Project Management Guides and Templates

The Project Management Guides and Templates are provided by Hort Innovation to assist Service Providers in developing specific project management components for projects they are delivering.

Good project management and planning is essential for effective and efficient project delivery. It enables maximum impact from levy investment in R&D and Marketing.

Service Providers may use the templates supplied by Hort Innovation or develop their own if a project has specific contextual requirements, or they have their own templates that meet Hort Innovation's requirements.

The guides and templates cover:

1. Risk Management Plans – to ensure risks are identified and then managed in a structured way so to minimise their impact on a project
2. Stakeholder Engagement Plans – the framework for engaging with a project's target audience and project stakeholders
3. Communications Strategies – the systematic planning of information flow
4. Monitoring and Evaluation Plans – to identify the impact pathway of a project, and plan for collection of data and information that can be used to make evaluative judgements and decisions

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Toolkit is available separately. Various M&E tools for data collection and evaluation are provided.

For further information, please contact the Data & Insights team or the relevant R&D/Marketing Manager at Hort Innovation.

Guide to developing a Risk Management Plan

The information in this document is provided by Hort Innovation to guide Service Providers in developing a Risk Management Plan for projects they are delivering. This guide has been informed by the Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360:2004, Risk Management (superseded by AS/NZS ISO 310000:2009, Risk management – Principles and guidelines)[1].

A risk refers to any factor that may adversely affect the success of a project in terms of realising the agreed project outcomes, delivery of project outputs, achievement of timeframes or meeting budgetary constraints[2]. The purpose of a Risk Management Plan is to ensure risks are identified and then managed in a structured way, to minimise their impact on a project.

A Risk Management Plan should cover the following ten steps. A template for a Risk Management Plan is provided at the end of this guide. Service Providers may use this template or develop their own specific to their project. For further information, please contact the Data & Insights team or the relevant R&D/Marketing Manager at Hort Innovation.

1. **Risk identification** – what could happen that will have a consequence for the project?

Identify what could happen that will have a consequence for the delivery of project outputs, achieving intended outcomes and project progress in terms of budget and agreed timeframes. To assist in identifying potential risks, it is useful to consider project risk categories. Possible risk categories include (these are not mutually exclusive):

human resource	financial resource	WHS	equipment
organisational	environmental	commercial	technological
reputational	economic	informational	facilities
target audience	relationship	dependency	political

2. **Cause/source identification** – when, where, why and how could the risk event happen?

Identify the situation that would lead to the identified risk event occurring. How could it happen? What would cause it? There may be multiple causes/sources for a specific risk. They should be listed separately as they may require different controls. This step is critical to identifying possible risk treatment options.

3. **Impact identification** – how would the risk impact on project delivery and what is the consequence level?

Provide a brief description of how the identified risk would impact on the project. For example:

a) Prevent (delivery of/conduct of/some aspect of the project)
b) Delay (increased time to completion or realisation of outcomes)
c) Degrade/decrease (some process, output and/or outcomes of the project or image of the organisation(s) involved).

Identify the scale of the consequence of the risk event occurring. Consequence and likelihood tables are used to provide definitions for rating scales so there is a common understanding of their meaning; tables should be consistent with the context of the risk management activity[3]. An identified risk may have more than one impact and these should be listed separately. An example of a simple consequence scale[3] is provided below:

[1] http://asnsw.interactiontraining.net/Resources/AS-NZS%204360-2004.pdf
[2] Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines Version 7.0 (July 2011)
[3] Risk Management Guidelines Companion to AS/NZS 4360:2004

Descriptor	Definition
Severe	Most objectives cannot be achieved
Major	Some important objectives cannot be achieved
Moderate	Some objectives affected
Minor	Minor effects that are easily remedied
Negligible	Negligible impact upon objectives

4. **Likelihood identification** – what is the frequency or probability of the risk occurring?

The scale of frequency or probability of the identified risk occurring will depend on the nature of the risk causes relative to the project. The scale used must be appropriate for the specific project and activities. An example of a simple likelihood scale (probability)[3] is provided below:

Descriptor	Description
Probable	Can be expected to occur during the project
Possible	Not expected to occur during the project
Improbable	Conceivable but highly unlikely to occur during the project

5. **Uncontrolled risk level** – what is the risk assessment?

The level of an identified risk is based on a combination of the determined consequence and likelihood of the risk event occurring. An example of a simple risk level matrix[3] is provided below:

	Consequences		
Likelihood	Major	Moderate	Minor
Likely	Red	Red	Amber
Possible	Red	Amber	Green
Unlikely	Amber	Green	Green

6. **Risk evaluation** – is the level of risk acceptable or unacceptable?

Could you defend that the level of risk is acceptable? To determine acceptability or otherwise, you may compare the level of risk against a risk threshold, criteria or both. For example, in the above risk level matrix Red=Immediate Action, Amber = Heightened Action, and Green = Business as Usual.

7. **Risk treatment options** – what controls are in place, or will be in place, to manage the risk?

If the level of an identified risk is above an acceptable threshold, risk mitigation/management actions must be identified. The actions will reduce the negative consequences or likelihood associated with the identified risk (or both). If the level of risk is below an acceptable threshold, no actions may be required (risk acceptance).

8. **Treated risk level** – what is the residual risk following implementation of risk treatment options?

Combine the adjusted levels of consequence and likelihood to assess the adjusted level of risk.

9. **Treated risk evaluation** – is the treated risk level acceptable or unacceptable?

With risk management controls in place, could you defend that the level of risk is acceptable?

10. **Responsibility allocation** – who is responsible?

Who is responsible for monitoring and managing risks? The person/s responsible for undertaking risk management actions may be distinct from the person/s accountable for the Risk Management Plan.

Risk Management Plan Template

This Risk Management Plan template, Risk Assessment Matrix and Consequence/Likelihood Scales[4] may be used, or Service Providers can develop their own with specific context for their project.

Risk Likelihood Scale

Descriptor	Definition
Remote	May occur only in exceptional circumstances during the project; < 10% probability
Unlikely	Could occur in some circumstances during the project; 10 – 20% probability
Possible	Should occur at some time during the project; 20 – 50% probability
Likely	Will probably occur in most circumstances during the project; 50 – 80% probability
Almost Certain	Expected to occur in most circumstances during the project; > 80% probability

Risk Consequence Scale

Descriptor	Definition
Insignificant	All project outputs delivered and outcomes achieved; No loss of reputation of organisation/s; No loss of work time (e.g. due to availability of staff or weather interruptions); Minimal loss/damage to assets; Loss or impairment of a small amount of non-critical information
Minor	Outputs delivered but some quality reduction; Some reputational damage to organisation/s; Temporary loss of work time; Temporary corruption/loss of services/resources or non-critical information; Some loss of opportunity
Moderate	Failure to deliver some outputs and/or significant quality reduction in some outputs; Moderate reputational damage to organisation/s; Medium-term loss of work time; Corruption/loss of non-critical information resources
Major	Failure to deliver most outputs; Significant reputational damage to organisation/s; Long-term loss of work time; Loss/irrecoverable corruption of critical information resources; Major loss of opportunity
Catastrophic	Outcomes unable to be achieved and failure of delivery of all outputs; Irreparable damage to reputation of organisation/s; Loss of irreplaceable key staff or work time completely disrupted; Total loss/corruption of all information services/resources

Risk Assessment Matrix

	Consequence					
Likelihood	Scale	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
	Remote	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
	Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	High
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
	Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme

[4] Adapted from guidance notes for 'Project Risk Management – Risk Identification, Analysis and Assessment' provided by the Australian Government for Extension and Outreach Grants Funding and Australian Government Rural R&D for Profit Programme Risk Matrix.

Risk Management Plan – [Project Code] – [Project Name]

[Delete examples provided and add rows as required]

The risk What could happen?	**Potential causes/sources** What could happen? What would cause it?	**Potential impacts** How would the risk impact on delivery of project?	**Controls** What controls are in place, or will be in place, to manage the risk	**Likelihood with controls in place** From *Risk Likelihood Scale*	**Consequence with controls in place** From *Risk Consequence Scale*	**Treated risk assessment** From *Risk Assessment Matrix*	**Risk evaluation** Could you defend this level of risk is acceptable? *Yes/No*	**Responsible person** Who is the person/s responsible for monitoring and managing the risk?
Loss of key project personnel	*Resignation or retirement*	*Loss of key knowledge and experience*	*Project team trained in multiple skills; Regular project team meetings to share information on progress; Central storage of project data/information*	*Unlikely*	*Insignificant*	*Low*	*Yes*	
Unable to find on-farm trial sites	*Difficulty finding grower willing to host trial sites and any associated field days*	*Unable to trial research findings on-farm; Disruptions to work time; Unable to hold adoption activities*	*Liaise with industry and industry development projects early; Host grower has access to researchers*	*Unlikely*	*Minor*	*Medium*	*Yes*	
Unfavourable weather for trials	*Wetter than average weather*	*Delay in delivering project outputs*	*Ability to undertake trials in a different region or vary project timeframes*	*Possible*	*Minor*	*Medium*	*Yes*	
Low grower engagement in adoption activities	*Growers unable or unwilling to attend; Adoption activity content not relevant; Inappropriate extension strategies for the target audience*	*Low uptake of new practices; Underachievement of intended project outcomes*	*Development of stakeholder engagement plan; Early establishment of industry networks; Close liaison with industry development officer; Team member with knowledge transfer expertise*	*Possible*	*Insignificant*	*Low*	*Yes*	
Laboratory equipment failure	*Damage to key laboratory equipment*	*Delays in undertaking trials*	*Experienced laboratory technicians*	*Possible*	*Minor*	*Medium*	*Yes*	

Guide to developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The information in this document is provided by Hort Innovation to guide Service Providers in developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan for projects they are delivering.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan is the framework for engaging with a project's stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is the process used by a project to engage relevant stakeholders for a purpose of achieving intended outcomes. Stakeholder engagement is explicitly linked to project success.

A template for a Stakeholder Engagement Plan is provided at the end of this guide. Service Providers may use this template or develop their own if their project has specific contextual requirements, or they have their own templates that meet Hort Innovation's requirements below.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan identifies:

1. Target audience/s
2. Secondary audience/s
3. The level of the engagement (i.e. inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) – some stakeholder groups may be engaged at more than one level (e.g. a large group of growers may be informed while a sub-set are involved)
4. Why stakeholders would want to be involved in a project
5. What information stakeholders need
6. How stakeholders want to receive information and how often
7. Who is responsible for the engagement
8. Key messages
9. Characteristics of the audience and special considerations (e.g. engagement barriers, attitudes to risk, access to knowledge, information interests)

All Hort Innovation projects must link with any industry development and communications projects for the relevant industry. These are critical engagement pathways. These projects can aid the communication of project outputs and outcomes and provide assistance with industry knowledge transfer events. Acknowledge these pathways in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan as applicable.

For further information, please contact the Data & Insights team or the relevant R&D/Marketing Manager at Hort Innovation.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan – [Project Code] – [Project Name]

[Delete examples provided and add/delete columns as required]

Who	Stakeholder	Grower	Supply Chain	Consultant/ Agronomist	Researcher	PIB	Hort Innovation	Government	Investors/Co-Investors
Why	**Why engage with this group?**	*E.g. Delivery of improved knowledge & understanding, to demonstrate an effective ROI, support industry efficiency & sustainability*							
How	**What is the level of engagement**	*E.g. Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower **							
	Proposed method of engagement	*E.g. Workshops, media releases, industry journal articles, engagement with key representatives, product*							

		development, scientific paper							
	Timing of engagement	*When during the project will this occur?*							
	Resources required	*Outline the resources required to engage with key stakeholders*							
	Responsibility	*Who is responsible for conducting the stakeholder engagement?*							
	Key messages to communicate	*What are the key messages that need to be communicated to the key stakeholders?*							

Special Considerations	**Risk management issues, engagement barriers, audience characteristics**	*Are there any special considerations, issues, risks, sensitivities that need to be considered in engaging with the stakeholders?*							

* **Inform** – To provide information to assist stakeholders to better understand the issue, and/or identify alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions to the issue.

Consult – To obtain feedback from key stakeholders on the issue, alternatives and/or outcomes.

Involve – To engage directly with key stakeholders throughout the project to ensure that major concerns and needs are understood and considered.

Collaborate – To partner with key stakeholders to develop/evaluate solutions to problems, to make decisions, provide advice and to identify preferred solutions.

Empower – To deliver solutions and/or the ability for informed decision-making in the hands of the stakeholder. Stakeholders are then enabled to directly contribute to the achievement of project outcomes.

Communications Strategy Template

This template is provided by Hort Innovation to guide Service Providers in developing a Communications Strategy. A Communications Strategy will be required for all Industry Communications projects and other projects as required by Hort Innovation.

A Communications Strategy is the systematic planning of information flow and indicates what an Industry Communications project wants to achieve and how it serves the industry Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

A Communications Strategy should be updated annually to reflect continuous improvement and to remain 'current'.

All information products produced and knowledge transfer events held through Hort Innovation funded projects must be appropriately branded. Refer to the *Hort Innovation Publication Guide* (available on the Hort Innovation website) for more information. All project related media releases and interaction with the media must be approved by Hort Innovation.

For further information, please contact the Data & Insights team or the relevant R&D/Marketing Manager at Hort Innovation.

Communications Strategy – [Project Code] – [Project Name]

Background

Overview of the need for the strategy.

Objectives

Aims of the project in terms of communication, and how this aligns with the industry SIP. A Communication Strategy needs to align communications activities and outputs with what the project and SIP is trying to achieve. Communications activity is not an end in itself, but should serve SIP outcomes.

Audiences

Identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve your project outcomes. Consider the characteristics and preferred knowledge transfer channels of the different audiences and how this may impact the communication tools used.

Communication outputs (information products)

Identify the tools and activities that will be used to communicate with the identified target audiences. The purpose of each should be clear. Please ensure that work is actively undertaken to cross-promote content where possible with the Hort Innovation Communications Team.

Stakeholder engagement plan

Please refer to the Hort Innovation 'Guide to developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan'.

Program logic framework

Please refer to the Hort Innovation 'M&E Toolkit'.

Resources and timescales

Identify your resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and to ensure outputs and outcomes are time appropriate. Include an overview of the calendar of activities/annual operating plan.

Project risk management plan

Please refer to the Hort Innovation 'Guide to developing a Risk Management Plan'.

Monitoring and evaluation

Please refer to the Hort Innovation 'M&E Toolkit'.

M&E are critical components of the project cycle and ensures there is a mechanism for continuous improvement, with feedback and learnings able to be incorporated into the strategy. M&E assists in deciding what needs to be done differently.

Key performance measures

Indicate the key performance measures for the project. These may be in terms of information product (outputs) reach, number of information products (per type), use of information products, increased knowledge due to use of information projects, perceived industry value of information products, for example.