



### TBL reporting for urban irrigation

Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures (CRC IF) has developed a framework to use annually for assessing the sustainability of irrigation. This information is developed into a two page report that can be used for communicating progress to external and internal stakeholders.

IrrigationTBL meeting takes two hours and requires at least three people from an organisation to discuss the progress over the year and plan action for the coming year.

#### Background

There are very few organisations that assess and report on the sustainability of urban irrigation. This situation, together with growing political and community awareness has led irrigation communities and irrigation organisations to look for approaches and methods to assist in improving their performance and demonstrating transparently the **total benefits and costs of irrigation**.

Sustainability has grown out of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as  
*.....development that meets the needs of the present without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

*The definition of sustainability for irrigation is described by 3 principles*

- *Using, conserving and enhancing the land, water and biota resources in the urban areas, now and into the future.*
- *Maintaining the economic and social services and benefits to urban communities that enhance the quality of life, now and into the future.*
- *Ensuring the health of river, groundwater and drainage water systems that provide the irrigation water supplies, and maintaining extractions at sustainable levels.*

#### IrrigationTBL framework

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. <u>Sustainability Principles</u> for irrigation<br>Three generic principles offered that can be accepted or modified                  |  |  |
| 2. <u>High-Level Objectives</u> – 10 objectives relevant to social, environmental, economic are offered that can be accepted or modified |  |  |
| 3. <u>Issues</u> relevant to irrigation – identified by organisation   |  |  |
| 4. <u>Organisational objectives</u> to address issues to be developed by organisation  | 5. <u>Actions</u> – current or new action to address issues are documented | 6. <u>Indicators</u> – that help in measuring progress are chosen from a generic list or developed by organisation |

Sustainable development is a process of social learning rather than a set once-and-for-all definable qualities. It requires people to understand the current situation, find out all the various perspectives and works towards action that is relevant at present and will help move towards future goals. Therefore IrrigationTBL is a catalyst for people to work together to come up with a shared plan. The planning involves big picture thinking that is strategic and detailed plans that are practical.

**The report can be used as a stand alone document or be linked to State of the Environment (SOE) report and other water and openspace documents.**

## Indicators

23 indicators are available to do a TBL assessment of irrigation practices. 5 indicators are offered as the key indicators that every organisation should complete. The other indicators can be used depending on the individual organisation.

| Issues                    | Key indicators (5) always use | Other Indicators (18)   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Water use              | Water use per unit area       |                         |
|                           | Non-potable volume used       |                         |
| 2. Social outcomes        |                               | Recreation activity use |
| 3. Economic outcomes      |                               | Income                  |
| 4. Surface performance    | Surface quality               |                         |
| 5. Soil health            |                               | Soil compaction         |
| 6. Environment protection |                               | Nutrient runoff         |
| 7. Organisation capacity  | Training                      |                         |

IrrigationTBL is relevant to:

- Local government
- Catchment management authorities
- Organisations reliant on irrigation who manage public and private open space such as botanic gardens, golf courses and private sporting fields

Outputs and outcomes for committing to using IrrigationTBL are:

- Improved sustainability through annual assessment and reporting of irrigation
- Water savings through improved planning and management
- Improved capacity of organisations to communicate and plan for improved sustainability
- Report produced annually that can be used to demonstrate activities to improve sustainability

**Reports** available from CRC IF website

[www.irrigationfutures.org.au](http://www.irrigationfutures.org.au) click on publications, click on technical reports

1. A Guide to using Triple Bottom Line reporting as a framework to promote the sustainability of rural and urban irrigation in Australia
2. The Principles and Benefits of Triple Bottom Line Performance Reporting for the Australian Irrigation Sector
3. Use of reporting systems to improve the sustainable use of water for urban and peri-urban irrigation.
4. Performance reporting by the North Burdekin Water Board and sustainability, foundations for the future.
5. The development of sustainability reporting by a rural irrigation water provider, the Murray Irrigation Limited experience.
6. Embarking on a triple bottom line reporting process with Murrumbidgee Irrigation Pty Ltd.

## Products & Services

- Information pack
  - step by step instructions for running process
  - access to website
  - project reports
- 1 day training workshop for running process \$100 per organisation – minimum 8 organisations
- Train the trainer licence \$1000

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