



Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting Framework

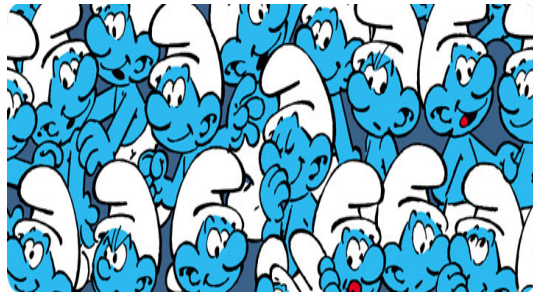
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What it isn't...



Smurf



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What is the MERF?

- An integrated monitoring, reporting and evaluation framework (MERF) designed to measure the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of all invasive plant and animal (IPA) programs and projects delivered by three Victorian government agencies across private and public land.
- It describes the way in which aggregation of multiple individual project outcomes leads to the achievement of higher order statewide IPA program strategic outcomes.
- The MERF also satisfies the reporting requirements of various internal and external stakeholders.

Context and Drivers for Change

- Need for greater emphasis on measuring **outcomes** rather than **outputs**
- Need to tell a cohesive story across government of the difference we are making with regards to invasive plant and animal program outcomes.
- Lack of alignment of evaluation and reporting across different agencies delivering IPA programs and with policy & strategy.
- Need to centralise evaluation data warehousing (data in and data out)
- Change in governance and investment processes for IPA.

MERF Development Stages

1. IPA Program Logic
2. Outcome mapping to align projects
3. Define purpose, scope, audience etc
4. KEQs, evidence & data (incl) KPIs
5. Feasibility analysis – *can we deliver increased evaluation/ data requirements? If not, what additional resources/ processes required?*
6. Implementation by Agencies
7. Develop centralised data warehousing
8. Develop Governance processes
9. Commence reporting based on MERF

Development Timeline

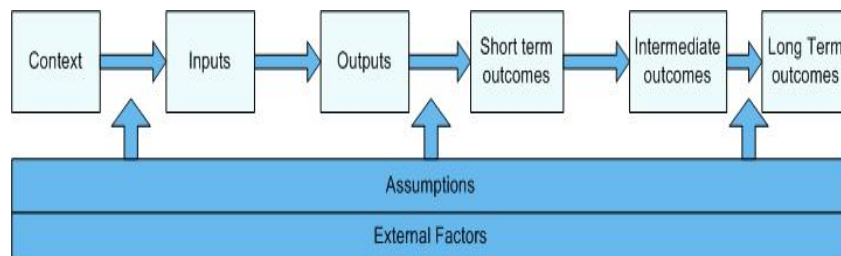


Purpose of the MERF

1. To demonstrate the value and efficiency of IPA investment – How we are currently investing.
2. To inform policy and strategic direction of the Victorian IPA program – How to invest in the future.
3. To demonstrate the impact of the Victorian IPA program – the difference we are making.
4. To understand the effectiveness of Victorian IPA programs.
5. To gain knowledge required to underpin further development of the Victorian IPA program.
6. To provide knowledge that can underpin stakeholder communication and engagement.

Program Logics

A series of Program Logics were developed from the policy level and then cascading down through program and then project logics.

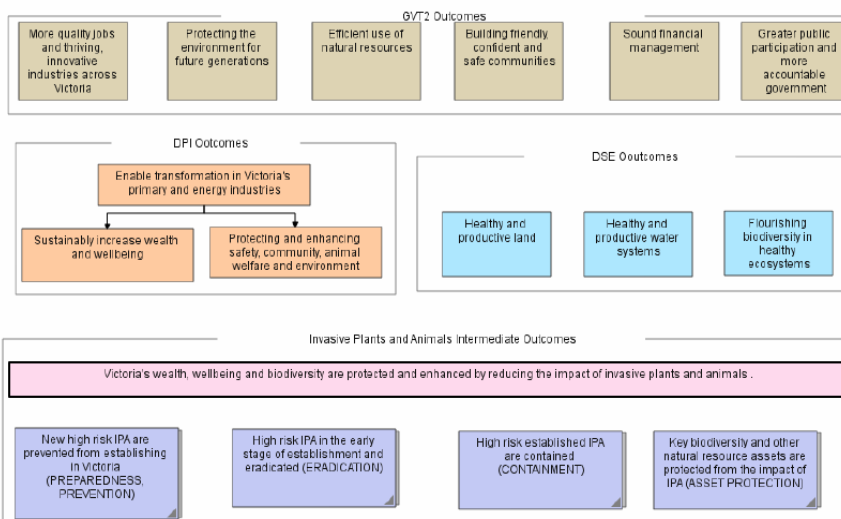


Based on University of Wisconsin- Extension, Program Development and Evaluation

Outcome Mapping and MERF Structure



Invasive Plants & Animals Outcome Map

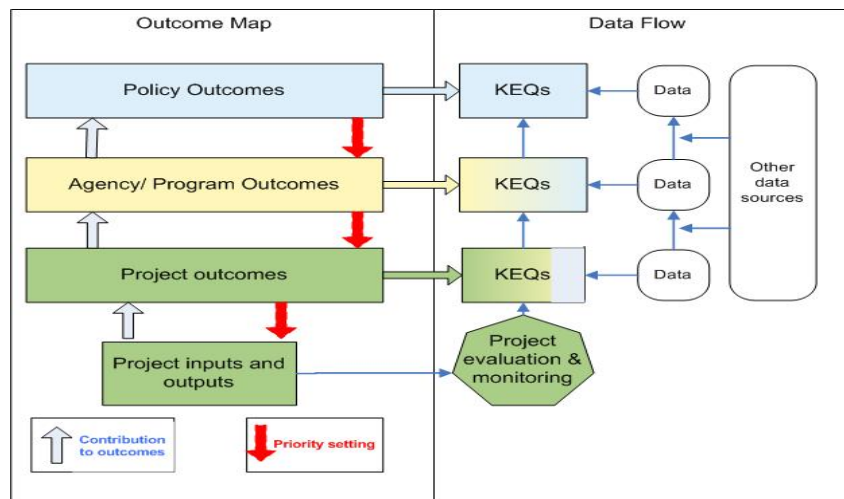


Key Evaluation Questions

The KEQs addressed the following areas:

- Impact of the program on achievement of IPA outcomes (5 KEQs)
- Value and efficiency (1 KEQ)
- Effectiveness (5 KEQs)
- Strategic alignment (2 KEQs)
- Continuous improvement (1 KEQ)

MERF Structure



Feasibility Analysis

Each of the 3 Agencies reviewed the MERF against existing systems to determine:

- What data was needed to collect to answer the KEQs,
- If current work processes and data collection and analysis systems were in place and/ or were adequate
- If not, what was required in order to fully implement the framework for their programs.

Systems Plans

- What are the key Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting needs of your project?
- What do you need to know? What are the data definitions (eg specify numerator and denominator)?
- What should the information output look like and how often is it needed?
- What baseline data do you need?
- What existing systems do you need?
- What new or modified systems do you need?

Benefits of Systems Plans

The benefits of employing this disciplined approach at the beginning of the project are clear, A Systems Plan:

- Makes Project Leaders focus on sources, availability and utility of data sources needed for their evaluation and monitoring activities from the beginning of the project.
- Tests assumptions that data will be available and usable.
- Allows systems sharing across different projects and avoids unnecessary duplication.

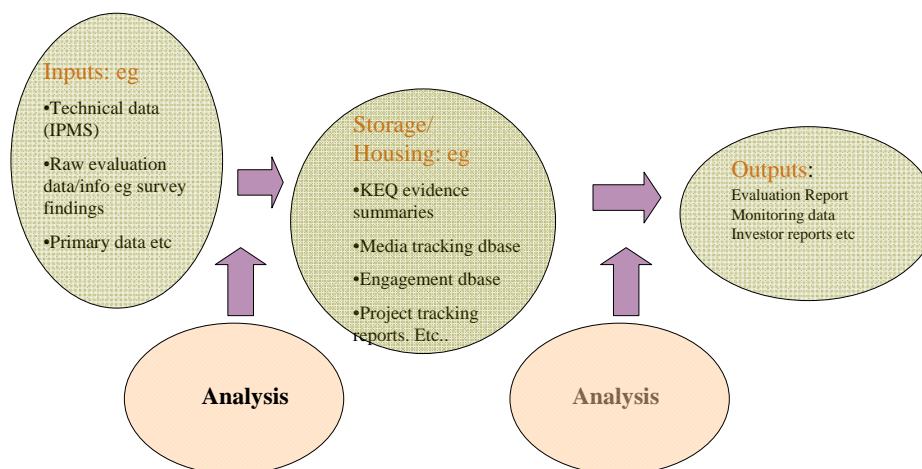
Governance processes

- Roles and responsibilities including agency (ies) responsible for contributing data for each KEQ.
- Reporting formats and frequencies.
- Target setting – to be informed by baseline data decisions.

Implementation by Agencies

- Align each project's logic with the policy logic.
- Review each evaluation plan against the MERF and add or modify KEQs as required.
- Modify the way in which operational staff collect, store and manage data.
- Upgrade systems to deal with increased data needs.
- Develop data warehousing to ensure all evaluation and monitoring data inputs and outputs, together with reports are accessible to all relevant parties in a central location.
- Implement new reporting systems.

MERF Data Warehousing



Unexpected consequences

1. High level of ownership and buy in from staff despite MERF creating significant additional work load.

Why?

- Involved from beginning in its development
- Welcomed a logical, integrated framework against which they could demonstrate their projects' achievements instead of historic meaningless output reporting

2. Catalyst for a cultural change in data quality.

- MERF provided a “carrot” rather than “stick” approach to drive improvement

Conclusions

•Development of a MERF in a green field site would be infinitely easier and quicker however such opportunities are rare.

•Our “retrofitting” project has shown it is still possible to develop a robust evaluation and monitoring system which is readily implementable and is recognised as important and beneficial by all participants and not **“just another reporting imposte”**.