

Extension Principles

FRDC is committed to ensuring our R&D investments have meaningful impacts on people's lives and the environments which support them. The integration of best practice Extension principles into the design and execution of priorities, projects and programs, is proven to enhance the relevance, effectiveness and legacy of research and development.

Principles

- 1. Identify stakeholders:** Determine all stakeholders involved in or affected by the project. This includes end-users, community members, funding agencies, policymakers and other relevant parties.
- 2. Understand needs and priorities:** Conduct thorough needs assessments to understand the specific needs, motivations, challenges, and priorities of the target stakeholders. This can involve informal engagement, surveys, interviews, focus groups and literature reviews. Think about the problem or opportunity based on the need.
- 3. Identify the type of problem/project:** Some problems/projects are highly technical and less complicated. Other projects are complex and involve social as well as technical components. These projects require increased extension resources and expertise at design and implementation stage. For these projects there is often value in bringing in diverse perspectives and to apply systems thinking approaches. Note that even simple technical projects often require extension as there are often stakeholders that are concerned or could be impacted by decisions informed by that project.
- 4. Develop a logic for how change can be achieved and set clear objectives:** Develop sound thinking including all the steps and assumptions around how the project will achieve change. Use tools such as Theory of Change and systems thinking where appropriate. Define clear and measurable objectives for the project that reflect the needs, motivations and constraints of the end users. Ensure that these objectives are aligned with any strategic planning and the needs of the stakeholders.
- 5. Involve stakeholders in project:** Where there is strong stakeholder interest, engage stakeholders throughout the project process to ensure their perspectives are considered and incorporated, or just keep them informed. This can help increase the relevance and effectiveness of the project outcomes.
- 6. Utilise participatory approaches:** Implement participatory approaches such as co-design workshops, citizen science, or community advisory boards to involve stakeholders in decision-making processes and foster co-ownership of the project.
- 7. Adapt communication strategies:** Tailor communication strategies to effectively reach and engage with diverse stakeholder groups. This may involve using plain language, visual aids, multimedia formats, or culturally appropriate communication methods.
- 8. Promote capacity building:** Provide opportunities for capacity building among stakeholders to empower them to actively participate in and benefit from the project. This can include training sessions, skill-building workshops, or knowledge-sharing events.
- 9. Facilitate collaboration and networking:** Facilitate collaboration and networking among stakeholders to maximize the impact of the project. This can involve organizing networking events, establishing online forums, or creating partnership agreements.
- 10. Monitor and evaluate impact:** Develop robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks based on the project's logic or theory of change and assess the impact of the project using scientific techniques. Do evaluation during the project to improve the project and then at the end to determine impact and to inform future actions.
- 11. Ensure project legacy:** Plan for the sustainability of project outcomes beyond the project implementation. This may involve developing strategies for ongoing extension, funding, institutional support, capacity building and stakeholder engagement to ensure both immediate and long-term impacts.

Extension Officer Network

The FRDC's Extension Officer Network was established in mid-2022. One Extension Officer was appointed in each State and Territory, tasked with engaging directly with individuals and organizations involved in fishing and aquaculture. The network's purpose is to facilitate best practise extension to achieve impactful research and development. A key role is to identify the research and development needs of grassroots stakeholders for inclusion in FRDC's investment calls.

How can Extension Officers help you?

Do you:

- have a great idea or are tackling a challenge related to seafood where R&D may help you?
- want the latest R&D information on your topic?
- want help connecting with people that you can collaborate with?
- want advice on best-practise extension to achieve impact and adoption from your R&D?

Then contact your local Extension Officer. They are keen to help you, and anyone else working in F&A and the broader seafood sector and people that don't normally apply for FRDC investment.