

MODULE 11
PLANNING FOR AND REPORTING

Pilot edition for east and southern Africa

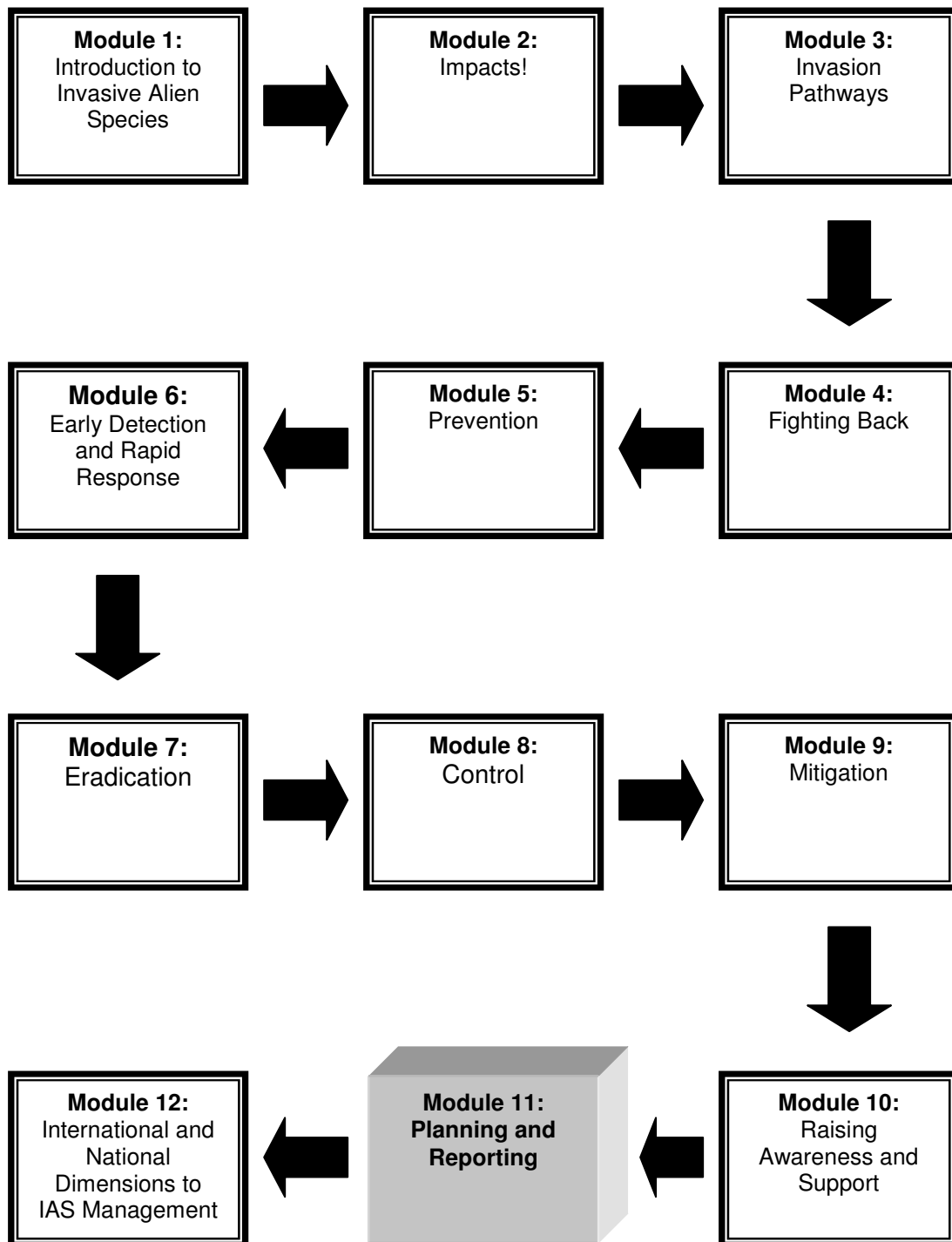


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PLANNING AND REPORTING

By the end of this module you should be able to:

- *Understand the importance of planning and reporting as part of IAS management*
 - *Recognise what plans and reports should contain*
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11.1 INTRODUCTION

11.1.1 Why plan for and report on IAS management activities?

IAS management is as much about managing information as it is about manipulating plants and animals. Unless we have good information about why we are doing something, and are able to interpret what we have achieved, we will not progress.

The importance and urgency in improving our capacity to address IAS threats locally – and globally, means we must use the best information available in designing and undertaking IAS management.

Preventing IAS incursions, eradicating or controlling them involves significant costs and risks. The number of failed attempts at managing IAS far exceeds the number that have been successful in achieving their objectives. The absence of plans was probably an important contributor to many of these failures.



Almost all projects judged to be successful will have had some sort of a plan.

11.1.2 Priorities for management

While we focus in this module on operational plans, a number of strategic decisions must first be made before projects can be selected. In particular, identifying one or more agencies with roles and responsibilities to manage IAS is critical. These organisations will need the capacity to effectively fulfil their roles.

Since there are never enough resources (especially funding) to carry out all projects, a process for setting priorities is required. Models are being used and refined which allow decision makers to rank various attributes such as biodiversity value, the nature and scale of IAS impacts, financial and social outcomes, technical feasibility, capacity-building merit and value for money of anticipated outcomes. Having a clear process for setting priorities which is consistently applied is important. Priority setting is discussed in more detail in Module 7 (Eradication).

11.2 PLANNING

11.2.1 Why plan?

- Planning helps you to think through your project
- Plans serve to link your project with the actions of others
- A plan gives others confidence to support it
- Plans provide a basis for resources to be allocated
- Plans guide your decisions and actions
- Plans allow progress to be measured and interpreted

A plan provides:

- A “statement of credibility”
- A process for addressing all the important issues
- Stimulus for other people to support and become involved
- A guide for management decisions and actions

11.2.2 Who are plans for?

Plans are required by organisations with statutory responsibilities for the resources you will be affecting. For example, if you intend operating on public land, manipulating native species or removing animals, such actions will probably require formal approval. Your plan will identify all actions requiring approvals and should provide a stimulus for appropriate approvals to be given.

Funding agencies also normally require plans so that they can see how their funds are to be spent.

Stakeholders such as indigenous people, landowners, neighbours and resource users will also use plans to obtain information about what is proposed.

Activity 11.1

Trainer: To prepare for this activity, gather information on a selected management project in your area.

Identify all the stakeholders for a real IAS management project, and discuss what sorts of information about IAS management each would need.

11.2.3 What should plans contain?

What a plan contains will depend on the information that people and agencies require. One or more of the following questions will need to be addressed:

- What are you planning to do, and why – and how will it affect various groups?
- What support do you require from different organisations?
- How can people be confident that you will achieve your objectives?
- How can stakeholders influence your activities, and participate?



Plans contain important information about what we plan to do, why, where, how and when, as well as how much it will cost and how we will measure our progress.

Remember that the PROCESS of preparing a plan can be as important as the plan itself. A good plan should reflect the needs of key stakeholders. Seeking their inputs and maintaining dialogue as the project proceeds and is reviewed, can be critical to the overall success of the project.

Planning is the first of seven steps in the management process. Reporting is the last. In this module we focus on planning and reporting. These are the steps where the “big” decisions about IAS projects are made.

The IAS management process:

- Planning
- Consulting
- Monitoring
- Choosing the methods
- Undertaking the operation
- Reviewing
- Reporting

Different agencies will have different requirements for what a plan should contain. Many will use specific terms and phrases. You should consult with those for whom you are primarily preparing the plan and agree on the planning terms and phrases to be used.

Trainer notes:

Collect some examples of strategic and operational plans from your region and use them as bases for discussion of their value in supporting IAS management.

11.2.4 What kinds of plans are there?

In the context of IAS management there are two main kinds of plans; strategic and operational.

- Strategic plans:
 - Contain discussions of strategic issues (e.g. governmental support for IAS management)
 - Address “higher level” goals (e.g. national, inter-agency)
 - Are of multi-year timeframes
 - Tend to be programmes, rather than projects
 - Form basis for declared support

- Operational plans:
 - Link associated strategic plans
 - Contain brief justifications for proposed actions
 - Are of short timeframes (usually a financial year)
 - Contain project goals and objectives
 - Contain performance measures
 - Form basis for funding and deciding actions

In this module we focus on operational plans. These are the plans with which you, as project managers and IAS management practitioners, are most likely to be involved.

11.2.5 What should an operational plan contain?

An operational plan is a formal statement of your intentions to take a series of actions to achieve a declared outcome at a defined site.

Operational plans give effect to strategic plans. They focus in specific issues and sites. They are used by people doing the work as well as by the agencies approving, funding or supporting activities.

Operational plans must be easy to follow and contain appropriate justifications and explanations where required.

Operational plans provide the basis for reporting on progress (that is, progress will be reported in relation to outcomes, objectives, actions and targets contained in the plan.

A good operational plan should contain:



Remember, different agencies will use different terms. However, these headings cover the main things which should be planned for, and reported on.

Desired Outcomes

A desired outcome is what you want to achieve. It is the reason for undertaking IAS management.

All operational plans should have a desired outcome declared which would normally be taken from a strategic plan



Outcomes are not about actions – they are about achievements

Examples of desired outcomes include:

Threatened species recovered

Ecosystem restored

Crop yields enhanced

Visitor experience enhanced

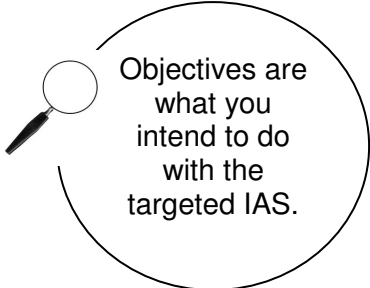
Example

Some outcomes from cat and rat eradications

In 1990 the last feral cat was removed from Jarvis Island National Wildlife Refuge in the Central Pacific Ocean. Cats were removed from two other equatorial islands; Baker Island in the 1960s and Howland Island in 1986. Introduced during the 1930s, cats and rats had extirpated several species of seabirds. Following the eradication of the cats and rats many seabirds such as blue-gray noddies, Christmas and Audubon’s shearwaters and white-throated storm-petrels have re-colonised Jarvis Island. Baker Island has been re-colonised by wedge-tailed shearwaters and hundreds of thousands of other birds. Small tern populations are returning to Howland Island as well as increased numbers of wintering shorebirds. The “Desired outcomes” for these islands were enhanced seabird populations.

Objectives

Objectives are about what you intend to do with the targeted IAS itself.



Objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)

In achieving your objectives measurable progress should be made towards the desired outcome.

Example

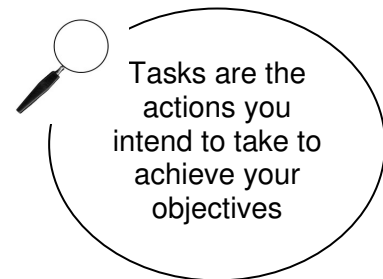
Control the possum population within Area X so that a 5% residual trap-catch index is not exceeded for the period of this plan.

Prevent taro blight establishing on country Y by establishing effective prevention (pre-border and at-the-border) and early detection/rapid response procedures by 2005, and maintaining them thereafter.

Tasks

Tasks can be listed according to the sequence of management steps: planning, consulting, monitoring, choosing the methods, undertaking the operation, reviewing and reporting.

Tasks are what IAS practitioners do.



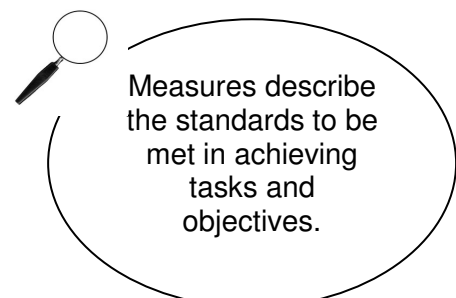
Example

By July 2004 the manager of Project X will have identify all the key stakeholders in the project. He/she will have determined the nature of their interests and ensured these interests are acknowledged in the project plan.

Maintain a monthly trapping regime to control Indian house crows in Area Y according to prescribed procedures and meeting performance standards.

Measures

Good measures are specific and realistic. If they are too general they are meaningless to the practitioner and to anyone evaluating performance. If they are too specific



they may not allow for any flexibility for the changes which almost inevitably occur as IAS projects proceed.

Measures may relate to management activities (e.g. the number of hunter days per goat killed, rodent tracking tunnel indices), or the IAS impacts you are trying to reduce (e.g. more birds breeding following eradication of an invasive alien predator, incidence of disease reduced following effective control of a vector)

We need measures to:

- Gauge our progress in achieving tasks or objectives
- Decide if we need to change techniques or approaches
- Determine if any important unpredicted changes are occurring
- Reassure funders and stakeholders that we are “on track”

11.3 REPORTING

11.3.1 Why report?

The only way to determine whether IAS management activities have been effective is to evaluate the progress made and the outcomes achieved. While many practitioners will assess their progress intuitively (“Yes, I have managed to contain this alga to that bay”, or “There are minimal deer impacts in this forest now as a result of our control”, or “Crop production has increased since we controlled that insect”), people with a stake in the outcomes of the project – including those who allocate funds to it, will probably want more assurance than a practitioner’s intuition. This is especially true when we consider that on-going prevention and control operations can involve large sums of money, and carry significant risks.

Reporting on what we have done, what we have achieved, and what we intend to do next is important because it:

- Requires practitioners to continually assess what they are doing, and why.
- Provides opportunities for other specialists to independently review progress towards objectives, the nature of activities undertaken and the quality of declared achievements.
- Allows decision makers to regularly review directions, seek changes and reconfirm their support.
- Allows others with similar IAS problems and opportunities to consider applying similar approaches.



Information about what we did, what the consequences were, and what we plan to do next should be contained in project reports.

11.3.2 How should I report?

How you report will vary enormously. This may depend on:

- Stipulated reporting requirements in the plan
- The type of activity
- The complexity of the tasks
- The level of detail required
- The preferred medium of the “client”



Remember, how you report, to whom and how often should be clearly set out in the project plan.

Reporting may involve one or more of the following:

- Regular preparation of detailed reports written according to a prescribed template
- Publication in appropriate technical or scientific journals
- Verbal presentation at steering committee and/or stakeholder meetings
- Circulation in regular community newsletters
- Opportune discussions with stakeholders

Recognising the importance of reporting and allocating sufficient resources to ensure it is done properly can be the key to achieving and sustaining desired IAS management outcomes.

Trainer notes:

Collect a range of IAS management plans and reports. Circulate these amongst participants. Ask them to assess their value for various users which they have identified.

Activity 11.2 (allow 2 – 3 hours for activity)

Mock Stakeholder Meeting

Trainer preparation:

In preparation for this activity research an IAS in your area – It could be based on a past control programme, a current one, an actual proposed control programme, or a fictional one. Gather all information on the species and methods commonly used for that species. Include information on distribution and any relevant biological information. Try to choose a controversial IAS - one that involves many stakeholders.

Activity:

Split the class into 3 groups.

Group one: The scientists proposing the control programme (6 – 8 people)

Group two: The stakeholders (The rest of the class)

Group three: The deciding council (4 – 6 people)

Group One:

Group one you are the scientists proposing the control programme. You must design a proposal for a control programme on the trainer's selected target species. Write up a rough plan which includes the methods you will use, and the timeframes. Make sure you are also prepared to explain to the "stakeholders" why they should let you go ahead with the control programme. Some of them aren't sure about this and are not very happy that they may be affected.

Group two:

You are the stakeholders and are quite suspicious about this proposed control programme. The control programme will affect you all in some way. Some of you have land which will be affected by the proposed control programme. Some of you are angry that helpless creatures will be killed. Others are afraid for their pets, etc. Each of you choose a reason as to why you don't want this to go ahead. Be creative.

Group three:

You will host a meeting between the stakeholders and the scientists. Allow each group to put their cases forward, then decide whether the project should proceed. Before you make your decision, you will go away to confer about your final decision.

You also have the power to place conditions and requirements on the project if you vote in its favour.

Describe how you will make your decision to the stakeholders and the scientists. Be as objective about your decision as possible.

11.4 SUMMARY

- Planning and reporting are key activities in IAS management
- Plans inform funders and stakeholders and provide opportunities for their involvement
- Plans guide management activities and provide a basis for review
- Reports allow assessments of progress towards goals and objectives
- Planning and reporting, together, stimulate dialogue between stakeholders, practitioners and others