



How do you encourage community participation in NRM activities?

Community participation in NRM can provide invaluable local knowledge and understanding that would otherwise be difficult to come by.

4 steps to encourage community participation in NRM

A technique known as community-based social marketing uses the following four steps to encourage community participation:

1. Identify the barriers and benefits to participating in the NRM activity

A regional profile, and information from studies conducted with the community, will help you identify barriers to participation for different groups in the region.

Some barriers are internal, such as knowledge, beliefs, fears, motivation, skills and personal values. External barriers include access to products or services, social support, social pressure and existing policies.

Once you have identified the barriers, rank them in order of priority.

You should also identify the benefits to participating in your NRM activity—you may be able to use the benefits to overcome the barriers.

Related topics

[What is Queensland's approach to regional NRM?](#)

[Who should regional bodies develop partnerships with?](#)

[What are the barriers and opportunities for participating in regional NRM?](#)

[How do you develop effective NRM partnerships?](#)

[How do you develop partnerships with research, development and extension providers?](#)

2. Develop a participation strategy

Understanding your regional community and knowing what has been previously successful in overcoming barriers to participation should help you develop your own strategy.

The following suggestions may be helpful as part of your participation strategy:

a) Use social behaviour to your advantage

- You are more likely to get participation if people commit publicly to change, in the form of a written contract or in a group.
- Participation is likely to be influenced by group 'norms' of behaviour, such as 'if the workplace recycled, I would be more likely to recycle'.
- Use prompts to remind people of the benefits or barriers to participating in the activity.

A prompt may come in the form of a sticker, a badge, a t-shirt or a poster.



- b) Promote the ways in which the community can become involved

The Department of Natural Resources and Water offers grants of up to \$5,000 for projects that involve the community in NRM. It also offers \$500 establishment grants to eligible community NRM groups, and free insurance for registered group through [Queensland Water and Land Carers Inc.](#)

The website, www.landcareqld.org.au, allows you to run a search on groups in your region.

- c) Encourage Indigenous involvement.

Regional bodies have a large role to play in working with Indigenous communities in NRM.

- d) Offer incentives.

Incentives such as grants, auctions, and subsidies can improve the condition of land and waterways more cost-effectively than many traditional policies and laws. For more details, read [What incentive mechanisms are available for NRM change?](#) or visit the Queensland Government's regional NRM incentives database.

www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/get_involved/incentives/index.html

- e) Give public recognition

Give public recognition by, for example, sponsoring an award program, acknowledging participants in reports, publishing their stories or promoting them in the local media.

3. Pilot the participation strategy

Before carrying out the strategy, get feedback from some members of the community and revise according to their feedback.

4. Evaluate the participation strategy

By keeping track of what worked well and what didn't, you can develop your own toolbox for encouraging community participation in your region. Be sure to update your participation strategy regularly according to changes in your regional profile and activity.

Giving public recognition in the Burdekin Dry Tropics

Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM found that, for graziers with high intrinsic motivation to conserve biodiversity, some form of public recognition can be sufficient reward for their efforts.

The NRM body recorded the stories of six landholders in the Bowen Broken Bogie River catchments to provide insight for the general public—and other landholders—of how some landholders in the region are succeeding in managing viable properties as well as conserving biodiversity.

The stories document a diverse and valid set of circumstances, philosophies and experiences of people living on the land.

By publishing their personal stories, the landholders were given a voice and a forum for public recognition of their biodiversity conservation.

Read the stories in SE05 Final Report Appendix H Landholder Stories

www.burdekindrytropics.org.au/initiatives/se05.html

Useful resources

Mackenzie-Mohr and Smith (1999)
Fostering Sustainable Behaviour.
New Society Publishers, Canada

Understanding social and economic influences on natural resource management decisions

www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research_sips/sips/social_economic/pdf/s_e_influences.pdf

Partnership-based social research for sustainable NRM in Queensland

www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research_sips/sips/social_economic/pdf/se03_partnership_research.pdf

