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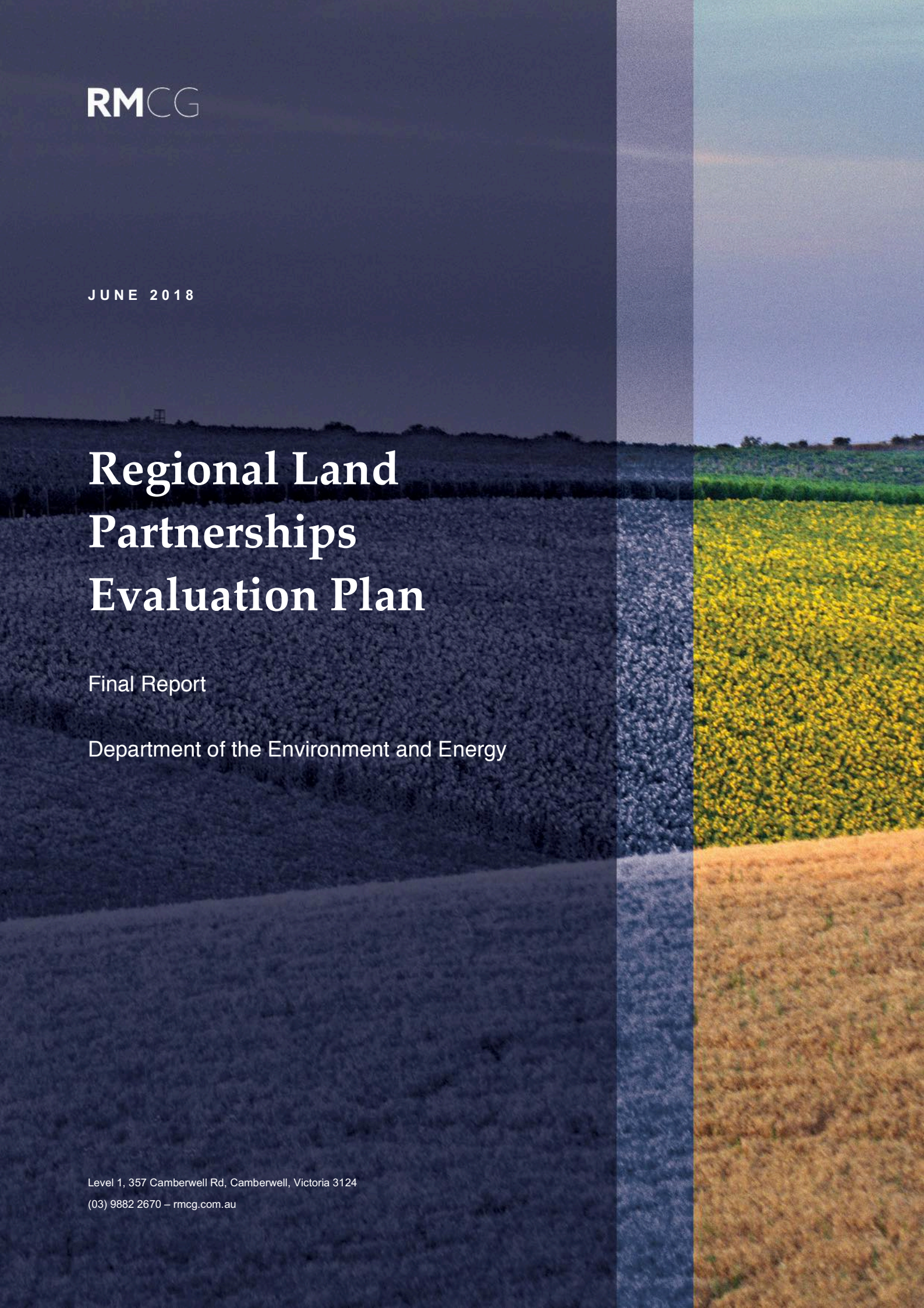
Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan

Final Report

Department of the Environment and Energy



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1 Introduction

This report presents an evaluation plan for the six outcomes of the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) component of the National Landcare Program. The plan aims to create an approach that will drive clear and effective reporting on the achievements across RLP. It is also intended to provide advice for the Australian Government and RLP Service Providers on how to prepare for both medium-term and end of program evaluations.

As part of the foundation work for the RLP program, an RLP Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework was developed. This framework is based on the Australian Government's Natural Resource Management Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework (2009). Another part of this foundation work was the set of high level program logics prepared for each of the six RLP outcomes.

This project has taken the existing MERI frameworks and high level RLP logics, and prepared detailed evaluation plans for each outcome. The aim of these plans is to:

- Clearly identify the short-, medium- and long-term goals of each outcome
- Identify the indicators and measures that will be used to assess progress towards those outcomes
- Define the type of data that Service Providers will be expected to collect in order to report on that progress.

1.1 THIS DOCUMENT

This report includes an evaluation plan for each of the 5-year RLP program outcomes, namely:

1. By 2023, there is restoration of, and reduction in threats to, the ecological character of Ramsar sites, through the implementation of priority actions.
2. By 2023, the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other EPBC Act priority species, is stabilised or improved.
3. By 2023, invasive species management has reduced threats to the natural heritage Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage properties through the implementation of priority actions.
4. By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities.
5. By 2023, there is an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation.
6. By 2023, there is an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant changes in climate, markets and extreme weather.

These individual plans are presented in Appendices 1 to 6.

The report also includes an explanation of some of the key elements of the evaluation plans including targets, assumptions, and the role of indicators. Section 2 includes discussions of how target-setting, setting baselines, dealing with assumptions and the role that indicators play in measuring progress have been considered in these plans.

1.2 INTENDED AUDIENCE

The evaluation plans presented here are intended to be used by the Australian Government (the Department of the Environment and Energy, and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources), and by RLP Service Providers responsible for project delivery in their Management Units across Australia.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The logics and key evaluation questions (KEQs) are intended to provide the Australian Government with a clear guide on how best to evaluate and report on project investment contributions to:

- Project-specific outcomes
- 5-year program outcomes, and
- Long-term program outcomes.

This evaluation and reporting depends heavily on the data collection and reporting by Service Providers.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

The logic and the monitoring plan for each outcome provides Service Providers with guidance on:

- How project activities are expected to lead to short and medium-term results, and how those results link to the relevant 5-year RLP outcome. This information should help to shape project delivery.
- The measurements and data that needs to be collected over the course of delivering project(s) in order to report on the contribution to the RLP program outcome(s).

2 Evaluation plans

The evaluation plan for each outcome consists of:

- A **program logic**
- **Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) and sub-questions**, and
- A **monitoring plan** which outlines what data will be collected, by whom and how often.

In the following sections the key elements of these components are described.

2.1 PROGRAM LOGICS

The program logics have been developed to ensure consistency with the RLP tender process and with the Department's Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Tool (MERIT) as the key reporting tool.

The program logics document the 'Core Services' (to be delivered by Service Providers for each Management Unit) and the 'Project Services' as specified for each outcome in the RLP Request for Tender. These activities form the content of the service delivery contracts with each provider, and annual monitoring and reporting (via MERIT) will be based on these services.

The next levels of the program logics identify short- and medium and long-term project outcomes:

Short-term outcomes – outcomes achieved over 1 to 3 years. All projects will have short-term outcomes. Even though they are focused on a relatively short period of time, they are still expected to contribute to the 5-year Outcome. This contribution should be described via the program logic, with particular reference to the relevant indicators and assumptions.

Medium-term outcomes – outcomes delivered over 3 to 5 years. For 5 year projects, these will also be the end of program outcomes. All 3 to 5 year projects will have medium term outcomes, and these are to be reported on by the end date of the project. Medium-term project outcomes will contribute to the 5-year outcome. The indicators identified at the medium-term level of the logic should be used to describe progress towards these outcomes.

Long term outcomes – these are the outcomes that are expected 10-20 to emerge well after the end of the current project. In most cases, they will not be able to be directly measured within the life of the program, so indicators will be used to assess progress.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions are a critical element in all program logics. Assumptions help to explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes, and
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program.

Best practice in evaluation includes identifying any critical assumptions that can or need to be tested during the course of a multi-year project. For example, a technical expert might be engaged to test the assumption that there is natural regeneration of a particular vegetation community following weed control efforts.

The evaluation plans presented here do not identify any specific assumption testing because this generally requires detailed knowledge of the particular project. **The question of whether any assumption testing is warranted for a given project should be considered as part of project MERI planning.**

TARGET SETTING

The program logic and monitoring plan provide a useful framework to develop targets for a project. The process of identifying the project services (activities) and the short- and medium-term outcomes expected to be achieved during a project presents an opportunity to also identify the amounts of each project service and outcome(s) that are anticipated. The project budget is a key factor in setting targets, since this will determine the amount of project services, and therefore outcomes, a project can deliver.

This target-setting process can only be done meaningfully at the individual project level. As part of the MERI planning process for each RLP project, Service Providers will identify targets for the project services and outline the short- and medium-term outcomes they plan to deliver.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The second key element of the evaluation plans is the set of KEQs created for each outcome. In preparing these evaluation plans, we have drawn on the general KEQs defined for the five evaluation categories or themes set out on the Australian Government's Natural Resource Management Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework (2009) (Table 2-1).

For each outcome, a set of specific evaluation questions have been determined, and the link to the relevant parts of the program logic. For example, the KEQs for effectiveness include specific questions on the delivery of project services and short- and medium-Term Outcomes.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes (adapted from the Australian Government Natural Resource Management Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework, 2009)

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way.
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. Alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process.
Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. An impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short-term or long-term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed.
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources.
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed.

2.3 MONITORING PLANS

The third key element of the evaluation plans is the monitoring plan prepared for each outcome. The monitoring plan defines the specific data that needs to be collected at all levels of the program logic. That is, it identifies the data required to show that the project has delivered the project services as planned, which is relatively simple given that these services are generally well-defined activities. More importantly, the plan also identifies how the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes should be measured for each RLP outcome.

There are two key concepts that have informed these monitoring plans: baseline measures and indicators as tools to measure progress. The next sections describe how these two concepts have been treated in the RLP outcome evaluation plans.

BASELINE MEASURES

The RLP outcomes all focus on some form of change. Outcomes 1 to 4 specify changes in environmental conditions, such as vegetation condition, or the trajectory of a threatened species. Outcomes 5 and 6 are seeking changes in land management and agricultural systems, for both production and environmental benefits.

In order to measure these changes, it is critical to have a starting point or baseline(s) against which a change can be measured. This has been addressed in the evaluation plans by specifying the monitoring data that must be collected at all levels of the logic (identified in the monitoring plan). The most important measures of change are the measures of short-, medium- and long-term outcomes. With this focus in mind, the monitoring plans identify the measures (either direct measures or indicators) and timeframes over which they should be measured. For example, the monitoring plans for most outcomes suggest that the short- and medium-term outcomes should be measured at two- to three-year intervals, meaning that a baseline measure is made at the project commencement, and is remeasured after two or three years to detect changes.

MEASURING PROGRESS VIA INDICATORS

The monitoring plan created for each RLP outcome defines the data that can be used to assess progress at all levels of the program logic. Project services can be directly measured, and this is a well-established practice among Service Providers.

Measuring short-, medium- and long-term outcomes can be more challenging. In determining what data should be collected to assess progress in delivering these outcomes, a decision hierarchy has been applied:

- If there is a practical and cost-effective way to directly measure the outcome, then this should be employed
- If there is no direct measure, then a direct indicator of that outcome should be used
- If the indicators are difficult or too costly to measure (relative to the project size and duration) then it may be necessary to use measures of activities to assess progress. This is the least preferred option.

This hierarchy has informed the process of selecting the indicators listed in the monitoring plans for each outcome. Indicators have been identified that are practical, meaningful and can be collected cost effectively. The techniques to collect indicator data are not specified because each project needs to define the appropriate indicators for a particular project, and match data collection to the project's goals, size and duration. For example, a small budget, one-year project would approach collection of vegetation quality data differently to a large budget, five-year project. Both projects collect and report vegetation quality data, however, the specific data would vary between the projects.

3 Reporting

The RLP reporting obligations of Service Providers and the Australian Government are outlined below.

3.1 SERVICE PROVIDER REPORTING

All Service Provider reports are submitted in MERIT.

OUTPUTS REPORT

This type of report will outline the services delivered for the projects, and includes spatial reporting and photographs of a sample of intervention locations for each project. Outputs reporting occurs a quarterly or six- monthly, depending on the Services Agreement between the Departments and the Service Providers.

ANNUAL REPORT

Service Providers will submit an annual report for each project, confirming that the project is being delivered in line with the MERI Plan. Annual reports will also highlight key project achievements and/or issues, and propose any adaptive management actions for each project.

OUTCOMES REPORT 1

This type of report includes, for each short-term outcome set out in the MERI plan, a summary of the state of change detected between the baseline established by the Service Provider as at the beginning of the project and subsequent follow up monitoring undertaken by the Service Provider. For projects three years or less in duration, this report is to be submitted by the project end date. For longer projects, this report is to be submitted by the three year anniversary of the project.

OUTCOMES REPORT 2

This report addresses, for each medium-term outcome set out in the MERI plan, a summary of the state of change detected between the baselines established by the Service Provider at the beginning of the project, and subsequent follow up monitoring undertaken by the Service Provider. This type of report is only for those projects greater than three years duration, and is to be submitted by the project end date.

CORE SERVICES REPORTING

Service Providers are required to submit a Core Services report each time an invoice is submitted, indicating whether Core Services have been met or not. A more detailed Annual Core Services is also required to be submitted by each Service Provider.

3.2 AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT REPORTING

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Information for the annual progress reports will be collated from Service Provider reports in MERIT. Departmental annual progress reports will focus on project services, and over time, they will also be able to report on key performance indicators to measure and report on progress towards the six program level outcomes.

MID-TERM AND END OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Mid-term performance evaluations: A comprehensive program evaluation will take place in 2021. For this evaluation, the Departments will use Regional Land Partnerships Service Providers' information to report on overall program progress which will be used to implement program improvements and inform future program design. The evaluation will include evaluation of processes and progress towards outcomes, so would draw on the indicators identified for the medium- and long-term outcomes.

End-of-program performance evaluation: The Departments will conduct an end-of-program evaluation in 2023. This evaluation will revisit the mid-program performance evaluations and incorporate new information to provide a closing evaluation of overall program performance of processes, achievement of outcomes and economics. The findings will be used to inform future program delivery and will be informed by service provider reporting, targeted and long-term monitoring.

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Appendix 1

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 1

By 2023, there is restoration of, and reduction in threats to, the Ecological Character of Ramsar sites through the implementation of priority actions

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 1.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 1 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes (e.g. completing management actions in line with best-practice as described in a Threat Abatement Plan will result in a reduction of a given threat).
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 1

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 1 program logic include:

- At the Short-Term Outcomes level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that management actions have resulted in positive biophysical changes within the project area. If there is a reasonable expectation that a bio-physical change can be detected within the life of the project, that change should be measured directly.

- At the Medium Term Outcomes level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that those biophysical changes (measured within the life of the project) have contributed to an overall improvement in the ecological character of a Ramsar site. There are two tiers of measures/indicators at this level:
  - The Service Provider is expected to report on project-level indicators of restoration of- or reduction in threats to, the ecological character of Ramsar sites, within the boundaries of their projects. For the purposes of monitoring, we have broken 'ecological character' down to include a range of ecological/biophysical components, processes and services/benefits – and might expect to see positive changes in one or more of these areas.
  - The RLP Program lead is expected to report on program-level indicators of restoration/threat reduction. This would include: the number (or proportion) of Outcome 1 projects demonstrating positive indicators; and the area (or proportion of total area) of a Ramsar site(s) covered by RLP projects. Taken together, these two measures will provide an indication of the overall impact of the RLP program on Ramsar site condition within the areas it is investing resources.
- The difference between the measures at the 'Medium Term Outcome' level and the 'Long Term Outcome' level is that the 'Long Term' measures ask what contribution the RLP program made to the overall ecological character of Ramsar sites. This requires the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure (via indicators) wider trends in Ramsar site condition (e.g. as reported in Ramsar Management Plans, Ramsar Information Sheets, relative to a previous description). Knowing the overall trends in condition enables a contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process
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Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be

collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 1-specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 1 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 1 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

Program Logic – RLP Outcome 1: Ecological Character of Ramsar Sites

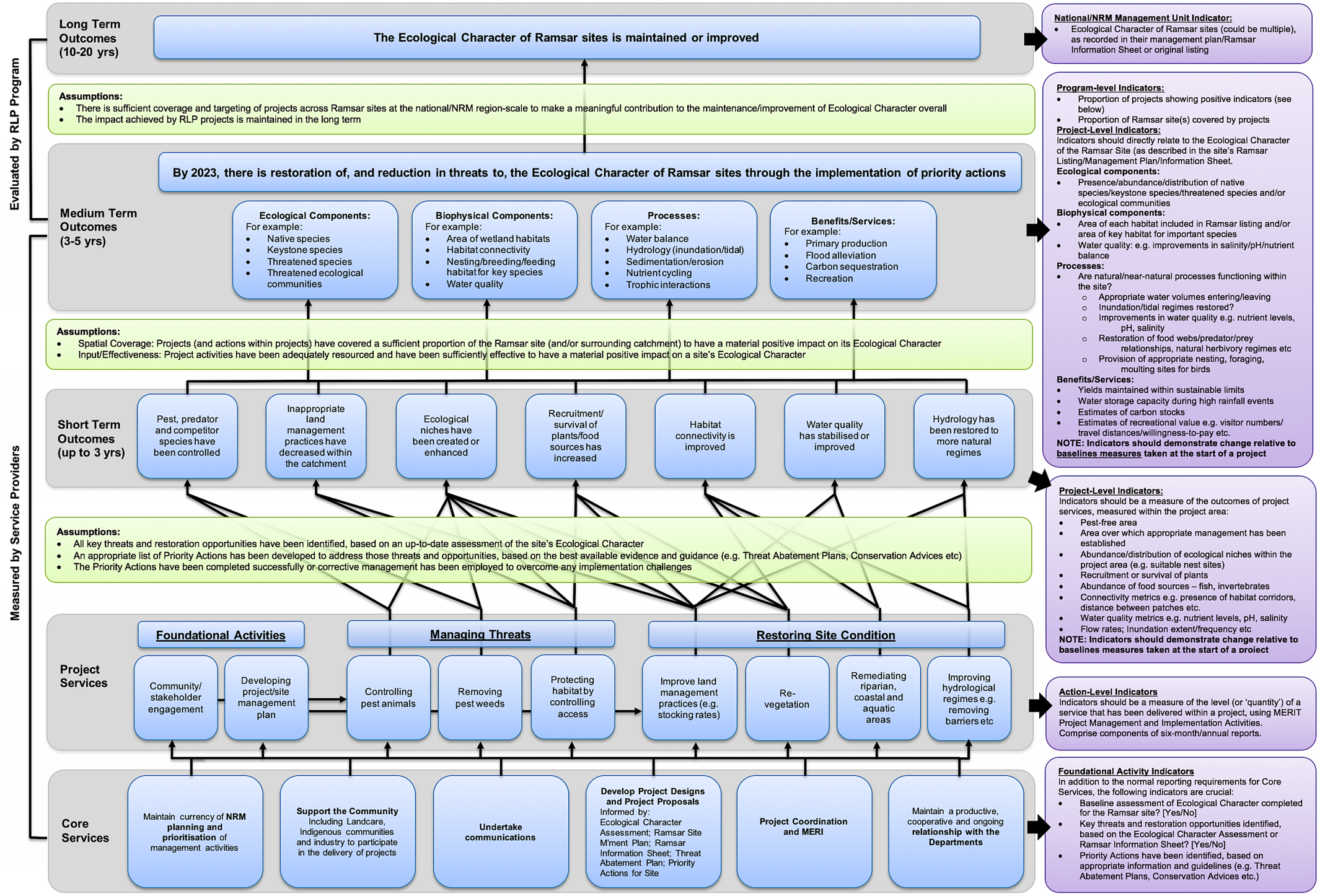

Figure 2-1: Outcome 1 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 1 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Foundational activities: Community/stakeholder engagement; Developing project/site management plan ▪ Controlling threats: e.g. Controlling pest animals; removing pest weeds; protecting habitat by controlling access ▪ Restoring site condition: Improve land management practices; re-vegetation; remediating riparian, coastal and aquatic areas; improving hydrological regimes	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled ▪ Inappropriate land management practices have decreased within the catchment ▪ Ecological niches have been created or enhanced ▪ Recruitment/survival of plants/food sources has increased ▪ Habitat connectivity has improved ▪ Water quality has stabilised or improved ▪ Hydrology has been restored to more natural regimes	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, were the foundational activities and management actions to control threats and restore site condition an appropriate way to: ▪ Align project delivery with community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcome?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the on-ground management actions adopted informed by/consistent with: ▪ Species Recovery Plans ▪ Threat Abatement Plans ▪ Conservation Advices ▪ Ecological Character Assessment of Ramsar site ▪ Ramsar Information Sheet ▪ Ramsar site management plans	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to the restoration of- and reduction in threats to- the Ecological Character of Ramsar Sites	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent has the Medium Term outcome contributed to the Ecological Character of Ramsar sites being maintained or improved?	Medium Term Outcomes Long Term Outcome
		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcomes

		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcomes
Efficiency	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	To what extent did Outcome 1 projects demonstrate 'value for money' through the: ▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 1 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcomes
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 1 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcomes

Table 2-3: Outcome 1 Monitoring Plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	The ecological character of Ramsar sites is maintained or improved	National/NRM Management Unit Indicator: Long-term impact of RLP investment on Ramsar sites can be evaluated by assessing changes in Ecological Character, as recorded in up-to-date Ramsar Management Plan or Ramsar Information Sheet, based on the Ecological Character Descriptions in their original listing. E.g. "Of the 65 Ramsar sites in Australia, the Ecological Character of X sites has been maintained or improved in the long term. The RLP program targeted Y% of those sites. Of the sites where Ecological Character deteriorated, RLP projects targeted Z%".	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DoEE lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, there is restoration of, and reduction in threats to, the Ecological Character of Ramsar sites through the implementation of priority actions	Maintenance or improvement in the Ecological Character of Ramsar sites, is demonstrated by two measures ▪ Proportion of projects showing positive indicators (at end of project) and ▪ Proportion of Ramsar site(s) covered by projects E.g. "The RLP program has invested in X projects across Y Ramsar Sites (covering Z% of the total area of those sites). Across all Ramsar projects, x% of projects demonstrated one or more positive indicators relating to an improvement in Ecological Character (Ecological or Biophysical Components, Processes and/or Benefits/Services).	End of funding cycle	DoEE lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 2**	For each component included in Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site (or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet):			
	Ecological Components: • Keystone species • Native species • Threatened species • Threatened ecological communities	Changes in: ▪ Presence ▪ Abundance ▪ Distribution relative to baseline (at start of project)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Biophysical Components: • Area of wetland habitats • Habitat connectivity • Nesting/breeding/feeding habitat for key species • Water quality	Change in area of: ▪ Wetland habitat ▪ Nesting habitat ▪ Breeding habitat ▪ Feeding habitat relative to the Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet Area of improved habitat quality via: ▪ pest, predator and competitor species being reduced below critical levels or eliminated (pest free area) ▪ site restoration works such as revegetation ▪ changes in connectivity of habitat – e.g. patch proximity change (for particular species) relative to baseline (at start of project) and proportion of required amount of work this represents (as per the Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet) Water quality improvements: ▪ EC (salinity) ▪ pH ▪ nutrient levels (TN, TP) ▪ TSS Or proxies for these improvements such as: ▪ Frequency of algal blooms ▪ Turbidity changes relative to long term levels (as per the Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Processes: • Water balance • Hydrology (inundation/tidal) • Sedimentation/erosion • Nutrient cycling • Trophic interactions	▪ Are natural or near-natural processes functioning within the site? (Yes/No) ▪ Are appropriate water volumes entering/leaving the site? (Yes/No) ▪ Have inundation/tidal regimes been restored? (Yes/No) ▪ Water quality improvements e.g. nutrient levels, pH, salinity ▪ Restoration of predator/prey relationships, natural herbivory regimes etc relative to baseline (at start of project) and the Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site (or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Benefits/Services: • Primary production • Flood alleviation • Carbon sequestration • Recreation	▪ Yields maintained within sustainable limits (primary production) ▪ Water storage capacity during high rainfall events (flood alleviation) ▪ Estimates of carbon stocks (carbon sequestration) ▪ Estimates of recreational value e.g. visitor numbers/ travel distances/willingness-to-pay ▪ Changes in other specific services relative to baseline (at start of project) and the Ecological Character Description of the Ramsar Site (or the site's Ramsar Listing/Management Plan/Information Sheet)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 1**	Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled	Area where pressure and impacts from these species have been reduced or eliminated (control versus eradiation). Proportion (%) this represents of total area that requires this treatment.	At 2-3 years	Service Provider
	Inappropriate land management practices have decreased within the catchment	Area of land where more appropriate management practices are being used. Proportion (%) this represents of total area that requires this treatment.	At 1 – 2 years	Service Provider
	Ecological niches have been created or enhanced	Increase in abundance and/or distribution (area) of ecological niches within the project area such as: ▪ Suitable nesting sites ▪ Feeding sites ▪ Refuges or roosting sites ▪ Etc. relative to baseline (at start of project)	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Recruitment/survival of plants has increased	▪ Recruitment rates ▪ Survival rates of new plants	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Habitat connectivity is improved	Connectivity improvements based on specific metrics such as: ▪ Presence and sizes of habitat corridors ▪ Distance between remnant vegetation patches relative to baseline (at start of project)	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Water quality has stabilised or improved	Water quality improvements: ▪ EC (salinity) ▪ pH ▪ nutrient levels (TN, TP) ▪ TSS Or proxies for these improvements such as: ▪ Frequency of algal blooms ▪ Turbidity changes relative to baseline (at start of project) AND/OR: Area of land where management change or treatment: ▪ decreases nutrient or sediment loss ▪ changes salinity to more natural levels ▪ restores pH to more natural levels Proportion (%) this represents of total area that requires this treatment.	At 1 – 2 years	Service Provider
	Hydrology has been restored to more natural regimes	Measures of hydrological regimes such as: ▪ Flow rates ▪ Area and frequency of inundation ▪ Etc. relative to natural regimes	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Services – project and core	Controlling threats: Controlling pest animals	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment – baiting, exclusion fencing etc. ▪ Number of individuals OR colonies killed / removed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Controlling threats: Controlling invasive weeds	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment ▪ Species targeted	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Improving site condition: Protecting habitat by controlling access	▪ Type of structure(s) installed ▪ Number of structures installed ▪ Access control method used (aim of structure) ▪ Area protected by access control structure	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving site condition: Improving land management practices (e.g. stocking rates etc)	**Management practice change** ▪ Industry ▪ Area covered by practice change ▪ Number of farming entities adopting this practice change ▪ Area of land directly benefiting from the practice change ▪ Type of agreement mechanism ▪ Area under agreement (ha) **Livestock management** ▪ Land management issue being addressed via livestock management ▪ Area managed (ha) ▪ Grazing practice being used **Erosion management** ▪ Area (ha) or length of stream or coastline (km) eroding (in this project area) ▪ Area (ha) of erosion being treated ▪ Length of stream/coastline treated (km) ▪ Erosion treatment method **Fencing** ▪ Length of fence ▪ Area protected by erected fence ▪ Purpose of fence	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving site condition: Improving hydrological regimes	**Water management** ▪ Hydrological regime changed from and to ▪ structures in place to manage water at this site ▪ Area of catchment in hectares being managed as a result of this management action	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving site condition: Remediating riparian and aquatic areas	**Erosion treatment method** ▪ buffer strips size (length, area) **Revegetation** Landscape connectivity via riparian link	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Community / stakeholder engagement	▪ Communities or groups engaged Purpose of engagement (informing through to collaboration – IAP2)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Developing project/site management plan	▪ Area covered by management plan ▪ Species included in management plan	On Commencement	Service Provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	▪ Ramsar Ecological Character Description is sufficiently up-to-date to inform the project	On commencement	Service Provider
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities and industry to participate in the delivery of projects	▪ Governance arrangements and structures engage community in the project delivery (e.g. stakeholder reference groups etc.)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Undertake communications	▪ Communications plan for the project developed and implemented	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by: Ecological Character Assessment; Ramsar Site M'ment Plan; Ramsar Information Sheet; Threat Abatement Plan; Priority Actions for Site.	▪ Baseline assessment of ecological character completed [YES/NO] (likely to be part of the process of site designation) ▪ Key threats and restoration opportunities identified and documented, based on the Ecological Character Assessment or Ramsar Information Sheet? [Yes/No] ▪ Priority Actions have been identified and documented, based on appropriate information and guidelines (e.g. Threat Abatement Plans, Conservation Advices etc.)	On commencement	Service Provider
	Project coordination and MERI	▪ MERI plan for the project developed (reflecting the program logic and delivery plans)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	▪ Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project	Throughout project	Service Provider

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Appendix 2

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 2

By 2023, the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other EPBC Act listed priority species, is stabilised or improved.

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 2.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 2 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs

and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes (e.g. completing management actions in line with best-practice as described in a Threat Abatement Plan will result in a reduction of a given threat).
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 2

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 2 program logic include:

- At the 'Short Term Outcome' level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that management actions have resulted in positive biophysical changes within the project area. If there is a reasonable expectation that a bio-physical change can be detected within the life of the project, that change should be measured directly.
- At the 'Medium Term Outcome' level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that those biophysical changes (measured within the life of the project) have contributed to the trajectory of a threatened species being maintain or improved. There are two tiers of measures/indicators at this level:
  - The Service Provider is expected to report on project-level indicators of the trajectory of a threatened species, within the boundaries of their projects – and might expect to see positive changes in one or more of these indicators.
  - The RLP Program lead is expected to report on program-level indicators of the trajectory of a threatened species. This would include: the number (or proportion) of Outcome 2 projects demonstrating positive indicators; and the area (or ideally the proportion of the species' distribution)

covered by RLP projects. Taken together, these two measures will provide an indication of the overall impact of the RLP program on the species' trajectory within the areas it is investing resources.

- The difference between the measures at the 'Medium Term Outcome' level and the 'Long Term Outcome' level is that the 'Long Term' measures ask what contribution the RLP program made to the trajectory of the threatened species overall. This requires the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure (via indicators) species' trajectory more widely (e.g. in sites outside the RLP program, or through wider systematic monitoring). Knowing the overall trajectory of the species enables contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process
Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. an impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short term or long term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 2-specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous

improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 2 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 2 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

Program Logic – RLP Outcome 2: Threatened Species

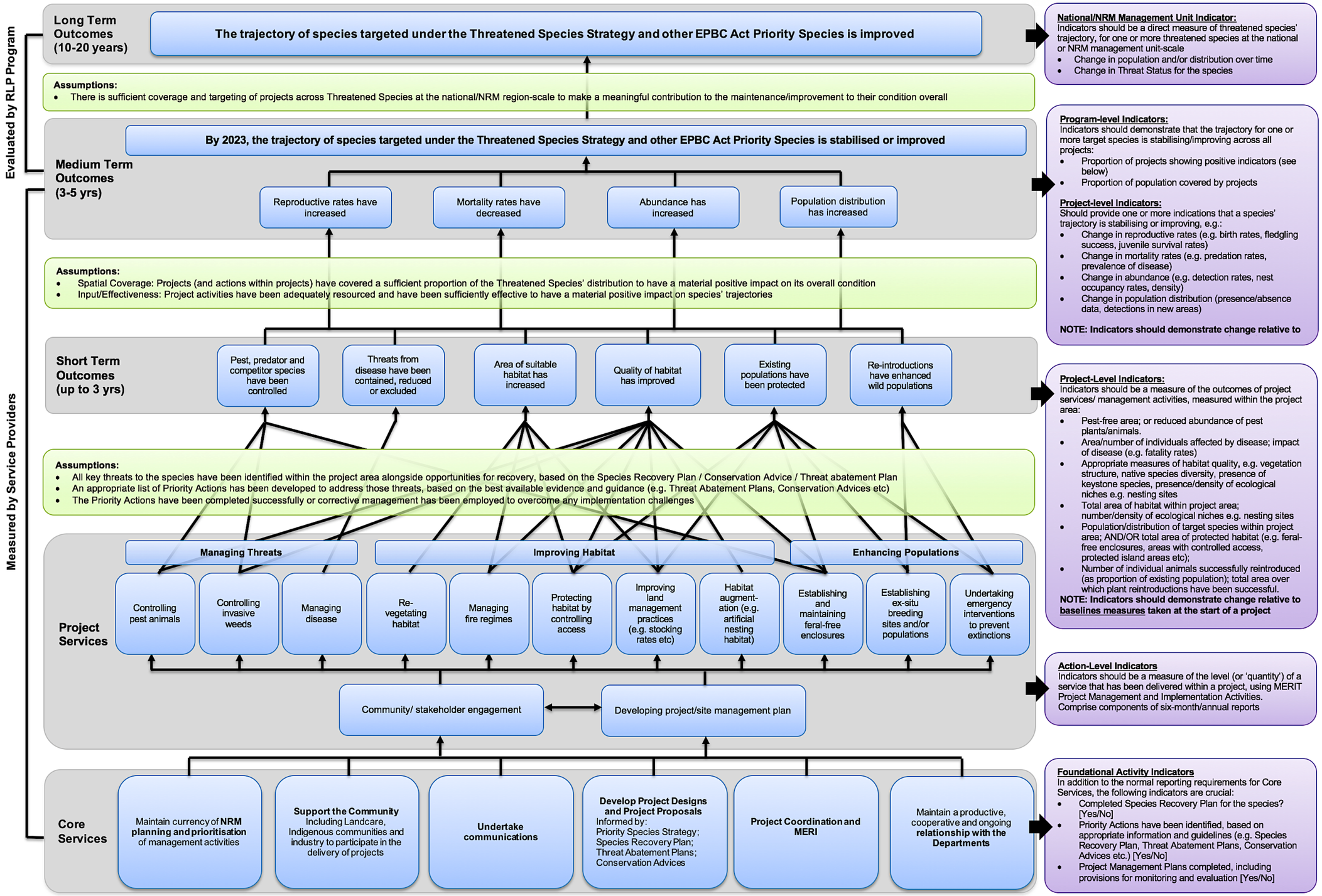

Figure 2-1: Outcome 2 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 2 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Foundational activities: Community/stakeholder engagement; Developing project/site management plan ▪ Managing threats: e.g. Controlling pest animals; controlling invasive weeds; managing disease ▪ Improving habitat: re-vegetation; managing fire regimes; protecting habitat by controlling access; improving land management practices; habitat augmentation ▪ Enhancing populations: establishing and maintaining feral-free enclosures; establishing ex-situ breeding sites and/or populations; undertaking emergency measures to prevent extinctions	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled ▪ Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded ▪ Area of suitable habitat has increased ▪ Quality of habitat has improved ▪ Existing populations have been protected ▪ Re-introductions have enhanced wild populations	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, were the foundational activities and management actions to manage threats, improve habitat and enhance populations an appropriate way to: ▪ Deliver the project given community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcomes?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the on-ground management actions adopted informed by/consistent with: ▪ Species Recovery Plans ▪ Threat Abatement Plans ▪ Conservation Advices ▪ Priority Species Strategy	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other EPBC Act listed species, being stabilised or improved?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent has the End of Project outcome contributed to the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy, and other EPBC Act listed species, being improved?	Medium Term Outcomes Long Term Outcomes
		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcomes

Efficiency	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	To what extent did Outcome 2 projects demonstrate 'value for money' through the: ▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 2 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcomes
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 2 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcomes

Table 2-3: Outcome 2 Monitoring Plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long-term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	The trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy and other EPBC Act Priority Species is improved	**National/NRM Management Unit Indicator:** Indicators should be a direct measure of threatened species' trajectory, for one or more threatened species at the national or NRM management unit-scale ▪ Change in population and/or distribution over time ▪ Change in Threat Status for the species	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DoEE lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, the trajectory of species targeted under the Threatened Species Strategy and other EPBC Act Priority Species is stabilised or improved	**Program-level Indicators:** Indicators should demonstrate that the trajectory for one or more target species is stabilising/improving across all projects: ▪ Proportion of projects showing positive indicators (by species) ▪ Proportion of population covered by projects	End of funding cycle	DoEE lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 2**	**Project-level Indicators:** Provide one or more indications that a species' trajectory is stabilising or improving, e.g.:			
	Reproductive rates have increased	▪ Change in reproductive rates (e.g. birth rates, fledgling success, juvenile survival rates)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Mortality rates have decreased	▪ Change in mortality rates (e.g. predation rates, prevalence of disease)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Abundance has increased	▪ Change in abundance (e.g. detection rates, nest occupancy rates, density)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Population distribution has increased	▪ Change in population distribution (presence/absence data, detections in new areas)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 1**	Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled	All short-term indicators should be measured within the project area: ▪ Pest-free area; ▪ Reduced abundance of pest plants/animals. Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded	▪ Area/number of individuals affected by disease; ▪ Change in impact of disease (e.g. fatality rates) Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Area of suitable habitat has increased	▪ Change in total area of habitat within project area; Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Quality of habitat has improved	▪ Measures of habitat quality, e.g. vegetation structure, native species diversity, presence of keystone species, presence/density of ecological niches e.g. nesting sites	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Existing populations have been protected	▪ Change in population/distribution of target species within project area; AND/OR ▪ Change in total area of protected habitat (e.g. feral-free enclosures, areas with controlled access, protected island areas etc); Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Re-introductions have enhanced wild populations	▪ Number of individual animals successfully reintroduced (as proportion of existing population); ▪ Total area over which plant reintroductions have been successful.	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Services – project and core	Managing Threats: Controlling pest animals	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment – baiting, exclusion fencing etc. ▪ Number of individuals OR colonies killed / removed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Managing Threats: Controlling invasive weeds	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Managing Threats: Managing disease	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. eradication, suppression, containment ▪ Area where disease threat is reduced	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Improving habitat: Re-vegetating habitat	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. increased understorey, increase in food sources ▪ Area of revegetation to improve habitat	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Managing fire regimes	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. less frequent, cooler burns ▪ Area where fire regime has been changed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Protecting habitat by controlling access	▪ Type of structure(s) installed ▪ Number of structures installed ▪ Access control method used (aim of structure) ▪ Area protected by access control structure	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Improving land management practices (e.g. stocking rates)	**Management practice change** ▪ Industry ▪ Area covered by practice change ▪ Number of farming entities adopting this practice change ▪ Area of land directly benefiting from the practice change ▪ Type of agreement mechanism ▪ Area under agreement (ha) **Livestock management** ▪ Land management issue being addressed via livestock management ▪ Area managed (ha) ▪ Grazing practice being used **Erosion management** ▪ Area (ha) or length of stream or coastline (km) eroding (in this project area) ▪ Area (ha) of erosion being treated ▪ Length of stream/coastline treated (km) ▪ Erosion treatment method **Fencing** ▪ Length of fence ▪ Area protected by erected fence ▪ Purpose of fence	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Habitat augmentation (e.g. artificial nesting habitat)	▪ Type(s) and purpose of augmentation ▪ Number of structures or installations	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Creating safe havens: Establishing and maintaining feral-free enclosures	▪ Area of feral-free enclosure	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Creating safe havens: Establishing ex-situ breeding sites and/or populations	▪ Number of ex-situ sites created ▪ Population (number of individuals, or breeding pairs) in ex-situ sites	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Creating safe havens: Undertaking emergency interventions to prevent extinctions	▪ Type and goal of intervention ▪ Number of individuals involved ▪ Duration of intervention	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Community / stakeholder engagement	▪ Communities or groups engaged ▪ Purpose of engagement (informing through to collaboration – IAP2)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Developing project/site management plan	▪ Area covered by management plan ▪ Species included in management plan	On commencement	Service Provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	▪ Ramsar Ecological Character Description is sufficiently up-to-date to inform the project	On commencement	Service Provider
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities and industry to participate in the delivery of projects	▪ Governance arrangements and structures engage community in the project delivery (e.g. stakeholder reference groups etc.)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Undertake communications	▪ Communications plan for the project developed and implemented	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by:	▪ Baseline assessment of ecological character completed [YES/NO] (likely to be part of the process of site designation)	On commencement	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Ecological Character Assessment; Ramsar Site M'ment Plan; Ramsar Information Sheet; Threat Abatement Plan; Priority Actions for Site.	▪ Key threats and restoration opportunities identified and documented, based on the Ecological Character Assessment or Ramsar Information Sheet? [Yes/No] ▪ Priority Actions have been identified and documented, based on appropriate information and guidelines (e.g. Threat Abatement Plans, Conservation Advices etc.)		
	Project coordination and MERI	▪ MERI plan for the project developed (reflecting the program logic and delivery plans)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	▪ Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project	Throughout project	Service Provider

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Appendix 3

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 3

By 2023, threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Properties listed for natural heritage have been reduced through the implementation of priority actions

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 3.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 3 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes (e.g. completing management actions in line with best-practice as described in a Threat Abatement Plan will result in a reduction of a given threat).
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 3

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 3 program logic include:

- At the 'Short Term Outcome' level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that management actions have resulted in positive biophysical changes within the project area. If there is a reasonable expectation that a bio-physical change can be detected within the life of the project, that change should be measured directly.

- At the 'Medium Term Outcome' level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that those biophysical changes (measured within the life of the project) have contributed to a reduction in threats to a WH Property's OUV. There are two tiers of measures/indicators at this level:
  - The Service Provider is expected to report on project-level indicators of threat reduction within the boundaries of their projects – and might expect to see positive changes in one or more of these indicators.
  - The RLP Program lead is expected to report on program-level indicators of threat reduction. This would include: the number (or proportion) of Outcome 3 projects demonstrating positive indicators; and the area (or ideally the proportion of the WH property) covered by RLP projects. Taken together, these two measures will provide an indication of the overall impact of the RLP program on threat reduction within the areas it is investing resources.
- The difference between the measures at the 'Medium Term Outcome level and the 'Long-Term Outcome' level is that the 'Long-term' measures ask what contribution the RLP program made to the OUV of WH properties (listed for Natural Heritage values) overall. This requires the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure (via indicators including threat measures) changes in the OUV of WH properties overall. Knowing the overall trend in OUV (or threats to OUV) of WH properties overall enables contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process
Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. an impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short term or long term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 3-specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 3 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 3 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

Program Logic – RLP Outcome 3: OUV of World Heritage properties listed for their natural values

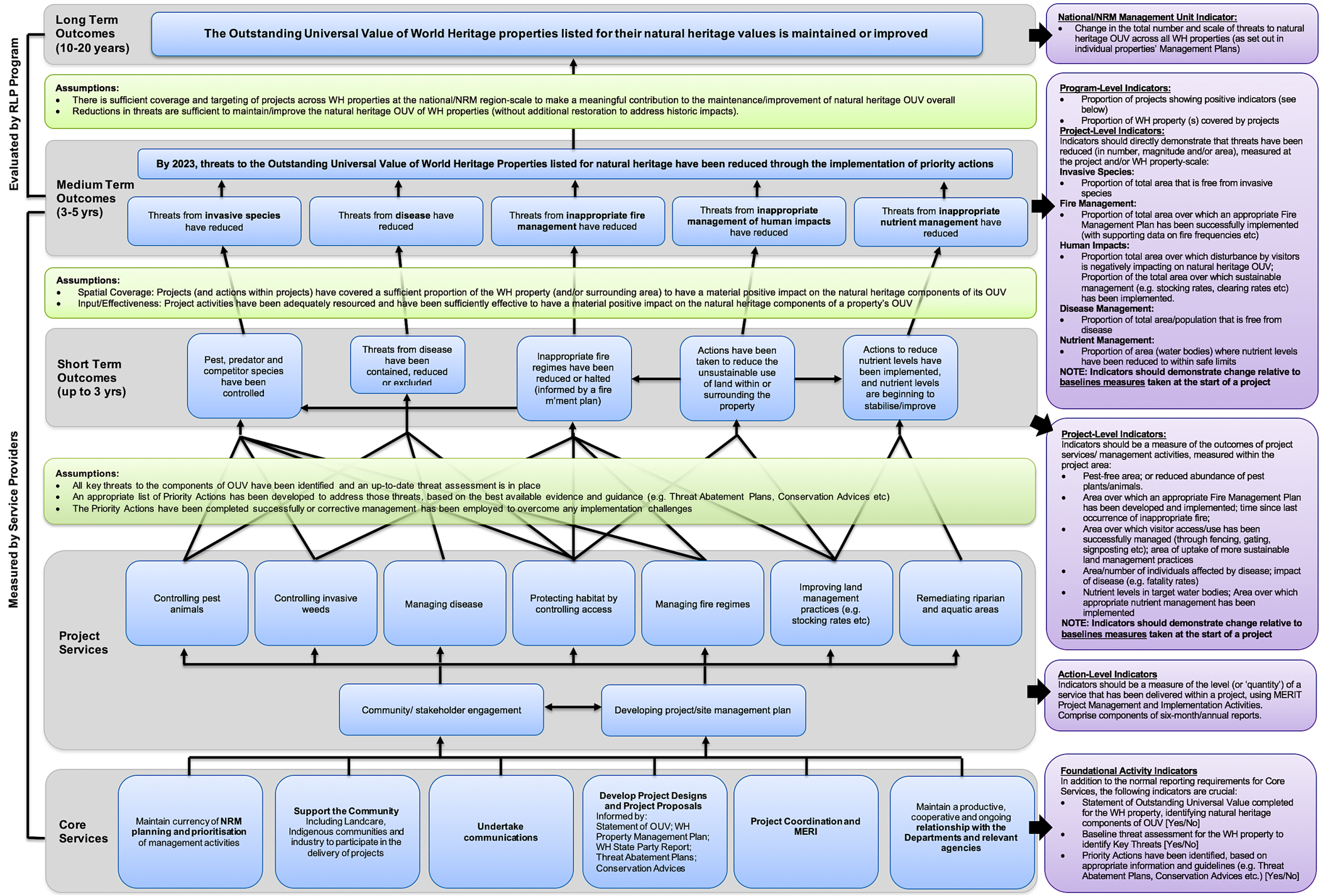

Figure 2-1: Outcome 3 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 3 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Foundational activities: Community/stakeholder engagement; Developing project/site management plan ▪ Controlling pest animals ▪ Controlling invasive weeds ▪ Managing disease ▪ Protecting habitat by controlling access ▪ Managing fire regimes ▪ Improving land management practices ▪ Remediating riparian and aquatic areas	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled ▪ Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded ▪ Inappropriate fire regimes have been reduced/halted ▪ Actions have been taken to reduce unsustainable use of land within or surrounding the property ▪ Actions to reduce nutrient levels have been implemented, and nutrient levels are beginning to stabilise/improve	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, were the foundational activities and management actions to reduce threats an appropriate way to: ▪ Deliver the project given community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcome?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the on-ground management actions adopted informed by/consistent with: ▪ Species Recovery Plans ▪ Threat Abatement Plans ▪ Conservation Advices ▪ WH Property's statement of OUV ▪ WH Property's Management Plan	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to a reduction in threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties listed for their natural heritage?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent have the End of Project outcomes contributed to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties being maintained or improved?	Medium Term Outcomes Long Term Outcomes

		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcomes
Efficiency	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	To what extent did Outcome 3 projects demonstrate 'value for money' through the: ▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 3 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcomes
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 3 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcomes

Table 2-3: Outcome 3 Monitoring Plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long-term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	The Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties is maintained or improved	**National/NRM Management Unit Indicator:** ▪ Change in the total number and scale of threats to natural heritage OUV across all WH properties (as set out in individual property Management Plans)	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DoEE lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Properties listed for natural heritage have been reduced through the implementation of priority actions	**Program-Level Indicators:** ▪ Proportion of projects showing positive indicators (by WH property) ▪ Proportion of WH property (s) covered by projects	End of funding cycle	DoEE lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in:** **Outcome Report 2**	Indicators should directly demonstrate that threats have been reduced (in number, magnitude and/or area), measured at the project and/or WH property-scale:			
	Threats from invasive species have reduced	▪ Proportion of total area that is free from invasive species	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Threats from disease have reduced	▪ Proportion of total area/population that is free from disease or change in disease impact (e.g. mortality rates)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Threats from inappropriate fire management have reduced	▪ Proportion of the total area over which an appropriate Fire Management Plan has been successfully implemented (with supporting data on fire frequencies etc)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Threats from inappropriate management of human impacts have reduced	▪ Proportion of the total area over which disturbance by visitors is negatively impacting on natural heritage OUV; increase in the total area over which sustainable management (e.g. stocking rates, clearing rates etc) has been implemented.	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Threats from inappropriate nutrient management have reduced	▪ Proportion of area (water bodies) where nutrient levels have been reduced to within safe limits	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in:** **Outcome Report 1**	Indicators should be a measure of the outcomes of project services/ management activities, measured within the project area:			
	Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled	▪ Pest-free area; or reduced abundance of pest plants/animals.	At 1- 3 years	Service Provider
	Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded	▪ Area/number of individuals affected by disease; impact of disease (e.g. fatality rates)	At 1-3 years	Service Provider
	Inappropriate fire regimes have been reduced or halted (informed by a fire m'ment plan)	▪ Area over which an appropriate Fire Management Plan has been developed and implemented; time since last occurrence of inappropriate fire;	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Actions have been taken to reduce the unsustainable use of land within or surrounding the property	▪ Area over which visitor access/use has been successfully managed (through fencing, gating, signposting etc); area of uptake of more sustainable land management practices	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Actions to reduce nutrient levels have been implemented, and nutrient levels are beginning to stabilise/improve	▪ Nutrient levels in target water bodies; Area over which appropriate nutrient management has been implemented	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Services – project and core	Controlling pest animals	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment – baiting, exclusion fencing etc. ▪ Number of individuals OR colonies killed / removed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Controlling invasive weeds	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment ▪ Weed species targeted	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Managing disease	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. eradication, suppression, containment ▪ Area where disease threat is reduced	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Protecting habitat by controlling access	▪ Type of structure(s) installed ▪ Number of structures installed ▪ Access control method used (aim of structure) ▪ Area protected by access control structure	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements Annual	Service Provider
	Managing fire regimes	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. less frequent, cooler burns ▪ Area where fire regime has been changed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving land management practices (e.g. stocking rates etc)	**Management practice change** ▪ Industry ▪ Area covered by practice change ▪ Number of farming entities adopting this practice change ▪ Area of land directly benefiting from the practice change ▪ Type of agreement mechanism ▪ Area under agreement (ha) **Livestock management** ▪ Land management issue being addressed via livestock management ▪ Area managed (ha) ▪ Grazing practice being used **Erosion management** ▪ Area (ha) or length of stream or coastline (km) eroding (in this project area) ▪ Area (ha) of erosion being treated ▪ Length of stream/coastline treated (km) ▪ Erosion treatment method **Fencing** ▪ Length of fence ▪ Area protected by erected fence ▪ Purpose of fence	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Remediating riparian and aquatic areas	**Erosion treatment method** ▪ buffer strips size (length, area) **Revegetation** Landscape connectivity via riparian link		
	Community / stakeholder engagement	▪ Communities or groups engaged ▪ Purpose of engagement (informing through to collaboration – IAP2)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Developing project/site management plan	▪ Area covered by management plan ▪ Species included in management plan	On Commencement	Service Provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	▪ WH Property Management Plan is sufficiently up-to-date to inform the project	On commencement	Project delivery team
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities and industry to participate in the delivery of projects	▪ Governance arrangements and structures engage community in the project delivery (e.g. stakeholder reference groups etc.)	Throughout project	Project delivery team
	Undertake communications	▪ Communications plan for the project developed and implemented	Throughout project	Project delivery team
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by: Statement of OUV; WH Property Management Plan; WH State Party Report; Threat Abatement Plans; Conservation Advices	▪ Baseline assessment of OUV completed [YES/NO] (likely to be part of the process of site designation) ▪ Key threats and restoration opportunities identified and documented in the WH Property Management Plan? [Yes/No] ▪ Priority Actions have been identified and documented, based on appropriate information and guidelines (e.g. Threat Abatement Plans, Conservation Advices etc.)	On commencement	Project delivery team
	Project coordination and MERI	▪ MERI plan for the project developed (reflecting the program logic and delivery plans)	Throughout project	Project delivery team
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	▪ Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project	Throughout project	Project delivery team

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Appendix 4

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 4

Outcome 4: By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 4.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 4 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes (e.g. completing management actions in line with best-practice as described in a Threat Abatement Plan will result in a reduction of a given threat).
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 4

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 4 program logic include:

- At the 'Short Term Outcome level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that management actions have resulted in positive biophysical changes within the project area. If there is a reasonable expectation that a bio-physical change can be detected within the life of the project, that change should be measured directly.

- At the 'Medium Term Outcome level, measures and indicators aim to demonstrate that those biophysical changes (measured within the life of the project) have contributed to the condition of Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) being maintain or improved. There are two tiers of measures/indicators at this level:
  - The Service Provider is expected to report on project-level indicators of TEC condition, within the boundaries of their projects – and might expect to see positive changes in one or more of these indicators.
  - The RLP Program lead is expected to report on program-level indicators of the condition of TECs. This would include: the number (or proportion) of Outcome 4 projects demonstrating positive indicators; and the area (or ideally the proportion of the TECs distribution) covered by RLP projects. Taken together, these two measures will provide an indication of the overall impact of the RLP program on the condition of TECs within the areas it is investing resources.
- The difference between the measures at the 'Medium Term Outcome level and the 'Long-Term Outcome' level is that the 'Long-term' measures ask what contribution the RLP program made to the condition of TECs overall. This requires the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure (via indicators) TEC condition more widely (e.g. in sites outside the RLP program, or through wider systematic monitoring). Knowing the overall condition of a TEC enables contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process
Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. an impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short term or long term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 4-specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 4 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 4 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

Program Logic – RLP Outcome 4: Threatened Ecological Communities

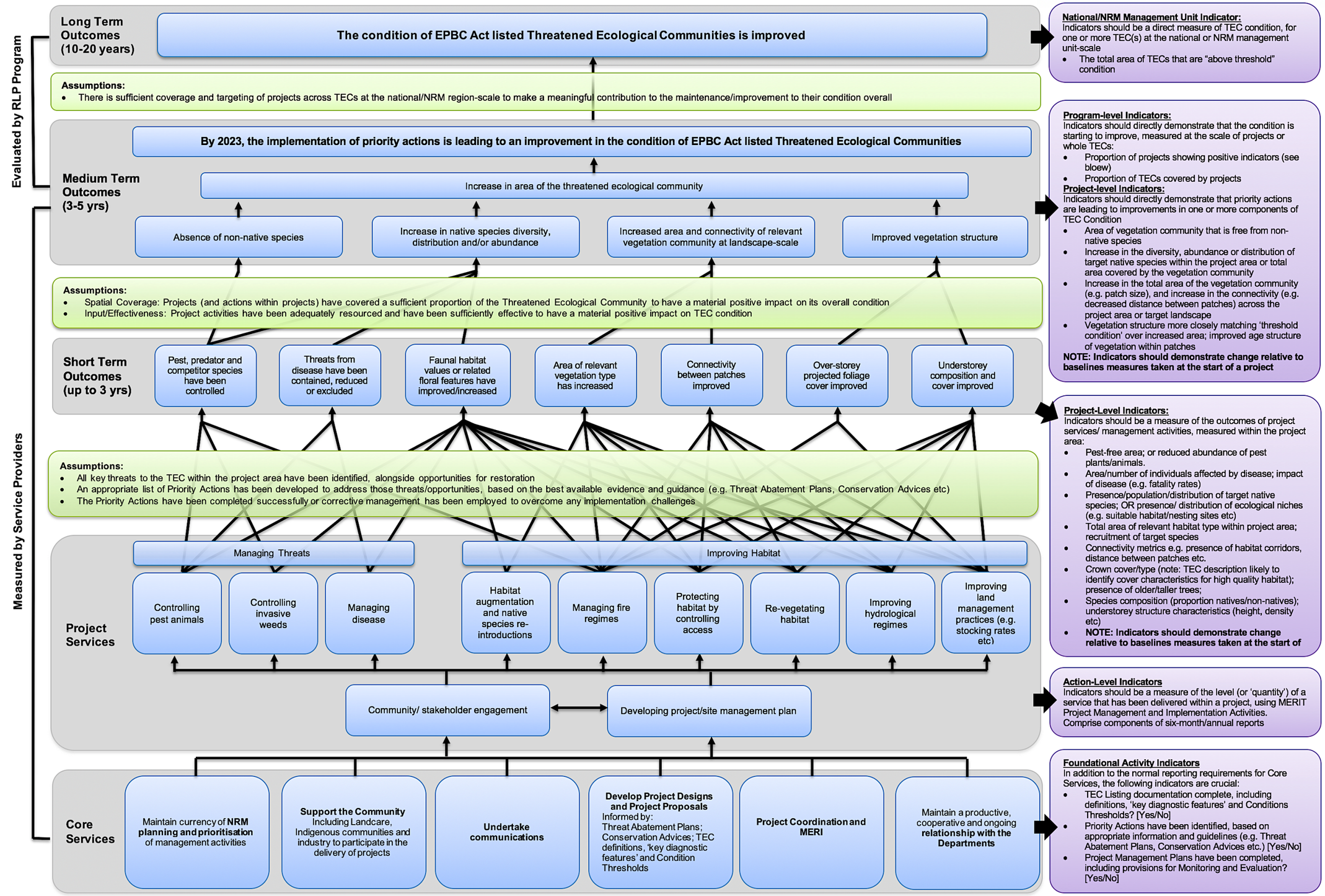

Figure 2-1: Outcome 4 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 4 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Foundational activities: Community/stakeholder engagement; Developing project/site management plan ▪ Managing threats: e.g. Controlling pest animals; controlling invasive weeds; managing disease ▪ Improving habitat: habitat augmentation; managing fire regimes; protecting habitat by controlling access; re-vegetating habitat; improving hydrological regimes; improving land management practices	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled ▪ Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded ▪ Faunal habitat values or related floral features have improved/increased ▪ Area of relevant vegetation type has increased ▪ Connectivity between patches has improved ▪ Over-storey project foliage cover has improved ▪ Undertsorey composition and cover has improved	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, were the foundational activities and management actions to manage threats and improve habitat an appropriate way to: ▪ Align project delivery with community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcomes?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the on-ground management actions adopted informed by/consistent with: ▪ Species Recovery Plans ▪ Threat Abatement Plans ▪ Conservation Advices ▪ TEC definitions, key diagnostic features and ‘condition thresholds’	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to improvements in the condition of Threatened Ecological Communities?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent has the End of Project outcome contributed to the condition of Threatened Ecological Communities being improved?	Medium Term Outcomes Long Term Outcomes
		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcomes

Efficiency	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	To what extent did Outcome 2 projects demonstrate 'value for money' through the: ▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcomes
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 4 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcomes
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 4 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcomes

Table 2-3: Outcome 4 Monitoring Plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long-term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	The condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities is improved	**National/NRM Management Unit Indicator:** Indicators should be a direct measure of TEC condition, for one or more TEC(s) at the national or NRM management unit-scale ▪ The total area of TECs that are "above threshold" condition	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DoEE lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, the implementation of priority actions is leading to an improvement in the condition of EPBC Act listed Threatened Ecological Communities	**Program-level Indicators:** Indicators should directly demonstrate that the condition is starting to improve, measured at the scale of projects or whole TECs: ▪ Proportion of projects showing positive indicators ▪ Proportion of TECs covered by projects	End of funding cycle	DoEE lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 2**	Indicators should directly demonstrate that priority actions are leading to improvements in one or more components of TEC Condition:			
	Increase in area of the TEC	▪ Area of the vegetation community that meets the definition of the TEC	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Absence of non-native species	▪ Area of vegetation community that is free from non-native species	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Increase in native species diversity, distribution and/or abundance	▪ Diversity, abundance or distribution of target native species within the project area or total area covered by the vegetation community	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Increased area and connectivity of relevant vegetation community at landscape-scale	▪ Total area of the vegetation community (e.g. patch size), and increase in the connectivity (e.g. decreased distance between patches) across the project area or target landscape	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
	Improved vegetation structure	▪ Vegetation structure more closely matching 'threshold condition' over increased area; improved age structure of vegetation within patches	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 1**	Pest, predator and competitor species have been controlled	All short-term indicators should be measured within the project area: ▪ Pest-free area; ▪ Reduced abundance of pest plants/animals. Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Threats from disease have been contained, reduced or excluded	▪ Decrease in area/number of individuals affected by disease; ▪ Change in impact of disease (e.g. fatality rates) Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Faunal habitat values or related floral features have improved/increased	▪ Change in presence/population/distribution of target native species; OR ▪ Change in presence/ distribution of ecological niches (e.g. suitable habitat/nesting sites etc)	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Area of relevant vegetation type has increased	▪ Change in total area of relevant habitat type within project area; ▪ Change in recruitment of target species Note: Area measures should be reported as a proportion of the total habitat/site/project area	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Connectivity between patches improved	▪ Change in connectivity metrics e.g. presence of habitat corridors, distance between patches etc.	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Over-storey projected foliage cover improved	▪ Change in crown cover/type (note: TEC description likely to identify cover characteristics for high quality habitat); ▪ Change in projected presence of older/taller trees	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
	Understorey composition and cover improved	▪ Change in species composition (proportion natives/non-natives); ▪ Change in understorey structure characteristics (height, density etc)	At 2 – 3 years	Service Provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Services – project and core	Managing Threats: Controlling pest animals	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment – baiting, exclusion fencing etc. ▪ Number of individuals OR colonies killed / removed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Managing Threats: Controlling invasive weeds	▪ Treatment objective/s – eradication, control etc. ▪ Total treatment area (Ha) ▪ Type of treatment	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Managing Threats: Managing disease	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. eradication, suppression, containment ▪ Area where disease threat is reduced	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Habitat augmentation (e.g. artificial nesting habitat)	▪ Type(s) and purpose of augmentation ▪ Number of structures or installations	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Managing fire regimes	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. less frequent, cooler burns ▪ Area where fire regime has been changed	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Protecting habitat by controlling access	▪ Type of structure(s) installed ▪ Number of structures installed ▪ Access control method used (aim of structure) ▪ Area protected by access control structure	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Re-vegetating habitat	▪ Treatment objective/s e.g. increased understorey, increase in food sources ▪ Area of revegetation to improve habitat	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving site condition: Improving hydrological regimes	**Water management** ▪ Hydrological regime changed from and to ▪ structures in place to manage water at this site ▪ Area of catchment in hectares being managed as a result of this management action	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Improving habitat: Improving land management practices (e.g. stocking rates)	**Management practice change** ▪ Industry ▪ Area covered by practice change ▪ Number of farming entities adopting this practice change ▪ Area of land directly benefiting from the practice change ▪ Type of agreement mechanism ▪ Area under agreement (ha) **Livestock management** ▪ Land management issue being addressed via livestock management ▪ Area managed (ha) ▪ Grazing practice being used **Erosion management** ▪ Area (ha) or length of stream or coastline (km) eroding (in this project area) ▪ Area (ha) of erosion being treated ▪ Length of stream/coastline treated (km) ▪ Erosion treatment method **Fencing** ▪ Length of fence ▪ Area protected by erected fence ▪ Purpose of fence	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service Provider
	Community / stakeholder engagement	▪ Communities or groups engaged ▪ Purpose of engagement (informing through to collaboration – IAP2)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Developing project/site management plan	▪ Area covered by management plan ▪ Species included in management plan	On Commencement	Service Provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	▪ TEC definitions, recovery plans and/or conservation advice is sufficiently up-to-date to inform the project	On commencement	Service Provider
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities and industry to participate in the delivery of projects	▪ Governance arrangements and structures engage community in the project delivery (e.g. stakeholder reference groups etc.)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Undertake communications	▪ Communications plan for the project developed and implemented	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by:	▪ Baseline assessment of TEC completed [YES/NO] ▪ Key threats and restoration opportunities identified and documented? [Yes/No] ▪ Priority Actions have been identified and documented, based on appropriate information and guidelines (e.g. Threat Abatement Plans, Conservation Advices etc.)	On commencement	Service Provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Threat Abatement Plans; Conservation Advices; TEC definitions, 'key diagnostic features' and Condition Thresholds			
	Project coordination and MERI	▪ MERI plan for the project developed (reflecting the program logic and delivery plans)	Throughout project	Service Provider
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	▪ Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project	Throughout project	Service Provider

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Appendix 5

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 5

By 2023, there is an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 5.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 5 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes, (e.g. previous projects have found that for every 20 landholders that attend our grazing management workshop, 7 adopt our rotational grazing system that increases summer groundcover)
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages, prices on export beef markets remain within the range for the last 10 years).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 5

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 5 program logic include:

- Biophysical measures have been included at the 'Short Term Outcome' level. However, because these characteristics are only really appropriate to directly measure over a longer timeframe, the monitoring plan for this outcome only specifies that they be measured at the 'End of Project Outcome' level. They are included at the 'Short-Term and Mid-Term' level, not for direct measurement but to identify the soil,

biodiversity or native vegetation management aim of the land management practice change activities that are noted at this level.

- At the 'Medium Term Outcome' level, outcomes relating to the practice change continuum should be measured i.e. change in awareness, knowledge, skills, confidence and ultimately adoption of recommended management practices.
- The difference between the measures at the 'End of project outcome' level and the 'Long-term' level is that the 'Long-term' measures ask the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure (via indicators) the trends in condition of the targeted assets i.e. soil, biodiversity and vegetation. Knowing the overall trends in condition enables contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.
- The differences between what a project would report at the 'Medium Term Outcome' level, and what the RLP program would report, are described below:
  - The project would report on changes to biophysical indicators monitored within their project boundary (only)
  - The RLP program would report on changes to biophysical indicators monitored across **all** projects that have received investment. This would provide an aggregated report on the impact of the RLP investment which has direct attribution.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which a program, project or initiative has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way
Appropriateness	A determination made through comparing the program with the needs of the intended beneficiaries using any of the techniques of needs analysis. alternatively, the program could be evaluated in terms of its compliance with process
Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. an impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short term or long term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 5 specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 5 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 5 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

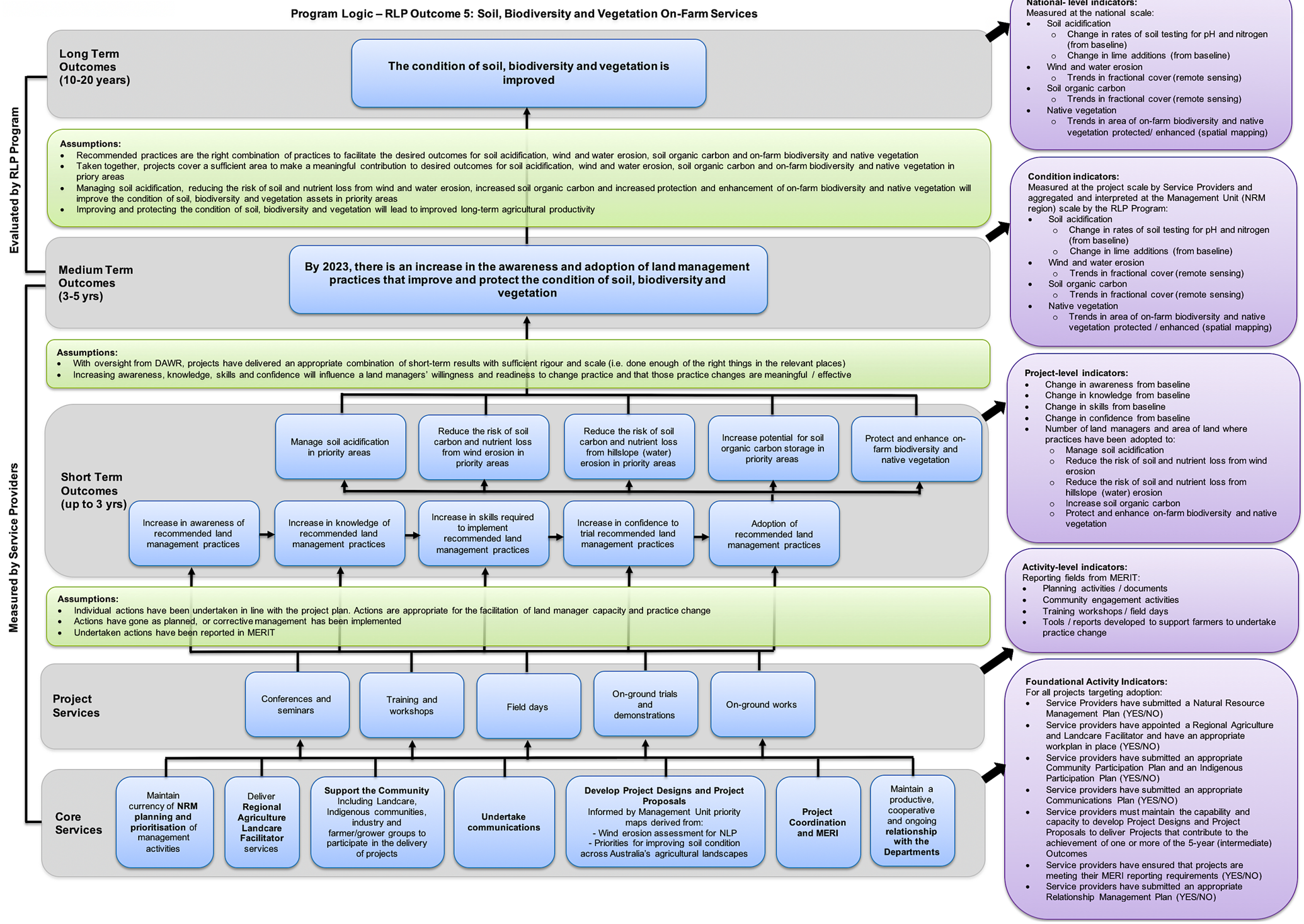

Figure 2-1: Outcome 5 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 5 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Deliver Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator services ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Conferences and seminars ▪ Training and workshops ▪ Field days ▪ On-ground trials and demonstrations ▪ On-ground works	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Increase in awareness of recommended land management practices ▪ Increase in knowledge of recommended land management practices ▪ Increase in skills required to implement recommended land management practices ▪ Increase in confidence to trial recommended land management practices ▪ Adoption of recommended land management practices	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, was community engagement, extension and adoption an appropriate way to: ▪ Align project delivery with community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcome?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		To what extent were the land management practices adopted consistent with recognised best practice to: ▪ Manage soil acidification ▪ Reduce the risk of soil carbon and nutrient loss from wind erosion ▪ Reduce the risk of soil carbon and nutrient loss from hillslope (water) erosion ▪ Increase soil organic carbon ▪ Protect and enhance on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation.	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to increased awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation?	Medium Term Outcomes
		To what extent has the End of Project outcome contributed to improved condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation?	Medium Term Outcome Long Term Outcomes
		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcome
		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcome

Efficiency	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	To what extent did Outcome 5 projects demonstrate 'value for money' through the: ▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 5 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcome
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 5 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcomes

Table 2-3: Outcome 5 monitoring plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative reporting frequency	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long-term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	The condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation is improved	Measured at the national scale: Soil acidification ▪ Change in rates of soil testing for pH and nitrogen (from baseline) ▪ Change in lime additions (from baseline) Wind and water erosion ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Soil organic carbon ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Native vegetation ▪ Trends in area of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation protected/ enhanced (spatial mapping)	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DAWR lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, there is an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation	Aggregated and interpreted at the Management Unit (NRM region) scale by the RLP Program: Soil acidification ▪ Change in rates of soil testing for pH and nitrogen (from baseline) ▪ Change in lime additions (from baseline) Wind and water erosion ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Soil organic carbon ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Native vegetation ▪ Trends in area of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation protected / enhanced (spatial mapping)	End of funding cycle	DAWR lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in:** **Outcome Report 2**	By 2023, there is an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity and vegetation	Measured at the project scale by Service Providers: Soil acidification ▪ Change in rates of soil testing for pH and nitrogen (from baseline) ▪ Change in lime additions (from baseline) Wind and water erosion ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Soil organic carbon ▪ Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) Native vegetation ▪ Trends in area of on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation protected / enhanced (spatial mapping)	At 3-5 years	Service Provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in:** **Outcome Report 1**	Increase in awareness of recommended land management practices	Change in awareness from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in knowledge of recommended land management practices	Change in knowledge from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in skills required to implement recommended land management practices	Change in skills from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in confidence to trial recommended land management practices	Change in confidence from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Adoption of recommended land management practices	Number of land managers and area of land where practices have been adopted to: ▪ Manage soil acidification ▪ Reduce the risk of soil and nutrient loss from wind erosion ▪ Reduce the risk of soil and nutrient loss from hillslope (water) erosion ▪ Increase soil organic carbon ▪ Protect and enhance on-farm biodiversity and native vegetation	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Project Services	Conferences and seminars	Reporting fields from MERIT: ▪ Community engagement activities ▪ Aim of conference or seminar – improve knowledge, build skills etc.	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative reporting frequency	Who is responsible?
		▪ Measures of change (based on aims)		
	Training and workshops	▪ Training workshops – number run, attendees ▪ Aim of training – improve knowledge, build skills etc. ▪ Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	Field days	▪ Field days – number run, attendees ▪ Aim of training – improve knowledge, build skills etc. ▪ Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	On-ground trials and demonstrations	▪ On-farm trials – number run, attendees (?) ▪ Aim of trials and demos – improve knowledge, build skills, change practice etc. ▪ Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	On-ground works	▪ On-ground works – type, number ▪ Aim of trials and demos – improve knowledge, build skills, change practice etc. ▪ Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	▪ Service Providers have submitted a Natural Resource Management Plan (YES/NO)	On commencement	Service provider
	Deliver **Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator** services	▪ Service providers have appointed a Regional Agriculture and Landcare Facilitator and have an appropriate workplan in place(YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects	▪ Service providers have submitted an appropriate Community Participation Plan and an Indigenous Participation Plan (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Undertake communications	▪ Service providers have prepared and submitted an appropriate Communications Plan (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by Management Unit priority maps derived from: ▪ Wind erosion assessment for NLP ▪ Priorities for improving soil condition across Australia's agricultural landscapes	▪ Service providers must maintain the capability and capacity to develop Project Designs and Project Proposals to deliver Projects that contribute to the achievement of one or more of the 5-year (intermediate) Outcomes	On commencement	Service provider
	Project coordination and MERI	▪ Service providers have ensured that projects are meeting their MERI reporting requirements (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	▪ Service providers have submitted an appropriate Relationship Management Plan (YES/NO) ▪ Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider

RMCG

Appendix 6

Regional Land Partnerships Evaluation Plan: Outcome 6

By 2023, there is an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant change in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production

June 2018

1 Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to provide advice on how to prepare to evaluate the Regional Land Partnerships (RLP) program. This plan is tailored specifically to Outcome 6.

The evaluation plan is presented in three main components:

- Program logic
- Program and outcome specific Key Evaluation Questions
- Monitoring plan.

2 Evaluation plan

2.1 PROGRAM LOGIC

The Outcome 6 program logic forms the basis of this evaluation plan (see Figure 2-1). The purpose of program logic is to describe the anticipated cause-and-effect relationships between project activities, outputs and outcomes or its 'theory of change'. Program logic also documents the **assumptions** that are critical to the transition from one level of the logic to the next and **indicators** that can be used to measure progress against each level of the logic over time. These two important elements of a logic are explained further below.

ASSUMPTIONS

Between each level of the logic, assumptions are specified. Assumptions help explain how one level of the logic links to the next. There are generally two types of assumptions:

i. Knowledge-based assumptions that draw on research, literature or previous experience to describe expected changes, (e.g. previous projects have found that for every 20 landholders that attend our grazing management workshop, 7 adopt our rotational grazing system that increases summer groundcover)
ii. Assumptions that relate to conditions or circumstances that are beyond the control or influence of the project or program (e.g. rainfall is within long-term seasonal averages, prices on export beef markets remain within the range for the last 10 years).

Identifying these assumptions ensures the logic provides a more complete picture of how the actions in a project are expected to contribute to outcomes.

INDICATORS

Indicators have been identified at each level of the program logic. They provide the evidence-base for project teams and the program as a whole, to demonstrate progress. Indicators can include both quantitative and qualitative measures. The timing and frequency of measuring the indicators is specific to each indicator (see monitoring plan). Some indicators might only be measured at the beginning and end of the project, while others are measured annually, or at multiple points in the delivery of the project (e.g. beginning, mid-point and end). It is important that no single indicator is considered in isolation of others. They should be recorded and reported together in order to give a clear illustration of the extent of project progress.

KEY FEATURES OF OUTCOME 6

Specific characteristics of the Outcome 6 program logic include:

- At the 'Short Term Outcome' level, outcomes relating to the practice change continuum can, and should, be measured i.e. change in awareness, knowledge, skills, confidence and ultimately adoption of recommended management practices.
- The difference between the measures at the 'Medium Term Outcome' level and the 'Long-term' level is that the 'Long-term' measures ask the RLP program to look beyond the direct investment and measure

(via indicators) the trends in condition of the targeted assets i.e. soil, biodiversity and vegetation. Knowing the overall trends in condition enables contribution analysis i.e. what difference has the RLP investment made to the condition of these assets through its investment.

- The differences between what a project would report at the 'Medium Term Outcome' level, and what the RLP program would report, are described below:
  - The project would report on changes to biophysical indicators monitored within their project boundary (only)
  - The RLP program would report on changes to biophysical indicators monitored across **all** projects that have received investment. This would provide an aggregated report on the impact of the RLP investment which has direct attribution.
- Indicators on farm resilience will be developed by DAWR shortly. It is expected that once available they will be incorporated into relevant project's monitoring and evaluation plans, and will be measured from that point onwards.

2.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) represent high-level lines of enquiry to guide an evaluation. KEQs have been prepared for the whole RLP program, across five evaluation themes (effectiveness, appropriateness, impact, efficiency and legacy). Definitions for each of these evaluation criteria are provided in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: RLP program evaluation themes

EVALUATION THEMES	DEFINITION
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Impact	A change in the condition of biophysical, social, economic and/or institutional assets. an impact may be positive or negative, primary or secondary, short term or long term, direct or indirect, and/or intended or unintended. Impacts are sometimes realised after the formal project is completed
Efficiency	The notion of getting the highest value out of program or project resources
Legacy	The enduring consequences of past investments, policies or actions that can be captured and/or bequeathed

KEQS FOR EACH OUTCOME

To effectively guide monitoring and evaluation approaches for each of the six RLP outcomes, each KEQ has also been broken down into a series of sub-questions relevant to that outcome. Information and data can be collected specific to the KEQs for each outcome using various monitoring and evaluation methods. The RLP program and Outcome 6 specific Key Evaluation Questions are outlined in Table 2-2.

The process of developing KEQs at both the program and outcome level was also critical in informing **indicators** (in addition to those identified during the program logic development) that are be included in the monitoring plan.

2.3 MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring is used to describe an ongoing process of routine data collection. Generating performance data at regular intervals throughout the life of a program is critical for adaptive management and continuous improvement. Monitoring also provides valuable data for evaluation, which can act as a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate a program's contribution to planned outcomes.

A monitoring plan for Outcome 6 has been prepared as a component of the evaluation plan. It is based on the **indicators** and **assumptions** identified during the program logic and KEQ development processes. The monitoring plan identifies the data that should be collected for each **indicator,** by whom and how often.

The aim of the monitoring plan is to provide clear guidance (timing, method) and accountability for monitoring at both the project and program scale over time. The Outcome 6 monitoring plan is provided in Table 2-3.

Program Logic – RLP Outcome 6: Supporting Agriculture Systems to Adapt to Change Services

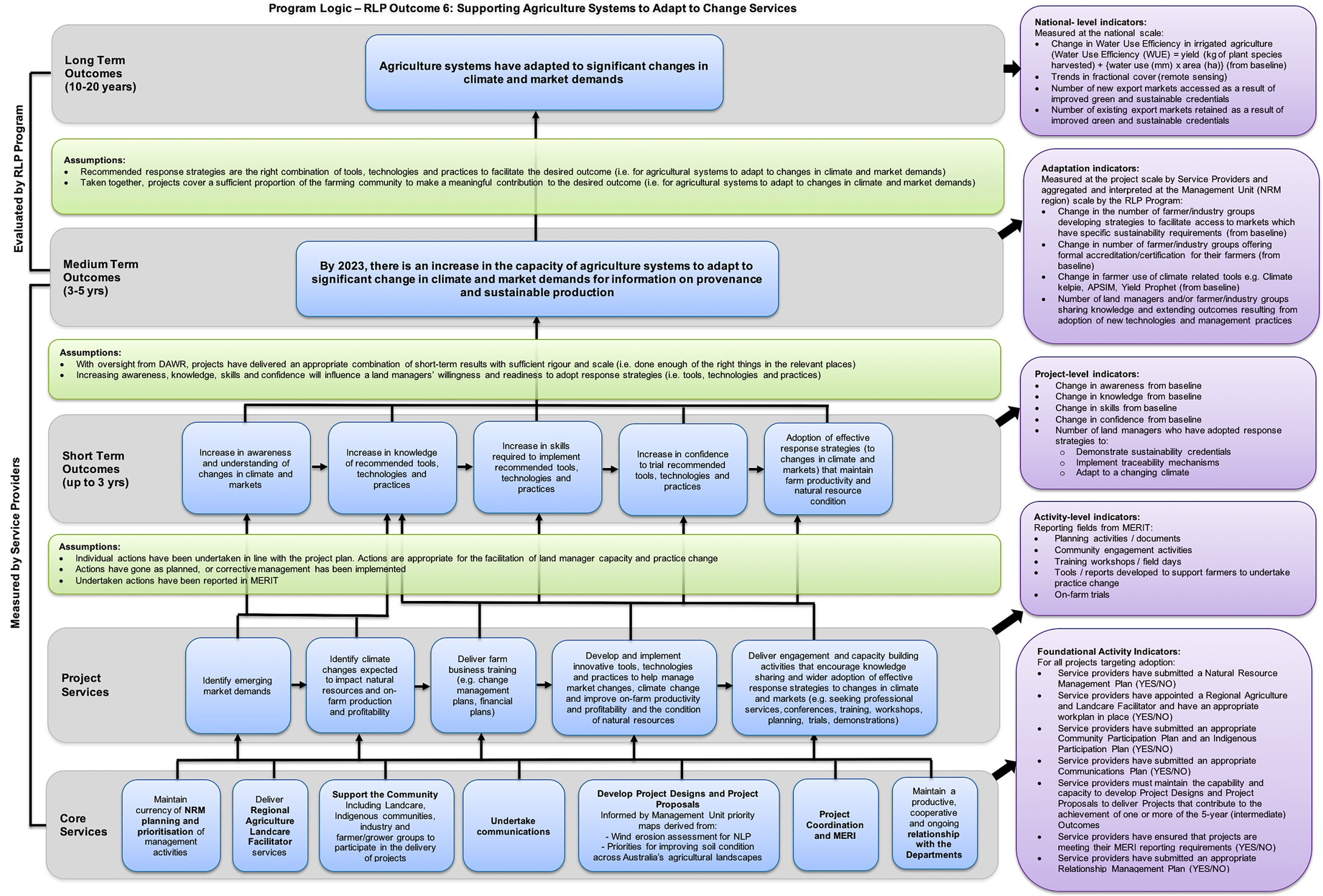

Figure 2-1: Outcome 6 Program Logic

Table 2-2: Outcome 6 Key Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION THEMES	PROGRAM KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	OUTCOME SPECIFIC KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS	RELEVANT LEVEL OF THE PROGRAM LOGIC
Effectiveness	▪ To what extent have the planned outcomes and outputs been achieved? ▪ Are current delivery approaches and funding mechanisms the best way to maximise impact or are there other strategies that might be more effective? (addressed in appropriateness) ▪ To what extent is the programme attaining, or expected to attain, its objectives and outcomes efficiently and in a way that is sustainable? (addressed in efficiency)	To what extent have the **Core Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Maintain currency of NRM planning and prioritisation of management activities ▪ Deliver Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator services ▪ Support the Community including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects ▪ Undertake communications ▪ Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals ▪ Project coordination and MERI ▪ Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing relationship with the Departments	Core Services
		To what extent have the **Project Services** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Identify emerging market demands ▪ Identify climate changes expected to impact natural resources and on-farm production and profitability ▪ Develop and implement innovative tools, technologies and practices to help manage market changes, climate change and improve on-farm productivity and profitability and the condition of natural resources ▪ Deliver engagement and capacity building activities that encourage knowledge sharing and wider adoption of effective response strategies to changes in climate and markets (e.g. conferences, training, workshops, planning, trials, demonstrations)	Project Services
		To what extent have the **Short Term Outcomes** (and any associated targets) been achieved? ▪ Increase in awareness and understanding of changes in climate and markets ▪ Increase in knowledge of recommended tools, technologies and practices ▪ Increase in skills required to implement recommended tools, technologies and practices ▪ Increase in confidence to trial recommended tools, technologies and practices ▪ Adoption of effective response strategies (to changes in climate and markets) that maintain farm productivity and natural resource condition	Short Term Outcomes
Appropriateness	▪ To what extent is the programme aligned with the needs of the intended beneficiaries? ▪ To what extent is the programme compliant with recognised best practice processes in the field—e.g. the type, level and context of investment and associated activities?	As a delivery approach, was research and development, extension and adoption an appropriate way to: ▪ Align project delivery with community needs and expectations ▪ Tailor the project to the climate, market and environmental conditions of each project site, and ▪ Achieve the Medium Term Outcome?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		To what extent were the response strategies adopted consistent with recognised best practice for capacity building and adaptation within agriculture systems?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		Are there any other methods that should/could have been used?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
Impact	▪ In what ways and to what extent has the programme contributed to changing asset condition, management practices, and / or effectiveness of delivery? ▪ What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted? ▪ To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	To what extent have the core and project services and short and medium-term outcomes contributed to increased capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant change in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production?	Medium Term Outcome
		To what extent has the End of Project outcome contributed to adaptation of agriculture systems to significant changes in climate and market demands?	Medium Term Outcome Long Term Outcomes
		What, if any, unanticipated positive or negative changes or other outcomes have resulted?	Medium Term Outcome
		To what extent were the changes directly or indirectly produced by the programme interventions?	Medium Term Outcome
Efficiency		To what extent did Outcome 6 projects demonstrate ‘value for money’ through the:	Short Term Outcomes

	▪ To what extent has the programme attained the highest value out of available resources? ▪ How could resources be used more productively and efficiently? ▪ What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	▪ Implementation of a site selection process which considered the costs and anticipated benefits of works at potential sites ▪ Establishment of partnerships for delivering the project (pooling resources, using local knowledge and experience) ▪ Coordination of the delivery of activities/works (e.g. with other projects, in geographic locations) ▪ Implementation of procurement processes to ensure both quality and quantity from investment, and ▪ Leveraging investment from other sources?	Medium Term Outcome
		How could have resources been used more productively and efficiently?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
		What could be done differently to improve implementation, and thereby maximise impact, at an acceptable and sustainable cost?	Short Term Outcomes Medium Term Outcome
Legacy	▪ Will the programme's impacts continue over time and after the programme ceases? ▪ How should the legacy be managed and by whom?	What evidence is there that the work completed through Outcome 6 will continue to be maintained?	Medium Term Outcome
		How likely is it that the outcomes achieved through Outcome 6 will be sustained?	Medium Term Outcome

Table 2-3: Outcome 6 monitoring plan

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
RLP Program Outcomes				
Long-term Program Outcomes (10-20 yrs)	Agriculture systems have adapted to significant changes in climate and market demands	Measured at the national scale: • Change in Water Use Efficiency in irrigated agriculture (Water Use Efficiency (WUE) = yield (kg of plant species harvested) + {water use (mm) x area (ha)} (from baseline) • Trends in fractional cover (remote sensing) • Number of new export markets accessed as a result of improved green and sustainable credentials • Number of existing export markets retained as a result of improved green and sustainable credentials	End of funding cycle and at 10-20 years	DAWR lead for this outcome
Medium Term Program Outcomes (3-5 yrs)	By 2023, there is an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant change in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production	**Adaptation indicators:** Aggregated and interpreted at the Management Unit (NRM region) scale by the RLP Program: • Change in the number of farmer/industry groups developing strategies to facilitate access to markets which have specific sustainability requirements (from baseline) • Change in number of farmer/industry groups offering formal accreditation/certification for their farmers (from baseline) • Change in farmer use of climate related tools e.g. Climate kelpie, APSIM, Yield Prophet (from baseline) • Number of land managers and/or farmer/industry groups sharing knowledge and extending outcomes resulting from adoption of new technologies and management practices	End of funding cycle	DAWR lead for this outcome
Project Achievements and Progress				
Medium Term Outcomes (3-5 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 2**	By 2023, there is an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant change in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production	**Adaptation indicators:** Measured at the project scale by Service Providers: • Change in the number of farmer/industry groups developing strategies to facilitate access to markets which have specific sustainability requirements (from baseline) • Change in number of farmer/industry groups offering formal accreditation/certification for their farmers (from baseline) • Change in farmer use of climate related tools e.g. Climate kelpie, APSIM, Yield Prophet (from baseline) • Number of land managers and/or farmer/industry groups sharing knowledge and extending outcomes resulting from adoption of new technologies and management practices	At 3-5 years	Service provider
Short Term Outcomes (1-3 yrs) **Reported in: Outcome Report 1**	Increase in awareness and understanding of changes in climate and markets	Change in awareness from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in knowledge of recommended tools, technologies and practices	Change in knowledge from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in skills required to implement recommended tools, technologies and practices	Change in skills from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Increase in confidence to trial recommended tools, technologies and practices	Change in confidence from baseline	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
	Adoption of effective response strategies (to changes in climate and markets) that maintain farm productivity and natural resource condition	Number of land managers who have adopted response strategies to: Demonstrate sustainability credentials Implement traceability mechanisms Adapt to a changing climate	At 2 – 3 years	Service provider
MERIT services – as per contracts				
Project services	Identify emerging market demands	Planning activities / documents reporting on markets and opportunities	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	Identify climate changes expected to impact natural resources and on-farm production and profitability	Analyses or reports on climate change impacts on farming Planning activities focussed on climate impacts on farming	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	Deliver farm business training (e.g. change management plans, financial plans)	Training workshops – number run, attendees Aim of training – improve knowledge, build skills etc. Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider

Level	Outcome/Activity	Indicators	Indicative frequency of reporting	Who is responsible?
	Develop and implement innovative tools, technologies and practices to help manage market changes, climate change and improve on-farm productivity and profitability and the condition of natural resources	Tools and technologies developed to support farmers to undertake practice change Resource materials (reports, extension materials) developed to help farms adopt changes Adoption/use of tools, technologies and practices aimed at helping farms to adapt to change	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
	Deliver engagement and capacity building activities that encourage knowledge sharing and wider adoption of effective response strategies to changes in climate and markets (e.g. seeking professional services, conferences, training, workshops, planning, trials, demonstrations)	Community engagement activities Field days Training workshops / field days Conferences or seminar Numbers of activities, participation Aims of activities – improve knowledge, build skills etc. Measures of change (based on aims)	In line with Outputs Reporting requirements	Service provider
Core services	Maintain currency of **NRM planning and prioritisation** of management activities	Service Providers have submitted a Natural Resource Management Plan (YES/NO)	On commencement	Service provider
	Deliver **Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator** services	Service providers have appointed a Regional Agriculture and Landcare Facilitator and have an appropriate workplan in place (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Support the Community Including Landcare, Indigenous communities, industry and farmer/grower groups to participate in the delivery of projects	Service providers have submitted an appropriate Community Participation Plan and an Indigenous Participation Plan (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Undertake communications	Service providers have prepared and submitted an appropriate Communications Plan (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Develop Project Designs and Project Proposals Informed by Management Unit priority maps derived from: Wind erosion assessment for NLP Priorities for improving soil condition across Australia's agricultural landscapes	Service providers must maintain the capability and capacity to develop Project Designs and Project Proposals to deliver Projects that contribute to the achievement of one or more of the 5-year (intermediate) Outcomes	On commencement	Service provider
	Project coordination and MERI	Service providers have ensured that projects are meeting their MERI reporting requirements (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider
	Maintain a productive, cooperative and ongoing **relationship with the Departments**	Service providers have submitted an appropriate Relationship Management Plan (YES/NO) Briefings of Australian government officers with responsibility for this project (YES/NO)	Throughout project	Service provider

This report has been prepared by:

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