

Performance Standard for Local Land Services

February 2015

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Introduction

This is the Performance Standard (Standard) for Local Land Services (LLS). It establishes general principles and expectations for organisational performance that will support LLS in delivering quality outcomes for investors, ratepayers, customers and communities.

The purpose of this Standard is to give assurance to investors, ratepayers and other stakeholders that LLS' investment of funds will deliver practical landscape management outcomes that reflect regional priorities and provide a triple bottom line¹ return on investment. For the purpose of this Standard, landscape management is inclusive of services that add value to local industry; enhance natural resources; protect industries from pests and disease; and help communities be more prosperous, resilient and responsive to emergencies such as flood, fire and drought.

Use of the Standard will ensure consistency, rigour and accountability. It will create a platform for transparency and innovation and will drive ongoing improvement in performance and the achievement of triple bottom line outcomes.

The Standard will also support flexible and innovative local operations. It will assist the organisation in identifying state-wide, regional and local priorities, developing methods for addressing these priorities and delivering practical outcomes within the context of investor and community requirements. Use of the Standard will support the effective focus of scarce resources at the right scale.

The Standard is part of the 'state priorities for Local Land Services, including any state-wide standards and targets' as referenced in the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.²

¹ For the purposes of the Standard, 'triple bottom line' refers to the economic, social (including cultural) and environmental impact and outcomes of government policies and programs (Net Balance Management Group, 2013).

² *Local Land Services Act 2013* Part 1, section 4 (2)

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The Standard

The Standard is an evidence-driven tool for state and regional bodies to apply to their specific challenges to improve LLS performance at all levels. It is principles-based and outcomes focused.

The Standard comprises eight interdependent components which, when applied successfully and together, will inform business decisions and activities. These are Governance, Leadership, Community Ownership, Customer Satisfaction, Understanding Scale, Collaboration, Risk Management, and Evidence-based Decisions.

Each of the components is related to the others and application of each component informs and is informed by the application of the other components. The Standard should be read and applied as a whole and not as a series of independent requirements. Importantly, it is not intended to be used as a checklist. Each component should be applied appropriately to the situation being considered.

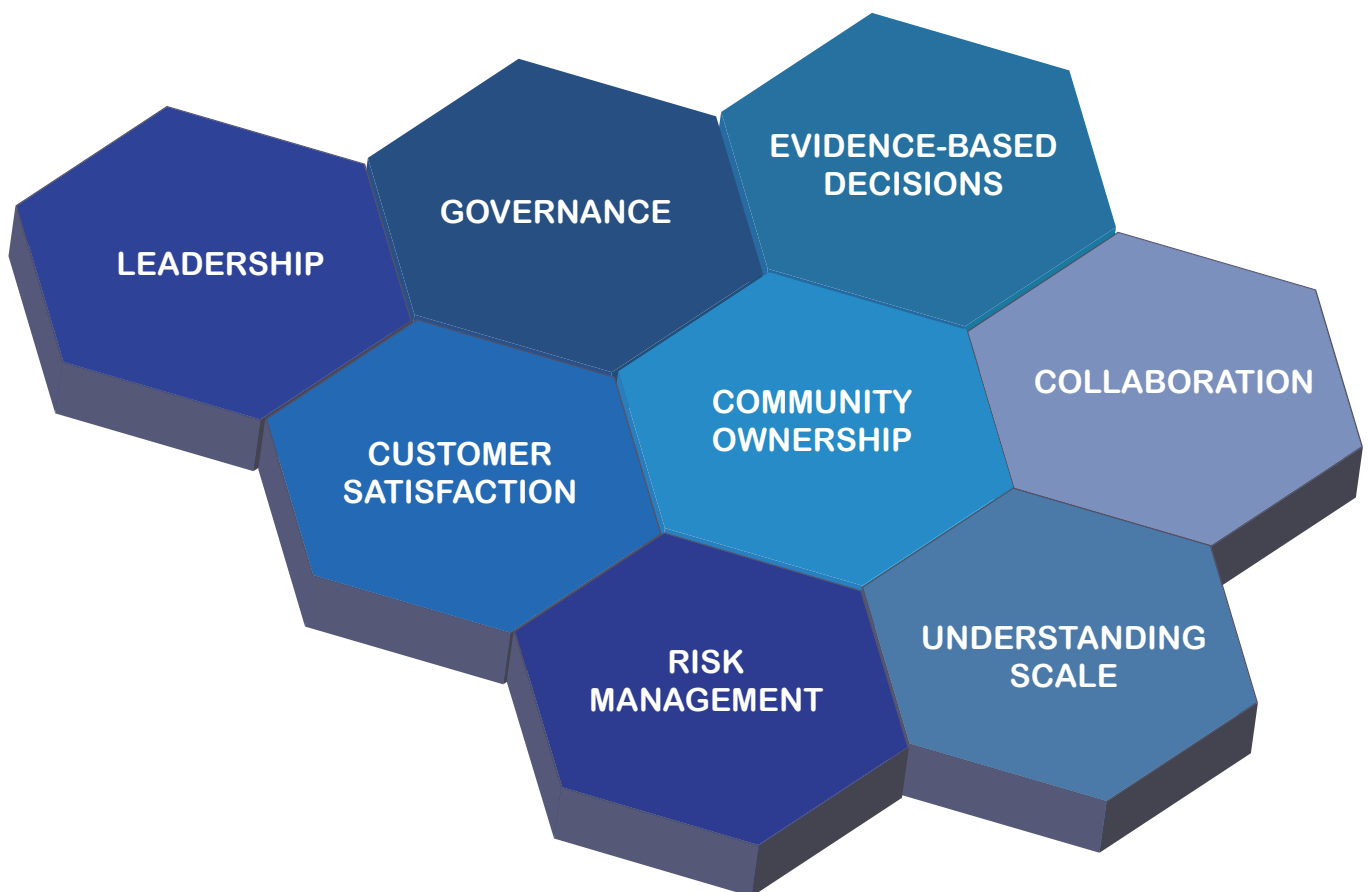


Figure 1. Eight interdependent components of the Standard

Who should use the Standard

This Standard has been created specifically for LLS. It has been designed to support devolution³ and aid the delivery of better outcomes through working in partnership with business, government and communities.

The Standard helps LLS to meet the unique performance and accountability requirements of a regional service delivery organisation with multiple institutional investors, a ratepayer base and broad ranging service obligations.

Other organisations providing services to land managers and local communities, particularly partner organisations of LLS, will benefit from using this Standard. It can provide guidance to any organisation that wishes to:

- develop and implement strategies in an efficient, effective and transparent manner
- address consistency and comparability with others
- assure itself that it is using relevant processes
- demonstrate its rigour and accountabilities to others.

How to use the Standard

The Standard has been specifically designed to apply to landscape management at all scales, including state, region, catchment, local and property levels. It applies equally to strategic, managerial and operational processes carried out in planning, consulting on and delivering services. For example, the Standard should inform state-wide and cross-regional initiatives and also inform the carrying out of on-ground activities.

In its application, the Standard accommodates the considerable variability in biophysical, social, economic and cultural conditions in each local area, and in investor, community, ratepayer and industry values. The Standard allows each region the flexibility to plan and implement the programs that are most appropriate to their unique settings, and encourages LLS to focus on the most critical actions to deliver priority outcomes in a changing landscape.

Each component specifies 'Required Outcomes' which describe the mandatory requirements of this Standard. Guidance on how the Required Outcomes may be achieved is also provided. Questions under 'Things to consider' are intended to drive continuous improvement, encourage innovation, and accommodate growth in organisational capability and maturity.

Where there are other means of achieving the Required Outcomes, managers may adopt different strategies, on condition that they can demonstrate equivalence of outcome and the intent of the guidance has been met. Evidence of any additional or alternative strategies used to achieve the Required Outcomes must be provided.

³ For the purposes of the Standard, 'devolution' refers to the transfer of power, assets, resources and decision making down to the local level.

For a given issue, using the Standard will require Boards, management and staff to make a conscious decision about the level of applicability of each component, the relevant outcomes to be achieved and the appropriate way to achieve them. Importantly, it is not intended to be used as a checklist but each component should be applied appropriately to the situation being considered.

Effective use of the Standard will allow LLS to identify risks to the organisation and areas for improvement. The establishment of early warning systems and transparent reporting will help LLS strengthen business operations and articulate the benefits of their services to investors, partners and communities. LLS is encouraged to integrate the Standard with other business management and compliance systems that may be in place.

Assurance and continuous improvement

The Standard is one part of an integrated framework which provides LLS stakeholders with assurance that funds are being expended to achieve triple bottom line outcomes, and are applied:

- in line with investor requirements
- in an efficient and effective manner
- in accordance with laws and regulations, and
- in consideration of community needs.

The Standard works in concert with other mechanisms such as strategic planning, reporting, audits and reviews to assist LLS in providing assurance that they are meeting investor requirements and other obligations (such as those set out in legislation, service level agreements, memorandums of understanding and grant agreements).

Legislative context

The *Local Land Services Act 2013* (the Act) requires two types of audits to be conducted. Sections 44 and 54 of the Act require audits of the LLS state and local strategic plans to determine whether their provisions are being given effect. Section 24 of the Act requires audits of LLS activities to determine whether LLS functions are being carried out efficiently, effectively and in accordance with State priorities. Section 4 (2) of the Act defines 'State priorities' for LLS as including "any state-wide standards...as advised by the Minister".

The Natural Resources Commission (the Commission) will conduct independent performance audits of LLS consistent with the requirements of the Act. The full definition of 'State priorities' in the Act is broad⁴ and as such, the Commission will use the Standard as one of multiple performance criteria in determining whether strategic plans are being given effect and whether LLS activities are being carried out effectively, efficiently and in accordance with state priorities. The Commission will also use other indicators of LLS performance as required by the Act, and by LLS investors and stakeholders.

⁴ Local Land Services Act 2013 section 4 (2). In this Act, "State priorities for local land services" includes any State-wide standards and targets, and any State and national priorities, for agricultural production, biosecurity, natural resource management or emergency management:
(a) identified in a State Government policy or plan or an intergovernmental agreement, or
(b) as advised by the Minister.

Audit context

When the Commission conducts audits of the implementation of LLS strategic plans and of LLS activities, the audits will include a review of consistency with the Standard. This review will focus on achievement of the required outcomes identified for each component.

The Standard reflects the type of objective evidence that an auditor would expect to see. Evidence should focus on demonstrating achievement of outcomes (or progress towards outcomes). The extent of evidence provided should be commensurate with the issue being managed or the strategy being used.

The Commission's audit reports will be made public. The recommended audit actions will be followed up with LLS Boards to ensure accountability and also to encourage the sharing of findings and improvement opportunities.

Assurance framework

The Commission's audits are only one source of assurance to LLS investors and stakeholders. LLS has a responsibility to provide assurance to investors and stakeholders via its own performance monitoring and reporting.

The integrated assurance framework shown below enhances transparency and accountability within the regional service delivery model by providing assurance over the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits achieved from LLS investment. Additionally, it promotes investor confidence in LLS, protecting continuity of service for customers and communities.

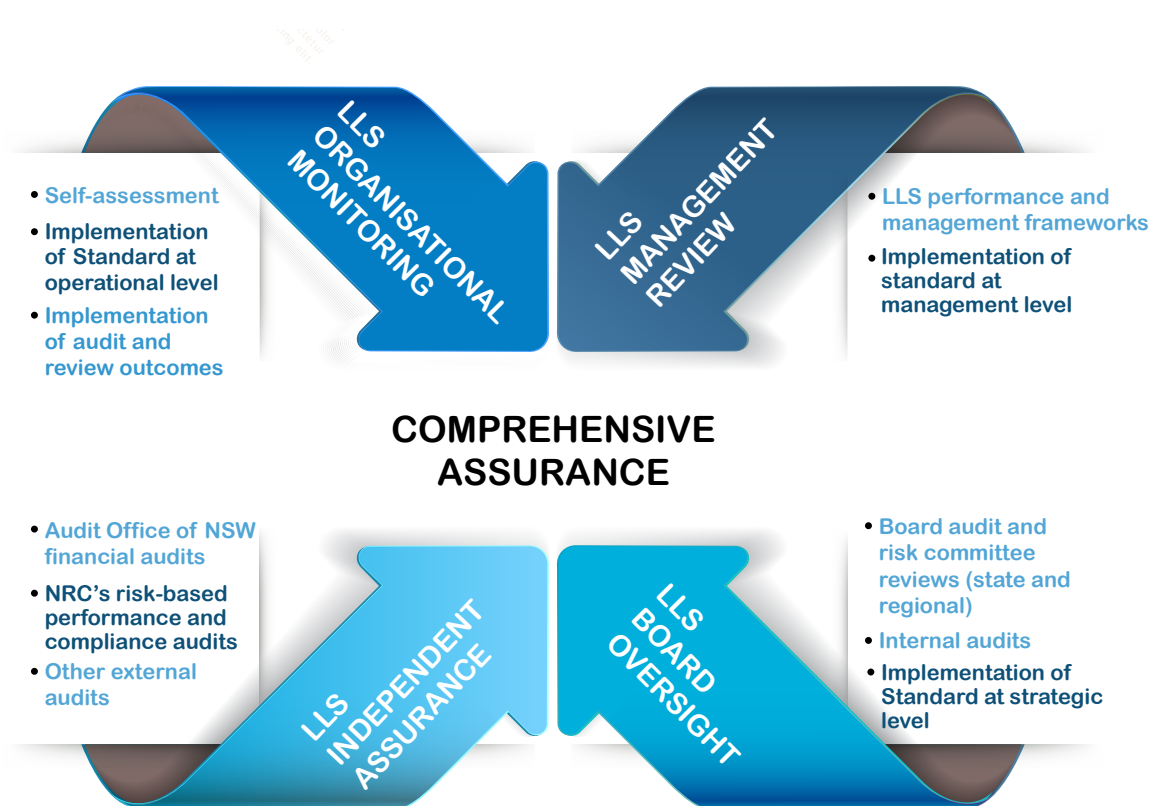


Figure 2. Integrated assurance framework

Within this framework, the Standard enhances transparency and satisfaction for investors, customers, ratepayers and communities by setting clear performance expectations up-front and ensuring consistent quality in LLS service delivery. The assurance framework demonstrates how use of the Standard at multiple scales contributes to the overall assurance provided.

The assurance framework also sets expectations for LLS to create systems that monitor and report regularly on performance, achievement of outcomes and continuous improvement. The Commission's audits provide stakeholders with independent, objective and reliable information and conclusions that complement the assurance provided by LLS through its own performance management and reporting systems.

Importantly, the assurance framework constitutes an integrated approach to increasing organisational effectiveness. Audit reports create incentives for progress through evidence-based recommendations for improvement which provide managers with a remit for change. Audits also leverage knowledge across and between LLSs, enabling managers to identify and share best practice.

Dealing with uncertainty

Many of the most challenging biosecurity, production and environmental problems involve complex interactions between natural and human created systems at scales ranging from global to local. The dynamics of these systems and the interactions between them make their behaviour unpredictable, generating uncertainty and making management challenging.

To address complexity or uncertainties inherent in landscape management, managers are increasingly adopting both systems and adaptive management approaches to identify, test and refine management options.

Adaptive management is a formal framework for inquiry that helps managers ensure interventions are contributing to agreed goals and objectives, and to learn about what interventions work best to improve their landscape management strategies over time.

Adaptive governance is a framework for analysing the social dimension of social-ecological systems. It looks at the underlying social interactions between individuals, community and industry groups, agencies and institutions at multiple organisational levels and how these must change in response to changes in the system. LLS' business is about people, their interactions with each other, with the landscape, with the marketplace and with wider social, economic and biophysical influences. An adaptive governance approach builds networks and linkages among these different groups, supports their participation in decision making, and builds their capacity to respond to crisis and change.

This Standard supports and drives an adaptive approach by encouraging decision makers and managers to question strategies, structures and social networks, and identify opportunities for participation and improvement at regular intervals. Performance standards, along with other strategies, plans and policies, add value to the management and development of organisations and their services. They can be seen as an effective means of collecting, embodying and disseminating ideas about how to perform and enhance business activities. They must also be dynamic and open to question, review and improvement.

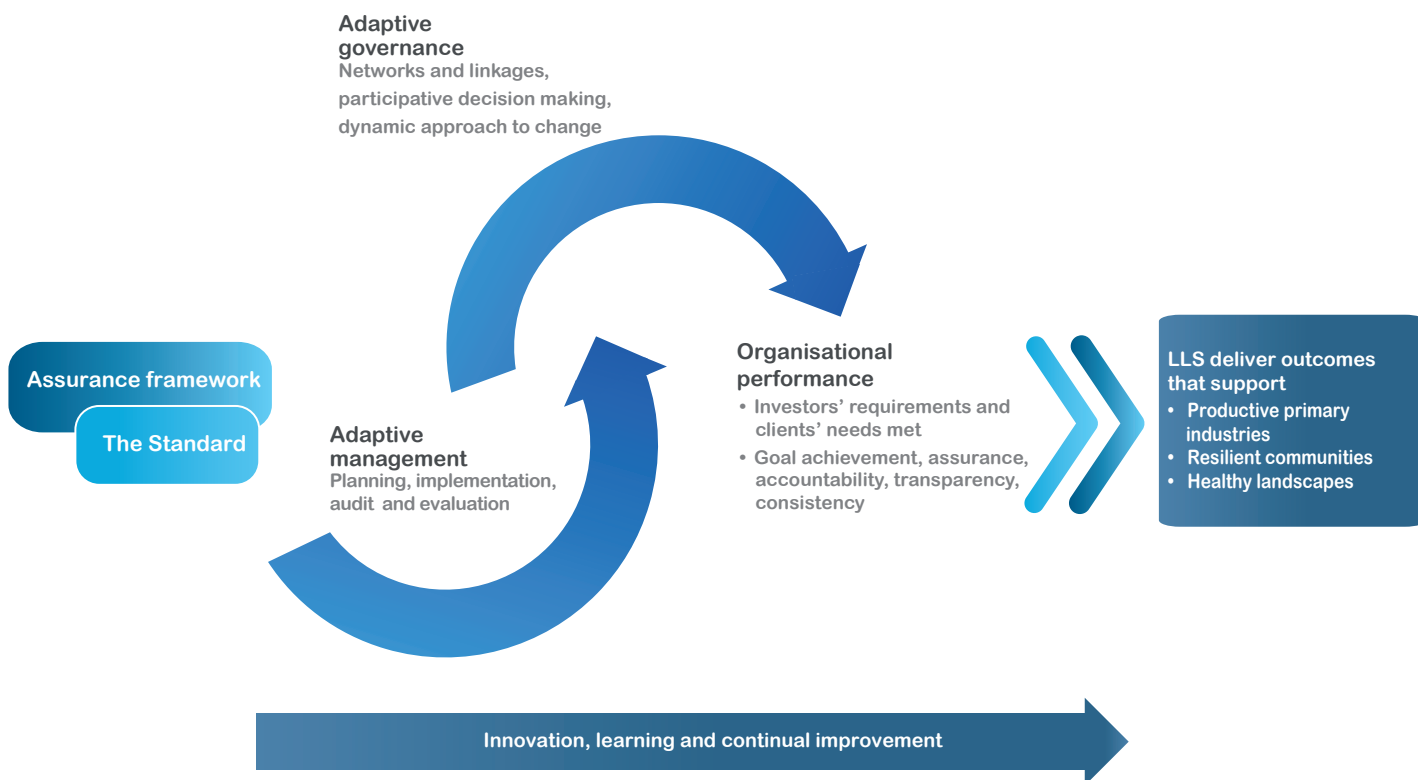


Figure 3. Model for adaptation and outcome delivery

This Standard will be refined within two years of its finalisation as part its adaptive management. Refinement of the Standard will be conducted in collaboration with LLS and their stakeholders to ensure the Standard remains relevant and useful and adapts to the emerging LLS' context.

Required outcomes

- Board of Chairs, regional Boards and management demonstrate integrity, accountability, transparency and credibility to a range of investors and other stakeholders.
- Effective open communication is established and maintained between the Board of Chairs, regional Boards and management.
- Boards are actively supported by investors, partners, academia, local government, landholders and communities (including Aboriginal communities) to build their social licence to operate.
- Investors and partners are assured of appropriate management, financial probity, legislative compliance and progress towards organisational goals.
- Board committees have clear roles and responsibilities and provide quality input to Board decisions.
- Institutional arrangements adapt while maintaining rigour and accountability.

Governance

‘Establish processes, systems, rules and relationships to direct and hold Local Land Services accountable in achieving intended outcomes and responding effectively to evolving needs’

The principles of good governance underpin all the components of the Standard and provide clear context and rationale for the Standard as a whole.

Good governance establishes processes and behaviours to achieve organisational goals, comply with all relevant laws and regulations, and satisfy community expectations. It promotes collaboration, and alignment of knowledge, skills and performance to organisational needs.

Adaptive governance goes beyond good corporate governance and analyses wider community and cultural networks and the inter-relationships between individuals, groups, institutions, policies and legislative frameworks. These multiple perspectives and disciplines are significant in building resilience in the face of changing values and trends. Adaptive governance is not top-down or bottom-up but collaborative, inclusive and flexible, enabling innovation, agility and decision-making commensurate with the risks involved and the requirements of a dynamic environment.

Ultimately, good governance gives government, ratepayers and the community confidence that investment is cost effective, compliant and delivers best possible outcomes while ensuring consistency and rigour. Future governance will need to maintain opportunities for regional innovation while ensuring effective leadership and consistent quality of services.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Develop, enforce and regularly review codes of conduct and delegations of authority, including discrete roles, responsibilities and relationships between Board members and management.
- Develop and implement a suite of policies and procedures to guide decision making and maintain legislative compliance.
- Ensure investment prioritisation and service delivery are consistent with the investors' and communities' requirements and align with national, state and local government priorities.
- Demonstrate accountability to investors and communities through transparent, publicly available, accurate and timely reporting against strategic and business plans.
- Develop and implement self-assessment procedures and respond to and monitor progress against actions raised.
- Proactively monitor compliance with legislation, regulation and formal agreements (such as memorandums of understanding or grant agreements), act to address any breaches and report transparently.
- Adapt governance structures, plans and processes in response to changing values and trends.
- Establish baseline demographic information and continuously document and report on community and stakeholder engagement.
- Connect with the community through a range of communication channels such as print media, websites, blogs and social media that permit two way engagement for distribution of information and receipt of customer feedback.
- Develop procedures to publicly respond to and report on internal and external audits.
- Document and make publically available methods, including decision support tools, for prioritisation of investments and mechanisms for identification of partnerships.
- Devolve management and planning to the lowest capable level by defining, delegating and enforcing roles and responsibilities across required areas of service and operations.
- Promote the highest standards of financial probity and deliver accurate financial reports in a timely manner
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- How have the Board and management fully discharged their responsibilities to stakeholders?
- How are multiple stakeholder views incorporated into Board decisions?
- What processes are in place to assess relevance of current governance arrangements in a changing context?
- What reporting measures can be used to build stakeholder confidence in good governance and progress towards organisational goals and investor priorities?
- How are relationships between the Board and committees governed?

Required outcomes

- Strategic plans clearly communicate strategic directions.
- Organisational activities and local services align and integrate with stakeholder goals, objectives and priorities.
- Leaders take responsibility for the achievement of organisational goals and transparent reporting of results.
- Investors and customers report confidence and trust in the organisation.
- Teams demonstrate a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement.

Leadership

‘Create, govern and inspire the achievement of goals by empowering employees, partners and communities’

Leadership is a process of support and influence where others are empowered and provided with direction and motivation towards the achievement of a common goal. Leaders support the development of high performing teams by creating and sustaining a culture where members seek out constructive feedback to continually learn and grow.

Leadership is demonstrated through clear and transparent decision making at multiple scales, where leaders act with integrity to advocate the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour. Leaders guide colleagues, stakeholders, farmers and communities in developing and sharing credible goals and values, while recognising and valuing the knowledge, skills and experiences of those they collaborate with.

Successful leaders continually explore regional trends for emerging risks and potential future opportunities. They are innovative and facilitate change within the organisation and the community.

By guiding and including others in decision making, effective leaders boost team productivity, generate enthusiasm, drive continual learning and build trust within the local community while being accountable for services and decisions.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Develop long term strategic plans, and define what is in and out of scope, in consultation with investors, partners and stakeholders.
- Establish shared goals and values, strategic direction and performance expectations.
- Develop business plans that reflect investor and community priorities to guide the organisation's objectives, and regularly report against these plans to the Board and stakeholders.
- Establish and align appropriate organisational structures, roles, responsibilities, and resource allocation to support the achievement of goals and objectives.
- Implement systems for ongoing professional development of staff, delegate responsibility and encourage staff-led initiatives.
- Promote a collaborative team culture that values and utilises the diverse skills of Board members, staff, local government, partners and the community, motivates them and respects their needs.
- Demonstrate commitment to agility, innovation and continuous improvement.
- Create a culture of achievement, fostering on-time and on-budget quality outcomes.
- Communicate, model and monitor ethical practices and standards.
- Resolve conflict and barriers to service delivery and goal achievement.
- Build cultural competency within teams and regions.
- Provide opportunities for genuine debate and critical reflections around important issues.
- Set systems and build capacity to enable teams to take initiative and act decisively.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- Do partners and the community understand and share the organisation's goals and values? How are they represented in actions? What are the community's current needs and expectations?
- How is excellence in leadership fostered throughout the organisation and community?
- What are the most important decisions and actions for leaders?
- What are the drivers for achieving lasting results in the organisation and the community?
- What succession planning and talent programs are in place?
- What are the emerging trends and innovations to equip the organisation for tomorrow's challenges?

Required outcomes

- Services deliver value for both customers and investors.
- Customers report that services are high quality, convenient and accessible.
- The organisation has a strategy for engaging, consulting and involving customers in service design, prioritisation and delivery as appropriate to the needs of different groups.
- Business and strategic plans incorporate customer needs and expectations into organisational goals and objectives.
- Staff demonstrate commitment to building long-term customer relationships through prompt, reliable and trustworthy service.
- Customers display satisfaction and report inclusion in decisions regarding service delivery.

Customer Satisfaction

'Identify and provide services that respond to customer needs and ensure high levels of customer satisfaction'

An understanding of customer needs is central to good service delivery. This understanding should be gained through effectively identifying customer groups, consulting with them on their needs and building the information received into the design and provision of services. Relevant, locally reliable advice and products can then be delivered to satisfy the diverse requirements of both investors and customers.

To maintain high levels of customer satisfaction, service delivery should be continually improved as needs and values evolve. This should be supported by customer-focused approaches and a commitment to professionalism throughout the organisation.

Efficiency in regional service provision is created through a flexible, coordinated and responsive system. The quality of service to customers is frequently enhanced through two-way relationships, open communication and collaboration with investors and partners and by utilising the skills and knowledge of local organisations.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Create a service-driven culture that promotes integrity and trust by treating customers with respect, fairness and sensitivity.
- Engage and negotiate with stakeholders on strategic issues related to government policy, standards of customer service and access to services.
- Identify and develop quality services that can be provided to diverse customer groups through consideration of customer needs and expectations, service gaps and funding allocation.
- Provide expert, influential advice to customers and ensure information sought is reliable, relevant and easy to access.
- Deliver a diverse range of services that are valued, cost effective, responsive and timely while fulfilling legislative and compliance obligations.
- Ensure responsiveness to customer needs is central to strategic planning processes.
- Where appropriate, create service delivery commitments (for example, memorandum of understanding or service level agreement) with customers and investors to manage expectations.
- Streamline customer engagement by enabling staff to collaborate and integrate services, and by supporting participatory approaches to problem solving.
- Ensure policies and programs for service delivery respond to and evolve with customer requirements.
- Develop, and regularly report on, key performance indicators for customer service delivery. Review and adapt as necessary.
- Identify and remove barriers to efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- Train and authorise staff to take immediate action and responsibility for customer needs, and to resolve issues quickly and fairly.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- How does the organisation encourage customer participation in its activities?
- How are the needs of smaller industry and community groups identified and provided for?
- What evidence is available to demonstrate services are adding value to customer businesses?
- How can services be continuously improved?
- What external factors influence service delivery? Have they been accounted for?
- How does the organisation monitor, collect and act upon customer feedback in a timely manner?
- Do management systems and processes drive or impede service delivery?

Required outcomes

- Local communities are supported to take greater responsibility for making decisions, managing resources and responding to emergency and biosecurity threats.
- Community advisory groups (including Aboriginal Reference Groups) bring local knowledge and influence to regional planning and decisions.
- Local government, communities and industry report respectful relationships where diversity and the needs of others are valued and incorporated into local planning and service delivery.
- Communities report they are engaged, skilled and resolved to manage their economic viability, environment and social well-being.
- Communities welcome innovation and co-invest in landscape management activities.

Community Ownership

‘Empower and enable communities to manage and maintain their prosperity, environment and well-being’

Successful land management organisations have shown that more resilient outcomes are achieved through broad participation of community members and resource users in management activities. This is the basis of community ownership which encourages the contribution of diverse economic, social, environmental and cultural perspectives.

Decision making authority, together with clear rules and procedures, should be devolved to the lowest capable local organisation. This ensures community participation, creates a system of co-responsibility, encourages ownership of decisions and delivers better management outcomes.

Diversity of participation increases social capital, creates more resilient solutions to problems, divides responsibilities and labour, and gives smaller groups the capacity to negotiate solutions to complex problems.

Local landholders and Aboriginal custodians hold diverse ecological, economic, social, and cultural values. Their experience and knowledge is an important contribution to managing productivity and the local environment. Further, if projects, programs and plans are owned by the community, they can outlast institutional or other changes and may sometimes be more effectively achieved in the absence of institutional involvement.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Invite and enable the participation of community including ratepayers, Aboriginal, environmental and industry groups in co-designing policies, plans and implementation of management activities.
- Map, recognise and utilise the existing knowledge and skills of communities, land managers and local industry groups.
- Continually support, document and report upon community engagement and capacity building strategies.
- Engage and support local partners, land managers and communities in coordinating projects that achieve common goals.
- Create opportunities for local organisations to take responsibility for the management of local issues.
- Encourage and support local community and industry networks to build community ownership.
- Develop effective procedures to analyse and respond to community and industry views and issues in a timely and productive manner.
- Facilitate the pooling of resources between individuals or groups to enhance community contribution, foster knowledge exchange and maximise outcomes.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- Where and how can community groups and others add the most value to planning and management activities?
- How have diverse skills and knowledge of the local community been utilised?
- How does the organisation build capacity, aid collaboration and allocate resources to enhance community capability?
- What decision making powers can be efficiently and effectively devolved to the community or community groups and what additional powers can be devolved over time?
- How do Boards work with ratepayers, community groups and others to bridge the gap between regional-level managers and local landholders?

Required outcomes

- The geographical scale and time necessary for achieving desired outcomes are understood and built into strategic and business planning.
- Trade-offs between economic, social and environmental outcomes are understood and incorporated into investment decisions.
- Decisions are taken at the right institutional scale for maximum relevance and impact.
- Use of available financial and staff resources is optimised.
- Service delivery is integrated without compromising investor priorities or outcomes.
- Understanding of where and what to monitor, and for how long, ensures more effective monitoring.
- Differences between community expectations and the temporal scale of system responses are understood.

Understanding Scale

‘An understanding of spatial, temporal and institutional scale is built into all aspects of LLS business’

Planning and implementing investments at the right spatial, temporal and institutional scales is fundamental to supporting resource prioritisation and effective landscape management. Too much or too little activity, taken for the wrong length of time or by the wrong people is not good business. It is a waste of limited resources and jeopardises possible return on investment.

An understanding of scale is integral to a social-ecological systems approach to landscape management. It informs expectations of the probable impacts of management interventions, informs more effective management of key risks and increases understanding of trade-offs between the economic, social and environmental factors implicit in any investment.

The scales at which communities engage with landscapes and the scales at which individuals and organisations manage them do not always align. To be effective, interventions may need to be co-ordinated across a range of scales (within and between regions or within and between properties or groups of properties). Planners and managers, therefore, need knowledge of the scales at which social, economic and biophysical factors interact, if effective community engagement and collaboration is to be established. They also need to appreciate the impact of institutional scale to assess the potential for devolving decision making to smaller local groups.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Use both science and local knowledge to analyse regional and sub-regional social-ecological systems, and assess the spatial, temporal and institutional scales relevant to proposed investments.
- Use this knowledge in identifying effective management options.
- Evaluate the scale of interconnections and relationships between biophysical, social, cultural and economic subsystems to understand necessary trade-offs.
- Identify when cross-regional activity or state-wide coordination is needed to achieve the required outcomes.
- Ensure relevant knowledge is available to maintain collaborative relationships and community engagement at the right scales.
- Understand the scale of influence of diverse local community, industry and cultural organisations and groups.
- Adaptively manage investments using knowledge of previous investments and an evaluation of project scale.
- Use knowledge of scale to identify cross scale interactions, and to assess and manage risks of interventions.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- How does scale streamline management options for plant and animal pest control, biosecurity, natural resource management, emergency management and agricultural advisory services?
- What factors are beyond the scale of LLS influence?
- At what scale can LLS maximise its return on investment?
- How can scale assist in identifying synergies in implementation and service provision?
- How does scale influence biophysical, social, cultural and economic trade-offs and outcomes?

Required outcomes

- Collaborations are utilised to establish productive and viable long-term service delivery.
- Local issues are adequately managed and collaborative arrangements deliver measurable benefits to ratepayers, the community and industry.
- Collaborations are founded on commitment to trust, transparency and mutual benefit.
- Collaborators are satisfied their strengths and capacities have been recognised, acknowledged and utilised.
- Stakeholders report increased efficiency and value arising from the established collaboration.
- Aboriginal communities are engaged in a culturally sensitive manner to collaboratively design solutions to landscape management issues.

Collaboration

‘Develop and maintain a collaborative approach to improving outcomes, sharing costs and delivering benefits to landholders and local communities’

Collaborations are catalysts for identifying innovative strategies, developing solutions and leveraging resources. They are also vehicles for sharing and controlling risk, and supporting the achievement of shared goals and objectives. They promote strategic alignment and effectiveness of planning, decision making and service delivery and may occur with any capable body including state agencies, industry, local government, investors, ratepayers, Aboriginal and other local community groups.

To be effective, collaborations require ongoing investment of time and effort, and should be established only after analysis of their costs and benefits to specific projects. Constructive collaborations increase investment efficacy, add value to local industry, increase knowledge and resource capacity, address stakeholder and community needs and encourage long-term commitment.

Strong collaborations are built on the basis of confidence and mutual respect where complementary capacities are recognised, expectations are communicated and barriers to achievement of common goals are removed.

Collaborative arrangements are a practical recognition of the complexity of social systems where LLS is only one of many players influencing outcomes.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Recognise opportunities for collaboration by mapping regional and sub-regional systems and networks, identifying common goals, and assessing willingness to collaborate.
- Recognise and build the capacity of existing industry, community and government collaborators.
- Where gaps exist, establish new collaborative networks to boost community ownership.
- Where appropriate, create formal or informal agreements with other parties to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Facilitate the allocation of resources, decision making and responsibilities within the capability and interests of each party.
- Welcome collaborators' advice to the Board, and encourage involvement in planning, strategic decision making and review.
- Regularly review, and if necessary, modify collaborative arrangements to ensure ongoing effectiveness.
- Ensure collaborations address issues and deliver benefits at the correct scale.
- Assign necessary responsibility for the constructive management of collaborations and to resolve any problems in a timely and productive manner.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- Are collaborations operating at their full potential?
- What further skills, knowledge and resources can be pooled to reach this potential?
- How can collaborators and investors be assured of success?
- How are collaborations reviewed and what is the procedure for making any required changes?
- Are the benefits of a collaboration greater than the costs?

Required outcomes

- Investors, ratepayers, partners and customers report increased confidence and certainty in the achievement of goals and objectives.
- The Board of Chairs accept full accountability for organisation-wide risk.
- Reputational and legal risks are managed through full compliance.
- Clear accountabilities are allocated to appropriately skilled individuals who have adequate resources to monitor and control risk.
- A positive risk culture is maintained where there is collective responsibility of risk management at multiple organisational scales.

Risk Management

‘Consider and manage all identifiable risks and opportunities to maximise return on investment and avoid, minimise or control adverse impacts’

Organisations face internal and external factors that make the achievement of goals and objectives uncertain. The effect of this uncertainty on the organisation’s objectives is risk. Risks to the provision of local land services include biophysical, biosecurity, socio-economic, institutional, technical, financial, legal, political, temporal and cultural factors. Legal factors include compliance risks associated with relevant legislation and regulation, and with formal agreements or contracts.

Risk management comprises actions that ensure awareness of risk; determine the type and degree of management required; and identify and harness any potential positive outcomes of risk whilst minimising its potential negative consequences.

Risk management should align with legislative responsibility and be embedded into organisational strategic planning and decision making. Risk management frameworks integrate internal and external accountabilities, resources, processes and actions.

Identifying risk does not necessarily preclude action, but rather dictates the need for appropriately focused monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Use all available knowledge to categorise and rank risks, on the basis of potential consequences, likelihood and magnitude.
- Develop and implement a consistent and reliable organisation-wide risk management system that meets Board-established risk thresholds and incorporates management strategies (avoid, remove, modify, share, retain, take or increase) appropriate to the level of risk.
- Integrate risk management and assessment into all aspects of the organisation's business.
- Analyse costs and benefits to clarify the interactions between means of minimising risk, and the consequences of risks materialising.
- Continuously manage identified risks by assigning priorities, resources, roles and responsibilities commensurate with the level of risk.
- Enable flexibility and dynamic responses to risk by regularly reviewing and updating risk management strategies.
- Implement risk self-assessment and organisation-wide reporting processes to proactively monitor risk, and publicly report on risk management in a timely and accessible way.
- Engage partners, investors, local government, communities and researchers in risk identification, evaluation and monitoring.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- Have all material risks to the organisation, its services, customers and strategic direction been identified and assessed?
- How does the organisation ensure risk management strategies are commensurate with the scale of risk?
- What is the relationship between local and state-wide risk?
- Are team behaviours and organisational systems aligned to the Board's established appetite for risk?
- How do partners and investors take responsibility for risks within their control?
- In what ways can we assure investors, partners and communities that risk is appropriately monitored and managed?
- For what issues is there a higher tolerance for innovation and risk?

Evidence-based Decisions

‘Base decisions on review and analysis of best available data, knowledge and information’

Putting evidence at the heart of the decision-making process helps people make well informed decisions. Evidence-based decision making requires effective management, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data, knowledge and information.

Best available evidence can come from many different sources, including (but not limited to) science, economic analysis, socio-cultural analysis, monitoring data, research and evaluation studies, on-ground practice, and expert knowledge. It is defined by its ‘fitness for purpose’; that is, evidence that:

- provides credible, relevant answers to decision makers’ questions
- has confidence levels commensurate with the risks associated with the decision
- can be collected within the timeframes and resources available.

Evidence-based decision making requires the support of appropriate knowledge management systems to ensure that the right information is available when needed. Knowledge sources continually evolve and should be reviewed and updated appropriately. Knowledge management systems should help identify links between different information sources. Where limited evidence is available, these knowledge gaps should be recognised, associated decision or project risks documented, and a plan to address gaps put in place.

Well planned monitoring and evaluation is a primary source of new information to address knowledge gaps, and is the foundation of adaptive management. It should focus on meeting critical knowledge needs by collecting and sharing long-term data sets to understand outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation should be used to test the efficiency and appropriateness of local management strategies, determine achievement of outcomes, inform adaptation and ongoing management, and drive continuous improvement in the provision of services.

Required outcomes

- Decisions are supported by a range of data, knowledge and information commensurate with the potential level of investment, risk, scale and local importance.
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting at multiple scales is outcome-focused and reliably informs decision making, project design, adaptive management and innovation.
- The Board, management and staff are confident in taking responsibility for their decisions and actions.

Guidance on achieving the required outcomes

This guidance and/or alternative methods can be used to achieve the required outcomes. Evidence should be available for any strategies used.

- Ensure the broad diversity of relevant scientific, social, economic, political and cultural knowledge has been considered in aligning business and strategic decisions.
- Incorporate evaluation and learning from previous decisions into strategic and business planning.
- Establish systems to continually scan for new knowledge and learn from changing stakeholder experience.
- Use information and evidence at appropriate scales and in a manner commensurate with its reliability, sensitivity, intellectual property arrangements and confidentiality.
- Allocate scarce resources using a knowledge of production systems, landscape function, identification of trade-offs and an understanding of risks.
- Analyse and evaluate data consistently using valid and up-to-date methods, decision support tools and landholder knowledge.
- Collect and share data and knowledge with government and non-government delivery partners for improved evidence-based decision making and cost efficiency.
- Encourage participatory practices with investors, partners and communities in research and evaluation to ensure evidence reflects and responds to their needs.
- Plan for and resource monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements when designing organisational goals, targets, programs and projects.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on outcomes to investors, partners and communities.
- Ensure open access to data.
- Demonstrate that application of this component informs and is informed by the application of other components.

Things to consider

- Are data collection and knowledge sources linked to strategic information needs, such as evaluation of outcomes, key decisions and informing innovative actions?
- How are stakeholders with different knowledge and experience contributing to improved knowledge?
- How can modern tools, for example triple loop learning or Evidence Based Decision Making⁵, be used to inform timely decisions and planning? What decisions are most appropriate for the application of these tools?
- How has cultural knowledge informed decisions?
- Are the roles and function of monitoring, evaluation and reporting at different scales understood?
- Are information products being delivered to decision makers in a timely and useful manner?

⁵ Evidence Based Decision Making is a formal practice that promotes a systematic and rational approach to researching and analysing available evidence. It involves comprehensively searching multiple sources of evidence to answer specific questions. Knowledge and information is transparently quality assessed and synthesised to determine its admissibility.

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