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Where, in theory, we're at

The Decision Framework (DF) effort has been suggested as a tool for goal implementation teams and workgroups to formulate strategies for achieving protection and restoration related goals for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Use of the framework may be lacking due to inadequate training and incentives. Understandably, the goal teams and work groups may feel that their efforts have been generally successful and that they have annual work plans in place. Why use a new, unneeded tool? However, direction from the Principal's Staff Committee, and the need for transparency and accountability in the Bay Program make require a more organized framework in order to more clearly show progress. Consequently, a meeting of the coordinators/staffers regarding use of the Decision Framework may be helpful to discuss ways to use and integrate it into their existing goal team, workgroup strategies and across-group efforts.

It is important to recognize that many goal teams have already produced Decision Frameworks, however, they have not been shared, many are not completely done, and there was no collaboration or sharing with other goal teams. In addition, some of the teams were given somewhat negative or critical feedback on their efforts, which left the teams feeling somewhat disappointed by the process.

Recently, a strategy session was held by GIT 1, the Fisheries Goal team. The purpose of the session was to identify the value of collaboration and opportunities to work together. This timely effort can provide a springboard for a useful frame of reference to introduce the importance of the Decision Framework and how it can improve program function and planning.

Goal-setting and outcome sessions have been held and are currently under consideration by upper management entities at CBPO (MB, PSC) as well as a new Bay Partnership Agreement. While adding to workloads and being a somewhat separate set of efforts, they can provide an opportunity to build on the momentum supporting DF activities so that staff efforts and annual outputs and successes can be specifically recognized through a more transparent strategic planning process supported by their work plans.

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Where we might want to go, with whom

The goal of a series of planned sessions/workshops with coordinators/staffers and (possibly) workgroup GIT chairs would be to go through the steps of the framework with the idea of integrating both the explicit and implicit knowledge that went into the strategies/action/management plans that GITs/groups already have in place.

The plan would be to work (i.e. the coordinators/staffers group) together through the adaptive management cycle to see how effective the framework could be as a tool to a given workgroup/GIT, paying particular attention to the steps at the end of the cycle such as "monitoring programs" and "assessing performance" to flesh out current work plans and strategies. Finished examples of Frameworks and anecdotes will be shared and discussed to illustrate the utility of the Framework. In addition, as each group shares their common experiences and results from each

session, areas of cross-group collaboration might become more apparent, and hopefully assist in tool development work products and outcomes.

A group facilitator, such as a CBP manager, GIT chair, or Carl Herschner, will be key in rolling up his/her sleeves, guiding the structure of each session for which they volunteer, and encouraging positive results and outputs for the participants as they work through the session's task for the day. Pre-session planning will be critical in the success of these sessions.

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How we might propose to conduct the work session – Draft general Work Session Agenda

Each session structure might include the following – and details will be added in after the general outline is approved by the "Coordinators/Staffers DFIW Work Sessions Planning Committee":

1/ An overview of the agenda of the day (structure/approach of where we are in the framework, i.e. goals, factors influencing, etc.)

2/ Warm-up and review of what currently exists/is in place for each team i.e. for the Decision Framework or Strategy, including work plans

3/ Working through the prescribed structure for the day – i.e. "factors influencing", "monitoring" - the DF element of the day,

4/ Mid-meeting check in, sharing and evaluation of where everyone is at, if it's working for them, are they "getting it?"

5/ Meeting wrap-up, plan for homework both for that day's session and for the next session., i.e. chairs, jurisdictions to check back with, or review with chair/jurisdiction for next session.

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Session Content: What we might cover, and in what order

The premise behind the Decision Framework is to provide a logical series of steps for a team or group to follow to arrive at a point where strategies can be evaluated and amended or revised based on the varying level of success (or lack thereof). Decisions about the next cycle of group activities are made in response to the levels of success, and this is termed Adaptive Management. This process is based on Kaplan and Norton's (2008) paper "Mastering the Management System" and is well researched as a tool for moving companies and other entities beyond the day to day operational issues and into annual to 5-year plus strategic planning for greater margins of success. The outline and brief description of each step of the Decision Framework is as follows:

SESSION I

The first session will encompass a quick overview of the first three steps of the framework in addition to an overview of what an entire, finished framework and associated work plan look like. Since most existing decision frameworks include these components the primary value is review and realization of any commonalities among the goal teams.

1/ **Establish goals** that make the most sense and that are a priority for a given group (i.e. species abundance targets for fisheries, id and land preservation for healthy watersheds, acres restored for wetlands, etc.). If you don't have a goal that is manageable, pick a goal that is a high priority for the team yet large enough that it entails multistage planning and would require use of a Decision Framework. A general idea at this point of the magnitude and level of effort of the objectives and tasks that support this goal, such as you would have with a work plan, should be outlined with each goal or component of the goal. Identification of factors influencing will be helpful throughout the process, particularly in the next three following steps.

2/ Once the goals are identified, follow-up on how realistic those goals are by **identifying and prioritizing key factors that influence** execution or performance of the goal. While keeping in mind the rough outline of the objectives and tasks - this stage might include articulating, and then determining the likelihood of the success of steps and efforts that lead to achieving the goal. Examples of factors influencing goals include permitting issues, cross-jurisdictional discrepancies in economics/resources, funding, problems with including and accommodating viewpoints of stakeholders, etc.

3/ **Identify gaps/overlaps in existing management** programs addressing the important factors affecting goal attainment. Review current efforts and determine whether there is room for improvement, opportunity for inclusion, collaboration, restructuring of ideas, approaches, needs per the factors/efforts being considered/expended.

SESSION II

Session II will be a review of what is currently in place relating to work plans and overall strategies to see what has been accomplished or achieved. It is here that a framework for regular reporting and monitoring start for strategic planning.

4/ **Develop/refine/review existing management strategies**, and elaborate/further support, coordination and implementation planning by modifying objectives and tasks following the gap/overlap assessment.

SESSION III

Session III will be devoted to what exactly will be monitored and how to evaluate the objectives and tasks that are laid out in the strategy and work plans to determine success. For example, participants may be tempted to only share an indicator that is related to their goal. More importantly, through this session, they may be able to identify additional related indicators or outputs that will help to further characterize the success towards the goal.

5/ Based on the strategy, further delineate and emphasize those factors of the strategy that could provide an indication of the progress towards goals or strategies. Once identified, these indicators and actions can be

monitored and evaluated in order to understand the level of achievement of goals, objectives and tasks, and provide data for assessment of progress towards the goals and fulfillment of the objectives of the strategy.

SESSION IV

Session IV will focus on how to organize data and outcomes to properly conduct the performance assessment.

6/ A **performance assessment** enables managers and staff to review the extent of success or level of completion of the monitored actions and indicators. This step enables another opportunity (similar to Step 3) to identify potential gaps/overlaps/shortcomings in **execution** that might impact the ability of the strategy to be successful and achieve prioritized objectives/tasks.

SESSION V

Session IV will focus on adaptive management, and what types of results from the indicators dictate changes in how a workgroup does business.

7/ Based on the performance assessment of the monitored efforts, models and strategies may be revised in order to facilitate the possibility of/improve achievement of goals, objectives and tasks outlined in the strategy and work plan. The idea with this step is to reduce uncertainty in the management strategies/execution of activities using the evaluation monitoring and status of the various actions and indicators. This is also known more formally as **adaptive management**, but the "doing and seeing and paying attention to what is working/not working" is really what counts.

Literature Cited

Kaplan, Robert S. and David P. Norton. 2008. Mastering the management system. Harvard Business Review. January 2008 http://www.sap.com/community/webcast/2008_03_27_fnb/2008_03_27_fnb.pdf