Caring for our Country

Reef Rescue MERI Plan Template

For Reef Rescue Systems Repair and Urban Water Quality Planning grants

The purpose of this plan is to clearly set out the project activities to be undertaken, and the intended outputs and outcomes of this project. The plan also ensures that the process for monitoring progress and achievements is defined – doing so will support accountability of achievements and an adaptive management approach. This MERI Plan will need to be reported on, reviewed and updated (where necessary) at each reporting period. Data and information reported as set out in this MERI Plan will also assist the Australian Government to report against the Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes. To assist with this, your MERI Plan should be developed with reference to the Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan.

The Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan and the following documents are available on the program website www.nrm.gov.au. This MERI template is based on the principles and processes set out in:

- *The Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Strategy – Caring for our Country and Biodiversity Fund (the MERI Strategy);* **Completion of this MERI template will require that you are familiar with the concepts discussed in the MERI Strategy**
- *Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management – user guide*
- *NRM MERI Framework, Australian Government Natural Resource Management Monitoring Evaluation Reporting and Improvement Framework*

[This template has instructions in blue italics. Please delete all instructions as you work through this template.]

Important Definitions	
Caring for our Country Strategic Objectives - broadly defined objectives identified for the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Streams that align to the overall portfolio responsibilities of the Government Departments administering Caring for our Country.	
Caring for our Country 5 year Outcomes - the Sustainable Environment and Sustainable Agriculture Streams both have established 5 year Outcomes that projects will contribute towards.	
Project Outcomes - also known as 'intermediate outcomes'. These apply to the Sustainable Environment Stream Only. Project Outcomes are the desired (or actual) results, or impacts of having undertaken the project(s), such as maintenance or improvement of the biophysical assets, enhanced community capacity, or changes to an organisation. Project Outcomes can be influenced by factors outside of the projects control; however they should still be expressed as a SMART Statement and monitored where possible. Project Outcomes should align with to the 5 Year Program Outcomes.	
Investment Theme – Investment themes are the broad program outcomes areas. Within each Investment Theme there may be a number of Program 5 year outcomes.	
Project Outputs - also known as 'immediate activities and outcomes'. Project Outputs are the key actions to be delivered by the (sub) project and are largely within the direct influence of the project team. Project Outputs should be expressed as a SMART Statements and need to be monitored and reported as part of the project.	
Project Activities - including 'foundational activities' these are the activities specific to the project that underpin successful planning and delivery of the Project Outputs. These might include establishing and incorporating relevant plans, establishing steering committees, undertaking planning days, surveying sites and mapping locations, establishing base lines and delivering on ground NRM actions.	
SMART Statements – stands for Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time-bound. To help ensure the desired outcomes and activities to be undertaken are clear, this document asks that all outcomes and activities are expressed as 'SMART' statements.	

Version	Comment	Date
1		

Attachments
Attachment A: Program Logics
Attachment B: Project Risk Plan
Attachment C: Budget Summary

Project Information

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Details	
Project ID:	
Project title:	
Organisation name:	
Organisation Address:	
Project Manager:	
Project Period:	
Caring for our Country Budget (GST excl, cash only) :	
Total MERI Budget (GST excl):	

PART 1 - Program Logic

1.1 PROGRAM LOGIC DIAGRAM

One purpose of this MERI template is to set out the structure and logic of the project, demonstrating how activities underpin delivery of outputs, which in turn underpin achievement of the outcomes. While Parts 2 and 3 of the template require that you provide the detail of your project in a logical and structured way, development of a diagrammatic presentation of the project logic can be a useful way to visualise and then test the design and approach of the project. All projects should attach a program logic diagram at Attachment B. You may choose to develop the program logic diagram as a first step in completing this template.

PART 2 - Project Linkages

2.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

For each investment theme, a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed for the Caring for our Country Sustainable Environment Stream. These will be available within the Sustainable Environment Program MERI Plan on the MERI page of the www.nrm.gov.au website. Where possible these KPIs should be considered when developing the Project Outputs and Outcomes.

2.2 PROJECT LINKAGE TO CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY OUTCOMES

Project Linkage to Program Outcomes - Contribution to Caring for our Country Program Objectives	
Relevant Caring for our Country Program Strategic Objective	**Maintenance of ecosystem services, including ecological and cultural values, now and into the future**

Long Term Project Outcome(s) (refer to relevant Caring for our Country 5 year outcomes)	• *INSERT A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THIS PROJECT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE 5 YEAR OUTCOMES (2013 – 2018):*
	
	Sustainable Environment
	
	• *Build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef to the impacts of climate change by improving the quality of water leaving the catchments and entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.*
	
	• *better protect and conserve nationally and internationally significant ecosystems, species, ecological communities and landscapes, through actions that:*
	
	   - *identify and address key threatening processes at a range of scales*
	
	   - *enhance the condition, connectivity and resilience of habitats and landscapes by protecting or restoring ecosystem functions, including nutrient, water and energy flows*

	- *incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge into planning and on ground outcomes* - *reflect a whole of landscape approach to biodiversity conservation.* • *build community capacity and connection with the environment, including through activities that re-establish urban bushland, areas of Indigenous significance and the health of urban waterways.* ***Sustainable Agriculture*** • *Increase the percentage and area of farming entities that have adopted sustainable land management practices to build farm productivity and improve the quality of ecosystem services delivered to the broader community from their land, whilst building their resilience to climate change.* • *Increase the percentage of farming and fishing entities and land managers that improve their knowledge and skills in managing our natural resources to deliver ecosystem services.*
Investment priorities/themes	• Protecting the Great Barrier Reef

2.3 PROJECT LINKAGE TO RELEVANT PLANS

Project linkage to relevant plans- List relevant plans (including Reef Water Quality Protection Plan 2013, Regional NRM plans, Indigenous Land and Sea Management Plans, Water Quality Improvement Plans) that your project aligns with, and intends to deliver against.			
Name of Plan	Owner of Plan (organisation that issued the plan)	Relevant actions within plan being addressed (include reference where possible)	Brief description of how target will be addressed.

PART 3 - Project detail

3.1 PROJECT DETAIL

Primary Investment Theme	Protecting the Great Barrier Reef	Project Location	Spatial Information to be updated at reporting period.
Project Outcome(s)	• *INSERT THE OUTCOMES SOUGHT BY THIS PROJECT. THESE SHOULD BE EXPRESSED AS A 'SMART' STATMENT AND RELATE TO THE CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY 5 YEAR OUTCOMES*		
Description	• *DESCRIBE THIS PROJECT IN YOUR OWN WORDS (150 OR LESS)*		

Project outputs, assumptions and monitoring			
Investment theme (choose those that apply)	**Total Project Output** – total to be delivered by end of project. Statements should be SMART. **NOTE: Each output should be linked to only one Investment Theme – choose the most relevant.**	**Delivery mechanisms, assumptions and rationale –** How is the output to be delivered (i.e. briefly describe the method to be used)? What assumption(s) is/are being made about how the output will be achieved, and how it will lead to the achievement of the Project Outcome? What evidence is there to support the assumption?	**Monitoring -** How will the progress, achievement and impact of the Project Output be monitored?
Building natural resource management community skills, knowledge and engagement	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•
Enhancing Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	•	• *Delivery Mechanism* • *Assumption and rationale*	•

| Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance) | • | • *Delivery Mechanism*

 • *Assumption and rationale* | • |
| Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments | • | • *Delivery Mechanism*

 • *Assumption and rationale* | • |

Activity Schedule			
Project Stage	**Project Output** - for each period detail the Project Output to be delivered. **Note: output figures here should add up to Total Project Outputs stated above.**	**Key activities to be undertaken for period** (include key Foundational (planning/preparation), delivery, communication, monitoring and evaluation, reporting activities to be delivered each period).	**Budget** **(GST excl, incl. cash only)**
Stage 1: Project Commencement to 31 December 2013	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	**Aust Gov:** **Other:**
	•	Activity 2:	
Stage 2: 1 January 2014 – 30 June 2014	•	Activity 1: *Please add and delete rows as required*	
	•	Activity 2:	

PART 4 - Evaluation Plan

Evaluating Progress – As a funding recipient you have responsibility for reporting on how your project is progressing in terms of delivery of outputs and progress towards the desired outcomes. Through reporting on these aspects, you also play a role in contributing to an NRM community of continual improvement. Evaluation provides an opportunity to draw conclusions about what has been achieved, what is yet to be done, what worked well and what didn't. At each interim and yearly reporting period you will have the opportunity to provide a summary of your project, including progress and lessons learned. Evaluation findings may also support you to review and make changes to this MERI plan. You will also be required to provide an evaluation of your project as part of the Final Report.

In the table below describe how your project will capture the information needed, as well as the processes that are in place to evaluate and make conclusions about the progress, achievements and lessons learned. This may involve undertaking internal evaluations or engaging professional evaluative services. Include a description of how information about the project, including from monitoring activities will be used to evaluate progress. Also provide detail around process and roles and responsibilities.

In developing appropriate evaluation questions, you should include useful evaluation questions that:

- Cover the key evaluation criteria of: the **effectiveness** of the project and whether the project delivered what it intended; the ***impact*** of the project; the ***efficiency*** of the delivery mechanism/s; and the ***appropriateness*** of the methodology.
- Consider whether the assumptions and logic of the project will hold true.
- Consider whether the project's key risks will impact the project's outcomes or whether the controls to mitigate the threat/risk will be sufficient.
- Are drawn from the Caring for our Country Program Plan(s) and evaluation questions, where possible including in relation to Community and Indigenous engagement.
- Are answerable within the resources available to the project. Larger, long-term projects are expected to provide suitably high quality responses to in-depth evaluation questions.
- Can be answered by the monitoring data the project intends (and can afford) to collect.

Key evaluation questions	Describe how this project will ensure that evaluation questions will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
Impact:	
Effectiveness:	

Efficiency:	
Appropriateness:	

ATTACHMENT A: BUDGET SUMMARY

Attach the Project Budget with detail as in the table below. All figures are GST exclusive. In-kind contributions should not be included. This information will be used to assist Australian Government reporting of its investments.

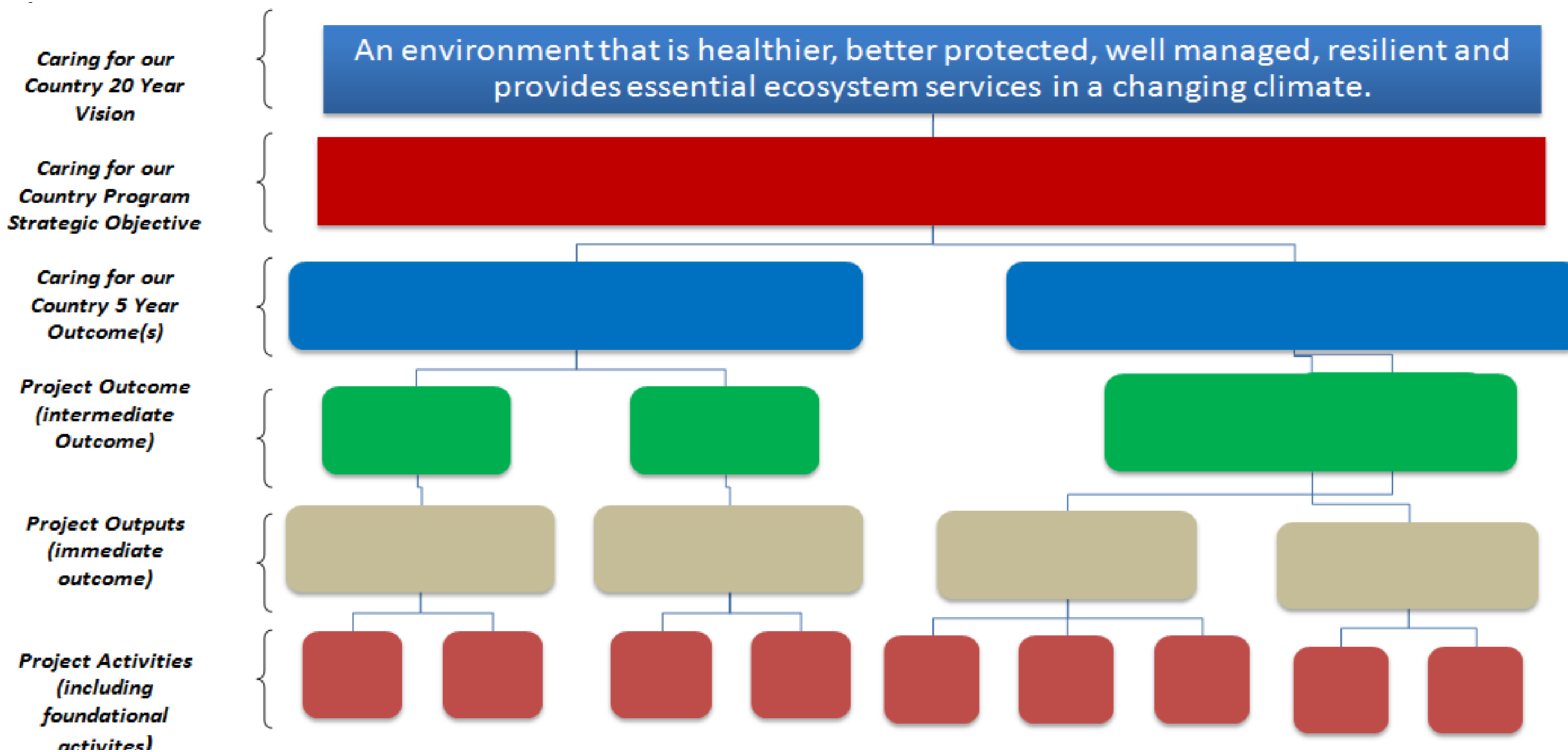| Investment Theme.	Funding Source	2013-14 ($)
Building natural resource management community skills, knowledge and engagement	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$
Enhancing Indigenous people's capacity for natural resource management	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$
Conserving and protecting species and ecosystems (matters of national environmental significance)	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$
Restoring and maintaining urban waterways and coastal environments	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$
Sub-total	Aust. Govt.	**$**
Sub-total	Other	**$**
Total (cash only)	All	**$**
Admin & MERI budget as part of the above table.		
Admin	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$
MERI	Aust. Govt.	$
	Other	$

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ATTACHMENT B: PROGRAM LOGIC

Developing a program logic diagram can be useful in helping demonstrate how your project aligns with the Caring for our Country program objectives and outcomes and help ensure that the approach, and steps needed to achieve the project outputs and outcomes are clear. The program logic diagram attached here should reflect and be consistent with the important detail captured elsewhere in this plan. A program logic diagram can also be a useful tool for communicating the project to others.

Developing a program logic diagram can be a useful activity done as a group, with members of the project team, as it ensures that there is a shared understanding about how the project is expected to proceed, and can unearth aspects (including assumptions, risks or other factors that you had not previously thought of. You can use this information to update the relevant sections within this plan.

Develop and attach a program logic diagram consistent with the structure provided at below. For further information and guidance on how to complete program logic diagram, refer to the guidance material found on the MERI page of the www.nrm.gov.au website. Your Caring for our Country Regional Base Staff may also be able to assist.

EXAMPLE ONLY

ATTACHMENT C: PROJECT RISK

To help anticipate and determine management strategies for the risk associated with the project, update and attach the risk plan here. Based on the risks and the controls or contingencies identified, you may need to update other sections of this MERI plan. Risks identified should be those that the project team consider to be within the reasonable influence of the project team to anticipate and manage.

| Risk/Threat Description

Describe the threat/risk, its sources and impacts | Likelihood*

Rare, Unlikely, possible, likely, almost certain | Consequence*

insignificant, minor, moderate, major, critical | Rating

Low, Medium, high, severe | Current Controls/Contingency

Describe what you will do to mitigate the threat/risk, source or impact to an acceptable level | Residual Risk

Describe any remaining risk after application of the control / contingency. Consider whether further management strategies are needed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. Add rows as required | | | | | |

Use the risk matrix below to determine the overall "Rating" of each risk listed in the table above based on your identified level of likelihood and consequence to produce a rating (severe, high, medium or low).

For example: *If you identified a risk's consequence as minor and the likelihood as possible, the risk "Rating" is low.*

Consequence					
	Insignificant	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Critical**
Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Severe	Severe
Likely	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Severe
Possible	Low	Low	Medium	High	Severe
Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Likelihood