Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative Evaluation

Nous & FRRR | Impact reporting update April 2024

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Nous is evaluating the Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought (HRPCD) Initiative, of which the CIP is one element
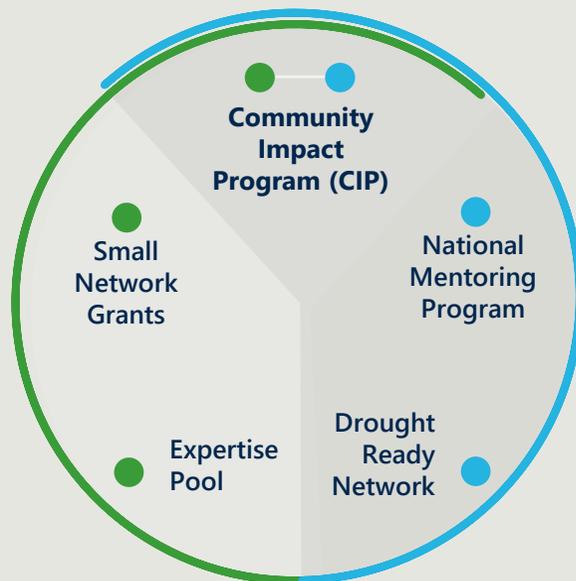
The HRCPD Initiative consist of five elements:

FRRR — Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal $19,643,570 investment

Australian Rural Leadership Foundation $10,000,000 investment

Community Impact Program (CIP)

Small Network Grants

National Mentoring Program

Expertise Pool

Drought Ready Network

The evaluation will seek to address the following question:

To what extent and how has the HRCPD initiative enabled rural, regional and remote communities to prepare for future droughts through strengthened social resilience, local capacity and capability building?

In answering this question, the evaluation aims to:

- **Capture compelling stories of impact** of the HRCPD Initiative on improving social capital and resilience in rural, regional and remote communities

- **Provide an evidence base** on how the Initiative has enabled more drought resilient communities

- Help FRRR, ARLF and DAFF **refine and adaptive the Initiative**'s design and delivery

- **Equip local organisations** with practical skills to assess, communicate and improve the impact of projects long-term.

- **Inform** the Future Drought Fund and related programs and reviews, and **future drought policy in Australia.**

The Evaluation will occur over two and half years, with the final Evaluation report due September 2025

This document includes updates to the short-term outcomes and guidance for impact reporting

Contents:

○ Important Information: Update to the short-term outcomes

○ Resource: Data collection & impact reporting guidance

○ Resource: Example questions and data collection tools

Important Information:
Update to the short-term outcomes

Nous has conducted 26 evaluation working sessions with funded regions of the CIP

The Nous evaluation working sessions

Many of you have already participated in an evaluation working session with Carlos, Sally, and the Nous Group team. These sessions aimed to:

- Introduce the HRCPD Initiative Evaluation and establish a shared understanding of its purpose
- Explore key evaluation concepts and their relevance to understanding the impact of the HRCPD Initiative
- Understand the intended outcomes of the CIP and the data collection tools to demonstrate achievement of these outcomes

If you have not yet participated in an evaluation working session and would like access to the session materials, please contact the coordinating organisation in your region or reply to this email.

Your feedback on the short-term outcomes

Thank you for providing feedback to Nous during these sessions. Your feedback will help the evaluation accurately capture the impact of your individual projects within the overall evaluation. Some participants suggested updates to four of the short-term outcomes improve clarity and be more inclusive of the full range of projects. Nous has responded to this feedback by making minor wording changes to the four identified short-term outcomes (see page 6).

Implications for your CIP project final reporting

Reporting in the Grants Gateway system has been updated to reflect the updated wording. These changes will not affect the specific outcomes you plan to report on in your final grant report to FRRR. If you have already reported on your project, you do not need to make any changes to your report.

If you have any further questions regarding your project reporting or the implications of these changes, please contact your FRRR Community Coordinator:

- Alysia at a.kepert@frrr.org.au (for regions in NT, SA, TAS, WA)
- Fiona at f.bradshaw@frrr.org.au (for regions in NSW, QLD, VIC)

Nous has made updates to four HRCPD Initiative short-term outcomes based on feedback from CIP delivery organisations

The Evaluation has identified seven short-term outcomes, building from the outcomes identified in your project roadmaps. The seven outcomes incorporate the program outcomes listed in your original project roadmap, project outcomes observed in the earlier stages of the HRCPD Initiative, project outcomes achieved by other FDF programs and the outcomes that are likely to be achieved based on a literature review of community resilience funding.

Your project reporting aligns with the short-term outcomes. The questions in the final completion reports for your CIP grants align to the seven outcomes. You will report on the 1-2 main outcomes, and any secondary outcomes, for your project.

The table below provides a summary of the seven short-term outcomes and the wording changes for four outcomes.

Current short-term outcome wording	Proposed updated wording based on community feedback
PO1. Improved communication, social connection, and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness	*No change recommended.*
PO2. Improved access to and use of services, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness	*Improved access to and use of services, **resources**, infrastructure, and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness.*
PO3. A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities	*No change recommended.*
PO4. Increased knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers, and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought	*Increased **awareness,** knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers, and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought*
PO5. Improved implementation of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought	***Increased** implementation and **improved effectiveness** of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought.*
PO6. Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience	*No change recommended.*
PO7. Growth and improved strength of community-based networks	***Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created.***

The HRCPD Initiative outcomes are different to the CIP project outcomes listed in your project roadmap

As part of the evaluation, seven new short-term outcomes have been identified. These short-term outcomes apply across all five elements of the HRCPD Initiative. The CIP project outcomes are mapped against the final seven short-term HRCPD Initiative outcomes below.

	Community Impact Program outcomes		Relevant HRCPD Initiative short-term outcomes
1	Communities identify and adopt innovative and transformative ways to build drought resilience.	PO5	**PO1.** Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness.
2	A change in awareness of and attitudes to drought resilience at the community level.	PO4	**PO2.** Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness.
3	Communities learn and share innovative ways to build drought resilience.	PO1, PO4, PO5	**PO3.** A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities.
4	An increase in the reach and activities of community leaders, mentors, networks and organisations driving action on drought resilience.	PO1, PO3, PO7	**PO4.** Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers, and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought.
5	Improved access to and greater utilisation of community infrastructure.	PO2	**PO5.** Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought.
6	Communities build their local leadership, networks, and social support.	PO1, PO6, PO7	**PO6.** Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience.
7	Community leaders, networks and organisations have stronger capability to undertake strategic drought resilience planning.	PO6	**PO7.** Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created.

Resource:

Data collection & impact reporting guidance

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Nous used the program logic model and data collection plans to provide impact reporting guidance

1. Program logic models support you to identify the primary outcomes your project will contribute towards

During the evaluation working session, you may have developed a program logic model for your project. This activity was intended to help you to identify which of the seven HRCPD Initiative outcomes your project is most directly contributing towards. You were encouraged to select two primary outcomes. These two primary outcomes will be what you select in your final project report to FRRR.

The program logic template is included overleaf.

2. Data collection plans help you to identify the data collection approach aligned to your project outcomes

Following the section of the primary outcomes that relate to your project, you were encouraged to consider the data collection strategy for measuring the achievement of these outcomes (i.e., beyond just counting the things delivered or people who participated in your project, but moving to measure potential behaviour change). Nous provided a page with guidance on the survey, interview or case study questions you might choose to ask participants of your projects for each of the outcomes you selected from the program logic model. These are provided from pages 13-27.

[TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT]

OBJECTIVES	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
What needs and policies do we want to address?	*What will we invest?*	*What will we do?*	*What will we produce?*	*Who will do what differently during the activity? Who will do what differently by the last day of the activity?*	*What larger, long-term changes does this contribute to?*

OBJECTIVES

Identify the priorities your project is aiming to support (as per your project roadmap). Delete those that don't apply to your project.
The CIP has four priorities for investment:

1. Local communities adapt to and prepare for the impacts of drought;
2. Enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities;
3. Drive local action that helps prepare for drought; and
4. Strengthen social resilience for resourceful and adaptable communities.

INPUTS

Write down in your template all the resources you will invest to deliver your project (this should include paid staff and volunteers, financial (both CIP funding and co-funding), assets (if appropriate)

ACTIVITIES

Briefly describe your project and the activities / services you are delivering.

OUTPUTS

Identify which of the output categories your project aligns with. Delete those that are not relevant:

- Networks: Initiatives to strengthen the capacity, capability, and coordination of professional, social or community networks.
- Community events to facilitate professional, social and community connection and build understanding of drought and climate change associated risks.
- Training initiatives to improve skills and capacity in community risk management, planning and project delivery.
- Community infrastructure: Small-scale community infrastructure projects to improve connectedness, wellbeing and facilities.
- Development and learning initiatives to facilitate professional, personal and leadership-related development and learning to support drought preparation.

OUTCOMES

The evaluation has identified seven outcomes that CIP projects will contribute towards. Identify the two outcomes your project most strongly will contribute towards. Add any outcomes that may be missing.

1. Improved **communication, social connection and collaboration** within and between communities to support drought preparedness.
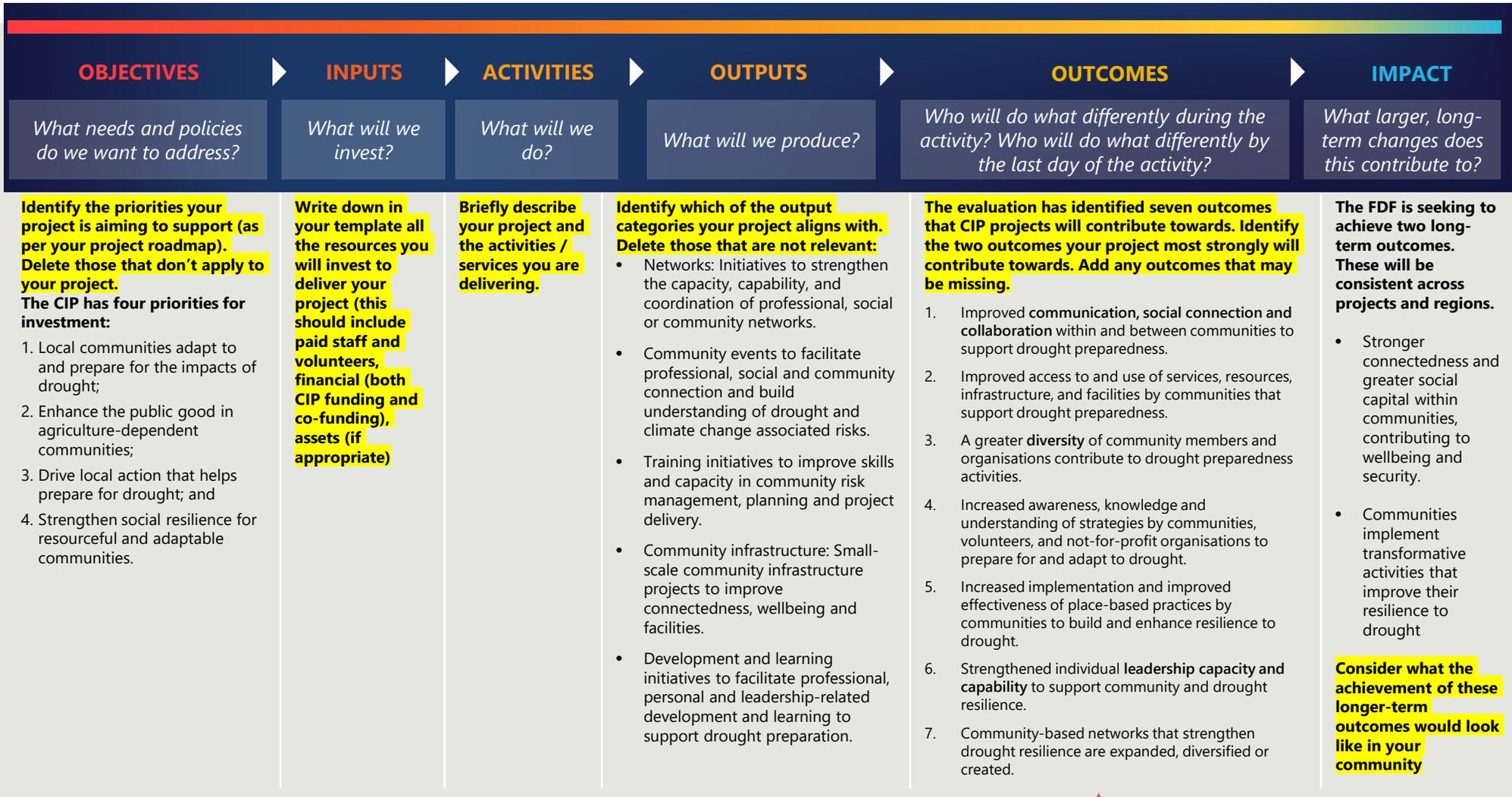2. Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure, and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness.
3. A greater **diversity** of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities.
4. Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers, and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought.
5. Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought.
6. Strengthened individual **leadership capacity and capability** to support community and drought resilience.
7. Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created.

IMPACT

The FDF is seeking to achieve two long-term outcomes. These will be consistent across projects and regions.

- Stronger connectedness and greater social capital within communities, contributing to wellbeing and security.
- Communities implement transformative activities that improve their resilience to drought

Consider what the achievement of these longer-term outcomes would look like in your community

You will report on the 1-2 main outcomes, and any secondary outcomes, for your project.

There are several data sources that can be used to understand the impact of your CIP projects

1 Surveys

2 Interviews

3 Observations / observer ratings

4 Focus groups

5 Case studies

You may have already planned to capture data relating to the delivery of your CIP projects. Consider how you can build in questions relating to the achievement of project outcomes.

Resource:

Example questions and data collection tools

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PO1: Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness

INDICATOR 1.1

HRCPD Initiative element program participants report improved communication, within their community or with another community, as a result of participating in the activity.

Data type	Tool	Questions	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project achieve the following: • Created more effective communication channels in your local community or with another community. • Increased frequency of communication in your local community or with another community.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews: Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project…" Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* *For case studies: Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO1: Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness (cont.)

HRCPD Initiative element program participants report (by region, by cohort) as a result of participating in the activity:
- Change in level of social connection within their local community, region or state
- Satisfaction with the strength of their social connections in their local community, region or state
- Increased collaboration within their community or with another community
- Improved sense of community belonging
- Improved awareness of supports available in their local community

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project achieve the following: • Strengthened social connection with your local community, region or state. • Increased community satisfaction with the strength of social connections in your local community, region or state. • Improved collaboration within your local community or between different communities. • Improved sense of belonging. • Increased awareness of supports available in the local community.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews: Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project…" Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* *For case studies: Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO2: Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure, and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness.

INDICATOR 2.1

Participants report (by region) following use of new or existing community services, resources, infrastructure and facilities:
- **increased knowledge sharing between community members**
- **improved sense of community connection**
- **increased community collaboration**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project achieve the following: • Improved access to services, resources, infrastructure or facilities that support drought preparedness. • Increased knowledge sharing between community members. • Improved sense of community connection. • Improved collaboration within the local community or between different communities.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews: Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project..." Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* *For case studies: Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO3: A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities

INDICATOR 3.1

Participants in each HRCPD Initiative element by:
- **Age cohort**
- **Gender**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	What LGA do you reside in?	Open text	Average score	% responses
Quant	Survey	What industry or sector do you predominantly work in? • Agricultural / fishing / forestry / mining (including natural resources and land management) • Construction / manufacturing / processing • Government (Local, State or Commonwealth) • Professional services (including HR, strategy, consultancy, real estate) • Financial services • Not-for-profit • Self-employed • Health services • Education • Retail • Other (please specify)	Selection from list	Average score	% responses
Quant	Survey	Do you identify as culturally and linguistically diverse?	Yes / No	Average score	% responses

PO3: A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities (cont.)

INDICATOR 3.2

Number and type of First Nations specific and culturally safe engagement opportunities (such as yarning circles), by region.

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	If you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, to what extent were there culturally safe opportunities for your engagement in the project? **For interviews:** *Respondents can rate the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above. Also ask respondents to provide details on what opportunities there were, and the benefits or challenges with these.*	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	**For case studies:** *Ask respondents to provide details on what opportunities there were and the benefits or challenges with these.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO4: Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers, and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought

INDICATOR 4.1

Participants, including volunteers and not-for-profit organisations, report (by region, by cohort) as a result of participation:
- improved understanding and awareness of drought risk
- improved understanding and awareness of climate-related risks
- increased confidence to prepare for drought events
- greater preparedness to respond to drought individually
- improved drought preparedness planning within their community
- that their community is more prepared to respond to drought

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project achieve the following: • Improved your understanding and awareness of drought risk. • Improved your understanding and awareness of climate-related risks. • Increased your confidence to prepare for drought events. • Increased your preparedness to respond to drought individually. • Improved planning within the community. • Helped you feel more prepared to respond to drought.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews:* Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project..." Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above. *For case studies:* Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO5: Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought.

INDICATOR 5.1

Participants report (by region) as a result of participation:
- **awareness of practices they were previously not aware of**
- **learning relevant skills or techniques that will enable them to employ new practices**
- **employing practices they had previously not used**
- **employing practices that were identified in regional drought resilience plans**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project achieve the following: • You became more aware of practices you were previously not aware of. • You learnt relevant skills or techniques that will enable you to employ new practices you had previously not used. • You employed practices that were identified in regional drought resilience plans. • You implement more effective practices aimed at building or enhancing resilience to drought	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews: Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project…" Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* *For case studies: Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO6: Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience

Participants report (by cohort) improved leadership behaviours as a result of participation in the activity, such as:
- **increased involvement in leadership roles**
- **decision-making, planning or problem-solving in their community**
- **group and logistical management**
- **advocacy work**
- **improved confidence or likelihood to take on a leadership role in their community**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project contribute to the following: • Increased your involvement in leadership roles. • Increased your involvement in decision-making, planning or problem-solving in their community. • Increased your involvement in group and logistical management in your community. • Increased your involvement in advocacy work. • Improved your confidence to take on a leadership role in your community.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews:* Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project…" Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above. *For case studies:* Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

INDICATOR 6.2

Participants report (by cohort), as a result of participation in the activity, increased awareness of:
- **what strong leadership looks like in their community**
- **opportunities to step into leadership roles**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project contribute to the following: • Increased your awareness of what strong leadership looks like in your community. • Increased your opportunities to step into new leadership roles.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	*For interviews: Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project…" Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* *For case studies: Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

PO7: Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created.

Participants report (by location), as a result of participation in the activity:
- **Improved awareness of community-based networks focused on building drought resilience**
- **Observing stronger or greater connections within existing or new networks**
- **The establishment of new community-based networks focused on building drought resilience**
- **Increased diversity of new or existing community-based networks**
- **Increased participation in community-based networks**
- **Increased number of activities organised by community-based networks**

Data type	Tool	Question	Response format	Analysis method	Format of insight
Quant	Survey	To what extent did participation in the project contribute to the following: • Improved your awareness of community-based networks focused on building drought resilience. • Enabled you to create stronger or greater connections within existing or new networks.	Likert (To a great extent, somewhat, very little, not at all, unsure)	Average score	% responses
Qual	Interview / Case study	• Facilitated the establishment of new community-based networks focused on building drought resilience. • Increased your participation in community-based networks. • Increased the number of activities organised by community-based networks you participated in. • Increased diversity of new or existing community-based networks **For interviews:** *Preface the statements above with "Please describe how participation in the project..." Respondents can provide descriptive responses OR rate the extent to which their participation achieved the statement, based on the Likert scale rating above.* **For case studies:** *Provide guidance for responses to be provided to each statement in one or two paragraphs.*	Conversational or open text response	Thematic	Synthesised text

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A bigger idea of success

Nous Group is an international management consultancy operating across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada.

We are inspired and determined to improve people's lives in significant ways. When our strengths complement yours and we think big together, we can transform businesses, governments, and communities. We realise a bigger idea of success.

750
PEOPLE

75
PRINCIPALS

5
COUNTRIES