



# What are the barriers and opportunities for participating in regional NRM?

The success of regional NRM projects depends on the active participation of communities and organisations. Participation has grown considerably over the past decade. Sometimes, however, barriers prevent people from working together to achieve their goals.

## What are barriers and opportunities?

Barriers prevent people from achieving their goals. They may be personal (lack of belief, time, skills, information, motivation, conflict, etc) or organisational (lack of funds, resources, responsibility, power, collaboration, etc). They may be cultural (conflicts with language, values, beliefs, etc) or political (changing government policies, funding availability, etc).

Opportunities are favourable conditions for people to achieve their goals. They may be personal (high levels of motivation, leadership, trust, wealth, commitment, etc) or organisational (strong community networks, volunteerism, funding, skills, etc). Usually, a mix of opportunities is necessary to achieve extensive participation in regional NRM.



This fact sheet explores the barriers and opportunities for participating in regional NRM at three scales: individual, property and regional.

### Related topics

- [Who should regional bodies develop partnerships with?](#)
- [How do you develop effective NRM partnerships?](#)
- [How do you develop partnerships with research, development, and extension providers?](#)
- [How do you encourage community participation in NRM activities?](#)

## What are typical barriers and opportunities to participating in regional NRM at the regional scale?

Barriers at the regional scale	Opportunities at the regional scale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited opportunities for local participation</li> <li>• narrow focus of effort</li> <li>• community capacity</li> <li>• unfavourable institutional arrangements</li> <li>• limited time for regional groups to implement complex plans</li> <li>• uncertainty over long-term commitment of funding arrangements</li> <li>• inequitable power and responsibility sharing</li> <li>• unclear role-sharing between government and non-government groups</li> <li>• poorly produced information products and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnerships work well at regional and catchment levels</li> <li>• close social networks and personal relationships</li> <li>• existing community networks within regional NRM bodies</li> <li>• strong sense of place and identity</li> <li>• community ownership of local NRM issues</li> <li>• shared expectations of NRM plans and actions</li> <li>• skilled extension practitioners</li> <li>• active research, development and extension providers</li> <li>• high levels of volunteerism</li> </ul>

## What are typical barriers and opportunities to participating in regional NRM at the property level?

Barriers at the property level	Opportunities at the property level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low farm income and high family debt</li> <li>• lack of farming or business management skills</li> <li>• limited time, finances or labour</li> <li>• lack of belief that conservation measures are effective</li> <li>• lack of reliable science to prove production benefits</li> <li>• drought</li> <li>• personal conflict</li> <li>• fragmented information</li> <li>• poor delivery of knowledge about sustainable farming practices or new NRM guidelines</li> <li>• distrust of government agencies</li> <li>• conflict between competing agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• property owners make a significant impact to regional NRM goals</li> <li>• incentives and rewards</li> <li>• access to local knowledge and practical examples of 'best practice'</li> <li>• interactive communication with other land holders, resource managers, scientists and peak industry groups</li> <li>• attendance of well-designed NRM workshops, courses and field days</li> <li>• access to IT, quality broadband and communication systems</li> <li>• collaboration with surrounding property owners</li> <li>• land owners are trusted sources of information</li> </ul>

## Graziers face barriers in the Upper Burdekin

A study into how graziers adopt new practices to protect and manage riparian areas in the Upper Burdekin catchment found economic drivers to be the main motivation for graziers to control weeds, fence cattle away from rivers, install new water points, monitor pastures and manage fire risk.

Graziers said they did not take up further riparian management practices because they believed that:

- the protection measures were unnecessary
- the time and money available was too limited
- the results would decrease farm production
- the topography of the land was unsuitable
- the practices might affect their access to stream water

Many graziers were in debt and dealing with increased government costs, further limiting their ability to become involved in NRM activities.

'It all comes down to the dollar... it's hard to be green when you're in the red,' said one grazier.



## Useful resources

State-level Investment Project  
SEO4 final project report: Integrated  
research, development, and extension  
for natural resource management

[www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research\\_sips/sips/social\\_economic/pdf/se04\\_rde\\_finalreport.pdf](http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research_sips/sips/social_economic/pdf/se04_rde_finalreport.pdf)