



RMPP Action Network Evaluation Plan



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OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the evaluation programme in RMPP Action Network are to:

- Report to the RMPP Board on the effectiveness of RMPP Action Network in conjunction with wider impact measurement processes
- Report effectiveness of RMPP Action Network to RMPP Partners
- Enable RMPP management to continuously improve RMPP Action Network
- Support wider evaluation processes for RMPP

This plan outlines the evaluation framework and activities RMPP will undertake during the course of RMPP Action Network and guides implementation and reporting processes captured in the RMPP Action Network Operations Manual (currently under development as at February 2018).

BENNETT'S HIERARCHY

Bennett's Hierarchy was developed by Claude Bennett of the USDA Cooperative Extension System in the late 1970s. The hierarchy was needed to be able to demonstrate the results of extension programmes, in order to justify spending on extension. It has been widely used in agricultural extension around the world. Bennett's Hierarchy allows incremental behaviour change to be measured, as it shows the causal links between the steps from inputs to outcomes and where along the continuum of change an extension program reached or was likely to reach in its funded life. The table below outlines Bennett's Hierarchy, covering the seven levels of change recognised in the framework. The higher the level, the more time and effort required to collect and analyse meaningful data.

Table 1: An outline of Bennett's Hierarchy

SEE outcomes Level 7: SEE represents Social, Economic, and, Environmental outcomes are the end results or Benefits. These outcomes may represent public or private benefits.
Practice change Level 6: Practices are patterns of behaviours, procedures, or actions that influence SEE outcomes. Through educational programs, individuals, groups, organizations, and communities adopt practices and technologies that achieve needed SEE outcomes.
KASA (Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations) Level 5: KASA refers to Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations that influence the adoption of selected practices and technologies to help achieve targeted social, economic, and environmental outcomes. Knowledge gain pertains to learned information or accepted advice; Attitudes focus on individuals' beliefs, opinions, feelings, or perspectives. Skills refer to individuals' mental and physical abilities to use new or alternative practices. Aspirations refer to ambitions, hopes, objectives, or desires.
Reactions Level 4: Reactions reflect participants' degree of positive or negative interest in topics addressed, their acceptance of activity leaders, and their attraction to the educational methods.
Participants Level 3: Program participants include individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities. Participants must be sufficiently involved in program activities to acquire KASA and adopt practices needed to improve SEE conditions. Duration, continuity, frequency, and intensity of program participation all contribute to amount of KASA change.
Activities Level 2: Activities are the various educational strategies and events used to inform, educate, or train target audiences. They range from direct personal contacts to indirect technological or mass media approaches. Program activities are determined by requirements to obtain positive reactions from participants as well as other factors needed to achieve desired changes in KASA and practices. Program activities are supported by program resources.

Resources

Level 1: Resources are time, money, and staff (including volunteers) used to plan, promote, implement, and evaluate programs. Resources also include research-based educational materials, organisational maintenance, communication technologies, and transportation.

This framework is being used to help develop the RMPP Action Network evaluation plan. In Table 2, an overview of key questions relating to RMPP Action Network that need to be answered are shown.

Table 2: An overview of key questions for evaluating RMPP Action Network.

<p>Level 7: SEE outcomes</p> <p>What is the economic impact of RMPP Action Network?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has profitability on-farm improved? - Has productivity on-farm improved?
<p>Level 6: Practice change</p> <p>What is the on-farm change as a result of RMPP Action Network?</p>
<p>Level 5: KASA (Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations)</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers increased their knowledge through involvement in an Action Group? <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers' attitudes to extension and practice change changed as a result of being part of an Action Group? - Is there a desire to self-fund groups? <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers' skills in decision making improved? <p>Aspirations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can farmers articulate their vision for their farm business?
<p>Level 4: Reactions</p> <p>What is the demand from farmers to get involved in Action Groups?</p> <p>What is the demand from facilitators, connectors and experts to get involved in Action Groups?</p> <p>How are facilitators/groups/connectors working together?</p>
<p>Level 3: Participants</p> <p>How many farm businesses are involved in an Action Group?</p> <p>How many from the farm teams are involved in an Action Group?</p> <p>How many experts are being used?</p> <p>How many facilitators have been trained?</p> <p>How many groups are facilitators running?</p> <p>How many Action Groups are there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many groups are run by partners? • How many groups are run by consultants?
<p>Level 2: Activities</p> <p>What are the range of extension activities being run?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which activities are most effective? - What is most effective follow-up and support? - How is the Knowledge Hub working? - How useful is the information being provided to groups? - How effective are connectors? - How are groups operating? - How effective are the SMEs (experts)? - How effective are mentors?
<p>Level 1: Resources</p> <p>Budget overview – funds committed and spent</p> <p>RMPP Action Network Management System feedback</p>

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES EXPECTED FROM RMPP ACTION NETWORK

Table 3: Outline of outcomes from RMPP Action Network against Bennett's Hierachy.

Level	Outcome for RMPP	Source of data			
Level 7: SEE outcomes	Overall RMPP goal: An increase profitability and productivity of sheep and beef farmers in New Zealand; Specifically, an increase of \$117/ha for sheep and beef farmers by 2025 (from the RMPP Business Case)			Case studies [BakerAg]	Overall impact assessment [Scarlatti]
Level 6: Practice change	Self-reported and observed practice change on-farm as a result of being in an Action Group	Evaluator survey (every six months) [RMPP]		Interview data [UMR]	
Level 5: KASA change	Self-reported and observed knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirational changes				
Level 4: Reactions	Demand from farmers to be involved in an Action Group Demand from facilitators, connectors and experts to be involved in RMPP Action Network		Facilitator self-reflections [RMPP]		
Level 3: Participants	3000 farmers from the red meat sector taking part in an Action Group by June 2020 150 trained facilitators, actively involved in 8 regional hubs by June 2020 350 groups actively working through their Extension Plans by June 2020	Action Network programme data			
Level 2: Activities	Identification of effective extension activities Use of Knowledge Hub tool and resources in extension activities				
Level 1: Resources	Accountability for money spent				

EVALUATION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In the table below the plan and activities for data collection for each level in the hierarchy is outlined.

Evaluation questions	How will we know it? (Indicator)	Where will the data come from? (Source & method)	Who will capture the data?	When will the data be captured?
Level 7: SEE outcomes				
What is the economic impact of RMPP Action Network? Has profitability on-farm improved? Has productivity on-farm improved?	An increase profitability and productivity of sheep and beef farmers in New Zealand; Specifically, an increase of \$117/ha for sheep and beef farmers by 2025	A model designed to provide a quantitative estimate of the impact that RMPP's Action Network has had, and will have, on the profitability of the sheep and beef farming sector in New Zealand.	Scarlatti, in conjunction with RMPP, BakerAg and UMR	- August – November 2019 (first round) - Possible second round June 2020
		KPIs are collected in Farm Action Plans	RMPP via Farm Action Plans (written by individual farm businesses that are members of an Action Group)	- On-going - Baseline capture of KPIs after Extension Plans are approved out of Action Plans - Yearly capture of KPI data when Action Plan refreshes
		Case studies [based on the farm pilot programme case studies]	RMPP via farm systems consultant/appropriate RP	- Starting September 2019
Level 6: Practice change				
What is the on-farm change as a result of being part of an Action Group?	Self-reported and observed practice change on-farm as a result of being in an Action Group	Self-reported change will come from the Evaluator survey, specifically questions from the 'Impact of the Action Network' section: - Have Action Groups motivated farmers to improve their farm business? - Have farmers learnt something new that has helped them achieve their goals? - Have farmers made decisions or changes to their farm business that are of a lasting nature? - Has the Action Group delivered significant commercial benefit? - Are farmers making better choices around how they spend their time?	RMPP extension team	- Every six months after group establishment
		Reported change from facilitators	RMPP extension team	Every third activity facilitators will be asked to reflect on how their activities and Action Groups are going. Capture data

Evaluation questions	How will we know it? (Indicator)	Where will the data come from? (Source & method)	Who will capture the data?	When will the data be captured?
				relating to on-farm changes
Level 5: KASA (Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations)				
<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers increased their knowledge through involvement in an Action Group? <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers' attitudes to extension and practice change changed as a result of being part of an Action Group? - Is there a desire to self-fund groups? <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have farmers' skills in decision making improved? <p>Aspirations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can farmers articulate their vision for their farm business? 	Self-reported and observed knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirational changes in farmer participants	<p>Evaluator survey questions from the 'Impact of the Action Network' section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has the Action Group helped farmers grow their farm business skills? <p>Evaluator survey questions from the 'Confidence to make changes in farm practice' section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are farmers more confident to use experts to improve their farm business? - Are farmers more confident in asking for help to improve their farm business? - Are farmers more confident to take action to improve their farm business? - Are farmers more confident to collaborate with others to improve their farm business? - Would farmers pay to continue participating in an Action Group? - Do farmers feel more in control of their own destiny? 	RMPP extension team, from farmers and facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline when Extension Plan is approved - Six monthly from that point on
Level 4: Reactions				
<p>What is the demand from farmers to get involved in Action Groups?</p> <p>What is the demand from facilitators, connectors and experts to get involved in Action Groups?</p> <p>How are facilitators, groups and connectors working together?</p>	Demand from farmers to be involved in an Action Group Demand from facilitators, connectors and experts to be involved in RMPP Action Network	<p>Evaluator survey questions from the 'Impact of the Action Network' section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are farmers feeling more connected with others? - Has farmers' mental health & wellness improved? 	RMPP extension team via farmers and facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline when Extension Plan is approved - Six monthly from that point on
		<p>Evaluator survey questions from the 'facilitator role' section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did facilitators communicate and manage group dynamics effectively? - Could facilitators read and respond to the farmers needs and backgrounds? - Did facilitators build engagement & ownership of the process by farmers? - Did facilitators draw on the experience of the group? - How effective were facilitators in organising farmer activities? 	RMPP extension team via farmers and facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline when Extension Plan is approved - Six monthly from that point on

Evaluation questions	How will we know it? (Indicator)	Where will the data come from? (Source & method)	Who will capture the data?	When will the data be captured?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did facilitators support their group to identify relevant/useful activities to achieve Action Plan Goals? - Have facilitators got the support they need? <p>Questions from the 'Learning experience' section of the evaluator tool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The process of getting the groups together was clear and easy - Did the ground rules assist the group to make good decisions? - Is the group an optimal size and composition? - Is the meeting frequency optimal? - Are farmers engaging/participating effectively? - Did experts assist in good decision making? - Did farmers get the right information/tools to achieve their Action Plan goals? - Is the Knowledge Hub fit for purpose? - Did the extension activities help farmers meet their Action Plan goals? - Did farmers get the individual support they needed to achieve their Action Plan goals? - Did farmers seek individual support? <p>Facilitator self-reflection on activities</p>	<p>RMPP extension team via farmers and facilitators</p> <p>RMPP with facilitators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline when Extension Plan is approved - Six monthly from that point on - Every third activity facilitators will be asked to reflect on how their activities and Action Groups are going.
Level 3: Participants				
<p>How many farm businesses are involved in an Action Group?</p> <p>How many from the farm teams are involved in an Action Group?</p> <p>How many experts are being used?</p> <p>How many facilitators have been trained?</p> <p>How many groups are facilitators running?</p> <p>How many Action Groups are there?</p>	<p>350 groups by June 2020</p> <p>National coverage of Action Network groups</p> <p>3000 farmers involved in Action Groups</p> <p>150 trained facilitators by June 2020</p> <p>Eight regional hubs established</p> <p>Quarterly meetings of the Hubs</p>	<p>The RMPP Action Network management system</p> <p>Need to pull out numbers of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups - Farmer participants - Average group size <p>Number of partner groups</p> <p>Number of facilitators and number trained through facilitation course lists of attendees</p> <p>Follow-up of facilitators by facilitation adoption support team monitoring approval of facilitators</p> <p>Keep count of number of regional hubs</p>	<p>RMPP extension team</p> <p>RMPP through facilitator training</p> <p>RMPP through facilitator adoption support</p>	<p>Monthly</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Monthly</p>

Evaluation questions	How will we know it? (Indicator)	Where will the data come from? (Source & method)	Who will capture the data?	When will the data be captured?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many groups are run by partners? How many groups are run by consultants? 				
Level 2: Activities				
What are the range of extension activities being run? - Which activities are most effective? - What is most effective follow-up and support? - How is the Knowledge Hub working? - How useful is the information being provided to groups? - How effective are connectors? - How are groups operating? - How effective are the SMEs (experts)? - How effective are mentors?	Use of effective extension activities across Action Groups Widespread use of Knowledge Hub tool and resources in extension activities	RMPP Action Network management system, pulling details on range of activities being undertaken in Extension Plans	RMPP extension team	Six monthly
		Data on Knowledge Hub use	Knowledge hub – B+LNZ?	Monthly?
Level 1: Resources				
Accountability for money spent	Budget on-track	Budget overview – funds committed and spent	RMPP	Monthly
	Primary Farmer Contact time commitment	Special project to track this if needed?	RMPP with help from Primary Contact Farmer	As needed
	Monitoring Action Group spend	Data from Extension Plan: Average Action Group budget; average activity cost	RMPP	As needed

TIMEFRAME OF EVALUATION

Although collection of the evaluation data will be occurring throughout each year, there are key dates for completing an overview of evaluation results to date. These are linked to Regional Hub meetings proposed for April and October.

Proposed: Six monthly reviews of evaluation results to date, with data collected to that point. This is provided as feedback at Regional Hub meetings and additional comments incorporated.

Year outline	Activity
Monthly	Collection of data as outlined above (e.g. collection of participant numbers etc)
	Pushing evaluator tool out to groups approved – link into Extension Plan approval process
	Resend six monthly evaluator surveys for appropriate groups
Six monthly	Reporting of results to date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft supplied to facilitators (and others as appropriate) for feedback, via Regional Hub meetings March and September - Feedback incorporated into final report each six months at the end of April and October

THE EVALUATOR

A major part of the evaluation programme will be delivered through 'The Evaluator'. The Evaluator is an impact measurement tool developed through Synapsys, by Core Education, that will allow RMPP to measure the impact that RMPP Action Network is having on farm businesses and facilitator capability. It will be used to improve the programme, determine its value and get buy-in from participants.

This will be done by asking a range of questions of both participating farmers and their facilitators to determine whether RMPP Action Network is delivering on its objectives.

ANALYSIS

RMPP will manage the analysis of all evaluation results, which includes identifying which groups are to be looked at in greater detail and ensuring that surveys have been completed. Support will be provided by Synapsys from time to time for issues as they arise, which might include:

- Additional support for specific evaluation purposes
- Training and support in the use of the reporting system including possible changes of staff, user queries etc.
- Generating reports or attending stakeholder reporting meetings.

Analysis and reporting will be available at Cohort Level (combination of farmer groups) and Programme Comparison Level (one group compared to whole programme performance).

COHORT ANALYSIS

RMPP will have administrative access to analyse and report as follows.

- RMPP will manage attributes of groups in its own system, and will from time to time decide that it would like to analyse a particular cohort of groups, for a particular combination of surveys.
- The RMPP Action Network Management System (ANMS) will generate query-based Action Group IDs subsets that will be passed to The Evaluator for reporting and comparison analysis.
- The RMPP team will log in to The Evaluator and see the Polar Map and sliders for that particular query. Displayed data will consist of rolled up polar maps and graphs for the selected query and can be interrogated by role (Farmer, Facilitator), dimension, element and question as was the case for the genetics pilot.
- If the query needs to be retained, the system will generate a PDF snapshot report for later reference. RMPP will manage snapshot reports within their document management system.

PROGRAMME COMPARISON ANALYSIS

RMPP will be able to compare the performance of a cohort of groups against overall programme performance. For any given cohort (combination of groups and surveys), they will be able to compare the Polar Map and sliders against the performance of a programme level view that aggregates performance for all groups.