

Setting SMART Objectives and the RRC Monitoring Planner (RRC 2015)

Setting SMART project objectives:

- Specific (concrete, detailed, well defined)
- Measurable (quantity, comparison)
- Achievable (feasible, actionable)
- Realistic (considering resources)
- Time-Bound (a defined time line)

*SMART can also be applied when setting monitoring objective.

Go to RRC PRAGMO manual, APPENDIX 4 – SMART Objectives, for further information www.therrc.co.uk/PRAGMO/PRAGMO_2012-01-24.pdf

The RRC has developed a Monitoring Planner to help practitioners structure and organise monitoring strategies. The Monitoring Planner, with examples, is in excel format and freely available online: http://www.therrc.co.uk/monitoring-planner. It consists of a table with a series of headers to fill in the monitoring details for each project objective, as shown in the Table 2 below. An explanation for each header is also included:

Why – What are the project objectives and the specific targets to be monitored? (*E.g. to increase the area of riffles and clean gravel habitats by 80% over 2km of river*). (see Benchmarking & Endpoints - Tool Box 5).

What – What is your monitoring objective and what are you trying to observe? (*E.g. to monitor increased habitat diversity and change in macro-invertebrate assemblages*). (see Benchmarking & Endpoints - Tool Box 5).

How – What techniques are being used to collect data and what assessment methods are you using? (*E.g. habitat mapping, 3 min macro-invertebrate kick-sampling; a-diversity, PSI index*).

Data – Do you have access to any pre-project/baseline data? If not, this needs to be collected. (*E.g. previously collected 3 min macro-invertebrate kick-samples from two locations in autumn*).

When – When are you collecting data – month/season, duration of monitoring, sampling repeats? (*E.g. habitat survey: pre survey 1 month before works; post survey 1 year after. Macro-invertebrates: pre survey spring and autumn samples 1 year before; post survey 1 and 3 years after both including a spring and an autumn sample*).

Who – Who are the individuals and/or organisations responsible for monitoring? Ensure all data are comparable. (*E.g. habitat mapping in-house by Jo Smith; macro-invertebrate pre survey by third part and in-house by Jo Smith, post survey in-house by Jo Smith*).

Cost – Are all costs for monitoring covered by the funding? Note that some techniques might require monitoring to be carried out a few years after implementation. If funding is insufficient, go back to 'how' and think about alternative techniques and methods.

Confidence – How confident (High/Medium/Low) are you that the monitoring is robust, suitable and has potential to show what you are trying to observe within the project time limit? If your confidence is low, go back to 'how' and consider alternative monitoring techniques.

Evaluation – How will your collected monitoring data be recorded and the analysis outputs reported? (E.g. standard protocols, end of year reports, uploading information to the RiverWiki. Applying these generic questions to each specific project objective will lead to a clear understanding of what level of motoring is actually achievable.

Table 4. RRC Monitoring Planner

Why	What	How	Data	When	Who	Cost	Confidence	Evaluation



This Planner is already in operation with the 42 projects of the Catchment Restoration Fund (CRF) and it is likely to be adopted by Natural England and SEPA for their large scale restoration projects.