



SECTION 5.

IMPLEMENTATION

5 HOW DOES MY ORGANISATION IMPLEMENT OPTIONS? (IMPLEMENTATION)

Following completion of a risk assessment and options appraisal, a dedicated implementation plan needs to be prepared. Experience has shown that while risk assessment and option appraisal processes may have been thorough and conducted to an agreed timeframe, implementation becomes more opportunistic and requires tactical considerations, especially where there is a delay between the production of a plan and the implementation of actions (2).

Key considerations in developing an implementation plan include:

- **Is budget available?** Priority actions do not always have budget readily available, especially where they are not a part of or extension to business as usual activities. Implementation may therefore first require building the case for additional budget allocation; and
- **Are there “windows of opportunity” for implementing adaptation?** Some guidelines suggest looking for ways of incorporating climate response strategies into mainstream activities, and think about how they work with or against other strategies and policies (e.g. (15)). For example, the costs of adaptation can be minimised when factored into:
 - The early steps of planning new developments;
 - Infrastructure that is being upgraded anyway;
 - Routine maintenance that is being conducted;
 - Plans that come up naturally for review; and
 - Your routine work plan rather than being dealt with as an emergency; and
- **How can adaptation be embedded?** Embedding adaptation into all strategic and operational processes is a key way councils can plan and fund adaptation, so that it becomes standard practice and not opportunistic.

If funding, capacity or capability is not available for the highest priority option, then lower order options may need to be pursued. Alternatively, implementing organisations may need to look for opportunities to identify financing or funding mechanisms that can support an option for which the organisation itself has no budget for.

If you are wondering what is required to ensure your project is ready to implement refer to the checklist at Attachment C.

It becomes important at the implementation stage that adaptation practitioners ensure the focus does not rest solely on actions that have short term outcomes and that are an extension of business as usual.

While these actions will be more straightforward to deliver, in many instances they are not building longer term adaptive capacity.

Questions to consider when developing an implementation plan include:

- Do relevant stakeholders have sufficient buy in?
- Are there barriers to implementation?
- Are there planning lead times with respect to on-ground works?
- What sub-actions or tasks are required to initiate action? and
- What approach to implementation will we adopt? Will it be “Wait and see” or a risk adverse approach that leads to greater focus on implementation now?

There are several references to assessing barriers to implementation in the sections below. This can be done in a range of ways, from a low level, qualitative analysis of barriers to a more formal approach using institutional analysis. A diagnostic applied extensively in South Australia is the “Values-Rules-Knowledge” (VRK) framing (3), which aims to help users assess whether adaptation is constrained by a knowledge deficit (knowledge), institutional arrangements or systems (rules), and/or unresolved or unknown societal preferences (values). Further information on this approach is contained in **Box 1** and the supporting literature (3).

Does your organisation already have a plan for implementing priority adaptation options? Be sure to check the climate change adaptation plan for your region, industry adaptation plans and see if your organisation already has its own adaptation action plan.

See Step 6 of the LGA SA’s Climate Adaptation Planning Guidelines for further general information on implementing adaptation options.

5.1 Scan

The **Scan** level requires the development of a broad implementation plan, covering key elements such as action description, responsibility, due date, and key stakeholders at an organisational level. It will be useful to distinguish between the lead organisation (who is assigned responsibility for the action) and key stakeholders, who are necessary to engage for implementation to occur.

Development of the **Scan** level implementation plan will often require some additional refinement of options that were identified during the appraisal stage. This refinement could be based on an understanding of the strategic alignment of the action with potential implementing organisations and the extent to which funds are available for the proposed action.

Often, the *Scan* level will not lead to action on ground. Instead it builds the necessary capability within decision makers and key stakeholders to undertake subsequent levels of planning. As such, expectations need to be managed as to what are realistic outcomes from this level of activity.

Instead, the *Scan* level implementation plan sets a strategic direction for action and can provide the basis for further stakeholder engagement to generate buy-in to implementation. It can also help progress an organisation to the *Plan* level of adaptation.

To assist in ensuring that key enablers of an effective *Plan* level approach are being established, your organisation should consider conducting a barriers analysis at this point, based on the approach introduced during the Orientation stage.

5.2 Plan

The *Plan* level requires the development of a more detailed implementation plan than is prepared at the *Scan* level. The implementation plan should cover key elements such as action description, funding, responsibility (organisation and individual), due date, and key stakeholders (organisation and individual). Actions will be differentiated according to key sectors and specific areas of decision making e.g. how does my organisation protect residential buildings in per-urban areas in close proximity to native vegetation as the risk of fire increases in the future?

Options described at the *Scan* level tend to be broad, so at the *Plan* level your organisation will need to discuss and then describe how to initiate action. For example, the priority adaptation option for protecting natural and built assets along the coast could be to protect and restore dunes. However, in order for this to occur a range of sub-actions (or tasks) are required such as: prioritise areas of dune to restore, identify suitable plant stocks; procure a contractor to conduct on-ground works, establish a monitoring regime to determine the effectiveness of the action.

As for the *Scan* level, identifying a suitable lead organisation and individual, having a resources commitment, and determining other relevant stakeholders is essential. It may be that the implementation plan requires multiple iterations before responsibilities and funding are agreed.

Successful implementation will require more extensive work to be undertaken on securing finance and funding for actions. As such, individual project or business plans may be warranted. Because on-ground action can be initiated at this level of planning, revisiting barriers to decision making as described in the Orientation stage is warranted.

Experience with regional adaptation plans involving multiple organisations has suggested that once a regional implementation plan has been developed, this may require further refinement at an organisational level.

Specific techniques such as results chains can be used to improve strategy effectiveness, especially where achieving desired outcomes from past actions has been unsuccessful. This approach can be useful at the *Plan* level given that actions are more specific than at the *Scan* level. Further information about results chains is provided in **Box 4**.

Box 4. Using Results Chains to Improve Adaptation Strategy (Source (16))

While identifying adaptation actions can appear relatively straightforward, understanding the sequence of steps required for implementation can be elusive. A results chain shows the link between an action and desired impacts through a series of expected intermediate results. There are three basic components of a results chain: a strategy, expected outcomes, and desired impact.

Results chains can help implementation in three ways:

1. **Discuss and Refine Theories of Change** – By clearly stating how the strategy will achieve the desired impact (the theory of change), internal and external stakeholders can debate whether the desired impact can occur in practice or whether barriers to change exist;
2. **Measure Effectiveness** - Once there is agreement on the theory of change, a results chain can be used to define a project's objectives and indicators for measuring effectiveness. This can assist with an adaptive management approach and help to check that actions are having the intended outcome and if not, adjusting the actions as part of an ongoing process of review; and
3. **Develop a Common Framework for Cross-Site Learning** – Results chains can provide a framework for defining and testing common assumptions that underpin theories of change and learning about the conditions under which a strategy is or is not effective.

An example of a results chain for community capacity building for bushfire zone management is provided in **Figure 4**.

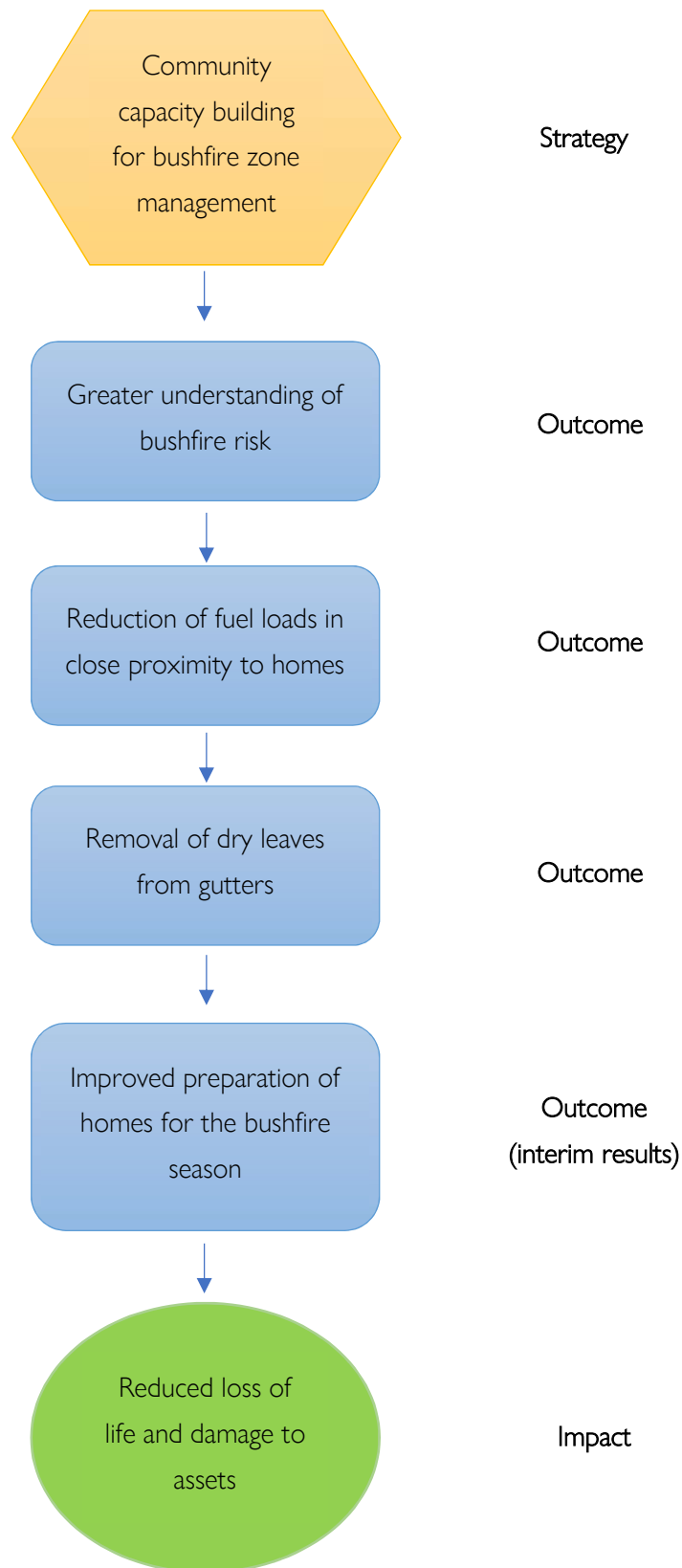


Figure 4. Results chain for community capacity building for bushfire zone management identifying examples of a strategy, outcomes and impact.

5.3 Delve Deeper

At the *Delve Deeper* level, implementation will more closely follow your organisation's standard approach to project delivery, involving development of an implementation plan with timeframes, costings and engagement of specific skill sets e.g. engineers, planners, procurement and finance officers. The barriers framework described in the Orientation stage will be a useful technique for identifying potential issues that could delay or prevent successful implementation. Importantly, the level of analysis should focus on barriers to well defined specific actions, rather than generic actions. For example, barriers to “dune restoration as a way to protect coastal assets” as opposed to “restoration of the foredunes to stabilise sand using local endemic species and sand fences at beach X”.

Because of the complex nature of climate change planning, continuing to involve decision makers and key stakeholders during the implementation stage will be important.

If your region, organisation or team is delivering multiple projects at the same time, it may be necessary to re-assess and prioritise resources across projects at regular intervals.

As for the *Plan* level, developing an implementation plan informed by a results chain approach (see **Box 2**) can assist in better understanding the relationship between the theory of change and desired outcomes.