proposed actions and investment strategies are evaluated. This should be clearly

described in terms of taking no further action apart from a continuation of current effort.

9. Where it is apparent that there are potential material social and / or economic impacts of any proposed investment, the affected parties (individuals, industries, regions, communities, cultural groups etc) should be identified. Immediate, medium term and long term positive and negative impacts should be considered. Each impact should be described, and where possible, evaluated, preferably against a 'do nothing more' base case
10. Where a number of options are available to achieve a desired outcome identified in the Plan's investment strategy, evidence will be sought that the relative social and economic impacts (including potential tradeoffs) of each option are identified and evaluated.
11. Evidence will be required that affected parties have been consulted and any social and economic issues raised by them have been appropriately considered and incorporated into the assessment.
12. As a general rule, the JSC would expect a more detailed and robust assessment where the potential social or economic impacts are significant (i.e. the greater the potential impact – the greater JSC's expectation for a more detailed and robust assessment).
13. All assessments should be transparent, clearly documenting:
 - a. the information used;
 - b. the methodologies used and their rationale;
 - c. the specific application of any analysis techniques used and the assumptions made;
 - d. how any input / feedback from stakeholders was considered and incorporated into the assessment, and;
 - e. the findings of the assessment, including clarification of the likely accuracy of the findings.

Links to supporting modules

Social and economic module

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/social.html>

Integrated Planning Act Plans (for social and economic data)

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/integration.html>

The **Queensland Regional Bodies Information System (QRBIS)** is an online system providing access to socio-economic data concorded (best fitted) to Regional NRM Body boundaries. Where data is available, data is also presented at the sub-regional level.

The data is of particular use to regional bodies and their advisors/consultants in undertaking regional profiling exercises and to develop a better understanding of the demographic makeup of regions and sub regions. All datasets in the database will be updated whenever new data becomes available.

*The database is available at:
<http://www.oesr.qld.gov.au/qrbis/>*

The regional overview should also demonstrate that *processes* described in section 3.7 of this document have been followed for its preparation, and the *planning principles* of:

- involving stakeholders,
- covering the full range of NRM issues,
- being underpinned by science,
- focussing on causes not symptoms of NRM issues,
- including implementation strategies for agreed NRM policies, and
- being consistent with other planning processes,

as discussed in section 3.8 of this document, have been adhered to in the preparation of the *content* of the Regional Overview.

The Regional Overview should also demonstrate how feedback from public consultation on the Community Information Paper and/or the draft Regional NRM Plan, as well as advice from RCGs, has been incorporated, or why it has not been incorporated.

Major descriptions and sources of information for the above items may be in a variety of forms and locations. To avoid overly large plans, background and source information may be referenced provided it is publicly available. Plans should also document major information sources relevant to the region, including other plans and strategies (for example, regional water or vegetation management plans, or threatened species recovery plans).

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is a Regional Overview section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- Does it effectively overview all NRM aspects of the region and satisfy accreditation requirements?
- Has it incorporated feedback from public consultation and government advice or explained why not?
- What is the page number/section reference to the Regional Overview section?
- What are the page number/section references to each of the Regional Overview accreditation requirements?

Plan Content Five: Setting targets at the regional scale, consistent with the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets

Rationale

Targets will be a core element of each Regional NRM Plan, and may relate to absolute improvement in resource condition or decreases in the rate of degradation. The Australian and State/Territory Governments have developed a National Framework for Natural Resource Management Standards and Targets. The Framework specifies the minimum set of matters for which all Regional NRM Bodies must set measurable and achievable regional targets (see Table 1), but does not specify the level for the targets in any region. In recognition of the relationship between standards and targets and monitoring and evaluation requirements, multilaterally agreed indicators applicable to each region's context for natural resource outcomes and management actions (including

capacity building) will be required to be included in each Regional NRM Plan. A range of assessment tools such as risk analysis, trade-off analysis and cost-benefit analysis may be used to inform this process.

Targets can be characterised as aspirational targets, achievable resource condition targets, and targets for management actions. Aspirational targets set a long-term vision, providing a direction for setting the costed and achievable resource condition targets. Management action targets identify short-term, specific activities or results, which will contribute to achieving the desired changes in resource condition.

Accreditation Requirements

Governments will require all Regional NRM Bodies to undertake an initial assessment of all matters identified in the minimum set of required targets (see Table 1), as part of their integrated NRM planning process. If there are no significant NRM issues raised with regard to a particular matter, a statement that a target is not applicable and the evidence for this conclusion should be included in the plan. The need to set a target should be considered at any review of the accredited plan.

An understanding of the social and economic consequences that may arise in the delivery of actions towards the targets is central to the setting of resource condition targets at the regional scale. It is important that an analysis of proposed targets is undertaken based on a defensible profile social and economic conditions and trends, as well as on environmental data.

In many cases, a reasonable period of monitoring will be required to establish baselines or trends. Hence, many Regional NRM Bodies will not be in a position to set natural resource condition targets at the time their Regional NRM Plans are put forward for accreditation. To address this situation, for accreditation, a Regional NRM Plan will need to contain:

- i. management action targets, which will result in progress towards the minimum set of matters identified for regional targets;
- ii. resource condition targets consistent with the National Standards and Targets Framework, where they can be set, noting the availability of such tools as the Water Quality Targets database;
- iii. resource condition targets which have been agreed by relevant jurisdictions, including affected jurisdictions, through other processes, including Murray Darling Basin end-of-valley salinity targets;
- iv. commitment to the early establishment of monitoring systems to collect/analyse baseline and trend information, to enable setting of resource condition targets against the minimum set of matters;
- v. proposals and a timetable for undertaking the target-setting process; and
- vi. a commitment to have in place, within 3 years of signing of the relevant Bilateral Agreement(s), the minimum set of regional resource condition targets, or have demonstrated significant progress towards their establishment (including performance against points iii and iv above).

Some regions may have existing resource condition targets for matters in the minimum set that are specified differently from those in the National Framework, but which meet the requirements and priorities determined by the Regional NRM Body and Queensland. Providing the Regional NRM Plan includes the requirements identified in points (i) to (vi) above, then the arrangements for addressing these differences and transition to the National Framework will be agreed between the Australian and Queensland Governments.

For accreditation of a Regional NRM Plan, targets should also demonstrate that *processes* described in section 3.7 of this document have been followed for their setting, and the *planning principles* of:

- involving stakeholders,
- covering the full range of NRM issues,
- being underpinned by science,
- focussing on causes not symptoms of NRM issues,
- including implementation strategies for agreed NRM policies, and
- being consistent with other planning processes,

as discussed in section 3.8 of this document, have been adhered to in the preparation of the *content* of the Targets section.

In addition, targets should also be:

- based on best available science;
- benchmarked against current natural resource condition and trend;
- capable of being linked to management actions;
- defined at appropriate scales and set in specific locations;
- able to take account of cumulative impacts of actions and the dynamic nature of natural systems;
- meaningful and achievable, reflecting the agreed natural resource outcomes sought;
- measurable so outcomes can be quantified;
- time-bound, with targets moving progressively towards agreed outcomes; and
- demonstrate how feedback from public consultation on the Community Information Paper and/or the draft Regional NRM Plan, as well as advice from RCGs, has been incorporated, or why it has not been incorporated.

Links to supporting modules

Targets module

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html>

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is a Targets section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- Does it set targets at the regional scale consistent with the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets and satisfy other accreditation requirements?
- Has it incorporated feedback from public consultation and government advice or explained why not?
- What is the page number/section reference to the Targets section?

- What are the page number/section references to each of the Targets accreditation requirements?

Table 1 - National Outcomes and Minimum Set of Regional Targets

| <p>National Outcomes The national outcomes are aspirational statements about desired national natural resource outcomes</p> | <p>Matters for which Regional Targets must be set</p> |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of salinity on land and water resources is minimised, avoided or reduced. 2. Biodiversity and the extent, diversity and condition of native ecosystems are maintained or rehabilitated 3. Populations of significant species and ecological communities are maintained or rehabilitated. 4. Ecosystem services and functions are maintained or rehabilitated. 5. Surface and groundwater quality is maintained or enhanced. 6. The impact of threatening processes on locations and systems which are critical for conservation of biodiversity, agricultural production, towns, infrastructure and cultural and social values, is avoided or minimised. 7. Surface water and groundwater is securely allocated for sustainable production purposes and to support human uses and the environment, within the sustainable capacity of the water resource. 8. Sustainable production systems are developed and management practices are in place, which maintain or rehabilitate biodiversity and ecosystem services, maintain or enhance resource quality, maintain productive capacity and prevent and manage degradation. | <p>Resource Condition Matters for Targets</p> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land salinity. 2. Soil condition. 3. Native vegetation communities' integrity. 4. Inland aquatic ecosystems integrity (rivers and other wetlands). 5. Estuarine, coastal and marine habitats integrity. 6. Nutrients in aquatic environments. 7. Turbidity / suspended particulate matter in aquatic environments. 8. Surface water salinity in freshwater aquatic environments. 9. Significant native species and ecological communities. 10. Ecologically significant invasive species. |
| | <p>Management Action Matters for Targets</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical assets identified and protected. 2. Water allocation plans developed and implemented. 3. Improved land and water management practices adopted. | |
| <p>Please note: This table should be read in conjunction with the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the table describing "National Outcomes, Matters for Target and Performance Indicators"</p> | |

Plan Content Six: Strategic, prioritised and achievable actions necessary to address the range of NRM issues and achieve the regional targets

Rationale

Sufficient resources will rarely be available to immediately implement all actions and needs identified in a Regional NRM Plan. As a result, regional NRM Bodies will need to identify and prioritise the strategies and actions necessary to achieve the regional targets.

Regional NRM Plans should describe and evaluate the range of possible actions to address the issues and their social, economic and environmental impacts. This would include:

- quantifying, where appropriate, the costs and benefits of options, as well as the implications of taking no action;
- where relevant, modelling proposed actions and their economic, social and environmental impacts;
- outlining trade-offs and solutions or mitigation strategies;
- identifying the circumstances in which regions may need structural adjustment assistance as a result of the plan's implementation; and
- identifying community capacity building activities necessary to promote sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation.

In some areas it will be technically and economically unfeasible to do anything but learn to live with the effects of natural resource degradation, such as salinity. Therefore the development of a shared vision that incorporates features such as salinity risk areas and sites that may have structural adjustment issues or other regional development opportunities is vital.

Accreditation Requirements

On the basis on the above rationale, Regional NRM Plans should describe preferred options and actions, and their impacts. These would include actions to:

- protect the natural resource base which underpins sustainable production and promote more efficient resource use (for example, by managing soil acidification, soil structure, water resources);
- protect environmental values (for example, by conserving biological diversity, habitats and ecosystem functioning); and
- ameliorate negative impacts arising from proposed strategies and actions.

Each proposed action or strategy will need to contribute to the achievement of the specific targets. For this reason the plan will need to include an analysis of:

- the mechanism or process through which the action will achieve or contribute to the target/milestone;
- the assumptions underlying the mechanism or process through which it is believed the action will achieve the target/milestone;
- the possible risks (e.g. possible external influences) that might adversely impact on the achievement of the target/milestone.

The assumptions will be the basis for developing evaluation questions for the action or strategy. The identified risks will be the basis for a risk management strategy by which the Regional NRM Plan will manage potential risks to the achievement of targets/milestones.

Regional NRM Plans should reflect the interrelated as well as the broad nature of natural resource management issues. Specific strategies and actions could include, for example:

- maintaining and improving the condition of existing native vegetation, including threatened communities;
- establishing multiple purpose perennial vegetation (focussed on agriculture, forests, biodiversity and greenhouse outcomes) in targeted areas, identified through salinity, vegetation and hydrology mapping, and groundwater modelling;
- implementing recovery and action plans for threatened species that occur within the region;
- implementing threat abatement plans for key threatening processes within the region;
- protecting and rehabilitating priority waterways, floodplains, wetlands, and estuaries;
- improving stream water quality, for example, through activities in the riparian zone or through using engineering works, where appropriate, in critical areas (eg. salt interception devices and groundwater pumping, removal of weirs and redundant structures, fish ladders, artificial wetlands);
- improving the management of environmental allocations;
- using water more efficiently (eg. through activities which harness private investment in storage and distribution systems);
- improving water quality through best management practices, for example by minimising nutrient discharges and water sensitive urban design;
- installing drainage in catchments/regions where agreed by affected land managers, the downstream impacts are positive, and the overall benefits of the scheme provide substantial long-term results over other approaches;
- improving planning frameworks to reduce the rate of habitat clearance;
- improving capital works planning and coordination to minimise to best direct effort and resources to mitigate downstream impacts;
- stimulating landholders to implement improved biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management;
- assessing, identifying and addressing training needs;
- developing capacity building strategies to be adopted within the region;
- addressing adjustment and property amalgamation issues including the impact on farmers, landholders, rural industries and flow on effects to regional communities;
- identifying and addressing natural resource management causes of rural/urban infrastructure degradation (buildings, roads, etc.);
- identifying strategies to deal with significant adverse social and economic impacts arising from changes to natural resource management.
- identifying opportunities for the implementation of market based mechanisms, such as markets for ecosystem services.

For regions that include areas identified under the NAPSWQ, Regional NRM Plans should also include specific actions to:

- prevent, stabilise and reverse trends in dryland salinity affecting the sustainability of production, the conservation of biological diversity and the viability of regional infrastructure; and
- improve water quality and secure reliable allocations for human uses, industry and the environment:
 - this could include, for example, strategies for reallocating water and projects that result in more efficient delivery, use and recycling of water.

Actions should also demonstrate that *processes* described in section 3.7 of this document have been followed for their identification, and the *planning principles* of:

- involving stakeholders,
- covering the full range of NRM issues,
- being underpinned by science,
- focussing on causes not symptoms of NRM issues,
- including implementation strategies for agreed NRM policies, and
- being consistent with other planning processes,

as discussed in section 3.8 of this document, have been adhered to in the preparation of the *content* of the Actions section.

Actions should also demonstrate how feedback from public consultation on the Community Information Paper and/or the draft Regional NRM Plan, as well as advice from RCGs, has been incorporated, or why it has not been incorporated.

Links to supporting modules

Targets module

<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html>

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Is an Actions section included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- Has a detailed set of prioritised actions guiding the implementation of the Regional NRM Plan been developed?
- Do proposed actions focus on achieving results for issues of national, state or regional significance that are identified as priorities in that region.
- Has a process for establishing priority actions been documented?
- Do actions outline their relationship to monitoring and review processes, including establishing milestones and indicators to measure performance?
- Is the linkage of priority actions to the Regional Investment Strategy identified?
- Have proposed actions incorporated feedback from public consultation and government advice or explained why not?
- What is the page number/section reference to the Actions section?
- What are the page number/section references to each of the Actions accreditation requirements?

Plan Content Seven: Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting and Review

Rationale

To provide a sound basis for investment, Regional NRM Plans must include clear requirements for ongoing monitoring and review to reflect new information and ensure continuous development and improvement of the Regional NRM Plan over time. This should include a process for continuing to engage all stakeholders in reviewing and updating Regional NRM Plans. Regional NRM Plans should also identify accountability, monitoring and reporting arrangements, and performance milestones (based on management action targets) linked to the achievement of regional targets.

Accreditation Requirements

Accountability arrangements for implementing Regional NRM Plans will need to integrate with broader accountability frameworks of relevant funding programs. For those regions that include areas identified by NAPSWQ, accountability arrangements should integrate with the framework outlined in the NAPSWQ Intergovernmental Agreement that includes:

- a) Regional NRM Plans including adequate monitoring of short to medium-term implementation of actions and a commitment to long-term effective monitoring of the biophysical, social and economic impacts of investments;
- b) Regional NRM Bodies reporting annually to the Australian and Queensland governments on progress and investment proposals on a three year running basis; and
- c) Australian and Queensland governments reporting annually on a national and state basis through the NRM Ministerial Council, with the reports being publicly available.

The National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the National NRM Standards and Targets Framework establish common structures and requirements for monitoring and evaluation within NRM programs. There will be some mandatory information that will be required for national processes.

Regional NRM Plans should contain a monitoring and evaluation component that is consistent with the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and include the key elements outlined below. Where these elements do not appear, there should be a clearly documented process to establish these elements within required timeframes.

- *Program Logic:*
 - An explanation of how the Regional NRM Plan is intended to bring about long term resource condition outcomes, including the core strategies to be employed, the stages in each process, the change mechanisms and the assumptions that underlie them. (*Note that the Regional NRM Plan should contain a comprehensive outline of the general processes by which the resource condition objectives will be achieved. The Investment Strategy should set these out in greater detail for individual funded actions.*)
 - Processes to test these assumptions and revise the plan when necessary.
 - A performance information and evaluation strategy that is consistent with, and relevant to, this rationale and these assumptions.

- *Existing Monitoring:*
 - Queensland and local government monitoring programs will provide an important part of the monitoring and evaluation components of Regional NRM Plans.
 - The Regional NRM Plan should set out current or existing natural resource monitoring arrangements, and how these will be incorporated into an overall monitoring strategy for the Regional NRM Plan. A comprehensive inventory of natural resource data held by State agencies and available to Regional NRM Bodies is being prepared.
 - Examples of data sources include DNRM&E's AUSRIVAS program, SLATS land clearing data, statewide biophysical river water quality monitoring programs. Existing community monitoring (for example, the Birds Australia database, Waterwatch programs, and Local Government monitoring programs);

- *Performance Indicators:*
 - Indicators and measures consistent with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to be used to measure and report on the minimum set of matters for targets established under the Standards and Targets Framework.
 - Indicators and measures which will be used in measuring and reporting on management action targets within 2 years of commencing activities and at the end of the program.
 - Processes to review these targets periodically in the light of monitoring and evaluation findings, new research, or improved models.
 - All other indicators pertinent to the strategies or actions employed to achieve the goals of the Plan (e.g. measures of outputs or of institutional or behavioural change).
 - Details of the processes for data collection, which ensure that necessary performance data is current and timely.
 - A satisfactory process of validation and quality control for performance data at the point of collection.

- *Baseline Data:*
 - Details of all of the available baseline data including measures of resource condition, attitude and behaviours where relevant to the Plan.
 - An assessment of data usefulness and applicability.
 - A comprehensive inventory of natural resource data held by State agencies and available to regional bodies is being prepared.

- *Actions to Address Data Gaps:*
 - Identification of any data gaps including baseline data or deficiencies in existing monitoring arrangements that need to be filled to meet performance information requirements for the plan
 - A plan to develop appropriate measures to fill these gaps

- *Data Management:*
Include details of the:

- proposed information management system and an assessment of its adequacy for the collection, storage, analysis and reporting of all performance information, including a costing
 - systems capability of cooperative data-sharing arrangements where possible to minimise duplication and maximise efficient use of data.
 - access arrangements for the information that is collected
 - systems conformity to the multilateral Data Management Agreement / ANZLIC
- *Evaluation:*
 - An evaluation strategy that establishes processes for the review of the Regional NRM Plan and its evaluation needs, at both regional and project levels.
 - Details of the structures and processes for the management of the schedule of evaluations and the implementation of their recommendations
 - An agreement for the evaluations to be utilised within the National M&E Framework.
- *Communication and Reporting:*
 - Details of a comprehensive reporting structure tailored to the needs of all stakeholder groups including its ability to transmit complete and accurate information in the agreed format to the required stakeholders in time for it to be used for the purposes for which it was collected. The reporting structure should be linked with the Regional NRM Body's Communication Plan and detailed in the Regional Partnership Agreement.
 - An annual report should be prepared outlining progress in implementing the accredited Regional NRM Plan, including progress against agreed targets, performance measures and milestones. This should include evaluation of the effectiveness and appropriateness of actions and strategies under the Regional NRM Plan, and contribute to the development of a State of the Region report aligned with the Queensland State of the Environment Report.
 - Some mandatory information that will be required for national evaluation. This information will be determined through the development of the National Framework for NRM Standards and Targets and the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- *Roles and Responsibilities:*
 - Details of the organisational and institutional arrangements and responsibilities for:
 - the collection, storage, analysis and reporting of performance information
 - the management of the performance information management system.
 - ensuring relevant evaluations are undertaken at appropriate times, and that findings are reported and utilised as appropriate.

- *Adequate Resources:*
 - An assessment of the adequacy of the resources allocated for on-going maintenance of systems for the collection of monitoring data, including storage, analysis and reporting; the conduct of evaluations; and establishment of baseline information (Note that resources include dollars, capacity, institutions and structures)
 - A realistically costed proposal for any additional requirements.

Monitoring and evaluation proposals should also demonstrate that *processes* described in section 3.7 of this document have been followed for their identification, and the *planning principles* of:

- involving stakeholders,
- covering the full range of NRM issues,
- being underpinned by science,
- focussing on causes not symptoms of NRM issues,
- including implementation strategies for agreed NRM policies, and
- being consistent with other planning processes,

as discussed in section 3.8 of this document, have been adhered to in the preparation of the *content* of the Monitoring and Evaluation section.

Monitoring and evaluation should also demonstrate how feedback from public consultation on the Community Information Paper and/or the draft Regional NRM Plan, as well as advice from RCGs, has been incorporated, or why it has not been incorporated

Links to supporting modules

Monitoring and Evaluation module
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html>

National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/national/pdf/aust_me_framework.pdf

National NRM Standards and Targets Framework
<http://www.deh.gov.au/nrm/monitoring/standards/>

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

- Are continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement of the Regional NRM Plan sections included in the Regional NRM Plan?
- Are continuous development, monitoring, review and improvements consistent with the National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and include its key elements?
- Are continuous development, monitoring, review and improvement of the Regional NRM Plan linkages to the Regional Investment Strategy identified?
- Have proposed continuous development, monitoring, review and improvements incorporated feedback from public consultation and government advice or explained why not?

- What is the page number/section reference to the Monitoring and evaluation section?
- What are the page number/section references to each of the Monitoring and Evaluation accreditation requirements?

Plan Content Eight: References / Appendices / Glossary

Rationale

To support the content of Regional NRM Plans it is likely that Regional NRM Bodies will find it useful to provide references to sources of information used in the preparation of the Plan. It may also be useful to include detailed information in an appendix so as to reduce the size of the main document. If uncommon or specialist words are used throughout the Regional NRM Plan it is also useful to include a glossary to improve the readers comprehension of the Plan.

Accreditation Requirements

Nil

Links to supporting modules

Nil

Self-check and referencing system to assist in accreditation processes

Nil

Output Three: Regional Investment Strategy

This section will be completed following completion of the RIS module

Rationale

Funding to implement a Regional NRM Plan will be determined on the basis of a Regional Investment Strategy (RIS) that lists the NRM actions the Regional NRM Body is seeking funding for. The RIS will form the basis of three year rolling investments subject to annual review by the JSC and Government decisions. Review of the RIS will take into account any approved amendments to the accredited Regional NRM Plan.

An investment strategy is essentially a business prospectus that is developed to attract external investment in priority actions that are identified in the Regional NRM Plan. An investment strategy outlines the funding required to implement an accredited Regional NRM Plan and identifies the returns for the investment of the respective contributors. It will provide the basis for devolved funding and for assessing performance against which ongoing payments will be made.

The actions to be funded through the investment strategy will generally address short-term management action targets, but contribute to achieving the longer-term resource condition targets of the regional plan. Over time, new investment strategies will be developed as particular issues identified in the regional plan are addressed and investment priorities change.

It is expected that Regional NRM Bodies will develop the RIS alongside Regional NRM Plans. The RIS will provide a basis for priority investments by governments under NRM programs such as the NAPSWQ and the Trust. Governments may invest in those elements of investment strategies that accord with the objectives of the relevant funding programs.

Links to supporting modules

| |
|--|
| <i>RIS Module</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html |
|--|

Output Four: Regional Partnership Agreement

This section is to be completed following the development of policy and will be the subject of a supporting module.

Rationale

The final output required to be prepared during the planning phase is a Regional Partnership Agreement (RPA). The RPA is an agreement between the Australian and Queensland Governments and the Regional NRM Body for the purposes of NAPSWQ and the Trust.

Accreditation Requirements

To be developed

Links to supporting modules

| |
|---|
| <i>Regional Partnership Agreement module</i> http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/guidance/index.html |
|---|

Part Four

4.1 Glossary

“**ANZLIC**” means Australia New Zealand Land Information Council – The Spatial Information Council;

“**capacity building**” means the range of activities by which individuals, groups and organisations improve their capacity to achieve sustainable natural resource management. Capacity in this context includes awareness, skills, knowledge, motivation, commitment and confidence;

“**In-Kind**” means a non-cash contribution to jointly agreed NRM regional and Statewide investment activities (including Regional NRM Plans and interim regional proposals) that are directed at achieving NRM outcomes relevant to Regional NRM Plans;

“**Joint Steering Committee**” means the Joint Australian and Queensland NRM Steering Committee;

“**Local Government**” includes a legally constituted council, shire, municipality, Deed of Grant in Trust Community Council, or other local authority established under State legislation;

“**migratory species**” means all species included in appendices to the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention) for which Australia is a Range State; and all species included in lists under migratory bird agreements between Japan and Australia and China and Australia (JAMBA and CAMBA); and all native species identified under any new international agreement; and which are protected by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;

“**Ministerial Board**” means the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust Ministerial Board comprising the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage and the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry;

“**NAPSWQ**” means the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality adopted by Australian, State and Territory Governments to tackle salinity and improve water quality in priority areas;

“**National NRM Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**” means the National Natural Resource Management Monitoring and Evaluation Framework endorsed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002;

“**National NRM Standards and Targets Framework**” means the National Natural Resource Management Standards and Targets Framework endorsed by the NRM Ministerial Council on 3 May 2002;

“**NRM**” means natural resource management, which includes any activity relating to the management of the use, development or conservation of one or more of the following

natural resources: soil, water, vegetation, biodiversity or any other natural resource, including coastal and marine areas, and World Heritage, Ramsar Wetland and other protected areas;

"NRM Ministerial Council" means the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council of Australian Government and State Ministers established by the Council of Australian Governments with responsibility for natural resource management issues in Australia;

"NRM region" means the geographic regions for which natural resource management planning will be undertaken and includes the coastal waters of Queensland and the seabed and subsoil beneath, and the airspace above;

"Regional Partnership Agreement" means an Agreement between the Australian and Queensland Governments and a Regional NRM Body;

"Ramsar Wetland" means a wetland, or part of a wetland, designated under the Ramsar Convention for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance and whose values are protected by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;

"World Heritage" means natural and cultural heritage that is of outstanding universal value and is recognised under the World Heritage Convention and whose values are protected by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

4.2 Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AGRNRMT | Australian Government Regional Natural Resource Management Team |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CIP | Community Information Paper |
| DATSIP | Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy |
| DLGPSR | Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation |
| DNRM&E | Department of Natural Resource, Mines and Energy |
| DP&C | Department of the Premier and Cabinet |
| DPI&F | Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries |
| DSD | Department of State Development |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESD | Ecologically Sustainable Development |
| IFA | Interim Financial Agreement (relating to the Trust) |
| JSC | Joint Steering Committee |
| NAPSWQ | National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality |
| NLP | National Landcare Program |
| NRM | natural resource management |
| QPWS | Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service |
| RCG | Regional Coordination Group |
| RGC | Regional Groups' Collective |
| RIS | Regional Investment Strategy |
| RMF | Regional Managers' Forum |
| RPA | Regional Partnership Agreement |
| SCG | State Coordination Group |
| the Trust | extension of the Natural Heritage Trust |

4.3 Appendixes

Appendix One – Regional NRM Participants

Regional NRM Bodies:

The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on the NAPSWQ, the NAPSWQ Bilateral Agreement, the draft Natural Heritage Trust Extension Bilateral Agreement, the Natural Heritage Trust Extension Interim Financial Agreement, and two Queensland Cabinet submissions on this issue have determined the criteria outlining the design and operation of Regional NRM Bodies.

*For more information refer to:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/joint/index.html>*

One Regional NRM Body in each Queensland NRM Region will be responsible for developing a single Regional NRM Plan in partnership with regional stakeholders and government agencies. The Regional NRM Plan may build upon sub regional/catchment plans. Regional NRM Bodies are also responsible to ensure the accredited Regional NRM Plan is implemented and to work with other bodies to ensure regional targets are met.

By the end of 2003 all Queensland Regional NRM Bodies were established and in the process of receiving Foundation Funding for the purposes of their operations and the preparation of a Regional NRM Plan. In other words, all Regional NRM Bodies have entered the planning phase and several Regional NRM Bodies, particularly those whose region includes NAPSWQ areas, will be well advanced in their preparations. Before the end of 2004 it is desired that all Regional NRM Bodies will have submitted draft Regional NRM Plans to JSC for accreditation, and several plans may have been accredited and implementation commenced.

Major roles of Regional NRM Bodies are to:

- ensure there is capacity in all NRM stakeholders and sectors to participate;
- ensure NRM sectors are well represented in decision making;
- ensure there is strong input to planning from the general community;
- provide a structured basis for negotiation through critical regional NRM issues;
- provide a basis for integration of critical NRM planning activities; and
- structuring mitigation of the impacts of critical NRM decisions.

Regional NRM Bodies must

- be a single legal entity;
- have majority community membership, balancing production and conservation interests, and seek effective participation and representation by relevant stakeholders including indigenous interests and local government;
- include effective representation for coastal and marine stakeholders;
- engage Indigenous people in the region;
- liaise with agencies, authorities and other bodies to promote integrate and sustainable management of natural resources

- have the necessary skills;
- maintain and provide proper financial records; and
- ensure adequate public access to information regarding decisions making.

*For more information on the establishment of Regional NRM Bodies
tba*

*For more information on Regional NRM Body corporate governance
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/general/index.html>*

*For more information on an individual Regional NRM Body
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/about/regional/regional_contacts.html*

Regional Groups' Collective (RGC):

The Regional NRM Groups' Collective consists of the Chairs and Executive Officers of all Regional NRM Bodies in Queensland. The Collective was formed in March 2002 to improve the delivery of regional outcomes in partnership with all stakeholders including industry, community, research and development organisations and government, and to act as a leadership body in NRM.

Strategies of the Collective are to:

- Speak as one voice with a consistent message;
- Support, mentor and advocate for Regional NRM Bodies to effectively achieve their sustainability goals;
- Build the capability of partners and the integration of programs and activities at a regional level;
- Leverage investment against community participation and commitment to natural resource management;
- Develop policies to support regional natural resource management as a long-term initiative, and partner with other organisations to promote policies of mutual interest;
- Coordinate common priorities across all regions on a statewide basis; and,
- Develop and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with Local, State and Australian Governments.

*For more information on the Regional Groups Collective:
<http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/about/state/rgc.html>*

Regional NRM Stakeholders

Regional NRM stakeholders are community based (i.e. non-constitutional government) individuals and sectors with an interest in NRM including Local Governments, farmers, landholders, natural resource based industries, Indigenous landowners and communities, conservation organisations etc. A stakeholder can be an individual from a community sector as well as an organisation representing a community sector, such as a representative body.

Regional NRM Stakeholders relevant to each Queensland NRM Region are unique and the makeup of representation on Regional NRM Bodies will vary from region to region according to the makeup of the community and the sectors with an interest in NRM.

As well as providing a sector representative to the Regional NRM Body, Regional NRM Stakeholders should be actively involved in planning phase output preparations, particularly through their sector representative, and during public consultation stages of output preparations. Regional NRM Stakeholders will be critical to the implementation of many NRM actions and the achievement of many NRM targets, and so must be closely involved in and committed to the preparation and implementation of Regional NRM Plans.

Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs):

Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) are composed of Regional Director level representatives from the core NRM agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRM&E), and Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPSR), plus other Government agencies that have an interest in Regional NRM in a region. Government agency interest in and relevance to each region and varies and the makeup of representation on RCGs will vary from region to region accordingly.

The purpose of RCGs is to foster strong community-government partnerships, coordinate and align whole of Queensland Government processes & policies, and resolve policy inconsistencies at the regional level. RCGs should convene regularly, may be a sub group of a Regional Managers' Forum (RMF), and should report regularly to their RMF.

Four RCGs have been established. The North RCG supports the Torres Strait, Cape York, Northern Gulf, Southern Gulf, Wet Tropics and Burdekin Regional NRM Bodies; the Central West RCG supports the Mackay-Whitsunday, Fitzroy, and Desert Channels Regional NRM Bodies; the South West RCG supports the South West, Maranoa-Balonne, Border Rivers, and Condamine Alliance Regional NRM Bodies; and the South East RCG supports the Burnett-Mary and South East Regional NRM Bodies.

Queensland Regional NRM Taskforce:

The Queensland Regional NRM Taskforce's is composed mainly of DNRM&E Central Office staff plus representatives from other key NRM agency Central Office staff. The mission of the Taskforce is to develop healthy regional NRM arrangements to support the delivery of NAPSWQ and the Trust:

- Developing regional NRM policy and providing quality social and economic assessment and incentive tools;
- Facilitating State level community engagement and capacity building strategies to underpin healthy regional NRM arrangements;
- Supporting regional DNRM&E staff to facilitate the establishment and monitoring of healthy regional arrangements and value adding to these arrangements through the provision of planning advice;

- Ensuring transparent and accountable corporate governance for the Trust and NAPSWQ delivery through the provision of timely advice and expertise
- Facilitating science and information to support better regional NRM outcomes.
- Innovation in guidance and support for the Taskforce while facilitating excellence in product and service delivery.

Some of the key roles the Taskforce undertakes to achieve this mission are to:

- Develop and implement a communication plan to facilitate healthy regional arrangements
- Provide a Queensland whole of government approach to establish and ensure the sustainability of healthy regional arrangement for NRM
- Develop a clear strategy to establish and maintain healthy regional arrangements across Queensland
- Secure funds to establish and maintain healthy regional arrangements now and in the future
- Establish the policy and frameworks/processes relating to healthy regional arrangements
- Define and get agreement on relevant government outcomes that facilitate good regional NRM
- Change attitudes to regional NRM of government at all levels
- Facilitate the definition of the roles of all levels of government in regional NRM
- Support the involvement of all sectors in participating in regional NRM and help define their roles in regional NRM
- Support and facilitate cross agency interface (point of contact/liaison) with regional groups
- Ensure that the expertise and information is available to regional NRM stakeholders for the development of NRM plans
- Coordinate and lead State govt policy on regional NRM
- Lead the State government programs such as community engagement, ten year partnership, NAPSWQ and the Trust, MCMC
- Link other major government initiatives such as sugar reform packages, farmbis etc into healthy regional arrangements
- Negotiate resolution of governance issues required to support community partnership approach
- Support the RGC, JSC, and SCG.

Australian Government Regional NRM Team (AGRNRMT):

Australian Government Regional NRM Team roles are to:

- Support and inform the deliberations and processes of the Joint Steering Committee;
- Be the Australian Government liaison point for Regional NRM Bodies, and provide support and advice as necessary;
- Forge and maintain partnerships with Queensland Government NRM participants;
- Monitor, evaluate, negotiate and report on Queensland Government participation and overall implementation of Regional NRM arrangements and structures;
- Ensure policy and program delivery mechanisms are consistent with National policies and administration requirements;

- Manage Australian Government consultation and input to designation, planning, accreditation and investment decision processes;
- Provide advice on, assess and make recommendations on proposals dealing with foundation funding, priority actions, state-wide, regional competitive and NLP funding, and Queensland in-kind contributions;
- Develop improved regional NRM arrangements;
- Advise Australian Government Ministers on implementation of these arrangements.

Joint Australian/Queensland Steering Committee (JSC):

The JSC is a collective of Queensland and Australian Government representatives and was created to co-ordinate Queensland and Australian Government actions for Regional NRM. JSC provides Senior Officers for decision making for NAPSWQ and the Trust.

JSC's role is to:

- Develop principles and criteria to guide the Trust and NAPSWQ investment;
- Assist the regional bodies to develop regional integrated natural resource management plans and investment strategies;
- Consider the integrated natural resource management plans and make recommendations to Australian Government and Queensland Ministers on accreditation of those plans;
- Recommend the Trust and NAPSWQ investment programs to Australian Government and Queensland Ministers;
- Agree the release of funding to proponents from the joint Australian Government and Queensland account for the Trust and the NAPSWQ;
- Review quarterly and six month reports for projects and provide advice to Australian Government and Queensland Ministers;
- Develop, implement and review Communication and Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies.

Appendix Two – Assets based approach

The Starting Point

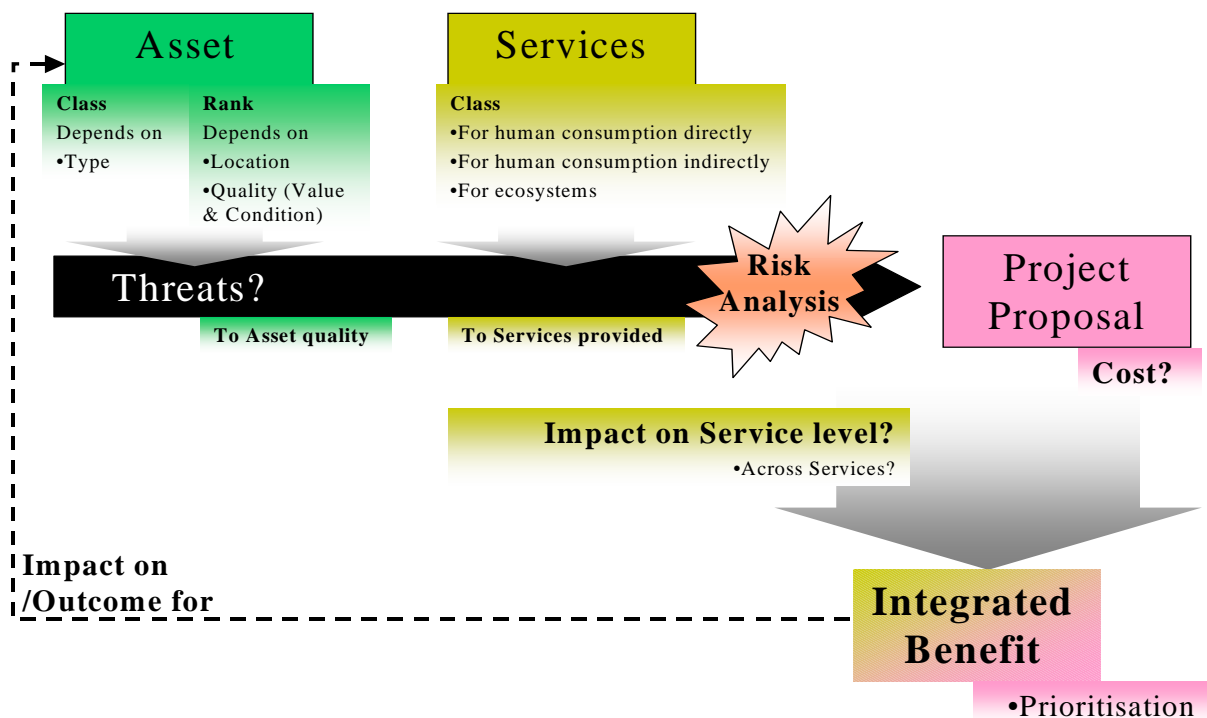
This attachment describes the consistent asset-based approach that is being supported to develop regional targets based on assets and threats to assist integrated natural resource management in Queensland's NRM regions

Both investors and regional partners need to commit to joint learning from the results of investment in initiatives and actions deployed from this cycle to eventually support full implementation of the asset-based approach. It is recognised that, wherever possible, information already available should be more effectively utilised in order to minimise the cost to both regions and the State.

Conceptual Framework

The following is a conceptual framework for implementing an assets-based approach to NRM investment. The framework combines information about asset value, service level and cost of service protection and/or enhancement to determine investment priorities. It is intended that the application of this conceptual framework will lead to the ranking of NRM initiatives and actions against one another to identify the best possible outcome.

Asset Based Approach for NRM investment – Conceptual Model



Further improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of NRM investment requires an agreed understanding across all NRM stakeholders of how language and logic is to be used. NRM investment principles, criteria, initiatives and actions can then be clearly described, assessed and prioritised in a consistent manner at regional and state levels.

Language and Logic

The environment or landscape comprises natural resources and other assets which society uses, appreciates or values in a variety of ways termed 'services' in this framework. Assets and services are threatened and impacted by changing environmental, social and economic conditions.

Natural assets are tangible physical elements of our environment that can be divided into primary and secondary classes (refer Table 1). Within these classes, natural assets can be further classified according to different type, condition, location and value. These classifications can be used in identifying relative preferences for protection or restoration. Assets may be valued by price (eg. agricultural goods in the market place) or, where there is not a market, by other non-priced measures.

Social and economic assets can be similarly considered.

Table 1. Examples of primary and secondary asset classes

| Primary | Secondary | Services | Threats |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| Water | Rivers and River reaches Wetlands Groundwater Floodplains | Water for consumptive use Aquatic breeding grounds Recreational uses Existence and amenity services | Nutrients Salt Weeds |
| Soil | Public Land Private Land | Forests and forest services Agricultural production | Erosion Land salinisation Acidity |
| Biodiversity | Native Vegetation Species Terrestrial and aquatic | Genetic diversity Breeding grounds Existence and amenity services | Land salinisation |
| Air | Air | Plant, animal and human health | CO ₂ , Sulphur, etc |
| Human | Social Infrastructure Cultural heritage | Support networks Critical mass Education Social welfare | Population change or decline Loss of institutions Loss of knowledge or expertise |

Services are the uses and values related to an asset. For example, they may relate:

- Directly to human consumption (eg. water);
- Indirectly to this consumption (eg. native vegetation influences the quantity and quality of water available for use); or
- May not relate to consumption (eg. native vegetation may provide habitat for threatened native species which are valued in their own right).

Service level is the amount of a particular service that is being provided at a location by an asset, measured through the quantitative application of **indices** independent of values or preferences (eg. 'Habitat hectare' for native vegetation). **Changed service levels** are the amount of expected change in service that will occur over a specified period of time due to a particular intervention (eg. the planting of vegetation). This change can refer to improvement, maintenance or reduced rate of degradation of a service.

Threats are potential causes of degradation to the natural asset base by natural and production based waste products such as salinity, acidity and pest plants /animals. These problems threaten either the quality of an asset and or the services that an asset provides. Assessment of the **risk** (likelihood and consequence) presented by the threat helps to guide project development to reduce or remove the threat.

Benefit is a measure of the gain that an action will achieve for a specified service. It is based on a combination of the relative value of the asset, the changed and/or secured service level, and the cost of the intervention. **Integrated benefit** is a measure of the overall gain that an action will achieve for all relevant services and assets and assessing the impact on each and all services affected.

Asset Valuation

Assets can be classified into priced and non-priced with most NRM assets being non-priced. Generally, the market determines priced asset values and the price can be used to rank assets. Most public assets are not traded and therefore are unpriced and require a different approach to ranking.

Priced assets include agricultural land, water (water rights for consumptive use) and infrastructure. These assets are commonly traded and prices are readily available. The asset prices are based on the expected future returns that can be generated from the asset. For instance, high rainfall grazing land capable of supporting intensive dairying will be priced higher than low rainfall sheep grazing land. The purchaser determines the price they are willing to pay taking into account the different returns they can generate from the land asset.

The valuation principles for non-priced assets are similar. However, rather than attempting to assign prices to the assets, it is possible to determine their relative value. Relative value for non-priced assets needs to be linked to scientifically defensible criteria for determining the NRM services that an asset provides.

Asset Service Assessment

NRM initiatives and actions aim to improve or stabilise the services that natural assets provide. A combination of the size, timing and design of an action will provide different changes in service levels. The following are examples of assets and services.

Table 2. Asset Services

| Asset | Asset Valuation Criteria | Service | Priced (Y/N) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| River Reach | Water Quality | Water for consumptive use | Y N |
| | Aquatic Habitat | Water to support species | N Y |
| | Existence, amenity value | Breeding grounds Recreational fishing Existence, amenity value | N |
| Native vegetation | | Existence and amenity value | N N |
| | | Genetic diversity | Y and N |
| | | Timber | |
| Land | | Agricultural goods | Y |

Services can also be identified as being either priced or unpriced. The pricing classification can be used to assist in the determination of cost sharing arrangements. If a good or service is priced it is possible for an individual or group to capture the benefits of a change in its level of provision. Capturing the changing service values allows for evaluation and monitoring demonstrating the effectiveness of actions and initiatives.

Threats

Threats could include salinity, water quality, and pest plants and animals. These problems threaten either the quality of an asset and or the services that an asset provides. Threats and associated risks can be considered from a variety of perspectives. For instance, measurement of a change in water quality could consider nitrogen, phosphate, turbidity or salt levels.

It is important to understand the processes that link a threat to a change in service. For instance, nitrogen concentrations and algal blooms, salt concentrations in irrigation water and loss of agricultural production. Further, it is essential to understand how a given action reduces or removes a threat. For instance, riparian buffer zones and reductions in nitrogen flows to rivers, pasture management to minimise water losses to the ground water system.

The type of threat helps to guide actions designed to reduce or remove the threat. The risk posed by a threat and the level of actual or potential loss of services or asset value should be an important consideration in prioritising actions. Similar consideration across an initiative, or between actions, is recommended to assist establishing the relative merits of actions.

Initiative and Action Effectiveness

Through consideration of the interrelationship between service level changes, asset valuation and project cost, it may be possible to develop indicators of an action's relative

effectiveness. This information can be combined in a number of ways to compare action outcomes such as expected improvement to NRM assets and services and the costs associated with improving services and asset quality.

Future Directions

It is hoped that further development and use of the asset-based approach and the resultant knowledge base concerning assets, services, and threats will have increasing influence on annual regional NRM planning. These will become critical in establishing the NRM benefits being derived from investment in regional initiatives and actions, and their relative effectiveness. With both regional partners and investors basing their decisions on the same approach and knowledge base, they can work together to improve the overall returns to the regions, Queensland and Australia from NRM investment.

Appendix Three - NAPSWQ State Level Activities (SIPs) Summary

Salinity

- SA01 Salinity Hazard Assessment for priority catchments:
- SA02 Hydro-geological investigations:
- SA03 Landscape attributes for salinity processes
- SA04 Integrated salinity modelling
- SA05 Information and data management (part of CB01)
- SA06 Project co-ordination and technical support for regional planning
- SA07 Airborne geophysics in the lower Balonne catchment

Water Quality

- WQ01 Framework and processes for target-setting and monitoring
- WQ02 Collation and assessment of existing water quality information
- WQ03 Modelling landscape processes, management impacts and catchment loads
- WQ04 Riverine habitat condition assessment and review of management guidelines
- WQ05 Enhance community capacity to undertake monitoring of water quality targets
- WQ06 Water quality impacts on ecosystem health

Capacity Building

- IM01 Regional Information Services Framework for Natural Resource Management (NRM)
- CB01 Capacity building of local governments to enable effective participation in NRM planning
- CB02 Integrating effective NRM planning into local government planning schemes
- CB03 Building learning and evaluation systems into the NAPSWQ
- CB06 Leadership for High Performance in NAPSWQ Regions
- CB07 Enhancing the technical/advisory and Community Engagement capacity within regional arrangements.

Incorporating social and economic considerations

- SE01 Institutionalising social and economic considerations and assessment in regional arrangements
- SE02 Co-ordination of social and economic information for the development of a regional information service
- SE03 Social research, development and extension
- SE04 Integrated RD&E for regional NRM
- SE05 Developing and trialling a toolkit of incentives and market based instruments for regional NRM

Sustainable Agriculture

- Theme 1 Landscape Management
- Theme 2 Grazing lands management best practice

- Theme 3 Industry Capacity Building for NRM
- Theme 4 Process support and coordination

For more information refer to:
http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/planning/state_wide/NAPSWQ/NAPSWQ_sip.html