

Participatory Evaluation in the Top End: An Emerging Prototype

Jonnie Saegenschmitter and Hmalan Hunter-Xenie
CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems

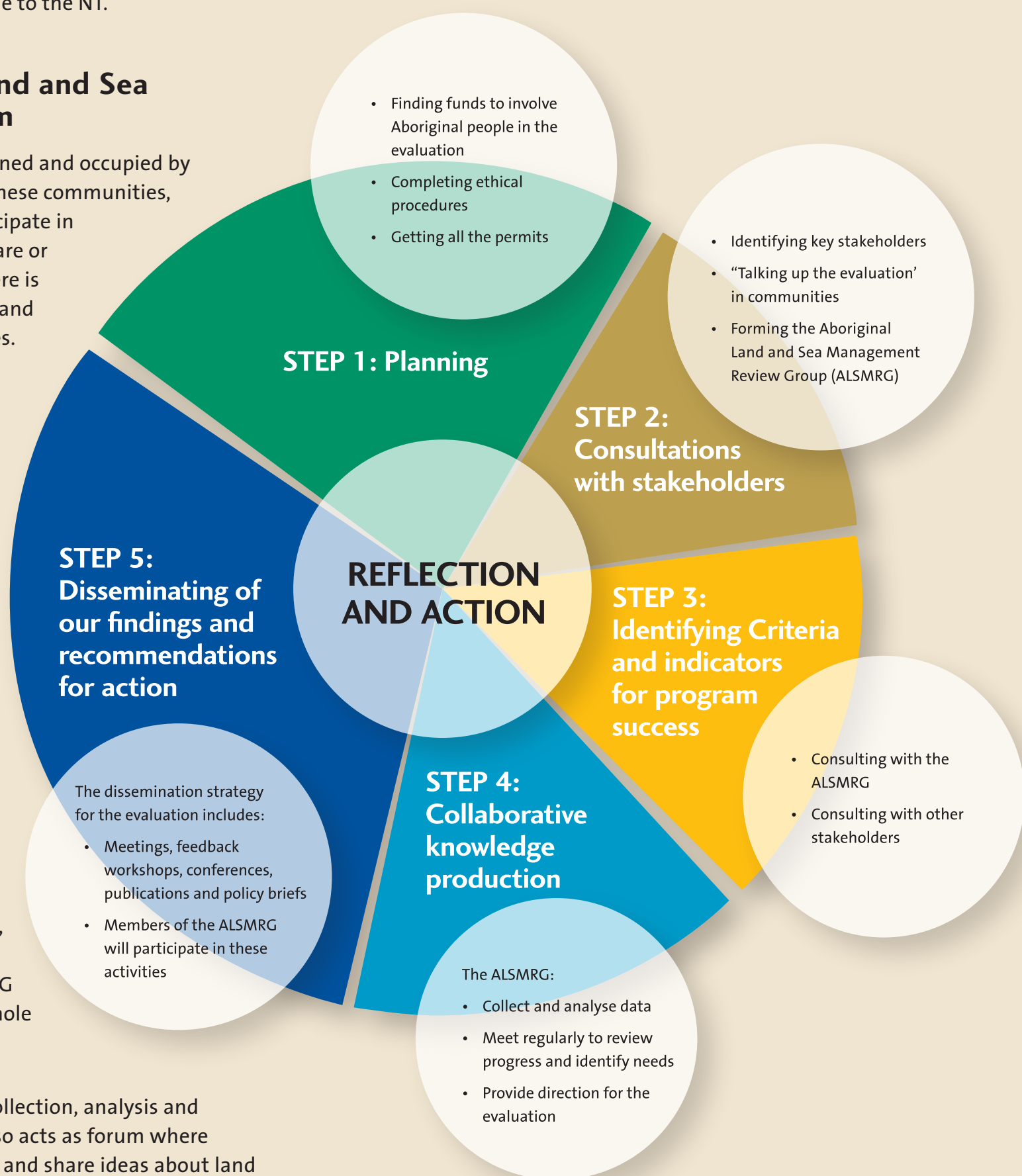
More and more organisations around the world are applying Participatory Evaluations (PE) as a suitable tool to assess the performance of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). In different parts of the world the approach is usually adjusted to suit local contexts, issues and setting. In the Northern Territory (NT), the Aboriginal land and sea management programs present particular challenges for PE. We made some adjustments to the methodology and have developed a prototype which we feel is more applicable to the NT.

Evaluating the NT Land and Sea Management Program

In the NT 42% of the land is owned and occupied by Aboriginal people. In some of these communities, not all, Aboriginal people participate in formal CBNRM through land care or ranger programs. Currently, there is little documented information and analysis about CBNRM activities.

In 2005, a participatory evaluation project was initiated with the involvement of 14 Indigenous people to look at the Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Program. The group is called the **Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Review Group (ALSMRG)**. The members of the ALSMRG are Balupalu Yunupingu, Cherry Daniels, Dean Yibarbuk, Elaine Watts, Grace Daniels, Hmalan Hunter-Xenie, Jonnie Saegenschmitter, Lorraine Williams, Matthew Ryan, Mona Liddy, Otto Champion, Peter Christophersen, Victor Cubillo and Wanyubi Marika. The work of the ALSMRG is facilitated by Dr Bevyline Sithole from CSIRO.

As well as participate in data collection, analysis and dissemination, the ALSMRG also acts as forum where members exchange experience and share ideas about land and sea management from their own perspectives. In this way, the members already reflect on the knowledge that they are gathering and apply it in their own programs. They also act as nodes of information for communities about the evaluation project.



Acknowledgements: The Participatory Evaluation in the Top End project is funded by the Northern Territory Research and Innovation Fund; CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems; the Northern Land Council, the School for Environmental Research, Institute of Advanced Studies, Charles Darwin University; the NT Department of Education; Employment and Training and the NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts.

*Further information: CSIRO Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre, Darwin NT
Phone (08) 8944 8400*

