



Australian Government Initiative

WATER QUALITY
AUSTRALIA

Monitoring and evaluation plan

National Water Quality Management Strategy

2018

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1 Purpose of this document

The National Water Quality Management Strategy (NWQMS) began in 1992. An independent evaluation undertaken in 2011 by KPMG recommended developing a small set of qualitative and quantitative performance measures that align with national objectives and priorities and implementing ongoing reporting at the national level to measure the success of the NWQMS.

This monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan provides performance measures that the Australian Government and state and territory governments can use to evaluate the performance of the NWQMS.

2 Background to the NWQMS

The Australian Government and state and territory governments work together on the NWQMS. The NWQMS provides the policy setting for water quality management in Australia; a water quality management framework for assessing and managing water quality issues; and guidelines based upon the best available science for managing different elements of the water cycle.

The NWQMS is voluntary, but it is utilised by all state and territory governments in establishing their own guidelines, regulations, policies, processes and standards for managing the quality and supply of water that is fit for purpose.

3 Monitoring and evaluation plan

The basis for the NWQMS M&E plan is the NWQMS logic (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The NWQMS logic gives an overview of how the NWQMS works, including the issues the NWQMS is designed to address and the outcomes for water quality that it aims to achieve.

The main centre box shows the key components, roles and responsibilities under the NWQMS, including:

- the nationally agreed policy, framework and tools that are the responsibility of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the Australian Government and state and territory governments to deliver
- management of water resources to obtain fit-for-purpose water quality that is the responsibility of state, territory and local governments and others.

The NWQMS logic also identifies the different purposes of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation for the NWQMS aims to demonstrate whether the strategy is efficient and effective as well as whether implementation and management actions are achieving the desired water quality.

Monitoring and evaluation performance measures are provided for:

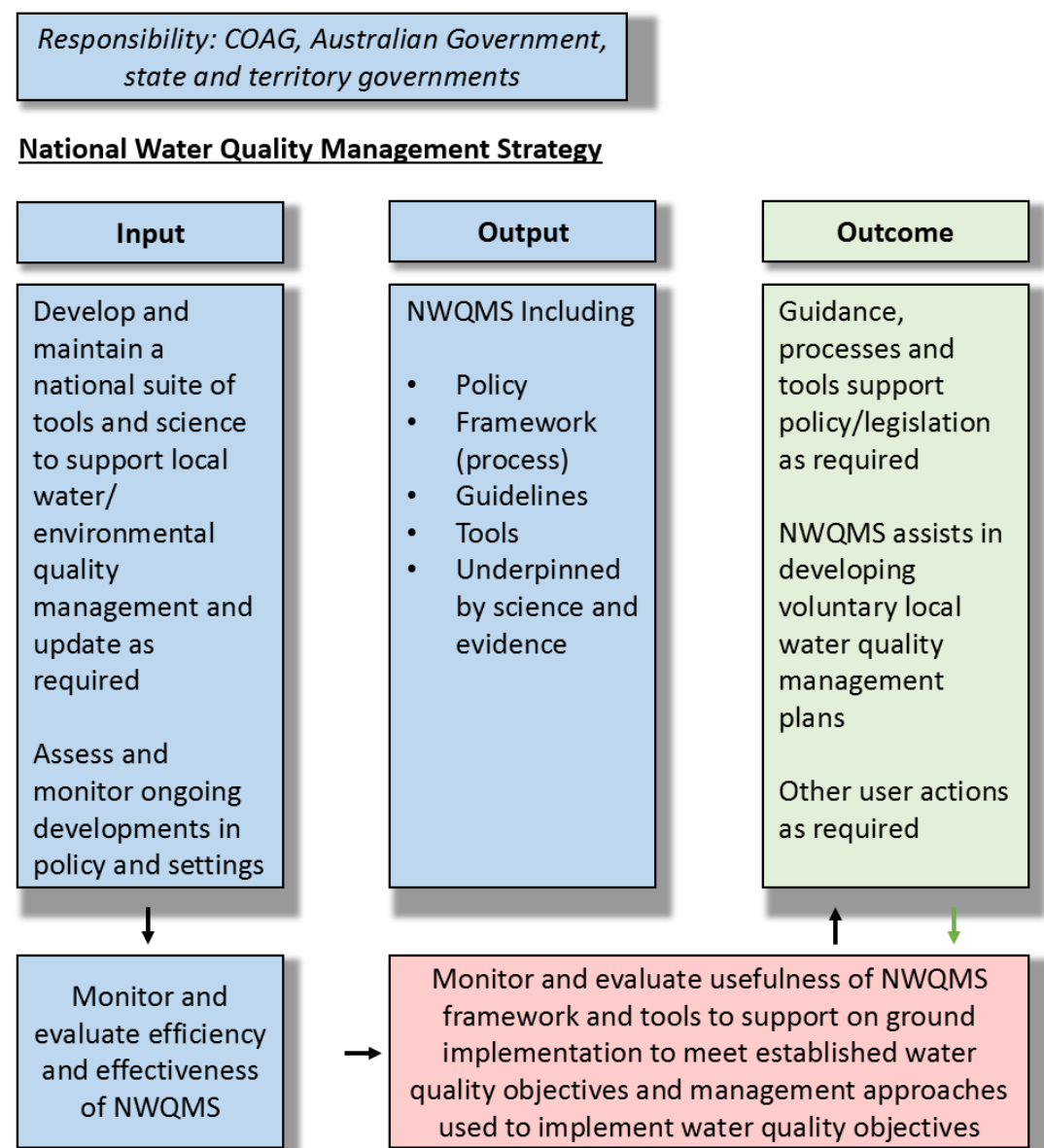
- *the NWQMS (nationally agreed policy, framework and tools)*—this is the first half of the logic diagram in **Error! Reference source not found.**. The NWQMS framework, guideline documents and other tools are intended to inform water quality management planning. The evaluation is based upon whether or not these tools are utilised and effective
- *implementation for the management of water resources*—this is the second half of the logic diagram. The outputs of the NWQMS—the framework, guideline documents and other tools—are the input to water quality management planning and actions. The evaluation is based upon whether the actions lead to a reduction in pressures on water quality.

The program logic, evaluation question and indicators for the two parts are given in the following sections. It is helpful to understand the Pressure–Stressor–Response on Community Values model when evaluating water quality. This is further explained in the [National Water Quality Management Strategy: The charter](#). Note also that there will be a lag between actions and response in water quality.

3.1 NWQMS evaluation question

Did the NWQMS information, tools and arrangements assist water quality planning?

Figure 1 Monitoring and evaluation for the NWQMS



3.1.1 Output indicators

- Guideline documents and other tools added, maintained and updated as required with best available science and information.
- NWQMS tools and resources easy to access and understand for water quality managers.

Table 1 Output indicators for NWQMS information, tools and arrangements

Performance indicators	Performance target	Baseline	Method/data sources	Reporting frequency	Reporting responsibility
Guideline documents and tools have been reviewed	All reviewed as per scheduled and updated as required	None (no plans and processes in place)	Records of reviews and revisions	Every 5 years	Australian Government

according to the established plans and processes					
New guidelines added are important for nationally consistent water quality management.	New guidelines meet requirements in <i>Design and requirements for a new guideline.</i>	None (no requirements in place)	Count and record of new guidelines added	Every 5 years	Australian Government
Number of hits on website per year	Twice the number of baseline hits by 2020	Number of hits on departmental website in 2015	Website visit count	Annual tally	Australian Government
Feedback on usefulness and accessibility of NWQMS tools and other resources	80% of users satisfied	None	Pop-up survey on website	Annual tally	Australian Government

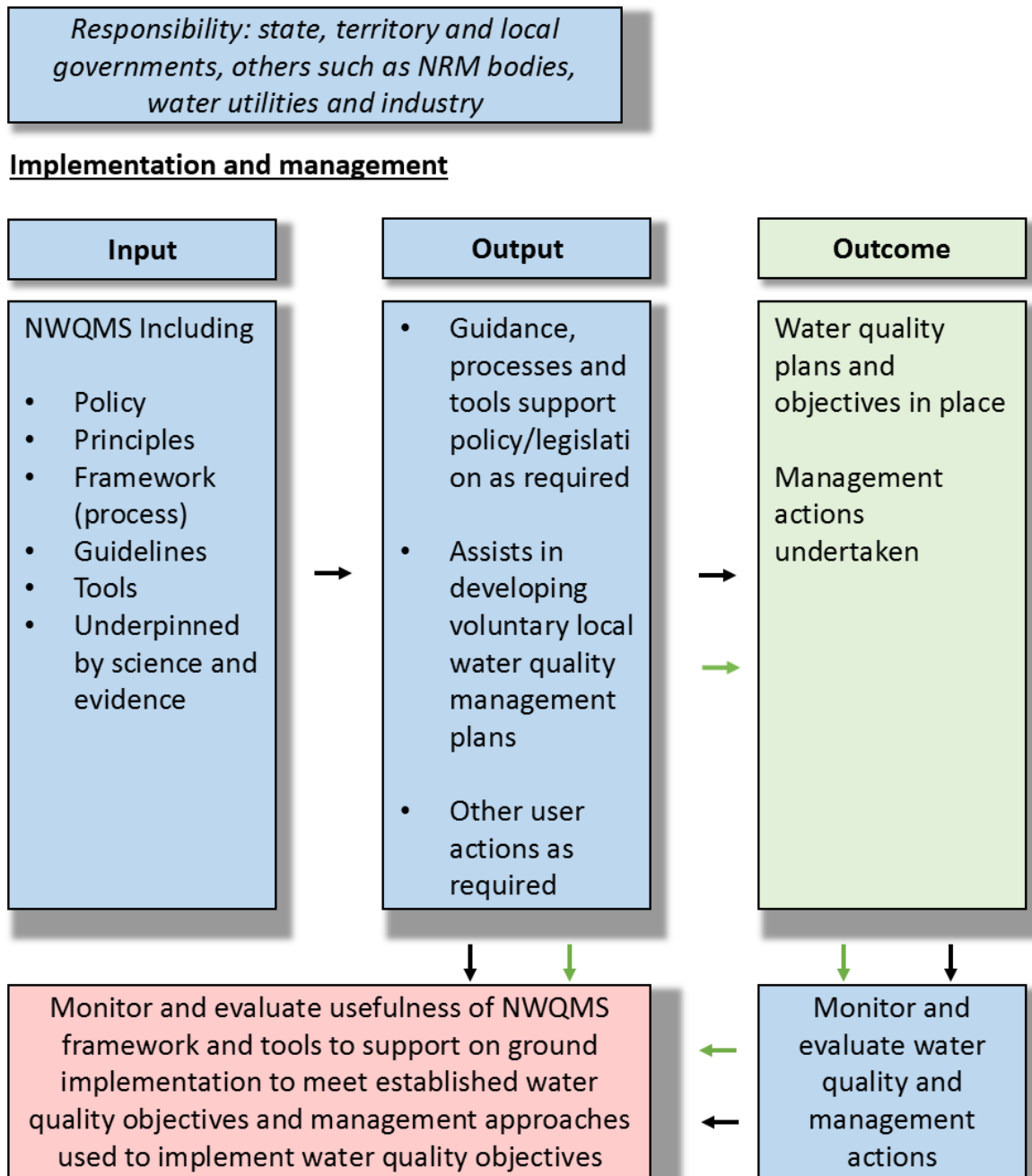
3.1.2 Outcome indicators

- NWQMS tools and resources are reflected in state and territory legislation, policies, licence requirements et cetera, as required. Reporting would be a statement by the jurisdiction on how it had incorporated NWQMS tools and resources into jurisdictional legislation, policies, licence requirements et cetera.
- Policies are updated to reflect the current national position.
- Water quality management plans utilise NWQMS tools and resources.

3.2 Implementation and management evaluation question

Did implementation activities set water quality objectives and undertake effective actions to manage water quality?

Figure 2 Monitoring and evaluation for implementation and management



3.2.1 Output indicators

These are the same indicators as for the outcome indicators specified in the NWQMS evaluation section (see Section 3.1.1).

3.2.2 Outcome indicators

- Water quality objectives are established.
- Water quality management plans are in place.
- Management actions reduced pressures on water quality, noting there is usually a lag in condition response.

- A statement is included on known water quality management plans that utilise NWQMS tools and resources.
- The number of groups that have been referred by the state/territory to the NWQMS for guidance in the period is given.
- A statement is included on whether state's/territory's water quality objectives established for water resources are consistent with NWQMS guidance.
- A report on any evaluations regarding the validation of management action impacts on reducing pressures.

4 More information

The [NWQMS website](#) has a range of guideline documents and other information that can assist water quality management. Alternatively, telephone the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on 1800 900 090.

5 Attachment A

Figure 3 NWQMS logic

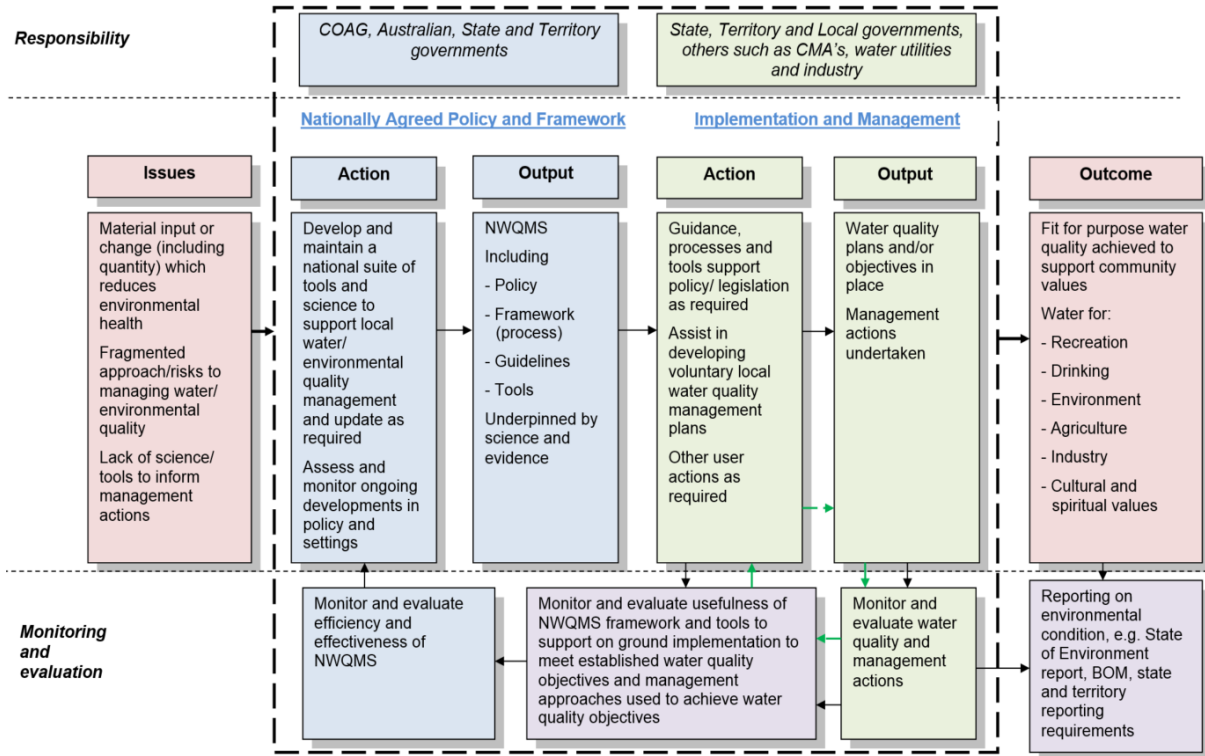


Figure 1: NWQMS logic