

QualDATA Fact Sheet

Monitoring Uptake strategies

In the QualDATA Log Frame there is a level that is called “Uptake Strategies”. This is the link between research and development and achieving change on the ground.

We don't call it “extension” (as in the old technology transfer model which sees a linear transfer from research to farmer through extension) because there are many different ways of achieving change of which extension is just one. The State Extension Leader Network (a national group across Australia) looked at extension in the context of the total strategies to bring about change (http://www.seln.org.au/attachments/uploads/061205SELN_Enabling_change_12pp.pdf) and they also showed the dimensions of extension itself that go beyond “show and tell”.

A lot of programs aimed at bringing about change in natural resource management in Australia, for example, rely a lot on providing incentives to land managers to change practices in favour of better environmental outcomes. Governments at local, state and national level also use policy to bring about regulation and/or tax incentives to make changes. Extension programs use a range of approaches including working with groups, organising field demonstrations and workshops – all with varying degrees of participation and capacity building. Increasingly electronic information and interaction is being used to support change.

Our evaluation in monitoring these approaches is to see how well they are working and whether changes are needed. The following table shows some of the uptake strategies used in agricultural RD&E activities, associated evaluation questions – and how this information could be captured.

Uptake Strategy	Monitoring & Evaluation Questions	M&E data collection
Working with grower groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many groups are there, how often do they meet and where are they located? • What is happening with membership over time? • What are the demographics of those involved? • How is the group run – and how does this work for participants? • What activities are being undertaken? • What are people gaining from these activities – and how does this line up with the project objectives? • What is the leakage from information and learning from the groups to other growers? • To what extent is this informing future research? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of group facilitators • Surveys of facilitators • Annual benchmarks, surveys and/or structured debrief of group members • Narratives or case studies of changes in thinking or practice by group members as a result of their group involvement
Using field demonstrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What demonstrations have been run, where and when? • How were they determined – what input did the target group have? • How did they relate to the objectives of the project? • Who participated/visited events and what were their demographics? • How relevant/useful did they find the demonstration/event? • What did they learn and what actions did they plan following their exposure? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of project staff • Interviews with Steering Committee or advisory groups • Feedback sheets – or group feedback from participants at end of events • Follow up surveys of participants • Narratives of observed changes by participants as a result of their attendance
Workshops and training (face to face or via the web)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What workshops were run, where and when? • What local content/input was incorporated? • Was it “accredited” – if so, how many took this option? • Were effective adult learning processes used? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of project staff. • Analysis of workshop materials • Observation of process using adult learning criteria

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was follow up support provided – how was it used? • What gains did people make in the understanding, skills and motivation to change? • What stopped people participating – what could be changed to increase participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer review of content • Feedback sheets from participants • Follow- up survey questions to participants and non-participants
Providing information - booklets; CDs, DVDs, internet pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information was provided in what form to which target audiences? • How well was the information put together - in terms of user-friendliness and appropriateness for purpose? • How reliable was the information? • How was information distributed and/or advertised? • How many – and what were the demographics – received and/or requested/accessed information? • How useful did users find it? What did it assist/ prompt them to do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project records • Media analysis • Peer/expert review of materials – pilot testing • Records of requests • Web statistics; Google analytics • User survey – part of a general random survey of potential users • Feedback surveys attached to products
One-on-one farm visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many farm visits were undertaken – with which demographic, and for what purpose? • How did they link with other uptake activities (for example follow-up with participants of a workshop)? • What evidence was there that the visits or other activities impacted on thinking or practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project officer records • Interviews with project officers • Narratives/case studies of observed impacts
Availability of financial incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the type of incentive and basis for receiving them? • How aware was the target group of the availability and purpose – and how to apply? • What was the level of response in terms of the strategic purpose for the incentives? • What did people use the incentives for? • How did this impact on their practice, thinking and plans for the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of incentive applications and success/ failures • Survey of successful/non successful and non applicants • Narratives/case studies/ interviews of those who used incentives to make changes
Use of government regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How aware are people of the regulations, their implications for farm operations and how to demonstrate adherence? • What changes have they made to people's practice, thinking and future plans? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government records of compliance/non-compliance • Survey of service providers • General random survey of target group

This table is not exhaustive but it does give the idea of the type of uptake strategies that can be used to bring about change and how to monitor them. The critical aspect of the exercise is to use the information gained to make changes in these strategies to make it more likely that the project will achieve its objectives (or Key Result Areas) and to inform future projects.

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