



Meridian Institute

Connecting People to Solve Problems

Designing Collaborative Processes for Adaptive Management

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Definitions

Collaboration: Working together to achieve jointly defined goals

Stakeholder: An individual or group who is likely to be affected by a proposed action or decision



Principles for Collaborative Process in an Adaptive Management Context

- ✓ Interaction between managers, scientists and other stakeholders is critical to success
- ✓ Triggers or points in the process should be identified when monitoring results/new information will be evaluated and changes in management will be made if warranted
- ✓ Decision-making structures must be able to incorporate and act on new information
- ✓ Mechanisms are needed to incorporate new participants and to engage stakeholders in stages/topics in which they are interested



Points for Collaboration in Adaptive Management

Collaboration should occur at each step:

- Identify stakeholders
- Develop a conceptual model of the system
- Identify management goals
- Identify options for achieving goals
- Design monitoring
- Identify triggers and options for adjusting
- Implement management action(s) and monitoring
- Evaluate monitoring results
- Adjust management if goals are not being achieved
- Modify goals, desired endpoints if necessary



Case Example: LCNCA



Case Example: CERP

CERP Adaptive Management Integration Guide & CERP Guidance Memorandum on AM and USACE Planning

- Forums for inter-agency collaboration
- Traditional public comment periods during meetings and online/written comment periods for non-governmental stakeholders
- Exploring use of the FOIA-exempt South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force for engagement with non-governmental stakeholders



Mechanisms for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration in AM Programs

Mechanism	Example
Federal Advisory Committee	Glen Canyon Dam AM Program
Legislatively-Established Body	Platte River Recovery Implementation Program
Stakeholder Group Convened by a non-Federal Entity	Sonoita Valley Partnership - Las Cienegas National Conservation Area
FACA-exempt Body	South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force;
Other?	



Factors to Consider

Federal Advisory Committee

- Clear, established guidelines for getting consensus advice from a diverse array of stakeholders
- Potential for consensus recommendations
- Requires approval by high-level officials
- Requires administrative resources
- Make-up of the committee may not involve all stakeholders
- Final decisions are made by the federal agency that convenes the group



Factors to Consider

Legislatively Established Body

- Ability to tailor governance structure to specific circumstances
- Shared decision-making
- Consensus of the group is implemented
- Length of time required to pass legislation
- Length of time required to develop a customized structure and process



Factors to Consider

FACA Exempt Body

- Flexibility to tailor process and structure to meet the needs of specific circumstances
- Administrative burden may be lower due to exemption from FACA
- Requires time to develop a customized structure and process
- Body may not be representative of all stakeholders



Factors to Consider

Non-Federally-Led Stakeholder Group

- Flexibility to tailor process and structure to meet the needs of specific circumstances
- Administrative burden may be lower because not bound by FACA
- Agencies may decide whether or not to utilize the outcomes of the process



Stakeholder Engagement Activities

- ✓ Convening Assessment – To identify interests and issues
- ✓ Agenda development – Invite input to identify key issues
- ✓ Joint fact finding– Identify information needed/to be developed together
- ✓ Field visits – To develop shared understanding
- ✓ Option identification – Seek opportunities to combine elements to create new options that meet multiple needs
- ✓ Documentation – Distribute summaries of issues identified, options for addressing them



Strategies for Addressing Divergent Perspectives

- Articulate different interests/objectives. Identify options for addressing them.
- Sequencing
- Link scientific knowledge with social, political, and economic knowledge to develop integrated solutions that meet multiple objectives
- Frame competing objectives as testable hypotheses and use adaptive management to confirm or update hypotheses



How Designing an Effective Collaborative Process Can Help Overcome Some Institutional Barriers to AM

- Provides a forum for parties to raise and explain concerns and suggest strategies to address them
- Facilitates understanding of different perspectives
- Creates an opportunity to reframe problems
- Sets the stage for parties to seek integrative solutions that meet multiple needs

