Operationalising the
Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation

Guidance for using CMP’s systems – Miradi and Miradi Share - to support implementation and management of Open Standards projects

Purpose
This report provides some guidance for exploiting the CMP systems supporting the Open Standards – Miradi and Miradi Share - to manage project information and streamline workflows within conservation teams and supporting functions.

Who should use this, and with whom?
Integrators / M&E staff, with systems / support people and managers who are responsible for multiple projects.

When
In discussions about how to improve the capture of conservation knowledge and improving the flow of information within and between project teams.

How
Review the guidance here and adapt it to your organisation’s context, when preparing to adopt the Open Standards and / or when looking for ways to manage project information.

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Improving the practice of conservation by improving the management of conservation
Operationalising the Open Standards

This report provides some guidance for “operationalising”1 the Open Standards – that is, exploiting its supporting systems – Miradi and Miradi Share - to manage project information and streamline workflows.

The report draws on findings from a Study of Practices, which worked with several organisations that are using the Open Standards for planning steps and are at different stages of operationalising. The report is primarily targeted at “integrators” (often people with a Monitoring & Evaluation role) in small-to-medium sized conservation organisations in the initial pilot stages of using Miradi and Miradi Share.

The Open Standards guidelines are explicitly “not designed to fully address administrative processes and functions related to, for example, budgets, contracts, and human resource management”2. This guide aims to address some of these areas.

The guide specifically focuses on use of the CMP’s systems which support the Open Standards - Miradi and Miradi Share. Some of the benefits described here could be obtained by storing project information in documents or spreadsheets for single projects, however this will not give you the data integration and analysis capabilities required to manage a portfolio of projects, or to efficiently manage single projects regularly going full-cycle.

Refer also to these related tools -
- Institutionalising the Open Standards
- Open Standards and Collective Impact
- Conservation Business Process Model
- Promoting change in cause-driven organisations

Please Note: Operationalisation can be tackled in many ways. This document focuses mainly on the “technical” aspects, however the success of any operationalising efforts will be determined much more by “people” factors. Before starting work on the technical side of things, please review the guidance in the related document “Institutionalising the Open Standards” which outlines factors to consider when selecting a pilot project and gathering a project team. This document assumes you have already identified a pilot project and considered who should be involved in the team.

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1 “Operationalising” generally refers to the routine function of putting processes and standard practices into use, and exploiting all of their key features. In contrast, “Institutionalisation” generally means “the building of infrastructure and culture that supports practices so that they are the ongoing way of doing business. The result is the deployment and implementation of processes that are effective, usable, and consistently applied across the organization. Institutionalisation implies that the process is ingrained in the way the work is performed and there is commitment and consistency to performing the process.”

2 CMP Open Standards v3 2013, page 2
Introduction

Operationalising the Open Standards involves putting in place the systems that support management and reporting of project information, and management of the projects themselves. Project information is produced by working through the guidance in each step of the Open Standards, with continual analysis and refinement as projects go around the cycle. The key Steps and information products in the OS cycle are –

The content of the key information products is shown below. This document focuses on systems support for the Operational Plan and Work Plan, along with factors that support projects moving around the full-cycle.
Preparation for Full-cycle support

The Open Standards systems – Miradi and Miradi Share – provide support for each individual step within the Standards. However the greatest benefit of the systems comes from their “whole of cycle” support – enabling project information to be captured, regularly updated, reported and shared, as projects move through the cycle.

Dealing with some initial design options will make it easier for projects to make best use of the systems’ capabilities. These options are described below, along with a starting Recommendation for each option. Most options are relevant for circumstances where you will be managing multiple projects. The “right” answers will evolve over time, but it’s worth knowing what options are available, making a start with a pilot project, and then building on each option as experience is gained.

Keep in mind that support is available if you want help with any of these options. For Miradi questions, contact support@miradi.org; for Miradi Share, use the Support link on the miradishare.org website. Guidance is also available from within Miradi’s help features (the Step-by-step guide in the top menu as well as the guides available for each by opening up the wizard window with the black triangles), and on Miradi’s Community web-page at www.miradi.org/community.

This section includes the following items –

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Choose your starting point and scope

You can start a pilot project from anywhere in the Open Standards cycle. Ideally you would start at the beginning with a new project, and work through most of the guidance in Steps 1 and 2 before moving into Implementation. But if you already have some projects being implemented, you could equally well just “move” them into the cycle as-is, and then gradually build up the project information over time by continuing around the cycle. A key advantage of having project information stored in systems is that it supports their gradual development – data can be easily added and new plan documents produced with minimal effort.

Different types of projects involve different levels of risk and complexity – some demand a detailed planning effort to ensure that the most appropriate strategies are adopted, while simpler ones, or projects that are repeating a known effective strategy, can follow a simpler path. The key is to have a viable first iteration plan before spending time and money on Implementation. Trained coaches can help you determine what would constitute a viable first iteration plan for your particular project(s). You can find a coach in your local area via the Conservation Coaches Network - www.ccnetglobal.com.

Here are some Recommendations for getting started -

- If you are starting a pilot with a new project, gather an appropriately resourced team and work through the Open Standards Steps 1 and 2, under the guidance of a skilled coach. Enter details into Miradi as the information is developed, and use one of the reporting features to produce your project documentation. Then move into Implementation (Step 3 and 4) of the project. Note that Miradi is best used “offline” by entering information developed on sticky notes during a workshop, rather than using it directly within the workshop – you want your team focussed on the content of their project, not the operations of a computer.

- If you have an existing project, and you are comfortable that it is implementing a sound strategy, then you could move straight into developing Workplans or Monitoring Plans depending on your need –
  - If you primarily want a Workplan and Budget to manage implementation of your project, enter your Strategy and Activities into Miradi’s Workplan View then build up the workplan and budget following guidance in OS Step 2C and/or 3A.
  - If you primarily want a Monitoring Plan to monitor the health of your key biodiversity targets, enter your Targets on a place-holder Conceptual Model, then build up the Viability Table to identify your Indicators and enter your Measures (OS Step 1B).
  - If you primarily want a Monitoring Plan to monitor and analyse the outcomes being produced by your project, create an initial Results Chain, identify the basic intermediate results that you are expecting (through a quick run of OS Step 2A) then identify the best Indicators and start recording your measures (OS Step 2B).

Before starting on any of these paths, quickly review the guidance in the rest of this document and act on the pieces that seem relevant at the early stages of your pilot project. Over time, more pieces will become relevant. Pilot projects are much like the Open Standards cycle itself -

“the entire process is rarely applied in a linear fashion from start to finish. Instead, it is a rough approximation of the more complex series of back-and-forth movements through which a project goes.”
Projects and Programs

Miradi and Miradi Share provide a few options for delineating projects and programs. In its simplest form, a single project is best managed as a single Miradi file, with the scope of the project determined by working through the guidance for Open Standards Step 1. Moving beyond one simple project, Programs create the capacity and stability that allows individual projects to function well and to simplify their management.

Several factors can influence decisions around lumping / splitting projects and programs –

- As per Open Standards guidance, projects should be defined around achieving particular conservation outcomes, rather than for specific time-based actions, individual capacity, or funding opportunities. This results-based delineation of a project provides the structure for overlaying these other considerations; for example, a project to restore habitat might need to run for 10+ years, with separate funding options supporting specific interim milestones over a 1-2 year timeframe. Projects are made up of groups of related activities (Results Chains and Strategies). Ideally a project is the “investment unit” that the organisation can choose to invest in, re-invest in, or close down.

- Most Miradi-based reporting can only view the details within a single Miradi project. Reporting and analysing information across multiple projects requires the capabilities of Miradi Share (or an external reporter such as the Miradi Companion).

- Miradi Share provides capabilities to “roll-up” selected information within projects to provide a program-wide perspective. For example, if multiple projects are managing marine protected areas that have similar targets, such as sea-grass beds, then the viability of those targets can be rolled-up to monitor changes in the overall health of the marine protected areas. This is achieved by tagging the targets within each project with a common classification, then using that classification in Miradi Share’s reports (see Using Miradi Share’s Classification schemes below).

- The Miradi Share concept of “Portfolios” allows projects to be grouped in many different ways, such as by name or by using a Classification scheme. For example, you can group all projects within a geographic region, or an organisation unit, or involving a particular type of Target. Once grouped, reports can be run across all projects within the group. A project can exist in multiple Portfolios. Well-structured Portfolios mean users need only navigate the subset of projects relevant to their area, rather than wading through all of an organisation’s projects.

- Miradi Share also offers the concept of multiple “Programs” within an Organisation. A project can exist in only one Program.

- Privacy and security options should also be considered when determining project & program structures (see Privacy and Security considerations below).

- The delineation of projects and programs might also be influenced by partners within a collaboration (The Collective Impact model has some guidance to offer here).

Recommendation: The basic recommendation is to start small, with just one or two Miradi projects plus the Miradi Share Community Library. After an initial pilot period, you could start adding more Miradi projects and move to a specific Miradi Share Program for your organisation, so that you can exploit its more advanced reporting and security capabilities.

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3 In Open Standards terminology:- Project = “a set of actions undertaken by a defined group of practitioners to achieve defined goals and objectives. The basic unit of conservation work.”
Program = “a group of projects which together aim to achieve a common broad vision.”
**Reporting options**

Paying attention to reporting requirements up-front will have many payoffs over the longer term. There are two key items to work through, and these are described in more detail below -

1. “Start at the end and work backwards” – identify the broad types of audiences interested in your projects, and then think about the information that they need. This helps to define the main types of information, and level of detail, that you need to capture within a project; it provides a good constraint on the tendency to “over-think” projects or to capture enormous amounts of detailed information only to find later that it is not really required. People can more quickly develop a good understanding of what to put in to the system when they know what they want to get out of it.

2. Decide on a minimum number of basic reports that satisfy most of the information needs of most of your audiences, then automate the production of these reports from the systems. This removes much of the time-consuming tasks around producing and reproducing project documentation, which allows the team to spend their limited resources on the actual work of the project, focusing on the quality of the content rather than documentation formatting.

### 1. Audiences & information needs

This analysis is best done with a small working group of people who can represent a broad cross-section of project stakeholders. Identify 3-5 types of audiences that will use information from your project. For each of these groups –

- Identify around 3-5 questions they might ask of your project, or the decisions they need to make
- Identify the types of data that will answer these needs; start with the information provided through the Open Standards, and over time extend this to information that could be provided by other systems (such as finance systems, donor systems)
- Work out how these data elements can be identified – most are likely to be standard reports and data items within Miradi so can be readily located, but some may need specific identifiers or customised reports (see also later section on Classifications below).

The examples in this table illustrate the type of information that you might develop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What questions might they ask? What decisions do they need to make?</th>
<th>How is this answered? (raw data elements)</th>
<th>How is this answered? (how are data elements identified?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program managers  How are our projects going?</td>
<td>Progress reports, for Strategies and Activities; and for Goals &amp; Objectives</td>
<td>Standard reports in Miradi or Miradi Share; could use Classifications to show sub-sets of all projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the health of our targets (of type x) improving?</td>
<td>Viability ratings for relevant Targets, and trend of recent measures</td>
<td>Targets tagged with IUCN habitat codes or specific Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What investment is required for project x?</td>
<td>long-term workplan &amp; budget</td>
<td>Customised long-term workplan report (eg Miradi Companion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors  What are you aiming to achieve, and why?</td>
<td>Project vision, Key targets and goals, results chains and objectives, workplan and budget</td>
<td>Custom report combining all factors (eg Miradi Companion) or tailored Miradi Full report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you know if you are succeeding? What will it cost?</td>
<td>Progress reports;</td>
<td>Commentary built from Miradi Share report Results Chain progress report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you achieving your aims?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team members  What do we need to work on next?</td>
<td>Workplan - strategies and activities assigned to team members</td>
<td>Customised short-term workplan report (eg Miradi Companion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Report automation

Once a reasonable range of needs have been identified, aim to define a minimum number of reports that can be used to meet these needs. Note that these examples focus on paper reports to illustrate the concept, but the information could equally be provided on-line as tabular reports or dashboards. Current reporting options are listed below; more options are expected to become available in future. Refer here for demonstration of these options.

- standard reports available through Miradi’s Reports View
- customised tables defined in Miradi’s Strategic Plan view, reportable through Report Templates
- export any page from Miradi
- Tabular reports from Miradi Share
- Some add-on reporting tools -
  - TNC’s Miradi Companion reporting tool which produces narrative reports for PCs
  - Customised reports using XSL templates which produce narrative reports with pictures and maps, for PCs and Macs (some templates available; others require programming)

The last two options allow for descriptive text from Miradi (see Capture the Details below) to be combined with images and maps, to automate production of quality narrative documents. These options allow teams to quickly produce project documentation such as project plans, and to easily reproduce new versions as their project information is updated.

Recommendation: start by identifying just a few key audiences – perhaps the project team, their managers and their funders – and their key information needs. Decide on a few initial reports, and the method you will use to produce them. Then build on this over time.

Use project templates

Templates help to get some consistency of information across projects. There are two options –

- If you are not using Miradi Share, you can create a Miradi project and load the information suggested below, then save that project with a name such as “Template project”. Then each time you want to start a new Miradi project, open this and use “Save As . . .” to create your new project.
- Miradi Share has a more advanced template capability, which will prepopulate any new Miradi project with the types of information below along with all Classifications that you have set up.

The types of information you might choose to put in a template includes –

- Load your General Ledger account codes, so that these are ready for use when project teams are developing workplans and budgets. To do this, create a text file with each code on a separate line, starting with the code itself, then a TAB, then the name of the account. In Workplan View,
Accounts Codes tab, use Import Account Codes to pull in your codes.

- If you will be using standard lists in other workplan information (such as funding sources), enter this information into the template project.
- Include hints to guide the team in filling in factors within the project, suggesting the type of information to enter, or even telling them to not bother with some sections. If you are using automated reporting options, this can help people see what gets reported.

**Recommendation:** start by defining a template that holds your General Ledger codes and just a few pointers about which boxes to fill in. Then the template will become part of your normal operating procedures and you can create updated versions over time.

**Using Miradi Share’s Classification schemes**

Classification schemes provide the ability to “tag” objects in a Miradi project with terms drawn from customised drop-down lists. This allows objects in multiple projects to be located and analysed. Miradi already has several sector-standard Classification Schemes available – see table below. Miradi Share extends this concept to organisation-specific lists that can be attached to most objects in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification Scheme</th>
<th>Description / Usage</th>
<th>Miradi object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Language</td>
<td>Standard list of languages</td>
<td>Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Standard list of countries; use to analyse or report on projects taking place in particular countries</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Area Category</td>
<td>IUCN Protected area Category codes</td>
<td>Project Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN Habitat Association code</td>
<td>Global list of habitat types; use to locate Projects and Targets operating in particular types of habitats, for analysis and reporting</td>
<td>Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN/CMP Threat codes</td>
<td>List of standard conservation threats or pressures; use to locate projects dealing with a particular type of threat, and analyse the status of threats across all or a subset of projects</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN/CMP Conservation Action codes</td>
<td>List of standard conservation actions; use to locate projects taking a particular type of action, to analyse the details, and review progress etc across all or a subset of projects</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation-specific classification schemes</td>
<td>As defined by each organisation based on their needs.</td>
<td>Most Factors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The screenshot at right shows an example of the standard Classifications in use – in Miradi Share you can query the Community Library to find projects working on similar actions, such as projects dealing with "Invasive / Problematic Species control". Miradi Share then provides the ability to download the project’s Miradi file, or contact the project team, so that we can all learn from each other’s experiences. These settings are made using the classification lists with Miradi (screenshot below).

Organisation-specific Classification schemes work the same way. These schemes define –

- The Objects to be classified – schemes can be attached to Project, Biodiversity Target, Threat, Strategy, Objective, Goal, Activity, Key Ecological Attribute, Contributing Factor, Indicator, Stress.

- The drop-down lists – these can be defined as a single level, or multiple levels (as shown). If a list is multi-level, selections can be defined as 'Any Node' which means that the user can select a value at any level, or 'Leaf' which means the user selects only at the lowest level.

- Lists can be defined as Multi select or single select.

Classification schemes get embedded into your Program’s template, and Projects receive the new schemes immediately, or after the next Check-in. Projects can then select items in the list, either by editing the project in Miradi desktop or by using the Edit Classifications function in Miradi Share.

Contact the Miradi Share administrators (using the Support link on the website) if you want to establish some Classification schemes for your project.

Recommendation: start by using the standard classification schemes that already exist within Miradi. Then as analysis and reporting requirements are determined, set up organisation-specific schemes to support these requirements. Start with just a few lists and then expand them over time as you gain experience and new reporting and analysis requirements arise.
Business rules and Naming conventions

Like any system, Miradi has many options and variations built in so that it can cater for the varying needs of different conservation organisations. You might find it helpful to narrow down the variety of options that get used, so that there is some consistency across your projects and to simplify training and reporting. One way to do this is to define a small set of “business rules” that explain the options and nominate the chosen option including the rationale for that choice.

The key options are described in the relevant sections below. For example, workplans and budgets can be defined for different time periods (years, quarters, months), and at different levels (Strategies, Activities, Tasks); defining some business rules will simplify training, use and analysis, and support linkage of data through to finance systems.

In addition, you may want to define some standard naming conventions for various Miradi objects. For example, the add-on reporting tools identified above use some of the “ID” fields associated with objects like Targets and Threats to identify related pictures and maps. Also, “ID” fields for project resources can allow collation of an individual’s workplan assignments across all projects.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that you keep all this in the back of your mind at the outset, and start to define appropriate guidelines as you gain experience with the systems and get a better understanding of your reporting needs.

Privacy and Security considerations

Privacy and security options should also be considered. A Miradi project is accessible to whoever you choose to give the project file to (provided they have the Miradi software). Miradi Share offers a several privacy and security settings.

- **Project Access State** – determines whether the Project is available to everyone (Public) or is restricted to members of the Organisation, or the Program, or the Team.

- **User roles** – an individual is assigned a role (Manager, Editor, Partner, Viewer) which determines the project information they can access – see screenshot below

- If your organisation has a Miradi Share Program, you can set the **Program Type** as being available to everyone (Public) or just to people within the Program (Private).
If your organisation has a Miradi Share Program, you can also use the Data Privacy feature, which lets you nominate a list of ‘private data’ fields. These are fields that may contain sensitive information and that you want to restrict to team members with appropriate access. Then you can confidently allow sharing of the project more widely.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that you start with the simplest options, such as Public access within the Community Library, and decide on these options after the initial pilot phase.

**Capture the Details**

Miradi provides Details boxes for all of the key factors in a project – such as Targets, Threats, Objectives, Strategies, Activities, etc. The information entered into these boxes can range from nothing to several descriptive paragraphs. Exploiting these boxes allows you to capture the information in context, in one place (rather than scattered through various pieces of documentation), and sets up the content for automated narrative reports. It also provides a “single source of truth” which helps team members and other stakeholders to develop a common understanding of each object.

For example, writing 3-4 paragraphs describing a Target will create a strong foundation for reference during the life of the project. Similarly, a few paragraphs describing a Strategy will avoid later confusion about exactly what work the Strategy entails and what it is trying to achieve. Also, if the first paragraph is well-written, it can be easily re-used in a wide variety of reports and documents, such as funding applications and website stories.

This is one option where you should think about defining a “business rule”, to give guidance about an appropriate amount of information, and describing the best style so that the information reproduces well in reports and can be easily re-used. For example –
Use Diagrams and Words

Miradi’s diagramming capabilities - Conceptual Models and Results Chains – are powerful features that lay out the relationships between factors affecting a project’s situation, and the logic that the project will pursue to achieve results. Experience has shown that most people are quite comfortable with diagrams and prefer to see the logic laid out in this manner; however a sizable proportion of people struggle with interpreting them and prefer the written word. Both forms can be produced in Miradi and shown in reports, to cater for all types of users. To enter Details - right-click on the name of the diagram, click Diagram Properties, then enter your description in the Details box.

Recommendation: capture the Details of key objects within Miradi, to provide a consistent record, aid common understanding, and to set up information for reporting and re-use.

Data Management

You can capture a lot of information within Miradi, but it is not designed to manage all supporting project documentation. For example, you will need to manage documents such as scientific references or contractual agreements. If your organisation does not supply guidance or filing structures, you might want to set up a shared folder that the whole team and key stakeholders can access (such as a Google site or drive).

Within Miradi’s Details boxes, you can add hyperlinks to this supporting information (right-click within the Details box, then add the location to the Insert Hyperlink menu).
Miradi Share provides a capability to load a limited number of associated files and links to your project. They are then accessible to whoever has access to your project. For example, if you are producing a range of maps or narrative reports to document your project plan, you might want to store the latest versions here so that all stakeholders can readily access them.

You should also think about where you will store broader information of use to multiple projects, such as the guidelines and “business rules” you develop from your pilot project. A good location would be your organisation’s intranet or equivalent. If you don’t have access to this type of facility, consider setting up a shared drive or site.

**Version Control**

Miradi Share performs all version-control tasks for you. The *Timeline* feature increases the minor version number each time your project is checked in (e.g. v1.2 becomes v1.3); you can manually increase the major version number at any time (e.g. v2.29 becomes v3.0). A useful convention is to increase the major version number each time your project goes around the loop, making adaptations identified by guidance in *OS Step 4 Analyse / Adapt*.

If you are not using Miradi Share, you might want to adopt a naming convention to give you some basic version control capabilities. For example, append something like “v1.2” to the project name, and manually modify the numbers using a similar philosophy to that used within Miradi Share.

**Recommendation:** decide on some basic filing and versioning standards to help manage your projects.
Operationalising OS Step 2 – Plan Actions and Monitoring

OS Step 2 builds the Action Plan, Monitoring Plan, and Operational Plan, creating all of the information required to manage the next and most important step – Implementation of your project. This section provides guidance on using the systems to support the information produced through Step 2.

This section includes the following items –

- Operationalising OS Step 2 – Plan Actions and Monitoring
- Developing a high-level Workplan and Budget
- Set the parameters for your Workplan information
- Manage your People
- Decide on the right level of detail
- Supporting your Monitoring Plan
- Managing the Project
- Managing the project risks and stakeholders
- Ensuring your people have capacity to do the work
- Finding the Funding
- Management Reviews
Developing a high-level Workplan and Budget

This section provides guidance for developing a high-level Workplan and Budget, which is the key component of the Operational Plan (OS Step 2C); it outlines the resources and timeframes needed to implement your plan. First follow existing Open Standards guidance and supporting materials (Steps 2A & 2B) to develop your Action Plan and Monitoring Plan, which define your project’s Strategies and Activities (including Monitoring activities). Alternatively, if you are retro-fitting an existing project into the Open Standards data structures, you should translate the project’s current work into Strategies and Activities and enter the key details.

Set the parameters for your Workplan information

Several options define what information is used to populate your Workplan. These can be set individually for each project, or you may choose to standardise them with some business rules to get consistency across all of your projects. The key parameters are in WorkPlan View, in the Settings and Workplan tabs –

- **Project Dates - Start and End** - can be any time period relevant for your project
- **Work Plan Dates - Start and End Dates** – these should be within the period of your project, and are used to restrict the amount of information displayed in Workplan View, which speeds performance. **Recommendation:** display the current year plus a few, to match your desired funding timeframe. The specific dates should match your fiscal year setting (otherwise partial years will appear).
- **Fiscal Year** - set to the period required by your finance people (often July-June, of Jan-Dec)
- **Quarter and Day column visibility** – can be hidden or displayed, depending on your preference for detailed planning (described below)
- **Include Work plan data from** – offers 3 settings to define the strategies that will appear in the Workplan. Strategies can appear on Conceptual Models, where they just represent an action to be taken; or they can be described in more detail on a Results Chain, where they are presented in context of an expected chain of events leading to a conservation result. **Recommendation:** include strategies from Only Results Chains, as this means that budgets will be oriented toward achieving results and not just conducting activities - the essence of results-based management.

4 One way to do this is to list out the key pieces of work involved in your project; group them up if it’s a long list. Then in Miradi create a Results Chain and add a Strategy for each group, then create Activities for each piece of work. Also add Indicators for any factors (outputs / outcomes) that you are using to monitor progress.
Manage your People

People working on your project can be defined in two places: team members are often defined in the Team tab (in Summary View) during the early planning stages; additional people beyond the core team can be assigned in the People tab in Workplan View; ticking the Team Member box will include them on the Team tab. A useful delineation is to restrict “Team Members” to the core team, so that the team table can be included in various project reports; and use the People tab in Workplan View to define a broader range of people and groups who are assigned work but may have limited involvement in the project.

Consider setting a consistent format for the ID field so that information for related resources can be extracted within and across projects.

You can also develop estimates for the cost of your people’s time – often this is the major cost of a project so is worth focusing on to ensure time is well allocated. The Financial Settings in Workplan View allow the costing rate to be defined, such as cost per day, or cost per FTE.

Then in the People tab you can define the Work Unit Rate for each person and group. Note that this rate does not need to reflect salary costs, which are often confidential and budgeted separately; instead, it could represent a fully-loaded cost or generic charge-out rate for resources of particular types.

As you assign work to people, Miradi will add the calculated cost to the project’s total budget. For example, in these screenshots Elena’s daily rate is set at 150 (screenshot at left), and she has been assigned a total of 621 days (top-right), creating a budget cost of 93,150.
Decide on the right level of detail

Miradi offers several different ways to prepare the workplan, to cater for projects of different scales and complexities. It is worth experimenting with these options during a pilot project, and then setting some “business rules” to get some consistency across projects. There are several dimensions to think about –

- **High-level Planning (“Timeframe and People planning”)** – this feature lets you assign People or Groups to work items (Strategies or Activities) and define the timeframe (years / quarters / months) when the work should occur. It is best used in the early planning stages, when you are trying to schedule the project’s work and figure out who is going to do what.

  - This type of planning offers a first-filter to understand whether the work you are envisaging can actually be done with the resources that you are likely to have. It may prompt you to reprioritize the work, or stretch it over a longer timeframe, in which case you may need to update the timeframes defined in the associated Objectives and Goals.

  - This information can be entered when viewing a Results Chain, or in Strategic Plan view, or in Workplan View. It is worth experimenting with these alternatives the setting a “business rules” to define the preferred way, so that training and usage is simplified.

  - For some projects, this level of planning might be as much detail as you need.

- **Detail-level Planning** – at the detail level you can add information about the expenses that will be incurred to do the work, and assign people to work on particular Strategies /Activities and schedule the amount of time (“work units” – e.g. days or weeks), to estimate the cost of that work. The detail level is best tackled once you have done some high-level planning and concluded that the planned work is viable, however you could also choose to just do this detailed level planning.

  - This finer level of detail helps you to estimate the cost of your project. It may prompt you to reprioritize the work once you see how much it will cost, relative to the funding that you have available or that you think you can obtain.
This information can be entered in Workplan View – see screenshot below and further details in Section 3 below. More guidelines for this level of planning are available by opening up the wizard window with the black triangles at the top-left of the Miradi screen.

- **Work items - Strategy vs Activity vs Task** - you have the choice of planning assignments and expenses at the Strategy level, or for the individual Activities that make up the Strategy, or for the detailed Tasks making up an Activity.
  - You can choose either the Strategy or Activity levels for each of the High-level planning and Detail-level planning; the choices are independent.
  - If you plan at the Activity level, Miradi will roll up the assignments and expenses to give you a summary at the Strategy Level.
  - If you have several related strategies grouped onto one results chain (i.e. several strategies required to achieve a particular result), Miradi will roll the strategy totals up to the Results Chain level, which gives you insight into the investment required to achieve a particular conservation outcome.

- **Timeframes – Years vs Quarters vs Months** - you have the choice of planning assignments and expenses to occur either in a particular year, quarter, month or day.
  - If you plan at the Month level, Miradi will roll up the assignments and expenses to give you a summary at the Quarter and Year Level. You can hide the Quarter amounts.
If you plan at the Quarter level, Miradi will roll them up to the Year level.

Your circumstances will help to determine the right level, but a suggested “good” approach is to use Months or Quarters for near-term work, and Years for longer-term work. If you aim to flow your budgets through to your finance system, discuss these options with your finance staff.

**Recommendation:** Start simple and add detail as you become more familiar with your needs and the system capabilities. The computer can handle lots of detail but most humans can’t, so aim for simplicity and indicative higher-level details, even if this is at the expense of precise accuracy. One combined option might be to –

- Initially prepare a High-level plan at the Strategy and Year levels, to get a reasonable estimate of the cost and ‘do-ability’ of your project, and make any necessary adjustments given the amount of resources available.
- As the project starts to be implemented, take the near-term work in this high-level plan down into more detail – at the Activity and Quarter or Month levels.
- If your project is long-running, develop a High-level plan for 3-5+ years, and a detailed plan for the first 12 months, then continue “rolling forward” as time moves on, taking the next year’s high-level data down to the detail level and adding another year of high-level data to the end.

**Supporting your Monitoring Plan**

The Open Standards provide guidance on developing a Monitoring Plan (refer Step 2B). From an Operationalisation perspective, there are a few considerations –

- **Plan your Monitoring Activities** in the same way that you plan all other Strategies and Activities (described above) – i.e. initially at a High level and longer-term then in more detail for the short-term. This will help to estimate the resources required and ensure that the monitoring work can actually be implemented.

- **Prioritise your indicators.** Monitoring Plans often include a long list of items that need to be monitored; being clear about the relative priorities helps to ensure that measures data is gathered for the most important parts of the plan. Better to have a few key indicators monitored well, that a lot of indicators monitored irregularly. Priorities can be set in the Monitoring Plan tab for each Indicator. This in turn helps to identify whether the actions are leading to the expected results, which allows the team to decide how the plan should be adapted.
Exploit technology and shared datasets to reduce costs and increase the amount of relevant monitoring information available to you. Field-based collection is required for many factors, but is relatively expensive. Other options include remote sensing technology (e.g. satellite imagery, and devices like camera traps and sound recorders that are increasingly being connected through the “Internet of Things”) and broader projects or citizen-science efforts that are collecting similar information or data that could be a proxy for your Indicator. The Mira App is one field-based monitoring application aligned with Miradi data.

Manage your monitoring data - For your prioritised indicators, think about the best options for storing your source data. During Implementation you will likely enter Measures against Indicators in Miradi, but these Measures are often indexes or averages derived from multiple observations. The original source data needs to be stored so that it can be accessed and interpreted in the longer term when project outcomes and results are being analysed – this could be occurring 10+ years later, by different people and with different technology, so the monitoring data needs to be stored in a manner that will stand the test of time. This generally requires a shared storage location to hold the source data, along with its “meta data” (definitions of the data). Miradi Share’s “Associated Files” feature provides a simple storage option; local facilities affiliated with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility provide much more sophisticated options. When you enter the Measures into Miradi, it’s a good idea to add a hyperlink (right-click in Details box) to provide a permanent reference to connect with the original source data.

Managing the Project

The planning completed to this point ought to have developed a quality plan in terms of sound Strategies, focused Monitoring, and reasonable estimates of the resourcing required to deliver the project’s results.

A quality plan needs to include the activities and expenses required to manage the actual project itself. You may wish to add a “Project Management” Strategy to your plan, to provide a place for adding the Activities, assignments and expenses required to efficiently run the project; some examples are covered below.

Detailed project management guidance is beyond the scope of this document, but for simple projects some basic considerations include –

- Ensuring the project risks have been identified and critically assessed, with mitigation actions addressed or added to the plan (see below)
- Ensuring that stakeholder analysis has been conducted, and that the plan includes appropriate activities to involve stakeholders and keep them informed (see below)
- Adding periodic review meetings to the project schedule. The frequency will depend on your circumstances, but in general terms a “good” model involves monthly or quarterly team discussions to review progress and agree actions for the next period, plus regular (e.g. annual) reviews of monitoring results to identify any changes required to the plan (OS Step 4) and to produce reports informing funders and stakeholders of the project’s progress,
- Adding activities to the project schedule to ensure that any required reports are appropriately timed and resourced, such as reports to funders.
- Critically review the project’s resourcing needs to ensure that right quantity and quality of skills are available to perform the work, and schedule any actions required to address gaps, such as additional training or mentoring (see below).
- Obtaining peer reviews of the plan if desired or required.
- Obtaining funding for the project (see below)
- Obtaining management reviews or sign-offs as required.

Large or complex projects, particularly those involving partner organisations, require much greater attention to project planning and management. The Collective Impact model is a useful framework for these types of project; refer to the Open Standards and Collective Impact document for an introduction, particularly regarding the role of a backbone organisation to facilitate management of the project.

Managing the project risks and stakeholders
The Open Standards provides guidance for risk management (Step 2c) and stakeholder assessment (step 1d) but the OS systems do not yet provide all the associated data elements to manage these factors. It is recommended that you use two tables or spreadsheets to hold this information, and keep these stored with your project files. Examples are provided below.

Your detailed project plan should include Activities to regularly review your risk assessment and stakeholder analysis, as well as Activities to regularly act on stakeholder communication.

Risk assessment templates and guidance are widely available, and include information such as this -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the Risk Event?</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Mitigation Actions</th>
<th>Contingency Plan / Control Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A specific description of what could happen that would threaten the success of the project is needed. It must address who, what, where, when, why and how the risk could occur – in order to be able to be controlled effectively</td>
<td>Rate the impact on the project, should that risk event occur:</td>
<td>This is the probability of the Risk event occurring,</td>
<td>Describe what steps will be taken to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring.</td>
<td>What steps have been taken to reduce the impact on the project if this risk occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Low: very small delay (1 day) AND/OR minor cost increase (&lt;5% of total budget)</td>
<td>Very Low - 10% chance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low - some delay (2-3 days) AND/OR minor cost increase (5 - 10% of budget)</td>
<td>Low - 30% chance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate - key parts of the project delayed &gt; a week &amp;/or cost increase (10-15% of budget)</td>
<td>Likely - 50% chance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High - key parts of the project will be delayed &gt; a month &amp;/or hi cost increase (&gt;15% of budget)</td>
<td>High - 70% chance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very High - the project will completely stop &amp;/or major cost increase (&gt;20% of budget)</td>
<td>Almost Certain - 90% chance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stakeholders are often identified in your situation analysis (OS Step 1d) and key details can be stored in the Other Organisations tab in Miradi’s Summary View. Stakeholder analysis involves considering the type of information shown below (sample templates are widely available) –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder and Area of Interest</th>
<th>What impact does the project have on them?</th>
<th>What is their potential impact on success?</th>
<th>What are the key messages for this Stakeholder from this project?</th>
<th>How will they receive information on the project?</th>
<th>How will they be able to provide feedback to the project?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L / M / H</td>
<td>L / M / H</td>
<td>(e.g. what is important for them to understand in order to obtain their support for the project)</td>
<td>(e.g. via email, status report, etc) And how often (e.g. weekly, by exception)</td>
<td>How will they be able to provide feedback to the project?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ensuring your people have capacity to do the work**

Once you have developed a high-level workplan and budget, you should critically review the resourcing requirements against the capacity that you either have, or can reasonably expect to receive.

For relatively small projects, some basic cross-checks of quantity and quality will help to test whether your project has the resources it needs to be successful -

- The People tab in Workplan view will show the amount of work units that have been assigned to specific people and groups. It will also show the amount of work units that have been defined but not yet allocated (“Not Specified” row). You can use this information to check that the assigned work is within the time that each person actually has available to work on the project. Time limitations are a key reason for Projects being delayed or failing to deliver their results as expected.

- The Workplan will summarise the people that have been assigned to each Strategy (refer “Who” column). Now that you have a good understanding of the work required within each strategy, you can assess whether the assigned people have the skills and experience required to complete the work, and if not, consider ways to fill any gaps. This could include additional training or mentoring. These actions and costs should be added back into your plan.

- These types of cross-checks are often adequate for a single project. If people are assigned to multiple projects, try to determine the amount of time available to each project and check that assignments are within these limits. Miradi Share’s Strategy/Activity Workplan report provides a roll-up of assignments across multiple projects so that capacity can be assessed at the Program or Organisation level.
Finding the Funding

Your high-level plan should now show all of the actions required, and the people and expenses required to do the work. Miradi’s Workplan View will summarise this information – use the options shown in the screenshot below to control the level of detail displayed. When you have the information displayed to your liking, you can export the page (File, Export Current Page as, RTF) and include it in reports or funding applications. The key rows are the results chains, which can be broken down by displaying the individual strategies if required. The key columns are the work units (yellow columns), direct expenses (middle columns), and the total budget (right-hand columns). The total budget is calculated by adding direct expenses to the cost of the work units⁵.

This budget information informs investment decisions, showing the investment required to achieve particular results (as defined by results chains) or to achieve the project’s total result (as defined in Goals and the Vision). Often the results can’t be quantified in financial terms, so the decision requires a qualitative judgement about the merits of the project relative to its cost, and an assessment of the ability of the team to deliver the expected results.

This is the type of judgement that will be made by organisational management and potential funders. The related information should be packaged up in a way that allows these decisions to be made. Such a package could include the information shown below. If you have set up your project broadly following the guidelines in this document (in particular, identifying your audiences and their information needs), then all this information will be available to you in Miradi (field sources as noted) -

- The Project’s Vision (Summary View, Scope tab, Vision field)
- A summary of what the project is aiming to achieve (Summary View, Project Description field)
- High-level details of the key Targets, including their current state of health and the desired state of health with associated timeframe (Targets, Details, and related Goals)
- High-level details of the key Threats impacting on the key targets (Threat Details)
- The strategies you will pursue, the associated objectives and intermediate results, and the indicators you will use to monitor progress (Results Chain Details).
- The cost of the project, or selected strategies or timeframes (Workplan View)

Some funders are comfortable receiving information structured in Miradi reports, however many funders have their own unique funding application forms. In general, it should be possible to fill in most fields on

⁵ The cost of work units is calculated as the number of Work Units times the relevant Work Unit Rate. Work Unit Rates are entered for each person/group in the People tab.
these funding applications by extracting the information from Miradi; this gives you a consistent source of structured information to apply for and report on funding.

**Management Reviews**

Once projects have completed most of the work of Steps 1 and 2, it should be in a position to inform the key review decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Management Decisions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Supporting Information from Open Standards</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assess a new opportunity / project / program</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conceptualise Project</strong> (OS Step 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does this project contribute to our broader strategies?</td>
<td>- Planning purpose, Initial team, partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the Vision sufficiently visionary?</td>
<td>- Project Scope and Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What conservation values is the project protecting? Are they consistent with / complementary to broader programs?</td>
<td>- Key Targets (biodiversity, human well-being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the project scope at the right scale to protect the targets?</td>
<td>- Project context (situation analysis) – key threats and opportunities, key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the project context realistic? Has is adequately considered the cultural, social, economic &amp; political factors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have key stakeholders and partners been identified? Involved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Step into each stakeholders shoes - are there potential adverse / untended consequences and can these be managed? How?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are there any unmanageable project risks or constraints?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is it feasible for us to take on this project, or is someone else better placed to do so?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Review the Project / Program Plan</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plan Actions &amp; Monitoring</strong> (OS Step 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Are the goals clearly stated and easily understood?</td>
<td>- Action Plan - Goals, Strategies, Objectives, results expected and theory-of-change (results chains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are the expected results / Goals (Impacts) worth striving for?</td>
<td>- Monitoring Plan – indicators and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the theory-of-change robust, and achievable? Are results stated in terms of outcomes, not actions?</td>
<td>- Operational Plan - high-level workplan &amp; budget - resources (Ss, people, partners), project timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the required investment appropriate given the Impact (Goals) being sought?</td>
<td>- (adaptations as projects go around the cycle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can we resource the work over the project’s timeframe (funding, people, skills, partner capacity)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operationalising OS Step 3 - Implementation

OS Step 3 is where the planning effort is put into action. It involves regular development of short-term work plans to guide the actions and monitoring efforts of the team, and the ongoing project management tasks to keep things on track. This section provides guidance on systems supporting Implementation.

This section includes the following items –

Operationalising OS Step 3 - Implementation ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Developing a detailed Work Plan and Budget ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Assigning People to do the project's work .................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Managing the project’s Expenses .................................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Linking Miradi budgets to your Finance Systems ............................................................ Error! Bookmark not defined.

Managing Funding ......................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Recording and Viewing Progress – Actions and Measures ............................................ Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Progress Reporting ..................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

2. Measuring Indicators ................................................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Management Reviews .................................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Developing a detailed Work Plan and Budget

Refer to the discussion above under
Developing a high-level Workplan and Budget for related guidance. This section assumes you have developed a high-level workplan, and perhaps set some business rules governing the preferred options regarding the levels of planning. It provides more details about systems features supporting detailed workplans and budgets. While some of the high-level planning tasks can be done in several different parts of Miradi (Diagram View, Strategic Plan view, Workplan View), the detailed plans are best developed within Workplan View.

Generally, a detailed workplan and budget should be prepared for the near-term work. Your organisational context will determine the right time period, but a “good” option is to have a detailed plan for the current and possible next financial year, with higher-level plans for later years.

Assigning People to do the project’s work
See Manage your People above for the key parameters governing how people are allocated within a project. People can be assigned to Strategies or Activities, including Monitoring activities. The effort associated with the work can be entered at the Month, Quarter or Year level; if you need some consistency across projects consider defining some business rules to govern these choices.

- To assign resources to work, right-click on the relevant Strategy or Activity, then Create Assignment, then select a person and enter the work units in the white columns.

- Once assignments are made, you can produce a workplan for a particular person or group by using the “Filter by People” button on the main Workplan tab.

- You can also check the total work assigned to a particular person or group by reviewing the rolled-up totals in the People tab.

Managing the project’s Expenses
The main options available when estimating the expenses for your project include –
- At the simplest level, it is possible to enter estimates of total expenses directly into the row for a Strategy or Activity. Miradi will roll up these amounts to give you an estimated total budget for your project. If this is sufficient for your purposes then there’s no need to work through the following items for detailed planning.

- Your account codes can be imported to your project – see Use project templates above – or you can enter them manually through the Accounting Codes tab.

- Expenses can be assigned to Strategies or Activities, including Monitoring activities. The expense amount can be entered at the Month, Quarter or Year level; if you need some consistency across projects consider defining some business rules to govern these choices.

- To create expenses, right-click on the relevant Strategy or Activity, then Create Projected Expense, then add the details. The Name field lets you put in a description of the expense. Choose an Account Code, and a Funding Source if you need to track the allocation of funding. Two other fields are available for use (Category One and Category Two); for example, these can be used to group items or to provide a linkage to other systems. Then enter the required amount in the white cells.

- Once all expenses have been entered, you can review the total amounts for each type of account in the Accounting Codes tab. You can also see whether expenses have been entered but not yet

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6 There are restrictions on these features; once you start entering data at a lower level (eg for an Activity, or Month) you can’t enter details at the higher level (eg Strategies, or Year); refer to the Miradi wizard panel for further details. Deciding on some standard approaches will help to get consistency across projects and limit confusion.
assigned to an account (these appear in the “Not Specified” row).

Miradi will roll-up your expenses to the Activity, Strategy, Results Chain and Project level, so that you can see the funding required at these different levels of detail.

**Linking Miradi budgets to your Finance Systems**

It is possible to link the workplans and budgets developed in Miradi straight into your finance system. This has two advantages –

1. It avoids the work associated with a duplicate exercise to prepare budgets, which often result in just broad estimates or aggregates; and

2. It produces budgets that are directly aligned toward achieving results (e.g. the budget required to implement a particular results chain), and not just conducting activities (e.g. the budget required for travel). This allows informed investment decisions to be made.
The method for linking Miradi data to the finance system depends on the capabilities and needs of your specific finance system. In general terms, the table shown below can be exported (File, Export current Page as, tab-delimited file) in a format that meets the basic needs of most finance systems – all systems require different formats, but the common requirement is a file with rows showing account numbers, and columns showing monthly amounts, plus a total column.

There are additional fields in Miradi (Category One and Category Two) which can be used to collect additional data that might be required by the finance system.

See also Rolling budgets and forecasts below.

Managing Funding
Managing project funding can be time-consuming and fraught with error unless systems are leveraged to help with record keeping. Miradi can hold details of funding sources (see screenshot below), and the Funding Source Code then allocated to particular expenses and assignments.

This Funding Source Code offers an opportunity to link with other systems; for example using the same code in your donor management system will provide options for combining information.
The summary table rolls-up all of these allocations so that you can see how much of the grant funding has been allocated, and deal with any variances. The Comments field can be used to show details such as the total amount available, any particular timing restrictions, and the reporting requirements. Creating and scheduling Activities to meet the funder’s reporting requirements will help to ensure that these deadlines are not missed.

**Recording and Viewing Progress – Actions and Measures**

As work is performed, two types of information should be regularly collected –

1. **Progress Reports** on the work being performed and results being achieved
2. **Measuring Indicators** that will indicate whether the expected results are being achieved.

**1. Progress Reporting**

Progress Reports can be created at the Project, Results Chain, Strategy and Activity levels. Each level of reporting can serve a different purpose, as outlined below. Progress information provides a record for short-term communication and analysis, and as a long-term history so that in years to come people will be able to learn what actions were taken. Progress information can be entered into Miradi at any time, for example when an event occurs or when some activity is undertaken, while the details are still fresh; or periodically such as monthly or quarterly.

Consider creating business rules about the frequency and level of detail for reports at the different levels.

- **Project level reports** can provide a high-level summary of the project’s actions and results. The frequency of this high-level view should fit with your organisation’s required reporting; for example, it is useful for annual reports.

- **Results Chain level reports** should focus on reporting the results being achieved (or not), communicating whether the theory-of-change is playing out as expected, and as evidenced by monitoring of Indicators on the results chain.

- **Strategy level reports** can comment on whether the Strategy is being executed as planned and progressing towards its intended impact, summarising the aggregation of progress of all activities within the strategy. This provides a useful summary for higher-level managers.

- **Activity level reports** are the lowest level of detail, and usually of most use to the team for sharing details of the work they have underway. These reports should describe the actions recently taken or factors that are impacting on the activity.
Progress Reports can be entered from multiple places (Diagram View, Strategic Plan View, Workplan View); consider providing guidance on the preferred option to simplify training and usage. Details that can be entered are a date, Progress Status (traffic-light indicators from a drop-down menu), and some descriptive text (including hyperlinks to further information if desired).

Project-level reports can only be entered from the Summary tab. Project-level progress reports and Results Chain progress reports have additional fields for recording next-steps and lessons learned.

These reports will be of most value if the teams have access to some guidance on the type of information to be recorded, such as:

- Record any significant events that occurred relevant to the Strategy or Activity.
- Note any problems arising or anticipated, and comment on progress with any outstanding issues relating to the Strategy or Activity.
- Comment on any variances to what was planned to occur, particularly where there are implications for future actions, budgets, or relationships with donors and other stakeholders.
- Teams should be encouraged to use the traffic light Status fields to raise awareness of where the team needs assistance, tagging reports with “Minor Issues” or “Major Issues” as the case may be. A learning culture encourages open reporting so that timely corrective action can be taken (encourage a philosophy of “red is good”).
2. Measuring Indicators
Monitoring Activities can be created within any Strategy, to plan for the work and expenses associated with monitoring the related indicators which will reveal progress of the Strategy and associated Results Chain. These Monitoring Activities can be created in Diagram View or Workplan View; a regular Activity can be changed to a Monitoring Activity by ticking the box illustrated below (this can only be done in Results Chain view). These monitoring activities provide details of which Measures need to be taken, when, and by whom, as well as the specific method to be followed.

For monitoring of indicators associated with Target Viability, consider creating a separate Results Chain or Strategy to bundle these monitoring activities – see example below.
As the monitoring is performed, the Measures are then entered against the appropriate indicator – this can be done in Results Chain View or Strategic Plan View, and displayed in the “Monitoring data” table. Note earlier comments about the need to retain the source data if the measure is derived from more detailed information (refer Data Management)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Measurement Date</th>
<th>Measurement Value</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Healthy Coral Reefs Across Eastern Bay</td>
<td>2016-01-25</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Mild Decrease</td>
<td>Rapid Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Degree of bomb damage of coral reef samples</td>
<td>2016-01-25</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Mild Decrease</td>
<td>Rough Guess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1. Number of sharks in bay</td>
<td>2016-09-21</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>Expert Knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management Reviews

During Implementation, project information should be available to inform the key review decisions -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Management Decisions</th>
<th>Supporting Information from Open Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Implementation of the Project / Program</td>
<td>Implement Actions &amp; Monitoring (OS Step 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the workplan focussed on the highest priority actions (e.g. as identified by threat ratings and target viability)?</td>
<td>- Workplan &amp; Budget allocations relative to Threat Ratings and Target Viability desired ratings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are the required resources in place (quantity and quality)?</td>
<td>- Detailed Workplan (activities, responsibilities, timelines) across all related projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do our team members have enough time to do their assigned tasks (across all projects)?</td>
<td>- Budget ($)s, people, partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do our partners have adequate capacity for their roles?</td>
<td>- Progress reports for Strategies, Objectives, Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Which parts of the project are on-track and on-budget, and what issues need addressing?</td>
<td>- Measures against Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are measures being collected?</td>
<td>- Related Finance reports from Finance System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Should Implementation continue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operationalising OS Step 4 – Analysing / Adapting

OS Step 4 is executed periodically to assess how the project is tracking, and determine any adaptations required to the plan. The Workplan should have scheduled and resourced these review activities as part of the early planning. The Open Standards document provides guidance for how to analyse and adapt your plan; this section provides guidance on using systems to support this work.

This section includes the following topics –

- Operationalising OS Step 4 – Analysing / Adapting
- Information to be analysed
- Analysing Progress
- Documenting recommended adaptations
- Management Reviews
Information to be analysed

Project information should be accessed from all relevant sources, which might include –

- Progress Reports and Measures against Indicators – these should be available within Miradi, along with hyperlinks to relevant supporting information; Miradi Share provides table and graph views of this information
- Financial reports from related finance systems, showing the actual expenses relative to budget
- Information from fundraising systems regarding actual or planned interactions with key funders
- Stories prepared for websites or social media
- Any recent research reports on topics relevant to the project’s targets, threats or actions

Gathering some of this information is made easier by sharing codes between systems. For example, using project and strategy codes in Miradi which are shared with the finance system allows matching of financial reports; using Funding Source codes in Miradi that are shared with the donor system allow matching of funder information.

Analysing Progress

The key information to be assessed includes the following -

1. Completed Progress Reports can be viewed within Miradi, where the full history of work on Activities and Strategies can be seen in context. Completed Progress reports can also be viewed on-line in Miradi Share in a variety of formats, showing the most recent reports and the full history.

2. Measures taken for each Indicator, in the context of the related Results Chain, will show what progress is being made relative to the results expected, as indicated by the Future Values.
3. Measures added to the Target Viability Table will show the progress being made towards improving the health of the key Targets, relative to the Future Values and Goals.
Documenting recommended adaptations

Analysis of this information should be documented and stored with the project files (see Data Management above) so that it is available during future reviews. This analysis should inform discussions with the team and with relevant advisors to determine the adaptations that should be made to the Plan.

Management Reviews

During this Analysis step, project information should be available to inform the key review decisions -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Management Decisions</th>
<th>Supporting Information from Open Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse progress of the Project / Program</td>
<td>Analyse, Use, Adapt the project (OS Step 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is the project achieving its planned results, and on-track to achieve its long-term impacts?</td>
<td>- Analysis of project results and assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What adaptations should be made?</td>
<td>- Analyses of operational and financial data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are we meeting donor expectations?</td>
<td>- Record of discussions and recommendations for adaptations of the project plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How can we help individual / team performance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Should we continue investing in this project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Going full-cycle - Support for multiple iterations around the cycle

The information that periodically comes out of Step 4 is used to make adaptations to your plan.

This section contains the following items –

**Going full-cycle - Support for multiple iterations around the cycle** .................................................. 39

**Adapting your plan** ................................................................................................................................. 39

**Checking Priorities** ............................................................................................................................... 40

**Rolling budgets and forecasts** ............................................................................................................... 41

**Adapting your plan**

The common types of adaptations are shown below. Before making these changes, you may want to archive a copy of your project, or use comments in Miradi Share’s timeline to indicate when and why the adaptations were being made (see Version Control above).

- **Update Target viability comments** – the Measures added to the target Viability Table will automatically update the **Status**. The support commentary on **Current Status Justification** should also be updated at this time to provide a record of the change.

- **Update Threat ratings** if required - if analysis indicates that the Threat level has changed, the threat details should be re-rated using the 3 factors of Scope, severity and Permanence. The Comments field should record the details, including the old and new levels to provide a record of the change.
Updating Strategies, Activities and Workplans – If the adaptations require changes to priorities or actions, the related Strategies and Activities should be revised, and the Workplan updated to reflect any changes to assignments and / or expenses.

Checking Priorities
As time moves on it’s possible for priorities to become muddled, with variations between the priorities as expressed in the Action Plan, and the actual work that is being resourced in the Work Plan. This can be easily avoided by a periodic cross-check.

For example, the summary table below shows the Marine Example project’s target viability and threat details. It indicates that the “Seabirds” target is currently in a Poor state of health (viability), and that by 2023 the team hopes to have restored it to a Good state of health (as defined by its associated Indicators and ratings). The Seabirds target is threatened by rats. The other key threat is unsustainable fishing.
The associated workplan shows where project resources are being allocated – primarily to addressing the threat of rats and developing a sustainable fishery. This demonstrates good alignment between the Work Plan and the priorities in the Action Plan.

In cases where there is poor alignment, the team should investigate the reasons and bring them back into line. Poor alignment can often be because the workplan has been regularly adjusted based on the “realities” being experienced in the field, such as a particular threat having faded away, in which case the Threat ratings may need adjusting. Other times the threats might still be there, but resources have been diverted elsewhere.

**Rolling budgets and forecasts**

As your project moves along, you can use your adapted plans to regularly update the associated workplan and budgets to create what finance people call “rolling forecasts”. For example, as time moves on, take the next year’s high-level workplan and budget data down to the detail level (e.g. expense amounts allocated to particular months / quarters) and add another year of high-level data to the outer year. This data can be exported and, depending on your finance system, imported to inform the organisation’s ongoing longer-term financial planning and well as short-term forecasting.