

Developing an Outcome-Based Monitoring Plan with Measurable Indicators and Targets

It is increasingly important to measure the impact of programs and projects, especially those involving collaboration, in order to practice adaptive management and demonstrate and communicate success to stakeholders involved in the collaborative process, the greater community, and potential funders. The purpose of this information sheet is to help collaborative groups develop outcomes and measurable indicators and targets.

Sample Form for Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Outcome:

Indicator:

Target:

Baseline:

Tools:

Responsible:

Use:

Annotated Form for Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Outcome: What change do you want to bring about? How do you want the world to look or feel when you're done? The change could be in the lives of people, in the community, in the forest, and/or in the organization that contribute to accomplishing your purpose. An outcome describes an impact – not an activity. It can be useful to think in terms of initial, intermediate and longer term outcomes, where initial outcomes lead to longer term ones.

Indicator: How will you know when that change has occurred? What specific item must be changed or achieved to claim that progress has been made?

Indicators should be:

- Measurable and observable so the data is practical to collect
- Meaningful to your stakeholders
- Useful information for program improvement

Target: Elements of a strong indicator/target statement:

- How much change would indicate a successful level of achievement? A unit such as percent or number or quality objectives for a program's level of achievement on its outcomes. (This is also called a "measure")
- Who is the target population you will measure?
- What is the condition, behavior or characteristic you will measure?
- When is the timeframe in which the change should occur?

Baseline: The starting value from which you calculate change.

Tools:

- What is your plan for how you will collect data to measure the change?
- What tools do you need? (survey, sign-in sheets, newspaper clippings, etc)
- When and how frequently will data be collected?
- From whom will the data be collected?

Responsible:

- Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
- When/how/who will analyze the data (different from collecting)?
- Who will report back to constituents, and how?

Use of Data:

- How will data be used?
- Who is this information important to?

Sample Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Social Outcome: Diverse stakeholders work collaboratively to plan strategic fuels reduction and other restoration projects on USFS and private land (long term outcome: stewardship contract based on collaborative plan)

- Indicators: Number of stakeholders who regularly participate, (name of collaborative group) sign-off on plan, number of meetings, symposia, and field trips
- Target 1: By (date), a collaborative group of key stakeholders will develop a fuels reduction project on the _____ Ranger District of the _____ National Forest, as demonstrated by at least seven major stakeholder groups engaged in at least ten meetings and field trips, and ultimately, group sign-off on the project.
- Target 2: By (date), at least seven key stakeholder groups will convene to create an invasive species weed management plan for the _____ region, as demonstrated by stakeholders attending at least two meetings and field trips and one completed plan.
- Baseline: Stakeholders involved in the collaborative project and invasive species management have not formed cohesive groups yet, and no collaborative meetings or field trips with all stakeholders have occurred.
- Tools: Meeting minutes (attendance sheets), signature page if appropriate
- Responsible: Executive Director
- Use: Internal; identify further outreach/engagement needs

Ecological Outcome: Forest Service vegetation management prescriptions protect native plant diversity.

- Indicator: # of acres of planned vegetation management prescriptions on the _____ Ranger District that include protections for native plants
- Target: By July 1, 2008, the treatment plan and vegetation management prescriptions in the ____ contract will include protections for _____ native plant species.
- Baseline: Prior to 2007, no treatments included special protections for ____ native species in FS treatment plans on this district.
- Tools: Forest Service records, record of decision, treatment prescriptions, plans for native plant identification and pre and post treatment surveys
- Responsible: Executive Director, Field Staff, volunteer botanist
- Use: Demonstrate to supporters on-the-ground impacts resulting from group's work

Economic Outcome: A collaborative project is approved and implemented on the _____ National Forest and local contractors participate in stewardship contracts on the project.

Indicator 1: _____ National Forest issues Record of Decision on a collaborative project with participation from _____ County Forest Restoration Group.
Target: By June 2008, the ROD will be signed with the _____ County Forest Restoration Group's priorities intact.
Baseline: No collaborative projects have yet moved to implementation stage.
Tools: Federal Register
Responsible: Executive Director (Partners for implementation include _____ National Forest Planning Officer)
Use: Demonstrate value of collaboration to FS and collaborative stakeholders, report to funders and local community

Indicator 2: Number of local people employed in forest restoration activities and stewardship contracting in _____ County.
Target: By November 2008, at least 15 local people will be employed in forest restoration activities and value added product manufacturing in _____ County related to the collaborative project and stewardship contracts.
Baseline: 0 – local contractors are currently benefiting from stewardship contract work
Tools: 1) #s from _____ National Forest
2) interviews with forest restoration and value added product manufacturing businesses
3) interviews with _____ County Economic Development Assoc.
Responsible: Executive Director of (name of group) (Partners for implementation include _____ County Economic Development, _____ National Forest, etc.)
Use: Report to funders and local community the impact of group's work, build support within contracting community for group

Organizational Outcome: Active (name of group) board participation in raising money for the organization.

Indicator: Amount of money raised through board fundraising activities.
Target: By July 2008, (name of group) board members will raise at least \$8,100 through active participation in the individual giving campaign and other fundraising efforts.
Baseline: \$6,100 in local funds raised in 2007
Tools: 1) Volunteer hours contributed by board members in fundraising
2) Dollars raised
Responsible: Board, Executive Director
Use: Report back to board about their progress; incorporate into next year's planning