Australian Government

DEVELOPING A
PERFORMANCE STORY REPORT

user guide

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PERFORMANCE STORY REPORT

user guide

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This guide was funded by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative

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Acknowledgments
The assistance of Jo Roberts and Bevan Bessan as reviewers of drafts of the guide is greatly appreciated. The wealth of experience and knowledge brought to the task by all those involved in 15 NRM performance story report trials across Australia during 2007–08 and their thoughtful and insightful comments on the approach have substantially contributed to this guide.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, feedback on the guide from users will be welcomed.

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ATTACHMENTS

Introduction

This guide outlines a step-by-step process for developing a performance story report in the context of natural resource management.

The guide can be used in a range of contexts by evaluators and others who want to use participatory evaluation approaches to report on outcomes. Users may include consultants, government and non-government organisations, community groups, students, natural resource management organisations, industry bodies and academics. The guide will enable them to evaluate and report on program outcomes and continually improve their programs based on lessons learned through participatory evaluation approaches.

Performance story evaluation is useful for both internal and external evaluations and learning. Performance story reports are effective for reporting annually on achievements from one year to the next.

This document should guide the participatory evaluation approach but should not restrict innovation. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt the methodology to their particular context and budget.

Performance story evaluation is useful for both internal and external evaluations and learning. Performance story reports are effective for reporting annually on achievements from one year to the next.

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Using this guide

This guide explains a step-by-step process for developing a performance story report in the context of natural resource management. Users may choose to change the sequence of the steps or to use only some of the steps at different times.

KEY CONCEPT

The guide needs to be used in conjunction with the *Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management: User Guide*, available at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf.

The guide is presented in a user-friendly format and should be easily adapted to different user applications.

Features that increase the usability of the guide include:

» each section is represented by a distinctive colour and a tab making it easy to access particular parts of the guide as required

» a series of templates and attachments at the end of the document can be copied and used by participants in the performance story evaluation process

» important points to note are highlighted in colour on the page margins.

The following symbols draw the user to parts of the methodology that require particular attention:

KEY CONCEPT	CAUTION	TIP	DEFINITION
Fundamental component of performance story evaluation	An area where the rigour of the methodology could be affected if care is not taken	A suggestion for making the process smoother, more efficient or more fun	The meaning of a key term used in this guide

The following arrows direct the user either forward or backward to the relevant section of the document.

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SECTION 1

ABOUT PERFORMANCE STORY REPORTS

What is a performance story report?

A performance story report is a statement about progress towards a natural resource management (NRM) goal. It is supported by multiple lines of quantitative and qualitative evidence and describes the causal links that show how the achievements were accomplished. The report succinctly documents NRM program outcomes and overall impact. Topics for performance story reports are often selected because they are likely to show some significant outcomes.

Outcomes—are the results achieved as a result of a series of actions/activities.

DEFINITION

This evaluation approach applies a series of steps involving key stakeholders in collecting, generating and analysing quantitative and qualitative evidence about:

- the progress a program has made towards a desired NRM outcome
- how the program has contributed to outcomes (the causal links that show how the achievements were accomplished)
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of activities.

Performance story reports aim to strike a balance between completeness and conciseness. The report generally includes:

- intended outcomes
- achievements against expected outcomes
- lessons learned and recommendations for change
- steps taken to ensure the quality of the data presented (Mayne 2004).

In a nutshell, a performance story report provides:

- a view of progress towards outcomes at a glance
- insight into what's working and what's not and why
- a succinct account of program achievements
- an understanding of the links between investment and intended results, at intervals throughout a program
- a way for organisations to answer some of their more strategic evaluation questions on an as-needs basis or to use as a 'kick-start' process to revise the monitoring system
- information for future investment strategies
- a structure for an organisation's annual report.

The approach described in this guide is not intended to assess the efficiency of a program.

CAUTION

Financial reporting and cost–benefit assessments require a different methodology.

Participatory evaluation in the MERI Framwork

Performance story evaluation should be considered in the context of the Australian Government NRM MERI Framework (2009), which outlines key concepts and principles for understanding NRM program performance. Figure 1 illustrates the integral components of MERI:

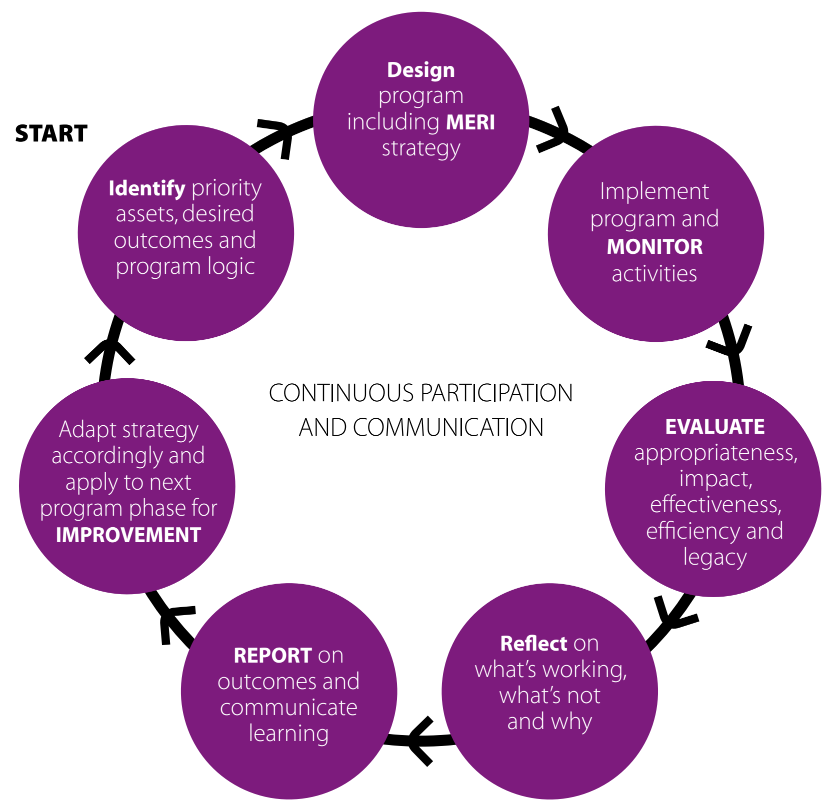
» program logic

» monitoring

» evaluation and reporting

» improvement and adaptive management.

Figure 1: The logic of MERI in program design



Participatory evaluation is central within the MERI Framework. It . . . *is most appropriate where the goals of the program include helping participants become more self-sufficient and personally effective. In such instances evaluation is also intervention orientated in that the evaluation is designed and implemented to support and enhance the program's desired outcomes* (Patton 1997: p. 101).

Participatory evaluation—is an overarching term for any evaluation approach that involves program staff or participants actively in decision-making and other activities related to the planning and implementation of evaluation studies (Mathison 2005, p. 291).

DEFINITION

A learning environment can be created through many small changes as well as more far-reaching events and changes. Any program can integrate multiple ways of working in order to stimulate learning—from the very way in which the program is designed to how investment happens as well as annual reviews with program stakeholders. Critical to this is the attitude of and example set by senior management and also a dialogue between implementing partners.

The MERI Framework promotes continuous participation and communication rather than treating evaluation as a single event. This enables people to be strategically guided in ongoing operation of a program by reflecting critically on what is happening.

KEY CONCEPT

There is more to participatory MERI than simply changing a few data-gathering methods. It is about organisational values. If participation is to lead to sustained efforts and empowerment, then a common understanding and an approach that results in shared decision-making are needed. This implies seeing collaborative MERI as part of good governance.

Participatory MERI ensures that a program is assessed using multiple lenses. It means clarifying who undertakes and carries out the process and who learns or benefits from the findings. This provides key learning and reflection opportunities throughout the process, which engenders ownership and increases the chances that findings will be acted on.

The ways in which people can be actively involved in each stage of a performance story report are detailed later in this guide as each step is explained.

KEY CONCEPT

This guide assumes that the program being evaluated has established a program logic. Performance story reports can only be undertaken with a program logic, as outcome statements and evaluation questions are needed for the evaluation process. A program logic can be developed retrospectively. To develop a program logic as a prior step for a performance story report, use the guide to *Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management: User Guide*, available at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf.

The guide will also assist in reviewing the program logic at the final step in performance story evaluation.

Where did performance story evaluation come from?

In 2007–08, as part of the Building Better Data Project, the Australian Government sponsored a performance story evaluation training program followed by 13 pilot studies around Australia based on work by Dart and Mayne (2005).

The pilot studies were undertaken by consultants and hosted by a number of regional NRM organisations. More than 1,000 community members from diverse backgrounds participated in the trials. All of these people have kindly shared their lessons and achievements from the trials, and this guide draws strongly on their knowledge and experience.

Performance story evaluation is a relatively new approach to reporting on program performance. Each step in the process rests on a body of theory and sophisticated social science research methods. To the extent that they do not compromise the rigour of the methodology, the simplest approaches are recommended. In the interests of simplicity, the theoretical bases of the various methods are not discussed in detail. A list of references is provided at the end of this guide for those interested in the theoretical underpinnings of the various methods.

Who should lead the performance story evaluation?

An external evaluator often leads performance story evaluation, although it is also possible for organisations to conduct some parts of the process internally. This guide assumes that the evaluation is being led by an external evaluator.

An evaluator—is a person with expertise and experience in evaluation approaches, often an external consultant. It is common to have an evaluation team, especially where the program being evaluated has multidisciplinary components. In this document the term 'evaluator' encompasses the person or team facilitating the performance story evaluation.

DEFINITION

For a program with diverse but related outcomes that span disciplines, the evaluator should have the expertise required to analyse, interpret and integrate the evidence so that it can be clearly communicated.

The main components of the process where an experienced external evaluator is required are in the development of the results chart, facilitation of the expert panel, and the writing up of results, recommendations and implications.

A results chart—is a table listing multiple lines of quantitative and qualitative data (primary and secondary) against the outcomes that are stated in the program logic.

DEFINITION

With some training, program staff can carry out the scoping of the evaluation, the program logic development and the interviewing.

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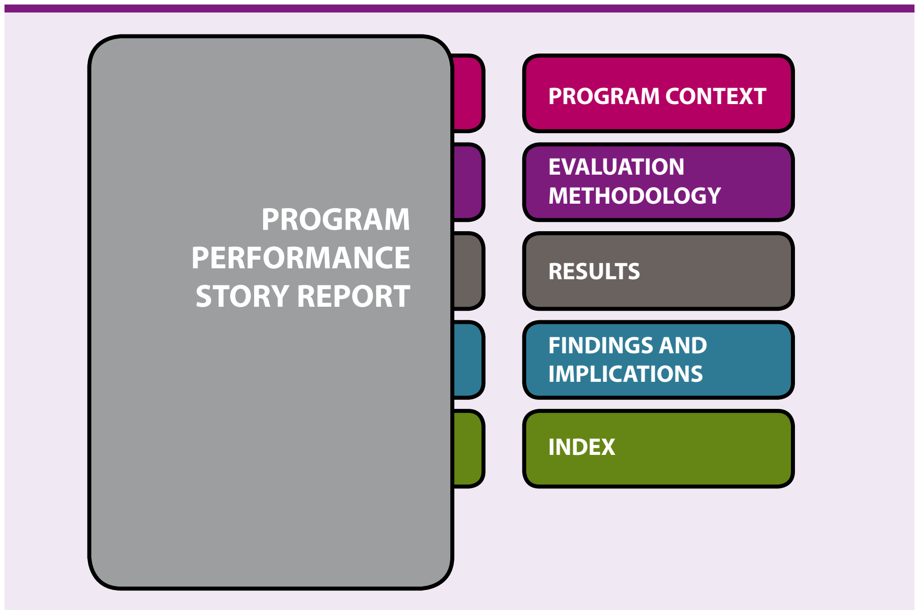
What does a performance story report look like?

A performance story report is usually between 10 and 30 pages long with five parts, as illustrated in Figure 2 and explained below.

Figure 2: Performance story report structure



Program context—background information about the program and the context in which it operates (how the program began, its location, objectives and key strategies, funding sources, structure and expected achievements), as well as an outline of the objectives and boundaries of the performance story evaluation and a summary of key outcomes and what has been learned.

Evaluation methodology—a brief overview of the process used in undertaking the evaluation.

Results—a listing of the most relevant and rigorous sources of evidence against the outcomes from the program logic hierarchy. This includes data as well as stories of change which are excerpts from interviews that best illustrate change that has occurred as a result of the program.

Findings and implications —a discussion framed by the evaluation questions that covers how the study has illustrated the program's impact (intended and unintended outcomes), the progress it has made towards its expected outcomes and how it has contributed to the long-term outcomes of NRM or a large NRM initiative. This part also includes recommendations for applying the findings to future phases of the program.

Index—a list of all the sources of evidence considered in the evaluation, including any additional references and the categories of interviewees and study participants.

Figure 3: Performance story report structure and processes

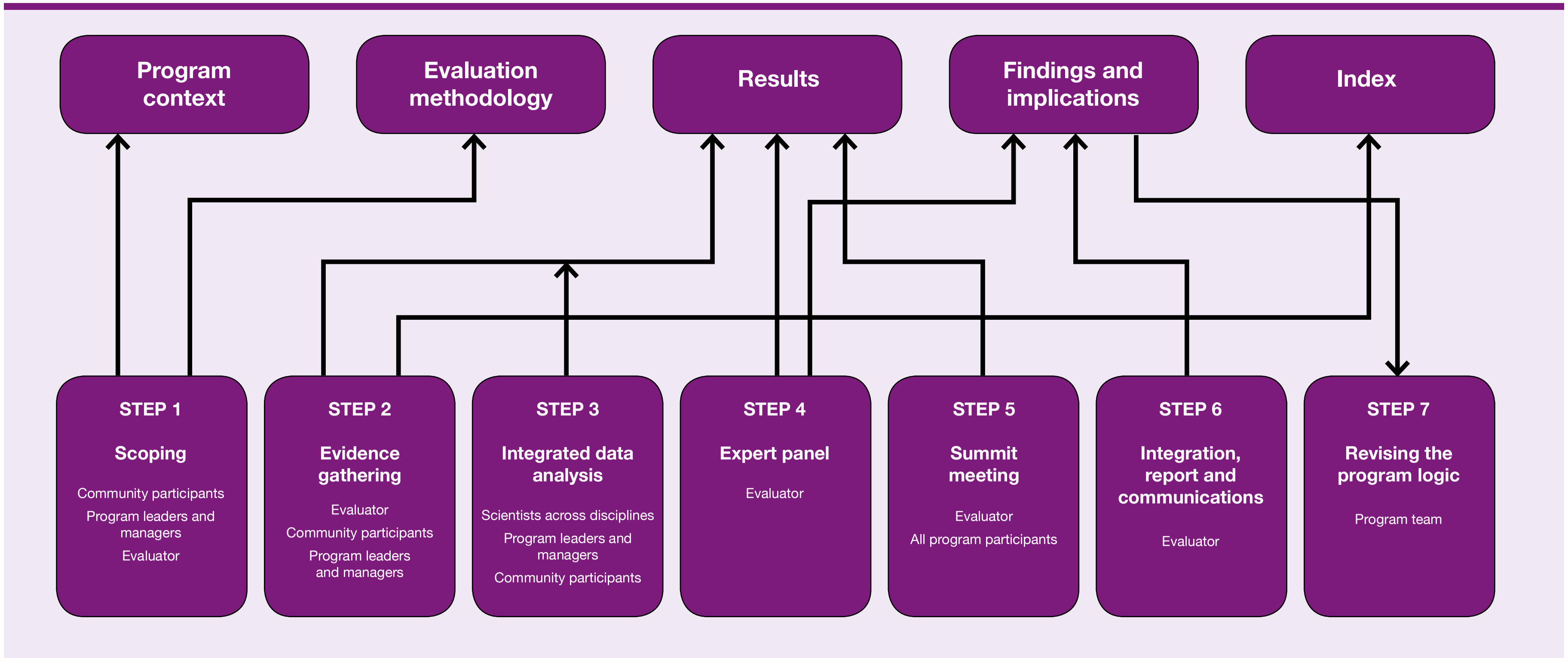


Figure 3 illustrates the parts of the performance story report and how they correspond to the steps in preparing the report. Suggested participants are shown for each step.

SECTION 2

THE SEVEN STEPS TO DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE STORY REPORT

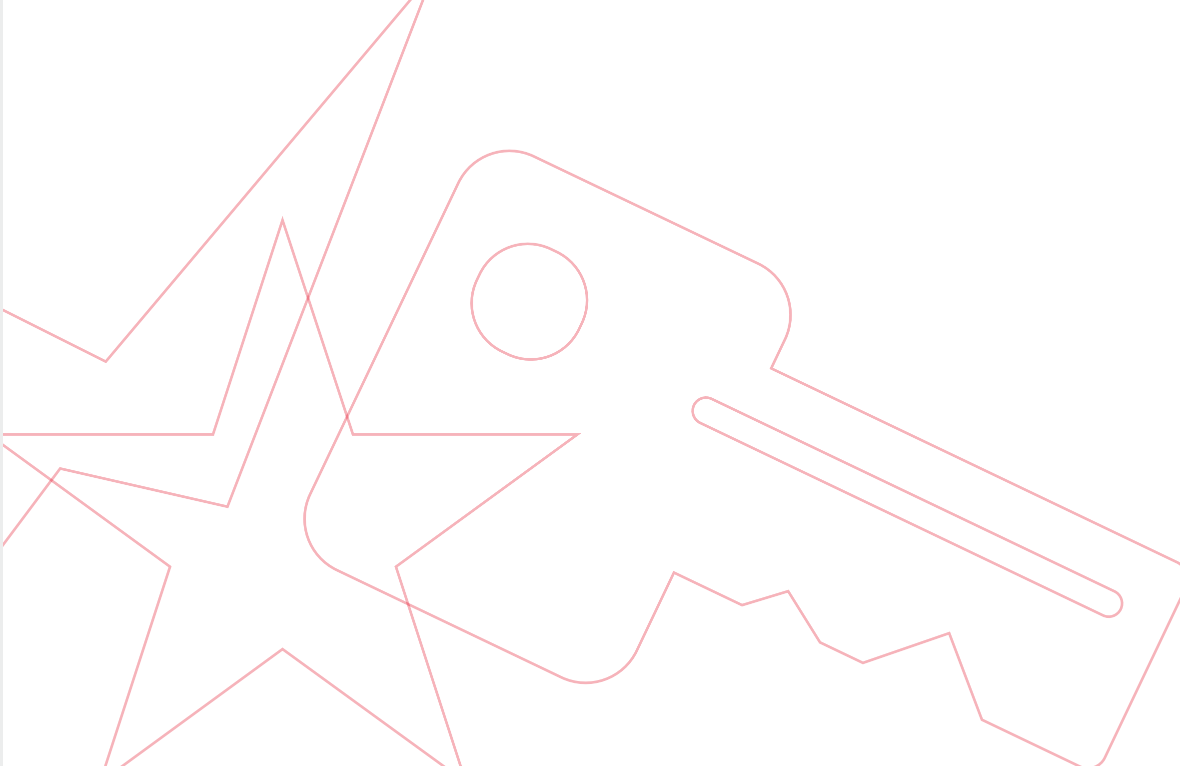
Overview of the seven steps

Figure 4: Key steps in developing a performance story report

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
Scoping	Evidence gathering	Integrated data analysis	Expert panel	Summit meeting	Integration, report & communi-cations	Revising the program logic

1. **Scoping**—inception/planning meetings are held to determine what will be evaluated, develop the program logic (if not already existing), set evaluation questions and identify existing evidence and people to be interviewed.
2. **Evidence gathering**—an evidence trawl is conducted to identify existing data that will provide best evidence for expected outcomes. This is followed by the social inquiry process, where interviews are conducted with people who can provide additional information about program outcomes. Specific questions are asked and recorded to provide stories of significant changes that have occurred as a result of the program.
3. **Integrated data analysis**—quantitative and qualitative data is analysed to identify evidence corresponding to the outcomes in the program logic and integrated within the results chart.
4. **Expert panel**—people with expertise in relevant fields and scientific disciplines assess the evidence of outcomes that has been gathered. They also judge and make statements about the extent to which the evidence is adequate to assess the progress the program is making towards its stated outcomes. The panel may also identify further evidence that may be needed to make a conclusive statement about the achievement of program outcomes.

   Following the panel meeting, the evaluator integrates all of the analysed evidence and assesses the amount and quality of evidence available for each outcome in the program logic to inform a draft set of recommendations.
5. **Summit meeting**—evaluation participants come together to consider and discuss the findings, nominate the stories that best illustrate the impact of the program and make recommendations for the program in future.
6. **Integration, report and communications**—the evaluator prepares the performance story report, which is a synthesis of all the above steps including recommendations from summit meeting participants. A plan is established to communicate the findings of the evaluation.
7. **Revising the program logic**—program managers, staff and other stakeholders meet to consider the report and revise the program logic as needed to plan for the next phase of the program. The next phase can incorporate the lessons and recommendations from the previous phase.



Step 1

Scoping

Scoping

The scoping step generally involves an inception meeting and/or a planning meeting.

Aims

The aims of scoping the evaluation are to:

» define the boundaries of the evaluation project, determining what elements of the program are to be evaluated (e.g. investments to be included, spatial boundaries) and devise a detailed evaluation plan

» draft the key evaluation question (if not already existing)

» clarify who the evaluation report is for

» identify important background information on the program and sources of data

» determine the resources that will be required to complete the evaluation

» clarify roles and responsibilities

» ensure all participants have a shared understanding of how the study will proceed—a work plan.

The key evaluation question—is the question to be addressed in order to assess the worth or significance of a project, program or initiative in relation to its goals. This overarching question frames the evaluation. A number of more specific sub-evaluation questions will sit below the key evaluation question relating to outcome statements in the program logic.

DEFINITION

Participants

» The inception meeting is usually between the evaluator/s, program manager and potentially senior corporate staff of the agency hosting the program (about five people as a rule).

» The planning meeting involves people who have in-depth knowledge of the program. These will be people who:

  – have historical knowledge of the program

  – are current program managers and board members—internal and on-ground (salaried and volunteers)

  – contribute funds and/or resources to the program

  – have expertise relevant to the program—biophysical, social science or policy expertise—and can ensure the correct data is identified to address the evaluation questions.

Activities

» Inception meeting

» Planning meeting. A planning meeting is the second activity in the scoping step (if the two have not been combined).

KEY CONCEPT

Program logic is the backbone of a performance story report.

Program logic is the rationale behind a program—what are understood to be the cause-and-effect relationships between program activities.

It is assumed that people who are embarking on a performance story evaluation have established a program logic for their program. If this is not the case, it will be necessary to develop a program logic at the planning meeting. This will probably add at least half a day to the planning meeting and may take longer.

For a step-by-step guide to developing a program logic, see the *Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management: User Guide*, available at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf.

Inception meeting

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» **Organise the inception meeting.** An example of a typical inception meeting agenda is at **Attachment 1**.

» **Choose the evaluand** by asking the following questions:

- What is the appropriate scale? Can the spatial boundaries of the program be defined clearly? Are maps available?
- What are the intended outcomes the program will contribute to?
- Has the program has been in operation long enough to determine its contribution to outcomes?
- At what date should the evaluation commence (for example, a program may have been running for 10 years, but it may be most useful for the evaluation to only consider the outcomes in the last three years)?
- Would it be more useful to look at a successful rather than a less successful intervention?
- Would focusing on a number of programs or sub-programs create a more balanced view?

DEFINITION

The evaluand—is the thing being evaluated. It can be a project, program or strategy or part thereof.

Once the above questions are answered, it is easier to draft a key evaluation question with clear boundaries. If a program logic is in place for the program, the key evaluation question will exist. This question should be reviewed in line with the part or parts of the program to be evaluated. An example of a key evaluation question is at Box 1. The performance story report in this case included two distinct native vegetation programs. One focused on covenants and the other on voluntary management agreements. These programs constituted the two key interventions that contributed to native vegetation targets.

Box 1: Sample key evaluation question from an NRM catchment management authority

> To what extent have regional native vegetation programs A and B contributed to native vegetation outcomes in our region between 1997 and 2008?

- **Each meeting participant drafts a key evaluation question** by considering the documented program objectives, together with the program logic outcomes and the responses to the questions above.
- **Agree on a single key evaluation question** through a discussion facilitated by the evaluator.
- **Identify who the report is for.** There are many potential audiences for a performance story report. The report will provide important information for agencies hosting programs, agencies that fund programs and people with an interest in the programs including agency staff, volunteers and the general public.
- **Decide how identified stakeholders will be involved throughout the development of the performance story report.** Involving stakeholders in the evaluation process from the beginning helps to ensure that meaningful information is gathered, in which program supporters have a real interest. Both the report and engagement in the evaluation project will be of particular benefit to those who will manage the program in the future, as the process generates much learning.

Involving stakeholders in the evaluation process from the beginning helps to ensure that meaningful information is gathered.

- **Identify important background information on the program.** Key documents (for example, the program's original plan, the program logic, funding arrangements, operating arrangements and funding sources, maps etc.) or other sources of information that provide the program context are identified through a discussion facilitated by the evaluator.
- **Determine the resources that will be required to implement the evaluation**—a detailed budget that is realistic about the cost of all components. Travel can be expensive, as can engaging consultant evaluators and bringing expert panel members together.

> Make sure that the scale of the performance story evaluation matches the size and budget of the program being evaluated.

TIP

» **Clarify roles and responsibilities.** The inception meeting provides an opportunity to clarify the role of the evaluator and the organisation that hosts the project in the evaluation project. A *program steering committee* (about six people with knowledge of both the program and performance story evaluation processes) is established at this meeting and includes:

- a representative from each key stakeholder group
- a member from the organisation hosting the project
- a representative of the community group the program aims to benefit
- the funding agency or agencies
- the evaluator/s
- an expert in the field relevant to the program's goals.

Planning meeting

TIP

It is sometimes possible to run the inception meeting as part of the planning meeting. This may be more efficient where:

» the organisation already has a clear idea of the key evaluation question

» it is difficult to gather key stakeholders together (for example, geographically dispersed stakeholders).

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» **Organise the planning meeting.** A sample planning meeting agenda is at **Attachment 2**.

» **Arrange resources** for the meeting including:

- a data projector and screen
- a large copy of the program logic and the key evaluation question
- a whiteboard (electronic, if possible)
- *Developing and Using Program Logic in Natural Resource Management: User Guide,* at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf

» **Develop a timeline of program outcomes and events** by:

- drawing the timeline on a whiteboard with program start and end dates marked
- plotting key events on the timeline (key events can include, for example, policy changes/new initiatives, significant environmental events such as drought, fire or flood, or organisational changes that may affect the program)
- brainstorming the key program outcomes and plotting them on the timeline.

- **Review key and sub-evaluation questions.** The sub-questions relate to outcomes at the different levels of the program logic and guide the evidence collection process. Together these sub-evaluation questions help answer the key evaluation question. Sample sub-evaluation questions are at **Attachment 3**.

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Sub-evaluation questions—are those questions that emerge from analysis of the program logic model, and that help to answer the key evaluation question.

DEFINITION

Together, the program logic with the key evaluation question, the sub-evaluation questions and the timeline, present an overview of the program—a picture of what the program sets out to achieve and a start to identifying what it has actually achieved. The program logic helps meeting participants to discuss and identify the questions that might best reveal the extent of progress (the intermediate outcomes) towards longer-term outcomes. All participants should be clear about what is being evaluated (for example, water quality, soil quality, practice change, industry sustainability).

All participants should be clear about what is being evaluated.

No evaluation can answer all of the questions the program's stakeholders may ask, so it is critical to prioritise.

CAUTION

- **Review the proposed sub-evaluation questions** and decide which of them will best contribute to answering the key evaluation question.
- **Identify sources for quantitative and qualitative evidence of program outcomes.** Once the sub-evaluation questions have been selected, participants identify the secondary data to address the questions.

  Often there is substantial quantitative and qualitative data available to report on the lower levels of the program logic, such as resources, activities and outputs. Participants in the planning meeting will often know of existing data, including how it originated and where to find it.

Not every sub-evaluation question in the logic model needs to be addressed—sometimes a question higher up the outcomes hierarchy will adequately address questions lower down.

TIP

- **Create a table** on the whiteboard with the sub-evaluation questions forming the rows. Participants then undertake to obtain the data and provide it to the evaluator.
- **Identify data gaps.** Once the existing evidence is identified, there may be questions for which there is no existing evidence or inadequate evidence. Typically there are evidence gaps at the intermediate outcome level. Where there are evidence gaps, primary data (data observed or collected from the source for the first time) may need to be collected.

In performance story evaluation the primary data collection is largely through interviewing selected people (social inquiry).

DEFINITION

Social inquiry—is disciplined inquiry that examines people's lives, experiences and behaviours, and the stories and meanings individuals ascribe to them. It can also investigate organisational functioning, relationships between individuals and groups, and social environments.

Depending on the nature of the program, the balance of primary and secondary data collection will vary. If there is a substantial amount of existing evidence, it may not be necessary to collect a large amount of primary data. For bigger programs or strategies, the cost of addressing evidence gaps may far exceed the budget and timeframe for the evaluation. In these cases, it may be necessary to prioritise the most critical gaps or to consider narrowing the scope of the evaluation.

A social inquiry process provides primary data to support and supplement the existing secondary data.

A social inquiry process provides primary data to support and supplement the existing secondary data. Primary data is qualitative and provides a depth rather than a breadth of information. (See Carr et al. 2008 for more on this theory. Carr's findings confirm the validity and reliability of social inquiry processes in performance story reports.) The aim of this process is to gather evidence by asking questions to elicit responses that link to the evaluation questions.

» **Decide who to interview.** Interviewees are usually drawn from three groups—program participants, strategic informants and experts in relevant scientific disciplines.

KEY CONCEPT

There are three types of interviewees for the social inquiry:

» **program participants** who were directly involved with the program and can comment on their own experience, such as program staff, land managers, volunteers and others who have been involved in the program in different capacities

» **strategic informants** who can comment at a strategic level about how the program has been experienced or how it has addressed policy goals, such as funding agency representatives and policy officers from local, state or federal government

» **experts in relevant scientific disciplines** or areas of expertise who can comment about the extent of change that has occurred as a result of the program.

Depending on the nature of the question, different types of interviewees will be more or less knowledgeable about the subject matter. Typically, a broad range of program participants (approximately 20 to 50) are consulted in order to gain an in-depth view of how participants have experienced the program.

The objective of sampling in performance story evaluations is to find the right balance in the number of each type of interviewee and in the number of interviewees who are to respond to each sub-evaluation question. A number of sampling toolkits are available on the internet.

Find the right balance in the number of each type of interviewee.

The rigour of the social inquiry process should not be judged on sample size but on the quality and credibility of data collection and analysis. Matters of validity and reliability are more pertinent to projects that employ quantitative methods.

CAUTION

» **Develop a stratified sample of interviewees** by creating a table on the whiteboard with the three groups of interviewees forming the columns. The rows represent the sub-evaluation questions. Referring to the table, meeting participants discuss and suggest a number of potential interviewees who could address each of the questions. **Template 1** provides a pro forma for categorising the interviewees identified during the sampling process.

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In general, the sample should include people:

- with a good historical knowledge of the program
- with a strategic overview of how the program contributes to the regional level outcomes
- with expertise to cover the different aspects or geographical areas of the program
- with sufficient local knowledge
- with knowledge about existing scientific evidence.

KEY CONCEPT

For specific topics it might be appropriate to stratify the sample in different ways, such as by geographic location or how they were involved in the program (for example, uptake incentives versus involvement in a group process).

» **Allocate social inquiry responsibilities** by asking meeting participants to use **Template 1** and undertake to either conduct particular interviews or to coordinate a series of the interviews. Interviewers who are not present can also be nominated.

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Interviews can take some time to organise. Often, volunteers are trained to conduct the interviews. Also, interviewees need to be contacted and provided with information about the interviews and the broader evaluation project.

Some of the identified interviewees may not want to participate in the social inquiry process. A number of calls may be necessary before a sufficient number of people agree to participate.

» **Identify expert panel members** at this early stage of the evaluation so they can be invited to participate and set the time aside if they agree to be involved. As the title suggests, the expert panel members are people who are considered to be authorities or who have expertise or experience in a field relevant to the program being evaluated.

TIP

» Teleconferencing and videoconferencing provide alternative meeting styles, especially if panel members are located in remote areas.

» Where appropriate, hold small local expert panels rather than bringing a large group together.

Getting the right mix of people on the expert panel is critical to its success.

Getting the right mix of people on the expert panel is critical to its success. When deciding who should be on the panel, consider these criteria:

- Are they able to make an objective assessment of the data (there should be no conflict of interest)?
- Are they considered to be an authority in the area to the extent that their assessments will have credibility?
- Do they have sufficient knowledge of the program outcomes to make informed judgments?
- Are people with particular cultural backgrounds or expertise required for the expert panel, such as a panel of traditional owners for a program in an Indigenous area?

The roles of the expert panel are described in more detail in Step 4.

TIP

It is worth investing in a robust expert panel. Be aware that experts may require a sitting fee. This will need to be incorporated in the evaluation project budget.

For some programs dual expert panels can prove successful—for example, a panel of traditional owners and a panel of scientists for an Indigenous program.

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» **Develop a work plan** at the conclusion of the planning meeting indicating key tasks and dates and allocating key responsibilities. Generally, the detailed plan is finalised just after the planning meeting and sent to the project steering committee for approval. An example of such a plan is at **Attachment 4**.

How will these activities contribute to the performance story report?

The following information generated through the scoping activities at Step 1 is essential to the performance story report (relevant report section is in brackets):

» program timeline (context)

» program logic (context and results chart; guides the findings and story sections)

» evaluation questions (context and results chart; guides the findings and story sections)

» data and social inquiry types and collection processes (evaluation methodology and results; also guides the discussion of findings)

Scoping the evaluation lays the foundations for a good performance story report.

Scoping the evaluation lays the foundations for a good performance story report.

Step 2

Evidence gathering

Evidence gathering

The second step in developing a performance story report is concerned with the gathering of evidence to support findings.

Aim

» Collect a range of secondary and primary data to populate the results chart and demonstrate the extent of achievement of program outcomes.

Participants

» The evaluator/s and people with knowledge of the program or the field of endeavour—the data may cut across different areas of expertise, so it may be necessary to involve people with particular expertise to interpret data and review the results chart to identify missing data.

» Volunteers, who have participated in training—program staff can help with collating data (although this is usually led by the evaluator). Involving various types of participants in the program in the data trawl builds their capacity so they can continue to refine their data management systems.

» A transcriber service to record taped interviews (recommended).

Activities

» Data trawl—obtain secondary data

» Social inquiry—collect primary data (training volunteers in interviewing)

» Conducting interviews (involves collecting stories of change)

Data trawl

» **Locate and retrieve existing quantitative and qualitative evidence** that is relevant to the evaluation.

Keep an open mind. The evidence trawl is like a crime scene investigation—the vital evidence only becomes apparent later in the study. Following people's suggested lines of inquiry can pay off, even if they seem a bit off target at first. It pays to be careful not to follow lines of inquiry that are beyond the scope of the study.

CAUTION

At the planning meeting, much of the existing data was identified, data gaps were noted and people nominated to obtain the data and provide it to the evaluator.

» **Negotiate access** to the data as necessary.

Stay within the program budget and timeframe:

» Develop a snapshot by using the program logic and sub-evaluation questions to limit the scope of the investigation.

» Consider engaging a specialist for the data trawl and analysis

TIP

Social inquiry

- » **Invite agency staff and volunteers to participate in interviews** to collect primary data. They enjoy hearing people's stories.
- » **Conduct a short training session in interviewing** for volunteer interviewers, explaining research ethics (see Box 2) and the draft interview schedule.

Box 2: Research ethics

Basic ethical considerations include:

Justice

- » The criteria for inclusion and exclusion of participants in qualitative research are often complex. For this reason, researchers should state these criteria clearly and be able to justify them.

Informed consent

- » Explain how information will be collected and recorded.
- » Explain how, where and for how long information will be stored, and who will have access to the stored information.
- » Advise interviewees that they may participate, may decline to participate, or may withdraw from methods or procedures proposed to them.

Privacy

- » Avoid undue invasion of privacy in the collection of information.
- » Collect only information relevant to the purpose.
- » Do not *require* interviewees to disclose their personal information.

Confidentiality

- » Safeguard the confidentiality of information obtained.
- » Make provisions for maintaining confidentiality in the collection, recording, accessing, storage, dissemination and disposal of information.
- » Disclose confidential information obtained only with the consent of the interviewee.
- » If a person or group other than the interviewee is named in the interview, ensure the party consents to their name being used in agreed contexts and for agreed purposes.

Release of information to interviewees

- » Do not refuse any reasonable request from interviewees to access the interview notes or recordings.

Collection of client information from associated parties

- » Before collecting information about an interviewee from an associated party, obtain the consent of the interviewee and explain the nature and purpose of the information you intend to collect.
- » If you take notes, it is advisable to read the transcript back to the interviewee to check that you have recorded it as accurately as possible. If stories are to be published externally, it is advisable to have the interviewee check the final printed version.

These ethical guidelines are derived from various sources, including the Australian Evaluation Society Inc.; Australian Psychological Society; and the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia.

Research ethics are extremely important when engaging people in interviews.

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Research ethics are extremely important when engaging people in interviews. Interviewing requires specialised skills. Participants should be given opportunities for role playing and practising interview techniques using the interview schedule and recording equipment. **Attachment 5** provides a sample training session agenda. Inexperienced interviewers can be trained as part of the performance story evaluation process. The training process works best if it is flexible and tailored to the particular group of interviewees.

» **Construct a semi-structured interview schedule** with two types of questions as explained in the box below.

The social inquiry includes two types of questions:

- questions relating to the outcomes
- a set of open-ended questions to elicit stories of change (the questions are listed in later in this section).

KEY CONCEPT

The interview schedule should contain a series of suggested questions to capture stories of change and a small number of additional questions related to the expected outcomes.

More than one interview schedule may be needed, depending on how many different groups are being interviewed. Questions should be tailored to elicit responses from the three different groups of interviewees, taking into account what each is most able to comment on in relation to the program outcomes. For example, farmers may be able to comment on the program's impact at the farm or community level. Public servants may be best placed to say something about the policy impact of the program, and researchers may draw on a large-scale study to provide evidence of biophysical change.

Questions should be tailored to elicit responses from the three different groups of interviewees.

Setting a limit to the number of questions will reduce the workload of transcribing and analysing the interviews.

TIP

The interview schedules will probably be stratified just as the sample of interviewees was stratified in relation to the expected outcomes. **Attachment 6** provides a sample interview schedule.

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» **Conduct pilot interviews** to test the interview schedules, with each group of interviewees (for example, a farmer, a researcher and a policy officer). If the interviewees have trouble understanding the questions, or the questions do not elicit enough of the right information, the schedules will need to be modified.

Ensure that the process and actual questions are culturally and socially appropriate in each interview environment—for example, language used, voice tone, cultural protocols—as many variations of questions can be developed that essentially ask the same thing in different ways.

CAUTION

» **Send a simple information sheet** to each interviewee who has agreed to participate. A sample information sheet is at **Template 2.**

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» **Prepare a consent form** outlining how the interview information will be used. A sample consent form for adults is at **Template 3** and a sample consent form for children is at **Template 4**. It is important that both the interviewee and interviewer sign the consent form before the interview begins.

both the interviewee and interviewer sign the consent form before the interview begins.

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» **Set up the individual interviews** by contacting interviewees to introduce the program, seek their consent to be interviewed and set the time, date and place for the interview. This contact also provides an opportunity to explain how the interview will proceed, who the interviewer will be and how the information will be used. A sample outline for initial contact with interviewees is at **Attachment 7**.

Conducting interviews

» **Conduct interviews** in locations mutually acceptable to participants and interviewers. Often, people feel most comfortable being interviewed in their home. Interviews are conducted using the semi-structured interview schedule. Face-to-face semi-structured interviewing is the recommended approach. It may, however, be necessary to use other formats such as focus groups and phone interviews.

TIP

If cost is an issue, group and phone interviews save on travel costs.

In a performance story report trial project, interviews were conducted by two people—a consultant and a local person. This method worked very well, as one person scribed during the interview, making notes of the time displayed on the tape recorder when pertinent information was highlighted or discussed.

The local person was carefully selected to ensure they would not bias the interview and affect the content of the information given. Having a local person known to the interviewee assisted the process because it helped the people being interviewed to feel relaxed. The interviewees were therefore more likely to open up and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Sometimes the local person assisted by prompting the memory of the interviewee to draw out information they may not have considered relevant.

» **Make sure the interviewee feels at ease**

- A friendly chat (about the weather, for example) helps to establish a rapport before performance story evaluation and the consent form are explained.
- Explain how the recorder works and invite the interviewee to practise using it.
- Invite the interviewee to ask questions about the evaluation and the interview.
- Seek additional information if required by asking an open-ended question: 'Could you say a bit more about…?'

   - Clarify by saying, ‘What I heard you say was … Is that correct?’
   - Be flexible and work on the interviewee’s terms to make sure you get their story.

» **Collect stories of change** as part of the interview. Stories of change are based on a series of questions in the interview as set out in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Structure of a story of change

A beginning	A middle	An end		Why this is significant
What was the situation at the start of the program?	What happened as you started to take action? What sort of support was provided and by whom?	What is different now compared to the beginning of the program? What made the changes occur?	+	Why are these changes important to you?

While the question ‘what changes have occurred as a result of your involvement in this program’ tell a story, a number of additional probing questions are often needed in order to capture the full story.

Interviewers should make certain that each story of change has a beginning, a middle and an end, so that it fully describes the significance of the change. For example, if the story is about a situation that went from ‘bad’ to ‘better’, both parts need to be described, as well as what happened in between.

KEY CONCEPT

An interviewee may say, ‘When the program started I had poor water quality in the creek and through the program I put in effluent pools’. ‘So what?’ you might think. Continued questioning and conversation may uncover the meaning. It may be that the engagement in the program and changing management practices have resulted in a creek where they can now swim, or fish have reappeared, or they have improved pasture and increased stock. This is a complete story of change.

To elicit the full story, the interviewer may need to ask questions such as:

- ‘How did you know about effluent pools and what is different as a result of installing them?’
- ‘What were the physical changes you could see as you adopted different management practices?’
- ‘What did this mean for your farming enterprise and for you personally?’
- ‘What will it mean for the future?’

Each story of change should conclude with an explanation of why the interviewee believes the changes to be important. These details in the performance story report will help the reader to understand the significance of the change.

Each story of change should conclude with an explanation of why the interviewee believes the changes to be important.

» **Tape record responses to questions about the change** the person has observed as a result of the program. These responses are generally transcribed word for word.

Interviewers need to know how to use the recording equipment and be comfortable using it, including the saving, reviewing and editing functions. Interviews are usually recorded by audio- or videotape, or in handwritten notes. These records are research data in themselves, and they may be transcribed.

The general voice and message of the interviewee, including colloquialisms, should not be changed.

You may edit the transcriptions of stories of change for ease of reading, but the general voice and message of the interviewee, including colloquialisms, should not be changed. The stories should be typed and placed in a folder ready for the expert panel (step 4) and summit meeting (Step 5).

» **Arrange transcription of interview** notes and recorded tapes. Transcription can be time consuming and resource intensive. It can be efficient to outsource the transcribing to a professional transcription service.

TIP

If you are planning to use a professional transcription service, make sure the recording is provided in their required format, for example as analogue tapes or MP3 digital files.

» **Validate the interview transcripts** by returning them to the interviewee so they can confirm that it is an accurate record. They should also be given an opportunity at this stage to request amendments to the transcript.

Step 3

Integrated data analysis

Integrated data analysis

The data analysis step requires a sophisticated set of skills. There are a growing number of specialists in integrating and interpreting the meaning of a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence from different sources and disciplines. It is worth considering the involvement of such specialists in the relevant areas of expertise if data is complex.

Aims

The processes involved in analysing the data aim to sort, prioritise, integrate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data from a range of sources, disciplines and methods and decide which data supports which outcomes.

Participants

» Evaluator/s

» Integration specialist/s

Activities

» Sort and code the secondary data

» Analyse the social inquiry data

» Analyse and compile the stories of change

» Identify key issues

» Recording

Sort and code the secondary data

» **Summarise each piece of data** to about a half page (see **Attachment 8**).

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» **Prioritise the data** according to its relevance, completeness and credibility/rigorousness.

» **Code the secondary data against the sub-evaluation questions** according to the outcomes in the program logic. This refines the evidence by coding it into relevant fields. These fields may include:
- scale
- sites
- reliability of source and possible bias (who wrote it, when, and who paid for it?).

» **Sort the evidence** into the following categories:
- strong evidence of the outcomes
- collated outputs that show progress towards an outcome
- evidence that may be strengthened through linking to primary data collected through the social inquiry process
- weak or irrelevant evidence of the outcomes.

Step 4
Step 5
Step 6
Step 7

Not all data will provide evidence of progress towards outcomes.

Not all data will provide evidence of progress towards outcomes—it is important to include both positive and negative evidence. While performance story evaluations tend to concentrate on positive outcomes that illustrate the strategies that are working, much can also be learned from looking at what did not work.

Clear evidence that emerges to indicate that a particular strategy is not working to achieve the desired change can stimulate discussion about what could be done differently in future for more positive results. The sorting process may also reveal unexpected results—that is, results other than the outcomes in the program logic. These should be included if they are found in several different sources.

» **Select the top 20 pieces of information**, ensuring that some relate to outcomes at the intermediate outcomes level of the program logic.

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» **Prepare a draft results chart** (see **Template 5**) and plot the relevant data into the chart where they provide evidence of an outcome.

KEY CONCEPT

Why is the results chart upside down?

Unlike the program logic, which outlines an expected series of changes, a results chart tells the actual story of change from the start (top of chart) to the end (bottom of chart) through lines of evidence generated from the data trawl. It is read as a story would be read from the top (reveals the activities that led to the changes—foundational activities) to the bottom (outcomes) of the page.

The results chart forms the core of evidence for the evaluation and the report.

The results chart forms the core of evidence for the evaluation and the report. At this stage, the chart is in draft form until the second part of the evidence-gathering process (the social inquiry) is completed.

» **Include notes about any limitations** relating to the secondary data in the draft result chart. This information will be useful for the expert panel and for writing the findings and implications section of the report.

» **Retain all evidence in a file** (preferably both electronic and hard copies), coded so that the expert panel members will be able to refer to it should they want to see reports and raw data.

TIP

The results chart can be complex, so tell the story through:

» pictures
» short video productions—oral stories
» charts
» web-based technologies

» **Consult scientific experts** to assess the quality of the evidence and to identify any key pieces of evidence that are available but may be missing.

> To avoid conflicts of interest, it is important not to use experts who will be members of the expert panel.

CAUTION

Analyse the social inquiry data

» **Examine the interview transcripts** by asking the questions listed in Box 3, using the program logic outcomes. The purpose of the analysis is to:

- provide context to and verification of the secondary data—often people will explain how or why change occurred, and what worked and what didn't
- determine the types of change people have observed or experienced as a result of the program.

Box 3: Questions to assist in analysing interview data

» What was the main point made in response to each of the evaluation questions?
» How important was that point in explaining the type or extent of contribution to an outcome in the program logic?
» Where does the response fit in the draft results chart?
» Does the response verify or conflict with the primary data in the draft results chart?
» Did the interviewee express how change has come about?
» Did the interviewee identify any changes or lessons that were unexpected or different from those in the program logic or those in the secondary data?
» How many respondents had similar responses to the questions?

» **Create a spreadsheet** in which each evaluation question forms a column (noting which outcome in the program logic the question relates to) and respondents (anonymous) form the rows. Calculate the number of people who responded in the same way to each question. Include these details in the results chart, expressed as numbers. This is a simple way to document the analysis. Compare the interview data with the secondary data. Do the sources confirm or contradict each other?

Analyse and compile the stories of change

» **Read through the transcripts** and identify the stories of change, using the program logic, evaluation questions and draft results chart as a guide. Boxes 4 and 5 provide examples of stories of change.

Do not exclude any stories, even if they seem similar to others. The only reason to exclude a story is if it is too incomplete to make sense.

Some stories may not relate to expected program outcomes. Stories of significant change that do not relate directly to an outcome may reveal unintended program results. These stories should be considered for inclusion as they can provide important lessons for program planning.

Do not exclude any stories, even if they seem similar to others.

Box 4: Sample story of change

'With heart and hands: a story of change'

'… We purchased this property 10 years ago and when we purchased it, it was in the same hands for three generations, it had been heavily overstocked, it was covered with garbage and old car bodies and rubbish … we cleaned it all out and over a period of 4 years we took 11 truckloads of garbage to the … tip, which staggered us.

'However … we realised that the most important thing was to try and get the place productive so we put new fences around the perimeter. The cattle for several generations had watered down at the creek and the banks had been badly eroded. There were several important main watering points where they had completely destroyed everything and they were just mud and that is why I applied to get some assistance to put up some fences.

'Having put up the fences we then planted up with species indigenous to the area and with a lot of labour on our own part and a bit more expense … which we did ourselves over the years, we excluded cattle from the property, … and we put in troughs to water the cattle … within two years of all that, we were quite staggered with one section in particular that gets a lot of runoff water … the native species which just regenerated themselves exceeded the stuff we had planted so it was quite an eye opener for us especially the sedges and the grasses … took off wildly. They weren't being grazed. They weren't being trampled.

'The most significant thing was the water quality of the creek. We do have platypuses in one hole and the water in the creek was markedly improved just by keeping it free of cattle … the other thing is, the bird life along there started to improve. We noticed, we took a list of the birds we had seen, having retired we have time to look at the birds, and the bird life that has come along, especially the small wrens and what have you, the understorey dwellers, lots of those have came back … to us it has been highly successful.

'… Having built a new house here and putting new fences up and water troughs and a lot of improvement to pasture and getting rid of noxious weeds and trees, we spent a hell of a lot of money and made none on the property. We were going to do things like fence off the creek some years ago, but thinking god if we are going to fence off the creek it is going to cost us $11 a metre so you put it on the back burner. Having … discovered that CMA and Landcare would give you some assistance, which we had no idea about in the first place, we went and did it. So if that financial assistance wasn't there it probably wouldn't be done.'

Box 5: Sample story of change

'180 degree thinking'

'Ah, I'm really rapt,' said one of the Landcare group members. 'I have just realised I have done a full 180 turnaround in my mind and in my thinking … Well, as I was driving home today I was thinking on the fact that I'd just been out, you know, in that back paddock where we've got those salinity problems and that sort of stuff … and have just finished planting all those trees and that, at the top of the catchment … and thinking I have done a fantastic job … you know, I have done something for the community, done something good … you know my son is coming home to the farm, and I have increased the productivity of the place now with what I have done … it's some really good stuff. I was driving home feeling really good.

'And then I thought, I can remember driving home about 30 or 40 years ago when I had finished clearing that paddock, getting all the trees out … driving home feeling like I'd done a fantastic thing for the community, I'd helped the future generations … increased the productivity of the place …

'And now here I am, less than probably 40 years, maybe only 30 years later, putting trees back in the ground, thinking I have increased the productivity of the place.'

» **Mark any quotes in the interview transcripts that capture change clearly and concisely.** These quotes may be useful later for inclusion in the findings and implications section of the report. Real voices can make the report more engaging. Extracts usually range in length from about one paragraph to a full page. Sometimes it is important to include at the beginning of the excerpt one or two sentences about how people became involved to give the story context. The moral of the story also needs to be included. This is drawn from the answer to the question, 'Why is this important for you?' and is placed at the end of the excerpt. The excerpts that tell stories of change are considered in later steps by the expert panel and participants at the summit meeting.

How to spot a story in a transcript

» The story is about change, ideally with a beginning, a middle and an end.

» The change relates to the expected outcomes or illustrates important unexpected outcomes.

TIP

» **Compile the stories of change, noting that:**

– There may not be a story from every interview, and some interviews may have more than one story—select only the best one.

– Do not include real names in the stories. Pseudonyms or general terms such as 'a farmer' can be substituted for names.

– The questions that were asked in the interview do not need to be included.

– The excerpts can be edited for ease of reading, but it is important to preserve the voice and message of the interviewee, including colloquialisms.

– The entire excerpt should be in the first person.

» **Try not to change the transcripts too much.** Place three dots before and after the excerpt to show that it has come from a larger transcript.

It may be necessary occasionally (but not preferred) to change the order of a quote to construct a coherent excerpt. Anything that is changed substantially needs to be verified by the interviewee before the summit.

Always use the interviewee's words, and preserve the style of their language.

TIP

What can be changed:

– punctuation

– repetitive or rambling sections, as long as deleted sections are indicated by an ellipsis (. . .)

– typos

– substitution of real names to protect anonymity.

Overall, the transcripts need to be readable, but not necessarily perfect in terms of grammar.

» **Consider how many of the excerpts are telling the same or similar change story.** Where multiple interviewees are telling a similar story of change, enter this information into the results chart using numbers.

The results chart can be ambiguous so it needs to be worded carefully. For example, rather than reporting 'no change' or 'no improvement', it may be more accurate to report that 'no monitoring took place' or that 'monitoring was at the wrong scale for the intervention'. Other possibilities are 'there were bushfires during the period under review' or 'monitoring was not carried out for long enough for a trend to be observed'.

Identify key issues

» **Extract the key issues** raised in the interviews.

» **Document all the issues** in a table and then select those that are most important, especially those that are repeated in more than one interview, and group issues together. The art is to decide when to group things together, and how to summarise the main points in the heading. The issues can be included in the findings and implications section of the report, as shown in Box 6.

Box 6: Example of issues identified through interviews

Issue	No. of respondents who mentioned issue	Quotes from interviews to illustrate issue
1. Program poorly publicised	5	'While the program is interesting, you need to understand that most people around here know nothing about it' (agency staff)
2. Incentives not sufficient	7	'After all it was only $5,000, it took around $60k to put all this in place, I figure for some farmers, this would be just too much investment' (farmer)

The quantitative and qualitative evidence, as presented in the results chart, forms the core of the performance story report. This version of the results chart will go to the expert panel.

Recording

All evidence sources need to be included in the index.

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» **Start developing the index** to the performance story report. All evidence sources need to be included in the index. A sample index is at **Attachment 9**. It is useful to do this as the evidence is collected and collated.

» To assist with compiling the final report, **keep a record of**:
- sections of the interview transcripts that capture change and can be used in the findings and implications section of the report
- any limitations relating to the secondary and interview data for the methodology section of the report
- key issues raised in the interviews.

» **Number the stories** for ease of reference.

Step 4

Expert panel

Expert panel

The expert panel brings together people with qualifications and experience relevant to the program outcomes. The expert panel members were identified at the planning meeting, and will have agreed well in advance to participate in the panel and should be well briefed on the nature of their task. The date, time and venue for the panel meeting should have been organised shortly after the planning meeting.

Aims

The purpose of the panel is to assess the quality of the evidence collated in the results chart and evaluate how well the evidence illustrates the contribution the program has made to the expected outcomes.

Participants

- Evaluator (the panel meeting requires excellent facilitation—if the evaluator does not feel confident in facilitation, a facilitator can be engaged)
- Scientific experts in the program outcomes areas (this may involve different scientific disciplines, such as biophysical and social/economic)
- People who know the program well (board members, managers, staff, community participants with local knowledge)
- Depending on the program being evaluated, people who can ensure the cultural context is taken into account and help with interpreting the cultural context.

Role of the panel

The panel will:

- consider the program logic model and all of the evidence that has been collected
- make statements about the extent to which the evidence is an adequate, unbiased, relevant and credible indicator that the outcomes have been achieved
- identify any additional information required to provide stronger evidence of outcomes
- recommend improvements for evidence collection and recording in future.

Activities

- Organise the panel meeting
- Conduct the panel meeting
- Craft outcome statements
- Develop recommendations

Organise the panel meeting

» **Provide background information to the panel** at least three weeks before the expert panel meeting. The panel members should receive a package of information including:

- a letter of invitation
- a meeting agenda
- an outline of performance story evaluation methodology
- the role of the expert panel
- details of panel members and participants in the meeting
- the questions the expert panel will be required to answer
- the program logic model
- the results chart and associated index
- the set of stories of change
- evidence summary sheets.

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» **Ask panel members to sign a conflict of interest declaration** (a sample conflict of interest form is at **Template 6**).

Conduct the panel meeting

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» **Begin the meeting with an overview** of the panel process, the evaluation approach and the background to the program. A sample agenda for the expert panel meeting is at **Attachment 10**.

» **Guide panel members** through the program logic and the results chart.

TIP

> Have a good note-taker at the meeting to capture the discussion and especially to record:
>
> » weaknesses identified in the data and why they exist
>
> » suggestions for improving data collection
>
> » recommendations for recording of evidence.

» **Provide the panel with an opportunity to ask questions** about the results and to see the data as required.

» **Ask panel members to assess the evidence.** This process is assisted by giving the panel a series of questions such as those listed in Box 7. The members consider the evidence either in small breakout groups or in a large group depending on the number of panel members.

Box 7: Reviewing the evidence

- Are evidence items a 'best fit' with the corresponding outcome?
- To what extent is the evidence for each outcome an adequate and credible indicator that the outcome has actually been achieved?
- Are evidence items at the correct level in the logic hierarchy?
- Which data items provide the strongest evidence that progress has been made towards the outcome?
- Are there data items that do not provide credible evidence?
- What additional data is needed to provide stronger evidence of outcomes?

Craft outcome statements

» **Facilitate the panel through a process in the large group**, where members discuss their responses to the questions in Box 7 and work together to craft statements about the contribution of the program to outcomes. Project the results chart and the program logic as a PowerPoint presentation or in a large poster format on the wall so all members can refer to it.

» **Generate an outcome statement** in response to each of the evaluation questions, based on the responses of the panel to the questions in Box 7, while still working in the large group. Responses should focus at the intermediate outcome level. The statement covers the extent to which the program has contributed to each outcome based on the evidence presented.

» **Determine the level of confidence in the evidence**—the panel rates its level of confidence in each of the statements and provides qualifying information for the agreed rating (low, moderate or high). For example, the panel might say that a program has contributed to improved cover of native vegetation in a given area. The statement may be qualified by a moderate confidence rating. This may be because the panel is unsure whether the plantings were appropriate or indigenous to the area.

Develop recommendations

- **Facilitate the final session** where the expert panel makes recommendations about additional data required to increase the level of confidence in the outcome statements. The panel also recommends improved data collection and analysis methods for future phases of the program.
- **Add any new evidence to the results chart** that the panel identifies as existing evidence that should be included or information that needs to be generated.
- **Update the results chart** after the expert panel meeting to include any new information, as well as the outcome statements the panel has crafted in response to each evaluation question. Indicate the corresponding level of confidence the panel had in the statement.

  The recommendations from the expert panel meeting will be incorporated into the final report.
- **Integrate all of the analysed evidence** and assess the amount and quality of evidence available for each outcome in the program logic to inform a draft set of recommendations. The draft recommendations will be presented and discussed at the summit.

Step 5

Summit meeting

Summit meeting

Much information has been collected from a range of sources in steps 1 through 4. The summit brings together the key stakeholders and the information that has been collected.

The summit date was set as part of the work plan in Step 1. Invitations will have been sent as per the project plan (usually six weeks before the meeting).

Aims

The summit meeting aims to:

» share the lessons about the effectiveness and impact of the program and incorporate stakeholders' experience and local knowledge into the evaluation process

» engage participants in a further process of assessing the evidence

» reach agreement on the stories of change that best capture expected (and unexpected) outcomes.

Participants

» Evaluator

» Facilitator

» Program stakeholders

» Program implementers—staff, volunteers, land managers

» People with an interest in the future of the program who may not have been directly involved in the earlier components of the evaluation.

Ideally, the summit brings together everyone who has participated in the evaluation up to this point (usually 30–60 people). A range of people with an interest in the program, such as farmers, volunteers, agency staff and policy officers, attend the summit. Information to be presented at the summit must be in an accessible format so that these diverse stakeholders can participate and contribute to the summit meeting.

Information to be presented at the summit must be in an accessible format.

Like the expert panel, the summit requires a good facilitator. As mentioned above, the meeting will include people from a range of backgrounds who are involved in the program for different reasons. Participants will represent diverse cultures and backgrounds and have varying levels of literacy. Inevitably, there will be different interpretations of the results.

Activities

» Organise the summit meeting

» Conduct the summit meeting

Organise the summit meeting

- **Send invitations** to summit meeting participants (generally by email).
- **Send an information pack** to summit meeting participants either by email or in the post containing:

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  - a summary meeting agenda (A typical summit agenda is at **Attachment 11**.)
  - directions to the summit venue
  - an overview of the evaluation aims and steps in the approach.
- **Set up the meeting room** for small group work with tables of 8–10 people in a way that allows both small and large group discussion.

  Prepare the materials to hand out at the summit. Participants will need the following materials to engage fully in the summit meeting:
  - the results chart
  - the index
  - a summary of the key issues table
  - the expert panel statements
  - a brief summary of the limitations of the evidence and data gaps
  - numbered copies of the stories of change from the interview transcripts. There can be up to 60 depending on how many interviews were done, each usually no more than one page long.
- **Arrange other resources** required at the summit meeting:
  - IT hardware, such as a laptop, data projectors and electronic whiteboard
  - slide or PowerPoint presentations of relevant information
  - large copies of the evaluation questions and the program logic that can be put up on walls so all participants can easily refer to them
  - sticky labels and paper to record results of small group sessions
  - if possible and appropriate, video or DVD footage from the program.

Conduct the summit meeting

Session 1 Welcome and introductions

- **Provide a friendly welcome to the meeting.** Many participants will know the chair of the board or CEO of the organisation that hosts the program. That person can welcome participants and show that the organisation has made a commitment to the evaluation process. The same person can facilitate introductions among participants (this should take no more than 15 minutes).

KEY CONCEPT

> There is much to cover at the summit meeting so facilitation must be highly focused to ensure required outputs are achieved.

» **Present an overview of the summit** agenda and aims and how the day will run. A program manager or board member usually presents the general background to the program. These presentations should be pitched broadly to the wide range of participants.

» **Succinctly present an overview of the performance story evaluation process** covering the key steps in the methodology and the components of the report. The presentation should be brief and use simple language. It should conclude with a focus on the key evaluation question, the program logic and the sub-evaluation questions.

Summit participants will engage best with the overview of the findings if it is presented simply.

TIP

An easy way to present the findings is to first outline how the results chart was developed and then present and focus a whole-group discussion on the results and evidence limitations. This may uncover more evidence as participants share their local knowledge and personal experience. Some participants may even think of an important piece of scientific evidence that was overlooked in the evidence trawl. The evaluator will need to include this evidence after the summit.

Session 2 Considering the results

» **In small groups, participants consider the program logic**, the evaluation questions and the draft results. Each group addresses two questions:

- Which of the results do (or do not) reflect your own view of the key outcomes of the program so far and why?
- Which other key outcomes would you include in addition to the draft results?

» **Ask each group** to agree on no more than three answers to each question and to write their responses on a single sheet of paper.

Session 3 Selecting stories of change

» **Arrange participants into small groups** with a set of stories of change that were collected through the social inquiry process. This part of the summit is generally very enjoyable for participants as it brings real-life examples to the evaluation. In the groups, people take turns reading a story aloud. At the end of each story, each group member makes notes on sticky labels about the key changes identified in the story and why the group thinks they are significant.

» Once all the stories have been read, **the group decides which three stories of change best reflect changes** in relation to the outcomes in the program logic and the evaluation questions. Participants return to the large group and each small group reads their three chosen stories to the whole group.

» **The whole group discusses the three stories and then votes** to select the story that best illustrates an important change that has occurred as a result of the program. Once a story is chosen from each of the small groups, the whole group votes on the three stories overall that best illustrate important changes.

The three chosen stories go into the results section of the report.

TIP

Take careful account of the likely literacy levels of the participants during this session.

Session 4 Learning from the issues

» **Capture participants' views on the main issues** that have emerged from the evaluation by asking them to work in small groups to consider the issues table and respond to the following questions:

- To what extent is the program on track with the original program logic and were the assumptions about how change would occur accurate?
- Given the best that the program has achieved and the lessons learned, in the future what should be kept, dropped, changed or created?

These issues are important in informing the recommendations for future phases of the program. They will generally be about activities and strategies—what worked? what didn't work? how could things be done differently for better results?

Session 5 Recommendations

» **Develop broad recommendations for future phases of the program** by asking each small group of participants to address three questions based on the information they have discussed throughout the day:

- Are the outcomes in the program logic appropriate for a future phase of the program?
- Are there ways the outcomes could be amended to ensure they are more achievable, or more strategic?
- How could the strategies or activities be changed or modified to achieve the desired program outcomes in the future?

» **Synthesise the recommendations** the small groups have suggested in a facilitated large group session.

The job of the facilitator is to group the responses and have the participants reach agreement about those that should be prioritised for inclusion as recommendations in the performance story report. The facilitator could group them, for example, into categories such as what needs to be kept, dropped, improved or created. The agreed statements from the recommendations session are incorporated into the findings and implications section of the final report.

Step 6

Integration, report and communications

Integration, report and communications

This step is really all about bringing everything together. The evaluator must integrate all the evidence from all the sources, many of which reflect different disciplinary perspectives and value systems. To ensure that reporting requirements are met, how the results are conveyed to different audiences must be carefully considered in line with the purpose of the communication product.

A distinguishing feature of the performance story evaluation approach is the way in which the results are communicated. Performance story reports should be relatively short and well rounded. They should cater for a range of different learning and communication styles.

Performance story reports should be relatively short and well rounded.

The report should be accessible to a busy policy person, a scientist, a journalist or just an interested member of the community.

Aims

The fundamental aims of Step 6 are to compile the performance story report and convey clear findings and recommendations.

Participants

- Evaluator/s
- Program managers

> The performance story report can be used as a tool for engaging external stakeholders such as funding organisations, program volunteers and land managers. Presenting the report to external program stakeholders can help to strengthen institutional arrangements for the next phase of the program.

KEY CONCEPT

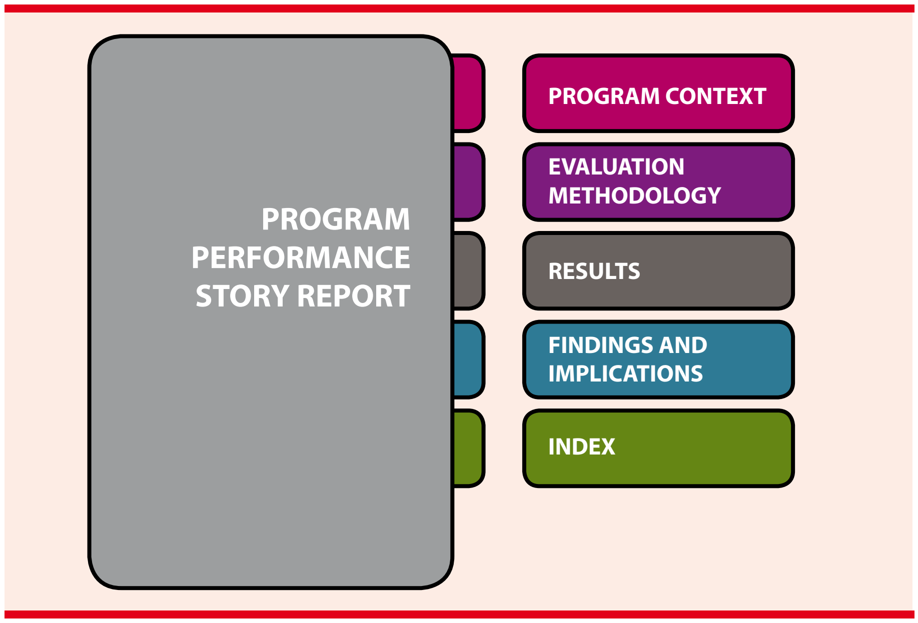
Activities

- Compiling the performance story report
- Communicating and disseminating the report

Compiling the performance story report

Section 1 of this guide outlined the elements of a performance story report. Figure 2 is repeated here for reference as the preparation of each section is discussed.

Figure 2: Performance story report structure



The report is prepared by the evaluator and should begin with an executive summary.

KEY CONCEPT

The executive summary must be a punchy summary of the findings, recommendations and implications so that the evaluation results can be understood at a glance.

The report includes a case study section for people interested in the human stories behind the program's performance and a section containing detailed evidence that will be of interest to program auditors, in particular. If technical language is unavoidable, consider including a glossary of terms to aid readers. An example of a performance story report can be viewed at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/psr-mount-lofty.pdf.

Part 1 Context

» **Revisit all notes and documents** to identify the essential preliminary and background information. This section should be written for an audience that does not know the program well and has not been involved in the evaluation.

» **Provide a brief introduction** to the program, the performance story approach and the results in the first section of the report. This section should be about two pages long. The content for this section comes from the information gathered at every step of the process.

Box 8: What's in the context section?

- The program and its location
- Expected outcomes for the program including the program logic diagram—the diagram should clearly indicate what the original investment was seeking to achieve and the mechanisms that were applied to achieve the required change
- The program start date and the period covered by the report
- The funding sources

Part 2 Evaluation methodology

» **Organise the methodology section** according to the steps to develop a performance story report. A flow chart can be helpful to illustrate the progression through the steps. The section should begin with a brief discussion of the approach that was adopted for each step of the process. This section is usually two to three pages in length.

Box 9: What's in the methodology section?

- Timeframe for the performance story evaluation
- Who undertook the study
- Who was involved in the study
- A brief summary of each of the major meetings
- Sampling methods
- Data collection processes—qualitative and quantitative
- Number of interviews in each interviewee category
- Data analysis process
- Limitations of the methodology

Part 3 Results

» **Begin this section with a brief explanation** of how to read the results chart, and the stories of change —the excerpts from interviews that best illustrate change that has occurred as a result of the program are the key components of this section of the report. Although the authors of the stories are anonymous, the interviewee group they represent should be provided.

CAUTION

To avoid a long and overly detailed results chart, it may be best to provide 'critical outcomes' in the results section and include the longer version as an appendix to the report or simply make reference to it and have it available should it be requested.

The results chart can vary in length from two to five pages. It should provide a succinct snapshot of the program outcomes. The agency may choose to retain a more detailed version of the results chart.

The three stories of change that were selected at the summit are generally up to one page long but can be as brief as one paragraph.

Box 10: Sample introduction to the results section

The results chart uses the outcomes hierarchy as a structure to report program outcomes. The evidence sources are detailed in the index at the end of this report.

Quantitative and qualitative data drawn from the data trawl, interviews and meetings is provided as evidence to substantiate the outcome statements. The last column contains qualifying notes about the data that informed outcome statements and/or data that was unable to be sourced.

Part 4 Findings and implications

» **Re-read and synthesise all materials** generated during the evaluation, including meeting notes, charts, tables, interviews and data in relation to the program logic and the evaluation questions. The findings and implications section is essentially a discussion framed by the evaluation questions. It is based on the evidence that appears in the results chart. This section is usually about five pages long.

The findings and implications section should not be a restatement of the results chart but rather an analysis of what the results mean.

CAUTION

» **Summarise:**

- how the evidence has illustrated the program's impact (intended and unintended outcomes)
- the ways in which the program has made progress towards its expected outcomes
- how the program has contributed towards the long-term outcomes of NRM or a large NRM initiative.

» **Develop the discussion section** by drawing on and integrating the comments of summit participants and the overall analysis of all evidence. The discussion should identify strategies that have been appropriate, efficient and/or effective and those that have not led to the desired results.

Identify strategies that have been appropriate, efficient and effective.

» **Include a short summary of the key lessons** from implementing and evaluating the program and the extent to which the program is on track towards achieving the longer-term outcomes. The lessons can be used by program managers to modify arrangements for implementing the program in future.

Include a box in the findings and implications section that summarises the three to five key findings of the study and a box that highlights the three main lessons.

TIP

» **Conclude the findings and implications section with a set of recommendations** that provide directions for the future. They are derived from all information sources consulted in the evaluation. In particular, the recommendations are informed by the deliberations of the expert panel and the summit participants.

The recommendations are informed by the deliberations of the expert panel and the summit participants.

Box 11: Sample recommendations

It is recommended that:

- » opportunities to further develop innovative partnerships to address NRM issues be actively explored and maximised
- » an integrated MERI – knowledge management – research and development framework and strategy be linked with the communication strategy
- » the multi-disciplinary program team be maintained, including members with expertise in areas including administration, monitoring and evaluation, science, ecology, on-ground works, extension, policy and planning
- » integration of the program with other NRM activities in the region be improved
- » the establishment of schemes that create economic value for native vegetation be supported
- » the focus on water extraction and plantation forestry as key threats be maintained
- » in addition to maintaining focus on these threats, assessments of both plantation forestry and the size of the buffer zone required between swamps and plantations be improved to stop adverse impacts (a 50-metre buffer zone is insufficient)
- » ecological monitoring of the impact of the program be improved to include the impacts on both the Emu-wren and swamps
- » economic value for native vegetation (for example, carbon offsets for swamps, rather than Tasmanian Blue Gum plantations) be acknowledged so environmental stewardship is a profitable option for landholders.

Part 5 Index

- » **List the details of all the sources of evidence** considered in the evaluation to form the index. Also, list any additional references, the number of interviewees in each category and the number of participants in each category who engaged in the various meetings throughout the process. It is important to ensure that consent (preferably in writing) is received from participants before listing their names in the index. Each item in the index should be clearly numbered. A sample index is at **Attachment 9**.

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CAUTION

Listing the names of the expert panel members in the report can add a degree of authority to the report, but it is necessary to seek written consent from the panel members to publish their names in the report.

Communicating and disseminating the report

» **Provide the agency hosting the program the opportunity to review the final report.** They may wish to suggest revisions and additions, but they must not change the findings. The final decisions on the report rest with the evaluator.

» **Consider the issues of useability** in relation to the report. The questions in Box 12 provide a framework to guide the development of communications for the report, remembering that communication is a two-way process and the performance story report is more than just a presentation of results. It is also an instrument to inform learning and adaptive management. At an earlier stage in the evaluation, decisions were made about the key audiences for the report. At this stage, how the report is to be presented needs to be decided.

If the budget allows, consider supplementing the text with visual aids such as photographs and maps. Together photos, maps, personal stories of change and scientific data can tell a comprehensive story about to what extent and in what ways a program is achieving anticipated outcomes and how the outcomes will contribute to achieving the longer-term program goals.

TIP

While the initial product of the evaluation is a written report, the material can also be presented in a range of media and formats, such as a DVD or a web-based interactive report. Ideally, this should be planned in advance so that oral interviews are recorded and the necessary consents are obtained to use the interview material in these formats.

Box 12: Questions to guide the development of communications for the report

- Will the performance story report meet the needs of the audiences?
- How will the report be used? by whom? and how often? Are new structures needed in the organisation to accommodate utilisation of the report?
- Will program managers be able to easily access the findings about outcomes and about the effectiveness and appropriateness of different management strategies?
- In what ways does the report lend itself to being used by program managers to support a continuous improvement approach to program management?
- Will funding agencies and management boards be able to easily access information from the report about the progress the program is making towards the longer-term outcomes?
- Will the report support funding agencies and boards in making decisions about whether funding for the program should be continued?
- Will the report provide information about ways in which the focus or investment approaches could be adapted?
- Are there pieces of information about program outcomes or likely future program benefits accessible for preparing briefs for senior executives or ministers?
- Are there legislated requirements that specify who is to receive the report and in which format?
- Does the report need to be published—if so, where and when?
- What are the publication guidelines, including style guide conformity or disclaimers?
- Who will it be distributed to and who will disseminate it?
- Does it need to be made accessible to people with particular requirements—for example people from multicultural backgrounds or people with disability?
- Are different versions needed for different audiences?
- Is there a need to develop press releases based on the performance story report?

Step 7

Revising the program logic

Revising the program logic

Much of the benefit from participatory performance story evaluations derives from the opportunities for learning they enable within the organisation running the program. The final report will contain conclusions and recommendations about the strong and weak interventions applied during the program. This last step is actually the first step in designing the next program phase.

Don't wait until after an evaluation to reflect on the integrity of the program logic and the evidence. Adaptive management and continuous quality improvement require regular reflection on process and progress.

CAUTION

This step involves a series of internal meetings to review the outcomes of the program so far, revise the program logic and begin planning the next program phase.

Aims

» Organisational self-assessment by reflecting on the outcomes

» Judging whether the program logic and the theory of change established for the program were confirmed by the findings of the evaluation

» Development of a revised program logic for the next phase of the program

Participants

It is important that the meeting involve the people who will be carrying out the future on-ground implementation of the program.

The agency hosting the program is the main participant in this step. The meeting should include senior executive staff and board members as well as program managers since their support will be essential to promote the forward agenda.

A facilitator is often engaged to lead participants through a structured process, but as agencies become more familiar with the process they can lead their own logic development process. It is useful to engage key program stakeholders in the development of the revised logic. Key stakeholders may include co-investors, potential investors in the program and those who stand to benefit from the program.

Activities

» Assess interventions and logic

» Identify factors that may impact on the program

» Revise program logic, assumptions and strategies

Assess interventions and logic

» **Organise resources for the review meeting.**
Meeting participants will need:

- the performance story report
- the meeting agenda, so they have a clear understanding of the purpose and required outputs for the meeting
- copies of the existing program plan and the MERI plan, including the program logic and the assumptions underpinning the logic
- the guide to program logic, available at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf
- relevant funding guidelines.

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» **Arrange a meeting or meetings** to discuss the findings of the performance story report. A sample program logic review and planning meeting agenda is at **Attachment 12**. At these meetings, participants will:

- review the key findings and lessons from the evaluation
- discuss the validity of the assumptions that were made at the outset of the program by asking: 'To what extent were the assumptions accurate or inaccurate and why?'
- consider the results chart and identify the relative rigour of different evidence sources
- consider the results in light of what appear to be strong and weak program management strategies
- brainstorm alternative strategies that may improve results
- reach agreement on how to use the findings and lessons to inform the next phase of the program
- discuss unexpected changes that occurred. This can help in predicting changes outside of the control of the organisation that could occur during the next program phase.

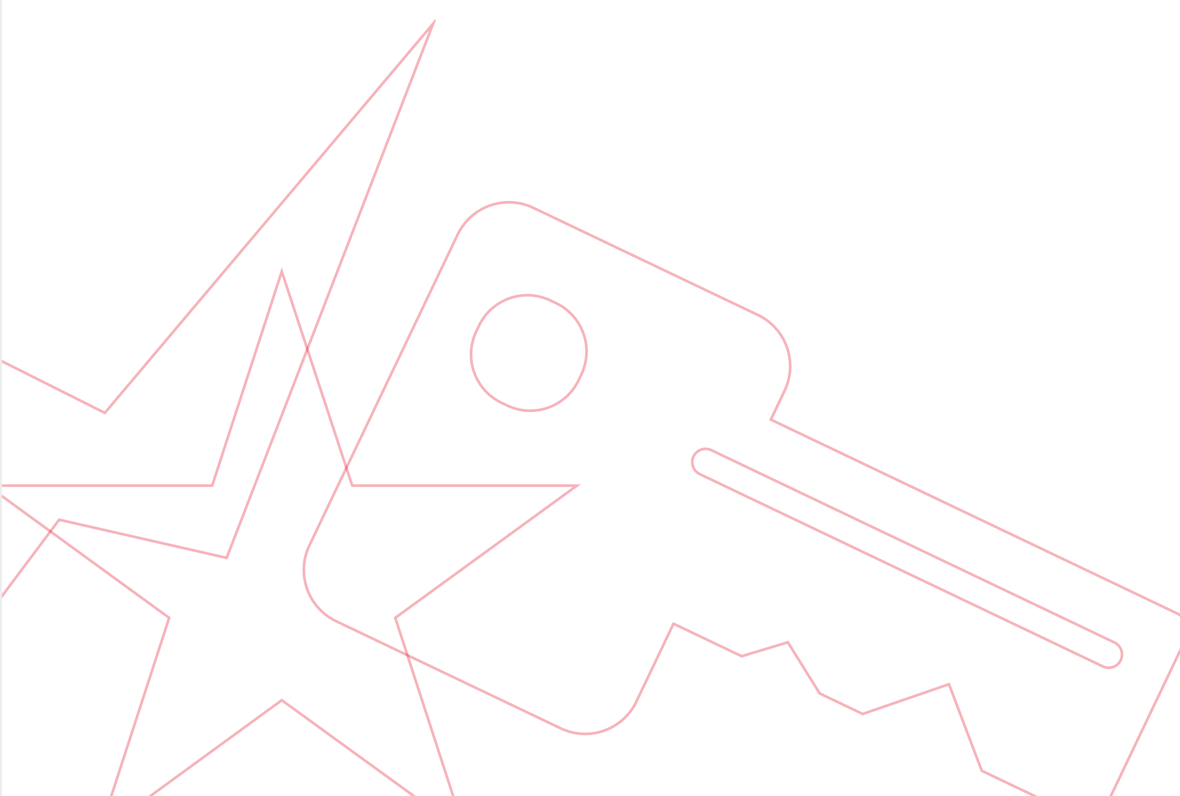
Identify factors that may impact on the program

- **Document the lessons** that have been identified by reflecting on the items above.
- **Consider influences that could impact on capacity to achieve outcomes in future**. This is a return to the scoping phase to see if there are policy, environmental or economic changes occurring or imminent.

Revise program logic, assumptions and strategies

- **Revise the program logic** and develop it for the next phase of the program, including revised outcomes, activities and assumptions about how change will occur and the strategies/investments to be prioritised. The new logic should retain the interventions that were positive in influencing desired change and exclude or replace those that were weak or had a negative influence.
- **Reflect on the performance story evaluation approach** that was used—the process and the product—and suggest any modifications for future evaluations.

The new logic should retain the interventions that were positive in influencing desired change.



SECTION 3

TOOLS

Tools

The tools included in this section are designed for use by trainers and developers of performance story report evaluations in training workshops or in the development of performance story reports. They consist of a series of templates and attachments.

The six templates are designed to be copied and used in the various steps of preparing a performance story report. They may need to be revised for use in particular evaluation projects. The templates can be downloaded in Word format from the Caring for our Country website (www.nrm.gov.au/me/meri-toolkit.html).

The attachments are samples to illustrate particular evaluation instruments. Like the templates, many of the attachments are designed to be copied and revised to fit particular evaluation projects.

The sample performance story evaluation workplan at Attachment 4 can also be used as a way of checking off that key activities have been conducted throughout the performance story evaluation.

Users of the guide are encouraged to fill in their own details as they work through the performance story evaluation process.

Templates

Template 1: interviewee categories

Name of suggested interview participant	Stakeholder group represented by interviewee	Evaluation question interviewee is likely to address	Suggested interviewer

Template 2: Sample information sheet for interview participants

{Program title} performance story report

What is this program?

_____insert host agency name_____ in collaboration with _____insert name of evaluator_____

are conducting an evaluation of _____insert program title_____
for the Australian Government.

What is being evaluated?

This performance story report will evaluate the extent to which the program is contributing towards

_____longer term outcome_____ in _____insert area_____

What is a performance story report?

A performance story report is an evaluation method that uses a participatory approach. This includes asking people who were involved with the program to tell their stories and share their experiences. It provides opportunities for program managers to find out whether their program is making progress and on track to achieve intended outcomes and for people involved in the program to talk about what's worked well and wasn't hasn't worked so well.

The stories will be read aloud at a one-day meeting involving all participants in the evaluation.

What are the arrangements to collect my story?

With your approval the interviewers will take notes throughout the interview and record your story. It is important to capture in your words what you believe to be the most significant change resulting from your involvement in {*insert name of program*}. Are you okay with your story being recorded?

☐ **Yes** I would like my story recorded for better accuracy.

☐ **No** I would prefer my story not to be recorded.

As discussed with you previously, {*insert names and organisations of nominated interviewer/s*} would like to visit you on {*insert date and time*} at {*insert location*} to conduct an interview. The interview should take about one hour.

Please confirm the time, date, location and your participation.

☐ **Yes** this time, date, location suit me well, and I am willing to tell my story.

☐ **No** please call me to arrange another time.

☐ **No** I would prefer not to participate.

After the interview, your story will be typed up and returned to you so you can check that it is accurate. How would you like to receive your story for checking?

☐ **Email** My email address is: ____________________

☐ **Fax**. My fax number is: ____________________

{*insert name of evaluator*} is committed to protecting personal information.

Invitation to the final program meeting

A one-day meeting is planned for {*insert date and time*} at {*insert venue*}. Those attending this meeting will be active in making sense of all the information the evaluation has collected. This will include reading the anonymous stories and selecting the stories that they believe capture the most significant change that has occurred as a result of the program.

Would you like to be invited to attend this meeting?

☐ **Yes** please keep me informed about the meeting and send me an invitation.

☐ **No**

The final performance story report

The anonymous stories selected at the final meeting will be included in the performance story report. The report will be provided to the Australian Government with all of the non-selected stories in a separate attachment. Selected quotes may also be included throughout the report. Would you like a copy of the performance story report?

☐ **Yes**

☐ **No**

Please mail or fax your completed form back to:

insert postal address

insert fax number

For further information contact:

insert name

insert phone insert fax

insert email

Template 3: Sample consent form for adults

I ______________________ insert full name ______________________ do hereby give permission for

______________________ insert name of organisation ______________________

to use my (details ticked below) in documents and publications.

☐ **name** ☐ **contact details** ☐ **image/photograph**

These documents and publications may include documents produced by:

____

I also understand that those documents and publications may take the form of newsletters, reports, website material, short films, videos etc.

If my details are to be published, please use the following information.

Name: ____

Position (where applicable): ____

Organisation (where applicable): ____

E: ______________________________ P: ______________

Important – please note:

The internet may be accessed by any person worldwide. I understand that if my personal information (name, contact details or image) is published on the internet then it will be accessible to users from all over the world, that my information can be searched for using an identifier such as my name, and that my information can be copied and used by any other person using the internet.

Most importantly, I understand that once my personal information has been published on the internet {*insert name of organisation*} has no control over its subsequent use and disclosure.

Interviewee signature ______________________________ Date ____ / ____ / ____

E: ______________________________ P: ______________

Postal address (where applicable): ____

Interviewer signature ______________________________ Date ____ / ____ / ____

E: ______________________________ P: ______________

A copy of the signed form should be retained by both parties.

Template 4: Sample consent form for children

I ______ full name of parent or guardian ______ do hereby give permission for

______ insert name of organisation ______

to use the (details ticked below) of my child in documents and publications.

- [ ] **name**
- [ ] **school name/school address**
- [ ] **image/photograph**
- [ ] **school year level (K-12)**

These documents and publications may include documents produced by:

______

I also understand that those documents and publications may take the form of newsletters, reports, website material, short films, videos etc.

If my child's details are to be published, please use the following information.

Child's name: ______

School: ______

School address: ______

P: (School) ______ E: ______

Important—please note:

The internet may be accessed by any person worldwide. I understand that if my child's personal information (name, contact details or image) is published on the internet then it will be accessible to users from all over the world, that the information can be searched for using an identifier such as my child's name, and that the information can be copied and used by any other person using the internet.

Most importantly, I understand that once my child's personal information has been published on the internet, {*name of organisation*} has no control over its subsequent use and disclosure.

Signature of parent/legal guardian ______ Date / /

E: ______ P: ______

Postal address (where applicable): ______

Postal address (where applicable): ______

Interviewer signature ______ Date / /

E: ______ P: ______

A copy of the signed form should be retained by both parties.

Template 5: Results chart

Evaluation question	**Outcome level (from program logic)**	**Expected outcomes**	**Sources of evidence** (enter the item numbers in this column for relevant evidence as listed in the index)	**Results statement in summary**	**Additional information about the data**
	Foundational activities				
	Immediate outcomes				
	Intermediate outcomes				
	Longer term outcomes				

Template 6: Conflict of interest declaration for expert panel members

I ______ insert full name ______ being an employee of

______ insert name of employer, if relevant ______

of ______ insert address of employer, if relevant ______

declare that to the best of my knowledge, I do not have:

» any financial interest in ______ insert the program Subject ______
» any immediate relatives or close friends with a financial interest in the subject
» any personal bias or inclination which would in any way affect my decisions in relation to the subject
» any personal obligation or, allegiance which would in any way affect my decisions in relation to the subject

(a 'conflict'), except as set out below:

1 ______

2 ______

3 ______

4 ______

5 ______

I undertake to make a further declaration detailing any conflict, potential conflict or apparent conflict that may arise during the evaluation.

I agree to abstain from any assessment or any decision in relation to:

______ insert program name ______

where such a conflict exists.

Signed ______ Dated / /

Attachments

Attachment 1: Sample inception meeting agenda

Time	Activity	Who
15 minutes	Welcome and introductions	Program staff member/board member
	Purpose and scope of inception meeting	Evaluator
1 hour	An overview of performance story report methodology	Evaluator
20 minutes	Overview of program from state and program/local perspectives—including review of program logic (if one exists)	State government officer and program director
1 hour	Setting the boundaries of the evaluation: » Who is the report for and what do they want to know? » What's included, what's not—parts of program considered? » Scales: temporal, social, geospatial » Evaluation budget	Evaluator
30 minutes	Establish steering committee and clarify roles of participants in the evaluation	All
20 minutes	Craft the key evaluation question	All
30 minutes	Next steps: » Who is to be invited to the planning meeting? » What information is required to describe the program's original plan, objectives, operating arrangements, funding sources etc? » Planning meeting date and venue » Agenda for the planning meeting	Evaluator

Attachment 2: Sample planning meeting agenda

Time	Activity	Who
15 minutes	Welcome and introductions	Program staff member/board member
15 minutes	Purpose and scope of planning meeting Introduce the key evaluation question	Evaluator
20 minutes	An overview of performance story report methodology (*if all participants are not familiar with the approach*)	
1.5 hours	Review the program logic and assumptions (if in place and develop a retrospective program logic if one has not been established) On a timeline, plot key outcomes, events/policies etc that influenced the program ***(This step will take several hours longer if a program logic is to be developed at the planning meeting)***	All participants
20 minutes	Review the evaluation questions	
1 hour	Determine information that is needed to address the evaluation questions Consider, at each level of the program logic, what evidence is in hand or readily available and what new evidence is needed to answer the evaluation questions Identify the evidence sources including data custodians and interviewees Identify interviewers Allocate responsibility for data collection	
10 minutes	Identify expert panel members	
1 hour	Develop a work plan for implementing the evaluation	

Attachment 3: Sample sub-evaluation questions

Program logic level	Evaluation questions
Longer-term outcomes	What have been the changes in water quality at the valley end?
Intermediate outcomes	To what extent and in what areas did participants' understanding increase? To what extent and in what areas did participants develop new skills or improve performance? To what extent did participants gain greater capacity to take self-directed action? To what extent were new and lasting partnerships formed?
	What changes were there in the amount of sediment entering the waterways in participating farms? What changes were there in nutrient levels in streams near participating farms?
Immediate outcomes and activities	How many workshops were run? How many information packs were released? How many incentive packages were taken up?
Foundation activities	What was the quality of the research? To what extent was the community involved in developing the program plans? To what extent were partners engaged effectively?
	What targeted resources were expended on the program (time, money, staff)? Were program resources used to leverage resources from other organisations?

Attachment 4: Sample work plan

Task status	Milestone and task	Date of event or task completion	Who is responsible
STEP 1	**SCOPING**		
✓	Inception meeting		
✓	Define the evaluand		
✓	Set the evaluation project boundaries		
✓	Draft key evaluation question		
✓	Identify who the report will be for		
✓	Identify important background information on the program for the evaluation		
✓	Determine evaluation budget and resources that will be required for the evaluation project		
✓	Clarify roles and responsibilities in the evaluation project		
✓	Establish steering committee for the evaluation project		
✓	Set the date and details for the planning meeting		
	Planning meeting		
	Develop a timeline of program outcomes and events		
	Program logic and outcomes documented		
	Document key and sub-evaluation questions and assumptions		
	Identify secondary data sources as evidence of program outcomes and nominated people to collect the data		
	Identify gaps in secondary data		
	Identify and stratify a list of potential interviewees for social inquiry		
	Nominate interviewers		
	Identify potential expert panel members		
	Draft the evaluation project work plan including dates for all meetings and the interviews		

Task status	Milestone and task	Date of event or task completion	Who is responsible
STEP 2	**EVIDENCE GATHERING**		
	Collect secondary data		
	Draft interview questions		
	Plan and conduct interview skills training for interviewers		
	Contact nominated interviewees to seek consent and interview appointment time		
	Prepare interviewing materials (interview schedule, voice recorders etc)		
	Conduct trial interviews with each group of interviewees		
	Conduct interviews		
	Transcribe most significant change story from interviews		
	Send interview scripts to interviewees for validation		
STEP 3	**INTEGRATED DATA ANALYSIS**		
	Arrange expert panel—logistics, invitations and materials		
	Sort and code secondary data		
	Prepare data summary sheets		
	Construct the draft results chart and note data limitations		
	Analyse interview notes and transcripts		
	Analyse the transcripts for stories of change		
	Compile the stories		
	Create an 'issues table' and extract key issues		
	Maintain records of data and start the index section of the performance story report		
	Arrange summit meeting—logistics, invitations and materials for participants		
STEP 4	**EXPERT PANEL**		
	Send background materials to expert panel members		
	Conduct the expert panel		
	Incorporate expert panel outcomes into results chart		

Task status	Milestone and task	Date of event or task completion	Who is responsible
STEP 5	**SUMMIT MEETING**		
	Finalise arrangements for summit—venue, attendees, materials etc		
	Conduct summit		
STEP 6	**INTEGRATION, REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**		
	INTEGRATION		
	Review all sources of evidence from all components of the evaluation in relation to the program logic and determine the evaluation findings and recommendations		
	Finalise the results chart		
	REPORT		
	Draft performance story report		
	Have others review the draft report		
	Prepare the final report		
	COMMUNICATION		
	Determine the report format/s and publication arrangements/requirements		
	Determine arrangements for distribution of the report		
	Publish and print the report		
	Disseminate the report		
	Plan to provide regular reports to key stakeholders to keep them up to date with the outcomes from each step of the evaluation project		
STEP 7	**REVISING THE PROGRAM LOGIC**		
	Arrange the program logic review meeting		
	Review performance story report and document lessons learned		
	Review and revise program logic and assumptions for next phase of the program		
	Review performance story report approach and suggest modifications to the methodology for next phase of the program		

Attachment 5: Sample training session agenda

Time	Desired outcome	Activities	Details
15 mins	Interview team members introduced to the basics of interview techniques	Value of qualitative research and open-ended interview questions	Handout: Q&A sheet
15 mins	Interviews are conducted consistently by the team	Review program logic and key evaluation questions	Handouts: program logic and key evaluation questions—explain the relationship between these
30 mins		Review interview questions and interview protocol Identify and discuss their meaning, in relation to the required information	Review the questions using a handout
15 mins		Introductions/establishing rapport and ethics procedures	Handout: ethics guide
15 mins		Procedures for use of digital recorders and note-taking	Trainer/evaluator
30 mins		Practice/role play—demonstrating interview technique	Trainer/evaluator
30 mins	Team feels clear and confident about their roles/responsibilities for the interview process	Q&A for any outstanding questions Discuss logistics	Trainer/evaluator
1.5 hours		Interview practice session	Trainer/evaluator Role plays
1 hour		De-brief session—interview team discuss what worked well and what needs tweaking in interview procedures	Trainer/evaluator

Attachment 6: Sample semi-structured interview schedule

Reassure the respondent that the information given will be anonymous

1. Please tell me how you first became involved in {*program*} and how you are involved now.

2. Let's list all the changes that have occurred as a result of your involvement in this program.

Turn tape recorder on from here

3. Thinking about all these changes—which do you think is most important? *(Choose one)*.

4. Can you tell me the story of this in some detail?

5. Why is this important for you?

6. What were the key factors that enabled this to happen?

Turn tape recorder off here

Mark the time displayed on the tape recorder and say, 'Thanks for sharing your story. I now have some more specific questions to ask.' (If these questions haven't already been answered).

7. What changes have you made as a result of your involvement in the program?

- How was effluent managed on your farm before the program—quantify this if you can?
- How much is treated in a particular way on the farm now?

8. What, if any, changes did you make in terms of fertiliser application?

9. Has the program led to any changes in your irrigation practices?

10. How about milk production—have there been any changes there?

11. To what extent, if any, do you think this program has helped to you to cope with drought conditions?

12. To what extent, if any, do you think this program has led to changes in water quality?

- Can you describe how you know this—what indicators there have been?

13. Can you think of any ways that this program could have been improved?

14. What recommendations do you have about how this program should work in the future?

Attachment 7: Sample outline for initial contact with interviewees

This will usually be a telephone conversation

Introduce yourself:

- Name
- Where you are from
- Who you represent
- In what capacity you are acting
- Ask them whether they are willing to volunteer to be interviewed

Why you are making contact:

- To ask them to volunteer to be interviewed and to participate in the evaluation

The context in which interviews will take place:

- The program and context and purpose of the performance story evaluation

> XX is currently investing in an evaluation of the {program} that you have been involved in for the past X years. {evaluator} from {X}, is developing a 'performance story' for the program. The purpose is to discover and present the results of the program. As part of the evaluation we would like to interview you to record your stories of how you have experienced the program. Stories from the interview, together with other evidence of change, will be used to tell the story of the program.

- How many other people, representing which stakeholder groups will be interviewed

The nature of the commitment you are asking them to make:

- Likely timing of the interview
- How long it will take
- The terms of the agreement they will enter into if they agree to participate in the interview/evaluation, including that they have a right for any information they provide to remain anonymous

Next steps:

If the person agrees to participate:

- Explain that they will be sent a one-page overview by mail before the interview explaining the evaluation process
- Explain the consent form and ask them to sign it
- Arrange a date, time and place for the interview

> If you agree, we could come to your place sometime between {date} and {date}, at a time that's suitable to you. I understand that it is an extremely busy time of year for you and we will work with you in whatever time will suit you, including in the evening if necessary. The interview would take about an hour. {evaluator/s} from firm} would be the person/people conducting the interview.

Attachment 8: Sample evidence summary sheet

Data summary: item 9

Topic: Sub-catchment and Landcare group activities for water quality outcomes

Title: {Program} outcomes—an evaluation {Date} {Author}

Background

This report evaluates the outcomes of the {program}

Key findings/information

The conclusions from a series of surveys, focus groups and interviews were as follows:

» Landcare has a significant role in assisting communities in program planning and implementation through:
  - promoting awareness and motivating action
  - assisting rural communities in building social capital and maintaining cohesiveness/motivation by facilitating social interaction
  - facilitating female/Indigenous participation
  - producing positive environmental outcomes on-ground
  - increased spending on NRM and a high return on external investment in NRM.

» Landholders felt that the program officer was central in the Landcare model and critical to success of the program.

Recommendations

1. Future funding should prioritise the employment of program officers to facilitate active involvement of rural communities in NRM.
2. Ongoing support for program officers should take the form of training, and provision of current information and promotional resources.
3. Funding should be allocated to build further momentum for on-ground works; motivate landholders to address NRM issues and to deal with issues at a level higher than on farm.
4. Training packages should be made available across various competencies; training should be multi-skilling focused and delivered through program officers within existing networks.

Fit with program logic

Sub-catchment and Landcare group activities for water quality outcomes.

Intermediate outcomes

» Increased community spirit and cohesion

» Capacity built in region using local knowledge and access to a range of technical and facilitation support

» Water run-off control

» Groundcover maintained

» Sustainable grazing

Examples to support outcomes

A well-facilitated Landcare group with strong community involvement including women and Indigenous people participated in a range of on-ground NRM activities and projects.

Examples that do not support outcomes

Some landholders became too dependent on program officers to initiate and organise activities.

Attachment 9: Sample index

Data items

Data item number	Report title	Source
Item 1	Ellen Brook: Catchment Nutrient Reports 2006	Published Fact Sheet from the Swan River Trust
Item 2	Ecological Water Requirements of Marbling Brook - Intermediary Assessment; May 2005	Unpublished report to the Marbling Catchment Group by the Aquatic Research Laboratory, School of Animal Biology, University of Western Australia
Item 3	Remnant Vegetation in the Brockman River Catchment, December 2001	Unpublished report by Stephen Connell and Miles Ebert of Azimuth Software
Item 4	Remnant Vegetation in the Brockman River Catchment, December 2006	Unpublished report by Stephen Connell for the Chittering Landcare Centre
Item 5	Ellen Brook Remnant Vegetation Study 2001	Unpublished report by Stephen Connell for the Chittering Landcare Centre
Item 6	Remnant Vegetation Study of the Ellen Brook Catchment 2006	Unpublished report by Stephen Connell for the Chittering Landcare Centre
Item 7	Ellen Brook Catchment: Water Quality Monitoring Snapshot; June – September 2005	Unpublished report prepared for the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group by Amy Salmon, with assistance from Dominic Heald (DoW) and Patricia Pedelty (SCC) (March 2007)
Item 8	Ellen Brook Catchment: Water Quality Monitoring Snapshot; August – November 2006	Unpublished report prepared for the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group by Amy Salmon, with assistance from Dominic Heald (DoW), March 2007
Item 9	Brockman River Catchment: Water Quality Monitoring Snapshot; September 2006	Unpublished report prepared for the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group by Amy Salmon, with assistance from Dominic Heald (DoW) March 2007
Item 10	Groundwater information and management options for the Brockman River catchment, Western Australia 2002	A published report (Salinity and Land Use Impacts Report SLUI 2) for the Water and Rivers Commission, by M.G. Smith
Item 11	Managing Nutrient Discharge from the Ellen Brook Catchment, Western Australia, December 1994	Discussion paper prepared by the CSIRO Division of Water Resources, Western Australia
Item 12	Leaching of Nutrients and Pesticides from the Scott River Catchment: A Critical Overview of Existing Data and a Comparison with the Harvey River, Ellen Brook and Gingin Brook Catchments, November 1996	Unpublished Report No 96-37 prepared for Jeff Kite and Michael Allan (Water and Rivers Commission) by Robert Gerritse (CSIRO Division of Water Resources)
Item 13	Foreshore Assessment of The Brockman River, 2007	Unpublished report prepared for the Chittering Landcare Centre by Stephen Connell
Item 14	Ellen Brook Catchment: Storm-max Nutrient Stripping Pond, December 2007	Unpublished Progress Report for the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group
Item 15	Land Use Effects on the Water Quality of Water Discharged to Ellen Brook, Final Report, May 1997	Unpublished Report No 97-22 for CSIRO Land and Water by P.G. Kin, J.D. Byrne and D.E. Herne
Item 16	Progress at High Nutrient Contributing Areas, 2007	Database records held by the Chittering Landcare Centre

Data item number	Report title	Source
Item 17	The Identification and Amelioration of Salinity in the Brockman River Catchment, November 2001	Dissertation for BSc in NRM, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Western Australia by Zoe Fulwood
Item 18	Management Strategies for Nutrient and Sediment Loss in the Ellen Brook Catchment (with an Introduction to Constructed Wetlands), June 2001	Miscellaneous Publication 19/2001 compiled by Kylie Banfield, Agriculture Western Australia
Item 19	Hydrogeological Information for Management Planning in the Ellen Brook Catchment, September 2002	A Published Report (Salinity and Land Use Impacts Report – SLUI 11) for the Water and Rivers Commission by RA Smith and R Shams
Item 20	Modelling Effects of Landuse Modifications to Control Nutrient Loads from an Agricultural Catchment in Western Australia, 2005	C. Zammit (Centre for Water Research, University of Western Australia; Western Australian Department of Environment); M. Sivapalan (Centre for Water Research, University of Western Australia); P. Kelsey (Western Australian Department of Environment); NR Viney (CSIRO Land and Water).
Item 21	Nutrient Pollution and Treatment in the Ellen Brook Catchment	Peta Kelsey, Aquatic Science Branch, Water and Rivers Commission. January 2005
Item 22	Understanding Nutrient Movement into Ellen Brook (draft)	A Published Report (Salinity and Land Use Impacts Report – SLUI 6) for the Water and Rivers Commission
Item 23	Bird Surveys Ellen Brockman Sub Region	Katerina Neve, NRM Officer, Chittering Landcare Centre
Item 24	The 'Tree Change' Rural Landowner – Learning to Manage Land Well	Nancye Gannaway (Swan-Canning Property Planning Project (South Perth), Department of Agriculture and Food WA); Neil Guise (Small Landholder Information Service (Waroona), Department of Agriculture and Food WA); Janet Conte (Small Landholder Information Service (Waroona), Department of Agriculture and Food WA)
Item 25	Foreshore Assessment of Ellen Brook 2007	Unpublished report by Stephen Connell for the Chittering Landcare Centre
Item 26	Enhancing Biodiversity Through Habitat Creation, Protection and Effective Property Management	Report by Jo Blunn, Environmental Officer, Tiwest Joint Venture
Item 28	Attitude and Practice Change	Unpublished Report from Nadia Crepert of the Coastal Catchments Initiative, Department of Agriculture and Food WA

Other references consulted

Report title	Source
Water Yield Response to Land Use Change in South-West Western Australia (November 2003)	A published report (Salinity and Land Use Impacts Report SLUI 31) for the Water and Rivers Commission, by Bari, MA & Reprecht, JK, Department of Environment
Evaluation of the Udumung Brook Restoration Project (December 2003)	Unpublished report for the Wannamal Lakes Catchment Group
A Walk Through the Ellen Brook Catchment, The Health of the River (January 1997)	Prepared for Ellen Brook Integrated Catchment Group and Swan River Trust by Wes Horwood, Catchment Officer, Swan River Trust
Community Water Quality Monitoring: Ellen Brook (December 1996)	Prepared for Ellen Brook Integrated Catchment Group and Swan River Trust by Wes Horwood, Catchment Officer, Swan River Trust and Susan Worley, Ribbons of Blue, Water and Rivers Commission

Science panel

A science panel workshop was convened in Fremantle, Western Australia, on 12 February 2008, with the following seven scientists representing nutrient contamination, water quality, biodiversity, social science, resource economics and sustainable agriculture:

» John Smith — Research Officer; Department of Agriculture WA

» Bob Smith — Branch Manager, Water Resource Management Section, Department of Water (WA)

» Martha Jones — Acting Environmental Program Manager, Swan River Trust

» Betty Gray — Private Consultant, Ironbark Environmental & Sustainable Development

» Peter Jones — Principal Social Scientist, URS Australia Ltd

» Debra Mont — Private Consultant, Resource Economics Unit

» Olive Tree (Observer) — Principal Natural Resource Scientist, URS Australia Ltd

Summit workshop

A summit workshop was held in Saint Parklia on 25 June 2008. The summit was attended by 41 participants representing committee and staff of the Coles Landcare Centre, committee members of catchment groups and councils, land managers, community members, representatives of agencies and departments, non-government organisations and local government.

Attachment 10: Expert panel invitation, agenda and information

Invitation

Dear {*name*},

Thank you once again for agreeing to be a member of the expert panel for the above program. The meeting will be held on {*insert date and time*} at {*insert venue*}. The agenda is attached. Morning tea and lunch will be provided. Please advise us if you have any dietary requirements.

Please also find attached:

» a letter of invitation

» the meeting agenda

» an outline of performance story evaluation methodology

» the role of the expert panel

» details of panel members and participants in the meeting

» the questions the expert panel will be required to answer

» the program logic model

» the results chart and associated index

» the set of stories of change

» evidence summary sheets.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Please confirm that you will be attending by: Date ____ / ____ / ____

If you require further information please contact:

Name ______________________________

P: ______________________ E: ______________________

Sincerely ______________________________

Signature ______________________ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Meeting agenda

Expert panel for {*name of program*} {*date and venue*}

9:45 Coffee on arrival

10.00 Welcome and introductions

- Background to the expert panel and the evaluation
- Background to the program
- Overview of findings to date—based on the program logic

10.45 Session 1: Examination of the program logic

Analysis of program logic, evaluation questions for the program and evidence collected so far including significant change stories

11:30 Session 2: Reviewing the evidence

- Are evidence items a 'best fit' with the corresponding outcome?
- To what extent is the evidence for each outcome an adequate and credible indicator that the outcome has actually been achieved?
- Are evidence items at the correct level in the logic hierarchy?
- Which data items provide the strongest evidence that progress has been made towards the outcome?
- Are there items of evidence that do not support the outcome that should be removed?
- What additional data is needed to provide stronger evidence of outcomes?

12.30 Lunch

1.00 Session 3: Crafting outcome statements

- Crafting outcome statements about the contribution of the program to outcomes
- Ratings of level of confidence in the evidence
- Qualifying the ratings
- Recommendations about additional data required to increase the level of confidence in the outcome statements
- Recommendations for improving data collection and analysis methods for future phases of the program

3.00 Close

Additional information for expert panel

An outline of performance story report methodology

What does a performance story report look like?

A performance story report is usually about 10–30 pages in length with six parts:

1. **Program context**—background information about the program and the context in which it operates (how the program began, its location, objectives and key strategies, funding sources, structure and expected achievements), as well as an outline of the objectives and boundaries of the performance story evaluation and a summary of key outcomes and what has been learned.
2. **Evaluation methodology**—a brief overview of the process used in undertaking the evaluation.
3. **Results chart**—a listing of the most relevant and rigorous sources of evidence against the outcomes from the program logic hierarchy.
4. **Stories of change**—excerpts from interviews that best illustrate change that has occurred as a result of the program.
5. **Findings and implications**—a discussion framed by the evaluation questions that covers how the study has illustrated the program's impact (intended and unintended outcomes),
   the progress it has made towards its expected outcomes and how it has contributed to the long-term outcomes of NRM or a large NRM initiative. This part also includes recommendations for applying the findings to future phases of the program.
6. **Index**—a list of all the sources of evidence considered in the evaluation, including any additional references and the categories of interviewees and study participants.

Key steps in developing a performance story report

1. **Scoping**—inception/planning meetings are held to determine what will be evaluated, develop the program logic (if not already existing), set evaluation questions and identify existing evidence and people to be interviewed.
2. **Evidence gathering**—an evidence trawl is conducted to identify existing data that will provide best evidence for expected outcomes. This is followed by the social inquiry process, where interviews are conducted with people who can provide additional information about program outcomes. Specific questions are asked and recorded to provide stories of significant changes that have occurred as a result of the program.
3. **Integrated data analysis**—quantitative and qualitative data is analysed to identify evidence corresponding to the outcomes in the program logic and integrated within the results chart.
4. **Expert panel**—people with expertise in relevant fields and scientific disciplines assess the evidence of outcomes that has been gathered. They also judge and make statements about the extent to which the evidence is adequate to assess the progress the program is making towards its stated outcomes. The panel may also identify further evidence that may be needed to make a conclusive statement about the achievement of program outcomes.

   Following the panel meeting, the evaluator integrates all of the analysed evidence and assesses the amount and quality of evidence available for each outcome in the program logic to inform a draft set of recommendations.

5. **Summit meeting**—evaluation participants come together to consider and discuss the findings, nominate the stories that best illustrate the impact of the program and make recommendations for the program in future.
6. **Integration, report and communications**—the evaluator prepares the performance story report, which is a synthesis of all the above steps including recommendations from summit meeting participants. A plan is established to communicate the findings of the evaluation.
7. **Revising the program logic**—program managers, staff and other stakeholders meet to consider the report and revise the program logic as needed to plan for the next phase of the program. The next phase can incorporate the lessons and recommendations from the previous phase.

The role of the expert panel

The expert panel brings together people with qualifications and experience relevant to the program outcomes. The purpose of the panel is to assess the quality of the evidence collated in the results chart and how well the evidence illustrates the contribution the program has made to the expected outcomes.

The panel will:

» consider the program logic model and all of the evidence that has been collected

» make statements about the extent to which the evidence is an adequate, unbiased, relevant and credible indicator that the outcomes have been achieved

» identify any additional information and evidence required to provide stronger evidence of outcomes

» recommend improvements for evidence collection and recording in future.

The questions the expert panel will be required to answer

To develop statements that summarise the extent to which the outcomes stated in the program logic have been achieved, the panel should ask thefollowing questions:

» What level of confidence (high, medium or low) does the panel have in each outcome statement?

» To what extent has the program contributed towards these outcomes?

» Which data items provide strong evidence that the outcome has been achieved or that progress has been made towards the outcome?

» Are there data items in the results chart that do not provide credible evidence?

» What additional data is required to provide stronger evidence of outcomes?

» Are there ways in which data collection, recording and reporting could be improved to make judgments about outcomes for future stages of the program more effective and efficient?

Following the expert panel meeting, the results charts will be updated to include the summary statements the panel made about outcomes at each level of the outcomes hierarchy in the program logic. The panel may identify existing evidence that should be included or data that needs to be generated. Any new items will be added to the results chart in the appropriate place.

The notes and recommendations from the expert panel meeting will also be incorporated into the final performance story report.

Attachment 11: Summit agenda

Agenda		
9.15	Coffee on arrival	
Session 1		
9.30	Welcome and introductions	Chair of board
	Background to the program	Program manager
	Summit agenda and aims	Evaluator
	Overview of performance story report methodology	Evaluator
	Overview of findings to date	Evaluator
Session 2		
11.15	Considering the results	Evaluator/facilitator
12.30	Lunch	
Session 3		
1.00	Selecting stories of change	Evaluator/facilitator
Session 4		
3.00	Learning from the issues	Evaluator/facilitator
Session 5		
4.00	Recommendations	Evaluator/facilitator
4.45	Close	Chair of board

Attachment 12: Sample logic review and planning meeting agenda

	Activity
Introduction	**Introduction**
10 minutes	Meeting aims
	Expected outputs
Session 1	**Reflection**
1–2 hours	Program outcomes to date—what changed and why?
	Which strategies/activities drove the change?
	Which were the strong and weak strategies/activities?
	Were our strategies/activities well targeted to our different groups of stakeholders?
	What factors outside our control had influence?
	What factors within our control were most influential and which of these might affect what we want to do more of in future?
	Have our outcomes and activities met the needs of our stakeholders?
	Should the program outcomes change or remain the same?
Session 2	**Influences**
30 minutes	Are there any external or internal factors that could influence the next phase of the program?
	In what ways could external or internal factors influence our ability to achieve the outcomes?
	What strategies could we adopt to mitigate potential obstacles to the success of the program in future?
Session 3	**Planning**
2.5 hours	Revise the outcome statements in the program logic
	Discuss and document planned activities to achieve the outcomes
	Discuss and document assumptions about how change is expected to occur
Session 4	**Program logic**
1 hour	Reflect on the new program logic in relation to the program plan
	Why—does it fit with the vision?
	Who—does it fit with program partners?
	What—does it fit with the changes being sought?
	How—does it reflect lessons from the evaluation about most effective change strategies/ interventions?
Session 5	**Evaluation**
30 minutes	Reflect on the performance story evaluation process—how should program evaluation be done differently next time?
Session 6	**Next steps**
15 minutes	Arrangements for developing a work plan for adapting and implementing the revised program that reflects the lessons learned

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

Asset	A useful thing or quality—something that has a value. In the natural resource management context, assets can be human, social, natural, physical or financial.
Evaluand	The thing being evaluated. It can be a project, program or strategy.
Evaluator	Generally, a person with expertise and experience in evaluation approaches, often an external consultant. It is common to have an evaluation team, especially where the program being evaluated has multidisciplinary components. In this document the term 'evaluator' encompasses the person or team facilitating the performance story reporting evaluation.
Expert panel	People with expertise in relevant fields or scientific disciplines who assess the evidence of outcomes that has been gathered. They then judge and make statements about the extent to which the evidence is adequate to determine the progress the program is making in contributing towards its stated outcomes.
Key evaluation question	The question to be addressed in order to assess the worth or significance of a project, program or initiative in relation to its goals. This overarching question frames the evaluation. A number of more specific sub-evaluation questions will sit below the key evaluation question relating to outcome statements in the program logic.
Key informants	Experts in relevant scientific disciplines or areas of expertise who can comment about the extent of change that has occurred as a result of the program.
MERI	Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement—an approach that is iterative and integrative and aims to result in learning and adaptive management.
NRM	Natural resource management, which includes any activity relating to the management of the use, development or conservation of one or more of the following: soil, water, vegetation, biodiversity, including coastal and marine areas and natural values of nationally listed heritage places.
Outcomes	The results achieved as a result of a series of actions/activities.
Participatory evaluation	An overarching term for any evaluation approach that involves program staff or participants actively in decision-making and other activities related to the planning and implementation of evaluation studies (Mathison 2005, p. 291).
Performance story report	An evidence-based statement about progress towards a natural resource management goal or target for an asset. The report is supported by multiple lines of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The report summarises one aspect of a natural resource management program, strategy or plan. As well as explaining what a program has achieved, it describes the causal links that show how the achievements were accomplished.
Primary data	Data that is observed or collected from a source for the first time.

Program logic	The rationale behind a program—what are understood to be the cause-and-effect relationships between program activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes and longer-term desired outcomes. Represented as a diagram or matrix, program logic shows a series of expected consequences, not just a sequence of events. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of an intervention (adapted from Dart & Davies 2003 and OECD 2002). A guide to program logic is available at www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/meri-program-logic.pdf
Program	In this guide, the term 'program' covers all levels of intervention, whether through a project, program, strategy or activity, as well as design and evaluation.
Qualitative data	Information that is not summarised in numerical form, such as minutes from meetings and general notes from observations. Qualitative data normally describe people's knowledge, attitudes or behaviours. It can be collected using a range of approaches. In performance story reporting, interviews are the most common method.
Quantitative data	Information that can be counted or expressed numerically. This type of data is often collected in experiments, and can be manipulated and statistically analysed. Quantitative data is often represented visually in graphs and charts.
Results chart	Multiple lines of quantitative and qualitative data (primary and secondary) charted against the outcomes that are stated in the program logic.
Secondary data	Data already collected by others, whether internal or external.
Semi-structured interview	An interview with an individual or individuals that follows a pre-defined set of question parameters, while allowing for a degree of freedom in exploring a range of issues.
Social inquiry	Disciplined inquiry that examines people's lives, experiences and behaviours, and the stories and meanings individuals ascribe to them. It can also investigate organisational functioning, relationships between individuals and groups, and social environments.
Strategic informants	Those people who can comment at a strategic level about how a program has been experienced or how it has addressed policy goals, such as funding agency representatives and policy officers from local, state or federal government.
Sub-evaluation questions	The questions that emerge from analysis of the program logic model, and that help to answer the key evaluation question.
Summit	A large group meeting where participants analyse the evaluation materials from the performance story evaluation.

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