



*knowledge for managing Australian landscapes*

## Arrangements to Enhance Effective Use of Incentive Mechanisms for Regional NRM

*Research project number AGT13 of the Social and Institutional Research Program of Land & Water Australia.  
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### Background

This project developed principles and arrangements to facilitate the appropriate use of diverse mechanisms to achieve regional natural resource management (NRM) outcomes. Within regional areas of Australia, there is a strong interest in the potential to use various incentives to increase the sustainability of NRM. However, to date there has been a tendency to focus on single incentives without understanding the potential for a wider range or various combinations of incentives and their contextual application.

We need to learn about mixing and matching a suite of incentives to maximise their relevance and uptake at the local level. The way that incentives are packaged and/or delivered, even which incentives are packaged, will differ according to the context of the problem and locale. Importantly, just who does this packaging is at this stage an unknown and is a key issue that this project explored.

There is limited understanding of the factors that facilitate on-ground actions that will contribute to achievement of regional NRM targets. Systematic approaches to delivery of NRM programs and incentives have been successfully implemented in sectors other than natural resource management. Some of these areas include health, housing, education and finance. This project examined these types of arrangements and their applicability to NRM.

### Objectives

#### Approach to the project

Adopting a participatory approach, involving the designers, developers and implementers of incentives, this project reviewed:

- past and current NRM policies and institutional arrangements
- economic instruments currently in use or suggested for use in NRM



- incentives and associated institutional arrangements in the human services sector

This information was analysed and based on the analysis, principles to inform improved arrangements for incentives in NRM were developed. A framework for improved institutional arrangements was then postulated so that the principles can be tested further in a systems context.

## Key findings

There are nine principles to guide arrangements for effective use of incentives in NRM.

### Principle 1

Institutional arrangements for delivering incentives must recognise the diversity among land managers and their particular needs and preferences.

#### How principle is incorporated into framework

Incentives liaison officers will introduce innovation in assisting individual land managers and potentially collectives of land managers to mix incentives and develop appropriate 'incentive packages' that address social, economic and environmental imperatives.

### Principle 2

Where appropriate and opportunities arise, 'brokering' group activities and encouraging collective responsibility approaches will assist in working towards landscape-scale change.

#### How principle is incorporated into framework

Incentives liaison officers will be trained to recognise opportunities for collective action and to assist the development of strategies for appropriate frameworks.

### Principle 3

Institutional arrangements for delivery of incentives should ensure that information on incentives, anticipated outcomes, targets and their applicability to particular situations is available to land managers.

#### How principle is incorporated into framework

A core function of the proposed institutional framework is to establish a comprehensive information base on incentives and to distribute information on available and appropriate incentives to land managers in accessible and personalised ways.

### Principle 4

Community engagement and feedback mechanisms are essential elements in modifying the delivery of incentives and associated institutional arrangements, as early detection of negative community reaction to incentives allows for incentives to be adapted so they are locally relevant.

#### How principle is incorporated into framework

Incentives liaison officers will be locally based with knowledge of the agricultural and NRM characteristics of the area in which they are operating. Through regular interaction with community members and with regional groups, the Incentives liaison officers will provide a two-way information exchange function.

## Principle 5

Institutional arrangements for delivering incentives should encompass strategies and resources for capacity-building, including management and technical skills of land managers, to ensure that local actions contribute to regional NRM targets.

### How principle is incorporated into framework

The proposed framework seeks to enhance community capacity through providing information, support and referral resources to individual land managers and communities. The model aims to empower land managers in decision making and adopting relevant technical skills in relation to incentives.

## Principle 6

Community engagement in incentive programs is more likely to be effective if the incentives liaison officer/ agency is trusted by the local community.

### How principle is incorporated into framework

The proposed framework places an independent officer in a community to resource local people. The model is based on making resources and information available and supporting implementation of incentives.

## Principle 7

To ensure committed staff and a sense of security in the community, institutional arrangements for incentives must include adequately paid professionals with employment security and professional development opportunities.

### How principle is incorporated into framework

The proposed framework takes into account the skills base for incentives liaison officers and infrastructure to ensure they have induction training, professional supervision, professional development opportunities and support networks.

## Principle 8

Effective coordination between government agencies and regional groups in relation to incentives is essential.

### How principle is incorporated into framework

The framework will seek to ensure that the incentives liaison officer receives accurate information about all aspects of incentives including eligibility, application details and potential impacts and will direct messages and information from government in relation to available incentives in the community as relevant and in accessible ways. The officer will also provide an information source back to governments and regional groups, i.e. when there are conflicts or overlaps between incentives and programs being offered by different agencies.

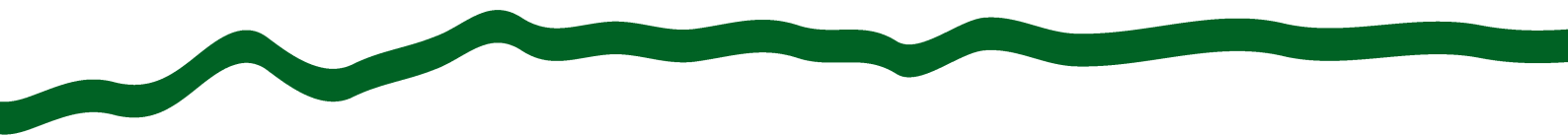
## Principle 9

Adequately resourced, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of incentives and their impact is essential to ensure incentives are having the intended outcomes in relation to regional NRM targets.

### How principle is incorporated into framework

Continuous and adaptive monitoring and evaluation are integral components of the proposed framework that link on-ground action with policy and regional plans.

The framework aims to enhance the adoption of incentives for the uptake of practices that will assist in meeting regional targets. The framework provides for one-on-one interaction between land managers and local support people who have access to information to guide land managers towards using incentives effectively.



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