

Lessons for governance from regional NRM



research FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Overview

The attractions of regional delivery

The regional delivery model

Governance principles

Strengths and limitations of regional NRM

NRM: the challenges

Uncertainty about outcomes and process

Complex problems where no single actor can solve problems

Diversity of stakeholder values

Long time frames for some problems

Regional NRM: the attractions

Planning and action at most appropriate scale

- move beyond the local to systems approach

- enable strategic approach to investment

- support local/ regional response to complex, persistent sustainability challenges

- ensure more accountability for investment

Devolution of responsibility for action

Combine regional planning and local engagement

Regional NRM: the model

Regional scale/ catchment-based planning

Regional plans identify issues/ assets and investment priorities
accredited by governments

Priorities set by appointed reference groups

Substantial investment government funds but rely on voluntary
change

Separation of purchaser and provider roles

Increasing range of policy instruments applied

Governance

After Lockwood et al. 2006

Governance involves collaborative arrangements to coordinate and guide decision-making through formal institutions of government and informal arrangements among government and non-government actors...

Governance principles

Founded on ethics and rationality:

Normative statements that make claims about how the exercise of power should happen and in what direction

Governance principles are therefore about both the means and ends of power

Governance principles

1. Legitimate exercise of authority
2. Inclusive engagement of stakeholders
3. Fair and equitable processes and distribution of costs and benefits
4. Connected functionally (coordinated) across scales/ sectors/ regions
5. Consistent strategic direction/ vision
6. Competent and effective delivery (eg assessing trade-offs)
7. Well-informed (eg different knowledge systems)
8. Responsive and self-reflexive
9. Durability of policy and institutions

Regional NRM: achievements

Improved integration across agencies (DEH/ DAFF)

Fostered regional perspectives

Raised level of NRM literacy amongst participants

Building partnerships to deliver onground work

Respected, competent organisations

Move to assets-based planning

Regional NRM: issues

High transaction costs in establishing regional governance

Asking groups to accomplish complex tasks with little guidance

Some stakeholders not adequately represented

Focus on action and insufficient attention to reflection

Short-term funding cycles (longevity issues)

Tendency to move from one policy option to next

Regional NRM: issues

Groups have limited capacity to respond to regional needs (limited devolution of power/ excessive reporting)

Blurring of purchaser/ provider roles

Limited inter-regional cooperation

Inability to identify trade-offs for investment choices

Data/ knowledge management issues

Principle	Score (1-10)
Legitimate	5
Inclusive	6
Fair and equitable	7
Connected/ coordinated	5
Consistent vision	6
Competent	5
Well informed	8
Responsive/ reflexive	4
Durable	4

Reflections

- A bold experiment with considerable achievements
- More successful than similar countries in getting balance between local engagement and regional planning
- Refinement over time
- No guarantee that will continue long-term