



CONSERVATION COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

POSITION STATEMENT NO. 10

Monitoring Strategy for assessing the implementation of management plans prepared under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*

JUNE 2014

Context and Purpose

The functions of the Conservation Commission of Western Australia (Conservation Commission) include, under section 19(g) of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act):

- (i) to develop guidelines for monitoring; and
- (ii) to set performance criteria for evaluating; and
- (iii) to conduct periodic assessments of

the implementation of the management plans by those responsible for implementing them, including the CEO of the Department of Parks and Wildlife (Parks and Wildlife) and, if the land is State forest or a timber reserve, the Forest Products Commission.

The Conservation Commission has robust methodologies for conducting periodic assessments of the management of the conservation estate (*Performance assessment policy: Guidelines for assessing the management of conservation reserves, forest management plans and biodiversity in Western Australia – Conservation Commission of Western Australia September 2012*).

The Conservation Commission has also developed a Position Statement relating to the establishment of performance criteria (*Conservation Commission Position Statement No. 9: Criteria for developing Key Performance Indicators for management plans prepared under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*).

The third element, the development of guidelines for monitoring the implementation of management plans, is the subject of this Position Statement.

Monitoring is defined in the IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (November 2013) as “*the continuous collection and analysis of information used by management and partners to determine progress on the implementation of activities, achievement of objectives and use of resources*”.

The policy goes on to say that “*information collected through monitoring is an important source of data used in evaluation...while monitoring tells us whether an activity is on track to achieve its intended objectives, evaluation tells us whether the activity as a whole is on the right track*”.

Current Situation

Management plans prepared by the Conservation Commission through the agency of the Chief Executive Officer of Parks and Wildlife, include management actions aimed at supporting the delivery of management objectives and/or desired outcomes for the management planning area.

An effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of management plans has not been developed to date. As such, whether current management activities developed for management plans provide the best information sources to monitor progress on plan implementation and, later evaluation of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or are effective in the delivery of intended objectives, has not been tested. The monitoring strategy presents the opportunity to develop a risk-based assessment approach to monitor progress towards the achievement of plan objectives.

Monitoring Strategy

The development of a monitoring mechanism will support continuous improvement in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of management plans to achieve intended objectives, while delivering improvements in the development of appropriate future management actions to support planning objectives across the conservation estate.

The monitoring mechanism recognises that as measurement tools, KPIs demonstrate the vertical integration of management actions into desired outcomes which, in turn, reflect the stated values of the plan. KPIs will continue to be primary plan effectiveness measures, providing information on the progress in a reporting period towards the achievement of agency desired outcomes in management of the conservation estate.

However, more frequent monitoring of the management actions detailed in management plans will provide interim evidence of the implementation of planned activities and progress towards the delivery of plan objectives. Information may also be used for adaptive management or the reprioritisation of activities to achieve plan objectives.

There are two KPI development criteria presented in Conservation Commission Position Statement No 9 that are particularly pertinent to the monitoring strategy presented in this Position Statement:

Criterion 2: KPIs in management plans should be driven by values and used to report on management actions in relation to those values.

Criterion 5: KPIs should be clearly linked to objectives, desired outcomes, management actions and include reasonable targets.

It is proposed that collection of data and information against individual management plan management actions will provide the opportunity for:

- the Conservation Commission to meet the obligations of s19(g)(i) of the CALM Act,
- timely, ongoing information to be provided to the Conservation Commission on the implementation of the objectives of management plans,
- the collection of baseline and ongoing data to be used in the effective performance assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the objectives of management plans,
- ongoing improvement in the development of appropriate management actions, measurement and assessment tools for management plans.

Figure 1 captures the role of the reporting strategy for KPIs within the Conservation Commission's performance assessment policy framework.

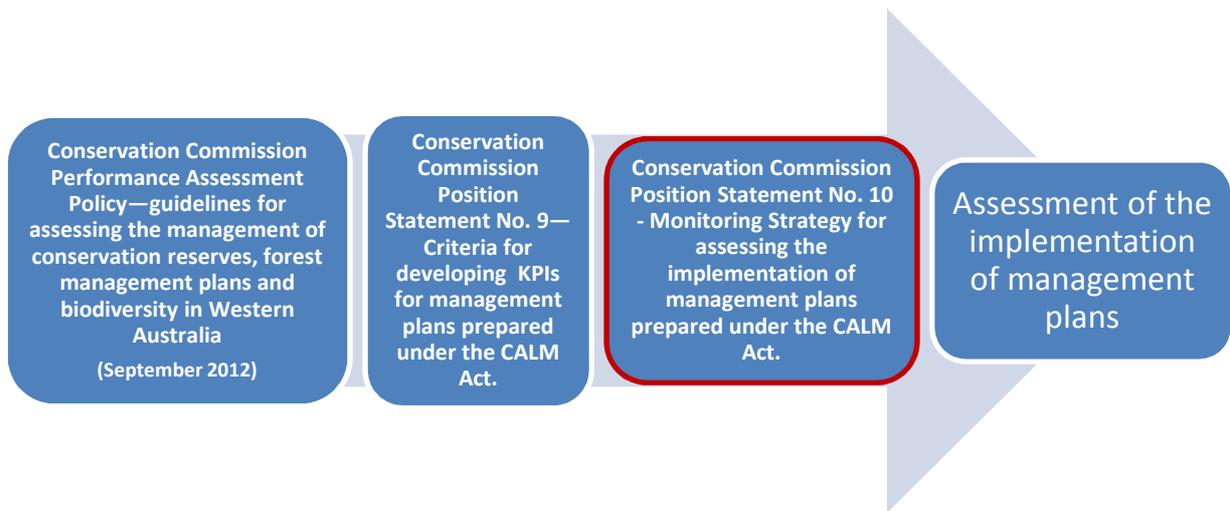


Figure 1: Conservation Commission Performance Assessment Policy Framework

Figure 2 illustrates how the Conservation Commission proposes to build status reporting of management plan implementation into its process for continual improvement. As shown, the information collated during management plan implementation would inform management plan preparation by the Conservation Commission. This reporting strategy will provide early indications of achievable KPIs and grounds for improvement.

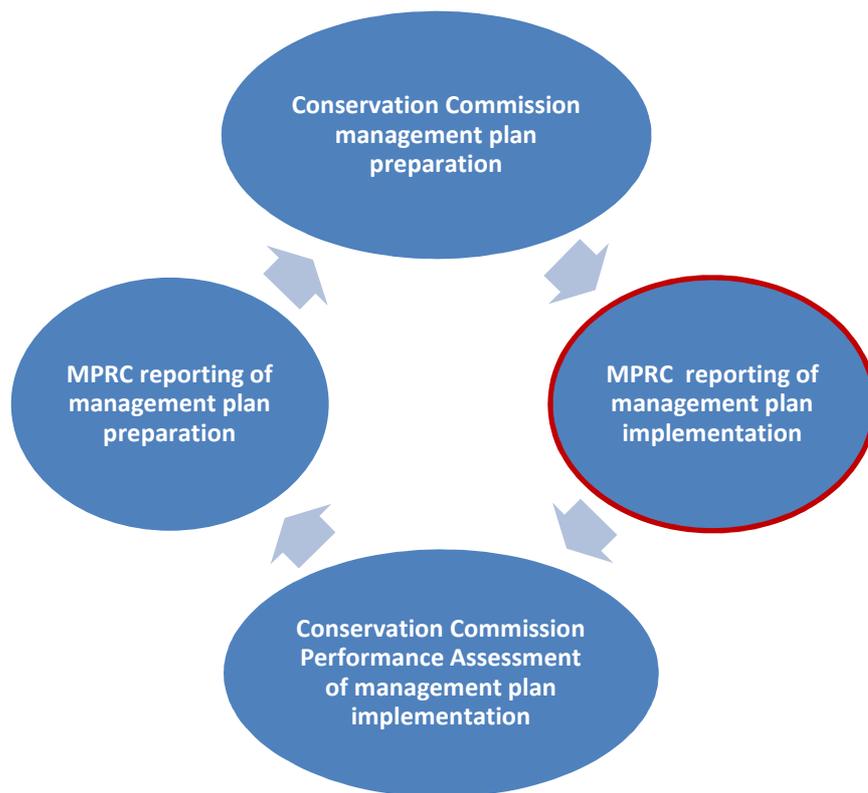


Figure 2: Conservation Commission processes for continual improvement

Monitoring Mechanism

As noted above, Conservation Commission management plans include management actions aimed at supporting the delivery of management objectives and/or desired outcomes for the management planning area.

To monitor progress in the delivery of each discrete management action, annual reporting against each action would be sought, using the familiar “traffic light” reporting model:

	Implementation of management action on track – no concerns
	Implementation of management action generally on track – minor concerns
	Implementation of management action has not commenced.

This reporting mechanism aims to promote collaboration between the Conservation Commission and Parks and Wildlife in the review and assessment by the Conservation Commission of the achievement of CALM Act management plan objectives and, in turn, to continually improve management plan preparation (see Appendix – Objectives of Management Plans under the CALM Act).

It is envisaged that this will be achieved, in the short to medium term, through:

- A commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of management actions that actively support the objectives and values detailed in management plans.
- An early indication of progress towards the achievement of targets for KPIs to measure the effectiveness of management actions (see Appendix 1: *Objectives of management plans under the CALM Act*).
- A practical tool for regional staff to regularly monitor the implementation of management plan actions to build a portfolio of evidence for performance assessment reporting.
- A practical tool for the Conservation Commission to engage with Parks and Wildlife earlier in the implementation phase of management plans prior to a performance assessment.
- Application of adaptive management techniques.

And in the medium to long term, through:

- Improved delivery of management plan objectives under the CALM Act.
- Improved portfolio of evidence for performance assessment.
- Continuous improvement in the development of management actions that support the objectives and values in management planning documents.
- Continuous improvement in the development of management plans.
- The establishment of a bank of management actions and standard KPIs for use in management planning across the conservation estate.

It is intended that the status reporting of management plan implementation through the Management Planning Review Committee would follow the structure provided in Appendix 2 *Management Plan: Implementation Status Update* (extracted from the Kalbarri National Park and Swan Coastal Plains South draft management plans).

References

Conservation Commission of Western Australia (2014). *Position Statement No. 9—criteria for developing key performance indicators under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. Conservation Commission of Western Australia, Perth.

Conservation Commission of Western Australia (2012). *Performance assessment policy—guidelines for assessing the management of conservation reserves, forest management plans and biodiversity in Western Australia*. Conservation Commission of Western Australia, Perth.

IUCN Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (November 2013)

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/evaluation_policy_eng.pdf

Appendix 1: Objectives of management plans under the CALM Act

Objectives of management plans

Section 56(1) of the CALM Act requires management plans for lands vested in the Conservation Commission to achieve and promote the following purposes:

- national parks and conservation parks: to fulfil so much of the demand for recreation by members of the public as is consistent with the proper maintenance and restoration of the natural environment, the protection of indigenous flora and fauna and the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest (s56(1)(c)).
- nature reserves: to maintain and restore the natural environment, and to protect, care for, and promote the study of, indigenous flora and fauna, and to preserve any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest (s56(1)(d)).
- CALM Act s5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves: to achieve the purpose for which the land was vested in, or for which the care, control and management of the land were placed with, the controlling body (s56(1)(e)). These areas are managed for a wide variety of purposes, including recreation, conservation of flora and fauna and historical features.
- indigenous State forests or timber reserves: to achieve the purpose, or combination of purposes, provided for in the proposed management plan under s55(1a) (s56(1)(a)).

Recent amendments to the CALM Act also require management plans to have the objectives of 'protecting and conserving the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal persons...in a manner that does not have an adverse effect on the protection or conservation of the land's fauna and flora' (see CALM Act s 56(2)).