

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Framework Executive Summary

NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

This document is an executive summary of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Framework. It outlines the framework's purpose, approach, key principles and key activities.

Adapted from the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy MERI Framework document developed by ARTD Consultants for the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

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1 Context: NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (the Strategy) was released in June 2022. The Strategy aims to make NSW more resilient and adapted to the impacts of climate change. The Strategy delivers foundational and critical information, services and supports and enables state and local government entities and communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The NSW Government committed \$93.7 million to deliver the Strategy over 8 years from July 2022 – June 2030.

1.1 Strategy objectives

The Strategy includes four key objectives:

Objective 1: Well adapted built environment and infrastructure

Develop and maintain the built environment and infrastructure to prevent, withstand and recover from climate change impacts, while continuing to perform its function and serve the community. This includes developing more resilient infrastructure after disasters.

Objective 2: Well adapted natural environment, biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources

Actively manage natural systems to be functional and resilient in the face of climate change by enabling adaptation that protects the environment, sustainably manages different uses and maintains ecosystems and biodiversity so they can be enjoyed.

Objective 3: Well adapted economy, businesses, industries and livelihoods

Manage the risks and take advantage of opportunities for our economy, businesses, industries and workers, including the creation of new jobs and industries generated by a climate-resilient future. This includes job opportunities from investment in clean technologies and infrastructure projects.

Objective 4: Well adapted society, government, communities, families and individuals

Society, government, communities, families and individuals have the capacity and resources to adapt to and avoid the worst impacts of climate change and to maintain wellbeing and prosperity.

1.2 Strategy priorities and actions

The Strategy describes how the NSW Government will undertake a wide range of adaptation actions which are intended to expand and strengthen the following priorities:

Priority 1	Develop robust and trusted metrics and information on climate change risk.
Priority 2	Complete climate change risk and opportunity assessments.
Priority 3	Develop and deliver adaptation action plans.
Priority 4	Embed climate change adaptation in NSW Government decision-making.

There are 16 actions in the Strategy under the four priorities and four additional actions relating to the delivery of government reports and disclosures and monitoring and evaluation for the Strategy. DCCEEW is responsible for leading the delivery and review of the Strategy on behalf of the NSW Government as a whole.

2 Strategy program logic

A program logic (Figure 1) has been developed for the Strategy. It summarises the Strategy actions, their outputs and outcomes, feedback loops, assumptions and external factors that may impact successful implementation.

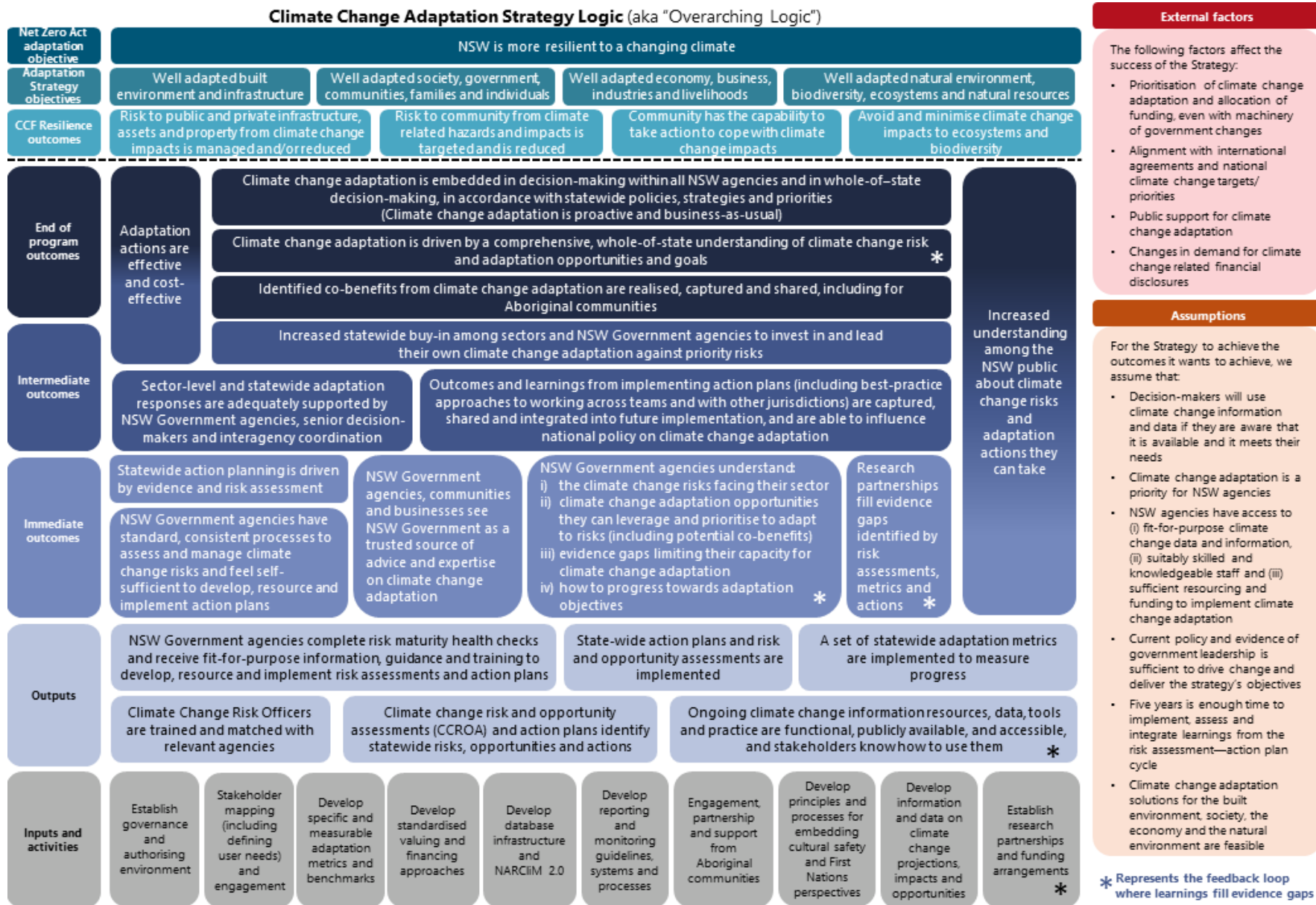


Figure 1: Program logic for the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

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3 MERI Framework summary

The Strategy states the NSW Government will monitor, report and evaluate action on climate change adaptation to both measure progress towards a climate-resilient NSW, and to ensure continuous improvement. This section outlines the MERI Framework purpose, approach, principles, key audiences and the timetable of MERI activities.

3.1 Purpose

The MERI Framework outlines how the NSW government will measure progress of the Strategy towards its intended outcomes. It identifies stakeholders, and their information needs in relation to monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities, and sets out learning and improvement activities to respond to the insights garnered through monitoring and evaluation findings.

It seeks to:

- communicate what success looks like for the Strategy
- ensure consistency and clarity in evaluating the success of the Strategy
- provide guidance on the data that need to be collected and monitored to inform decision making
- provide guidance on how to use monitoring data for adaptive management of the Strategy and its Actions.

The MERI Framework also facilitates compliance with the NSW Treasury policy and guidelines for evaluation.¹

3.2 Approach

The Strategy sets out a series of priorities that aim to help all NSW stakeholders adapt to climate change. Climate change and climate adaptation responses are complex and dynamic systems and the evidence base for effective adaptation is still emerging.

Accordingly, this MERI Framework is based on a systems evaluation perspective, rather than a traditional program evaluation perspective that focuses on actions as individual components. This

¹ NSW Treasury (2023). [TPG22-22 Policy and Guidelines: Evaluation](#).

means the Framework does not aim to determine the contribution of any single Strategy Action towards the Strategy objectives, but rather the contribution of the Strategy Actions as a whole.

3.3 Principles

The following principles underpin the MERI Framework:

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting are part of Strategy management. Planning and delivering evaluation activities are part of Strategy management, and include:

- allocating and managing resources for evaluation activities
- collecting data during delivery of the Strategy Actions
- communicating about monitoring and evaluation with stakeholders.

Evaluations are evidence based and quality assured. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities under this framework seek to use the best available data.

Evaluation design is fit for purpose. The framework provides guidance to program teams and evaluators on what needs to be addressed when planning and implementing evaluations. But it also allows for flexibility to make sure the design can encompass:

- the unique characteristics of the Strategy Actions and their related activities
- the needs of the varied stakeholder groups for the Strategy Actions
- changes in the delivery of Strategy Actions and changes in the climate change policy context over time
- the methods and approaches that will achieve the most meaningful insights.

Evaluation findings are transparent and open. A range of stakeholders may be affected by, or have an interest in, the evaluation results. Findings must be clearly documented in an evaluation report.

Evaluations are ethical. Evaluation processes consider the interests and sensitivities of all stakeholders, including their diverse backgrounds, needs and contributions. Individuals should not be identifiable in reporting unless they have provided explicit permission.

3.4 Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement activities

Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement are different activities but are most valuable when they are integrated with each other, as shown in Figure 2.

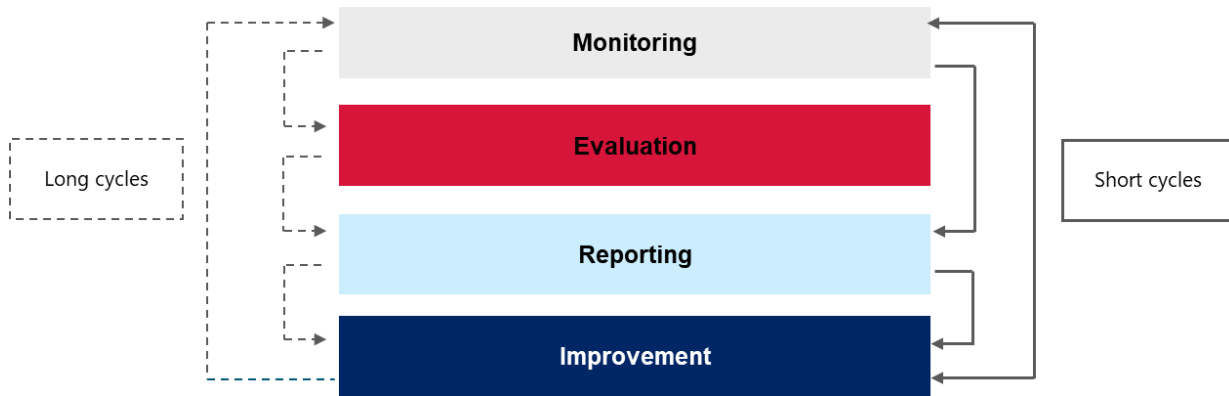


Figure 2: Relationship between monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement

3.4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is ongoing, routine data collection and analysis to understand the progress and performance of an initiative. Monitoring activities for the Strategy aim to track progress in implementing the Strategy Actions and achieving Strategy outcomes. Monitoring will also help identify and manage emerging risks and opportunities.

Due to the complexity of climate systems and adaptation responses, and the lack of agreed metrics (at this time) to measure adaptation progress, effective use of monitoring data to inform improvement will require collaboration, iteration and judgement.

It is expected the Net Zero Commission will be an end-user of monitoring and reporting data to assist their annual report function to monitor and review progress towards the adaptation objective under the NSW *Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023*.

3.4.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic and transparent process to assess the merit, worth, and/or significance of a program, strategy or policy. It is more in-depth than monitoring and provides longer-cycle judgements to inform decision making.

Evaluation of the Strategy will take a statewide perspective, aiming to determine how well NSW is adapting to climate change, and the effectiveness of Strategy Actions and adaptation action plans in contributing to resilience and adaptation objectives.

The Strategy states evaluations will be published by a panel comprised of representatives from Infrastructure NSW, the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, the NSW Chief Economist and other representatives with suitable expertise.

The evaluation activities that will occur for the Strategy are:

- the first evaluation report will be published in 2028
- future evaluation reports at least every 5 years after that.

3.4.3 Reporting

Reporting is the process of formally communicating information from monitoring and evaluation.

Reporting for the Strategy aims to:

- enable the department to share information about the ongoing progress of work under the Strategy
- inform leaders who have oversight of the Strategy about key risks in a timely manner, to ensure risks are known and managed
- provide program teams with information about their own progress.

The following principles apply for reporting at both the Strategy and Strategy Action level.

Reporting audiences and their information needs are clearly defined.

The value of a report is in the information being provided for the audience's needs.

Reporting requirements are harmonised wherever feasible.

Leveraging the 'collect once, use many times' data principle. The same is encouraged wherever possible for reporting purposes where governance groups have similar information needs.

Reporting roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Clear roles and responsibilities support the reporting process. This includes any responsibilities in relation to preparation, interpretation, and decision making.

Providing sufficient guidance for reporting stakeholders.

This includes defining the expected quality of reports, instructions about processes that should be followed, and the decisions/actions that reporting audiences should take.

Reporting is as automated as possible.

The systems supporting the Strategy are evolving. Best efforts will be made to automate as much as possible as the system matures.

3.4.4 Improvement

Improvement is the action taken on the basis of the data and insights from monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Many of the Strategy Actions are innovative. This means planned activities to capture learnings and opportunities for improvement will be fundamental to support implementation of the Strategy and to achieve outcomes.

The program teams responsible for the Strategy Actions will monitor progress towards delivering the activities and outputs and achieving the expected outcomes. This will be done with reference to the nested program logic, the monitoring and evaluation activities for the Strategy and data collection and management plans.

3.5 Review of the MERI Framework

The MERI Framework will be reviewed and updated as required. Triggers for review include (but are not limited to):

- Changes to the funding, structure or the outcomes being sought for the Strategy.
- Two years have elapsed since the last review and updates.