

Monitoring and evaluating progress in Natural Resource Management (NRM)



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INRM Plan - c/- Landcare Council of the Northern Territory - PO Box 30 - PALMERSTON - NT - 0831 - Freecall: 1800 208 239

Why do we need to monitor and evaluate?

Managing natural resources is a complicated task. In many cases the activities currently undertaken to address natural resource problems (e.g. weeds, feral animals, salinity) will need to be changed over time. Improving the way we manage natural resources can be done by answering the following questions:

1. How are we progressing? (Monitoring)
2. How did we go? (Evaluation)

In the first round of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT1) \$1.25 billion was spent on natural resource management around Australia. However, without a system to track progress and determine what was achieved, it was very difficult to say whether the program was successful or not. This difficulty highlighted the need for these questions to be formally included in the way future projects funded under the NHT are managed.

How do we monitor and evaluate?

A new approach to NHT2 funded projects has been developed to make sure that the two questions above are answered. The process is referred to as Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). M&E is not a new process, but there is now emphasis on M&E, in line with the NT Bilateral Agreement and the National M&E frameworks.

M&E is comprised of two parts:

1. Monitoring

Collecting information about where we are at in relation to achieving targets and how well our projects are progressing.

2. Evaluation

Using this information to assess why or how our actions made a difference to the management or condition of natural resources.

M&E is an important part of NRM because it helps us to:

- Improve NRM over time (learning by doing);
- Provide feedback to key stakeholders (the community, landholders, land managers, funding agencies);
- Show how effective investments are in achieving targets as defined in the INRM Plan;
- Be accountable for our investment of public funds;
- Identify future priorities for investment;
- Report the condition of natural resources both within the Northern Territory and nationally.

The types of monitoring and evaluation undertaken will be guided by the targets identified in the Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan. The information required for monitoring the progress of projects will come primarily from reporting by the project managers. The information from these reports will be used to evaluate progress towards the targets identified in the INRM Plan.

A more detailed explanation of how the progress of projects will be monitored and progress toward targets identified is contained in the Draft INRM Plan. You are encouraged to review the Monitoring and Evaluation sections in the Draft Plan and make a written submission.

Please send this submission back to us by **Monday 31 January 2005** in one of the following ways:

Fax: (08) 8999 4445

Mail: INRM Planning Team, PO Box 30, Palmerston NT 0831
Reply paid envelopes are available on request, freecall 1800 208 239
or respond through this submission form on the website

Email: inrm.dipe@nt.gov.au

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