

# Developing an Evaluation Plan for MLA Extension Investments



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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist you in developing an evaluation plan for producer adoption (extension) investments that will deliver significant on farm practice changes and resulting economic (productivity changes and/or cost reductions), environmental or social impacts.

Further detailed guidelines on how to measure attributable adoption and economic impact from extension type investments are available from the [MLA Extension Program Evaluation Framework](#) and these should be read in conjunction with this document.

Note that the following types of projects would likely not be considered as delivering significant, directly attributable, impact related adoption and hence do not need to be evaluated for practice change adoption and impact.

- Projects primarily delivering extension materials, web site content, scientific publications etc but little or no directly attributable practice change adoption activities (category 2 tool/enabler projects).
- Projects that do not include a practice change adoption pathway within the current project, but assume later adoption via other MLA extension programs (products) such as PDS, PGS.
- Primarily R&D projects with small scale producer involvement and limited R&D focussed producer sites (category 3 type projects).

However, the above investments may still require their delivery effectiveness evaluated. See [Step 3](#) for some guidelines around this aspect of evaluation.

Further information regarding the overall evaluation approach taken by MLA for measuring the economic, social and environmental impacts from all MLA marketing and research investments is available on the MLA web site at [Evaluation | Meat & Livestock Australia \(mla.com.au\)](#).

## Overview

Your plan should explicitly cover the following three steps, with the measurement of delivery effectiveness in [Step 3](#) clearly separated from the adoption and impact measurement outlined in [Step 1](#) and [Step 2](#).

- [Step 1](#) – In developing the project deliverables and objectives, identify and document significant, directly attributable adoption activities and their related adoption and impact KPIs that will deliver practice change.
- [Step 2](#) – Measure the attributable adoption and on farm impact resulting from MLA investment in producer extension programs, or those R&D projects that contain a significant extension component and where producer adoption is a project objective.
- [Step 3](#) – Measure the delivery effectiveness of a project (whether adoption focussed or not) in delivering contracted or agreed program objectives, as well as other, non-economic impacts such as Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Aspirational (KASA) metrics.

## Step 1 – Set up project for practice change adoption & delivering impact

The following check list should be used to identify and document evaluation planning requirements for projects that include significant, directly attributable adoption activities that deliver practice change and hence require adoption and impact evaluation (category 1 projects).

It is expected that this will primarily occur as part of the project proposal and be specified in the service provider contract (statement of work). However, there may be occasions where this can only be done at a later stage of the project e.g. once the R&D has been successfully completed.

Projects may have a part R&D and part adoption focus. The funding and activities relating to each should be clearly identified.

Multiple projects may contribute to an overall extension program (product). If this is the case, you should clearly identify the contribution of each project against the overall extension program (product).

Action	Purpose/Focus	Example Metrics
<i>Does this project include significant, attributable adoption activities that deliver practice change?</i>	<i>Identify whether the allocated funding and deliverables of this project include <u>significant</u> and <u>directly attributable</u> adoption (practice change).</i>	<i>Adoption related KPIs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of producers adopting</li> <li>• Number of hectares, animals etc affected by adoption.</li> </ul>
<i>If so, what is the adoption pathway and activities?</i>	<i>Identify the adoption pathway(s) <u>within</u> this project. The type, scale and number of adoption activities should clearly support the adoption KPIs above, adjusted for attribution (attributable practice change versus participation)</i>	<i>Adoption related activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of workshops and expected attendance levels</li> <li>• Training sessions, open days</li> <li>• etc</li> </ul>
<i>What are the practice changes that will be adopted and hence deliver on farm impact?</i>	<i>Identify the practice change area(s) targeted by this project. See practice change areas from the <a href="#">MLA Extension Program Evaluation Framework</a> document.</i>	<i>Practice change areas</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reproductive efficiency</li> <li>• Feedbase</li> <li>• Animal wellbeing</li> <li>• etc</li> </ul>

Action	Purpose/Focus	Example Metrics
<p><i>Within the practice change area, what is the practice change type?</i></p>	<p><i>Identify the specific practice change type within the above area.</i></p> <p><i>See practice change types from the <a href="#">MLA Extension Program Evaluation Framework</a> document.</i></p>	<p><i>Practice change type &amp; KPI</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Conception rate %</i></li> <li>• <i>Calf mortality rate (%) or Calf survival rate (%)</i></li> <li>• <i>etc</i></li> </ul>

## Step 2 – Measuring practice change adoption & impact

In developing an evaluation plan for measuring practice change adoption and economic impact (productivity increases and/or cost savings), the detailed guidelines in the [MLA Extension Program Evaluation Framework](#) should be followed. This also includes an example of implementing this framework.

The framework consists of four components.

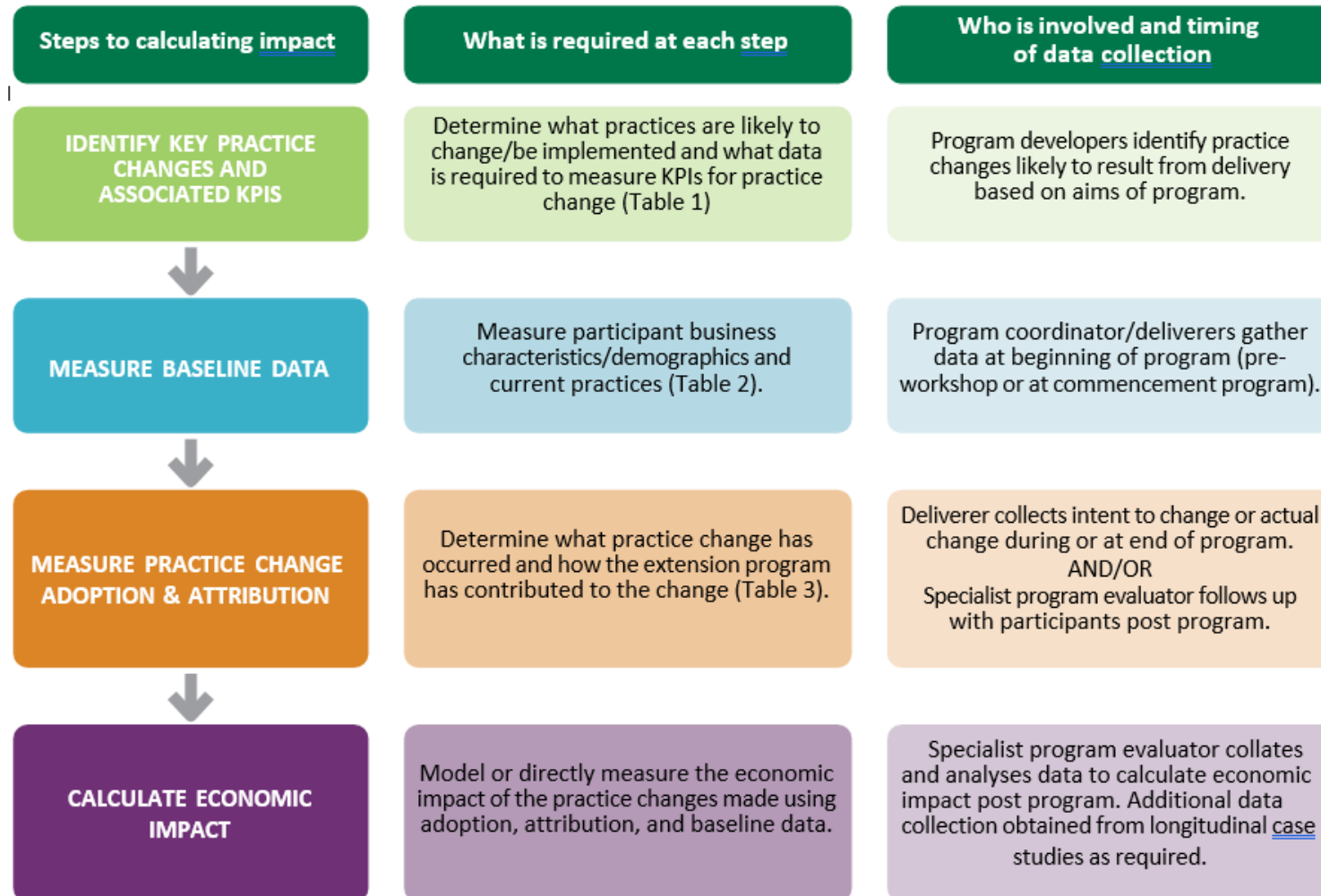
1. Identification of key practice change area/s and related productivity and economic KPIs that need to be measured to assess impact, along with associated data requirements. This should largely have been completed as part of project set up.
2. Collection of baseline data from participants.
3. Measurement of adoption and attribution of practice changes made by participants.
4. Guidelines for who collects the data, when/how often this occurs and using what methods.

Figure 1 details the flow of information from identification of practice change KPIs to calculation of economic impact. Your evaluation planning and activities should follow this structure.

Note that when measuring non-economic impacts such as environmental or social benefits, a similar set of steps should be followed. However you should consult MLA's [Triple Bottom Line Evaluation Framework](#) and associated [Triple Bottom Line Evaluation Framework Guidelines](#) for further information on how to measure these benefit types.

Figure 1 shows the key steps from the extension framework guidelines.

Figure 1: Steps to calculating extension economic impact



## Step 3 – Measuring project delivery effectiveness

Step 3 of evaluation planning focusses on measuring the delivery effectiveness of a project (whether adoption/impact focussed or not) in engaging the target audience and delivering contracted or agreed program objectives. To measure effectiveness, additional data collection is required that is separate from the adoption and impact data collection identified in steps 1 and 2.

Many of these measurements would relate to Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Aspirational (KASA) metrics, as well as MLA’s project management activities relating to milestone delivery, service provider performance etc.

The following checklist provides some guidance on measuring delivery effectiveness.

Area	Purpose/Focus	Example Metrics
<i>Delivery of contractual milestones and project objectives</i>	<i>Were the contracted milestones and objectives delivered on time, to budget and approved by MLA?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Milestones on track/delivered on time.</i></li> <li><i>Objectives achieved/not achieved and why.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Engagement of target audience, participant satisfaction/enjoyment, deliverer effectiveness</i>	<i>Experience of producers involved in the project – extent to which they found the project/ activity useful, of value and were satisfied.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Attendance surveys for producers or advisers at an event providing a score (1-10) on engagement, satisfaction, usefulness, deliverer etc.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations</i>	<i>Describe the changes in KASA that were achieved.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Change in knowledge, attitudes and skills of core and observer participants before and after project/activity.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Communication analytics</i>	<i>Identify the reach of communication channels in promoting project opportunities and findings.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Web page hits.</i></li> <li><i>E-Newsletter send numbers and open rate.</i></li> <li><i>Social media views, shares and interactions.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Project learnings, barriers / enablers to adoption</i>	<i>What went well? What can we do better?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>