

# Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan

Prepared by Nous Group for:  
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal  
Australian Rural Leadership Foundation  
The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

4 August 2023

# Contents

1	Executive Summary .....	1
2	Background and context.....	5
3	Objectives and scope of the evaluation .....	12
4	Evaluation approach .....	15
5	Methodology and data collection .....	24
6	Capability building .....	41
7	Evaluating the Community Impact Program .....	46
8	Evaluating the Small Network Grants.....	54
9	Evaluating the Expertise Pool.....	58
10	Evaluating the National Mentoring Program.....	62
11	Evaluating the National Learning Network.....	67
12	Evaluation management and implementation .....	73
13	Ethical standards.....	82
	Appendix A Key Evaluation Questions.....	86
	Appendix B Detailed data collection and monitoring plan for outcomes.....	87
	Appendix C HRCPD Initiative Program Logic (DAFF format) and key assumptions .....	96
	Appendix D Sampling Frame for Regional Deep Dives.....	100
	Appendix E Data collection tools .....	104
	Appendix F Glossary .....	117

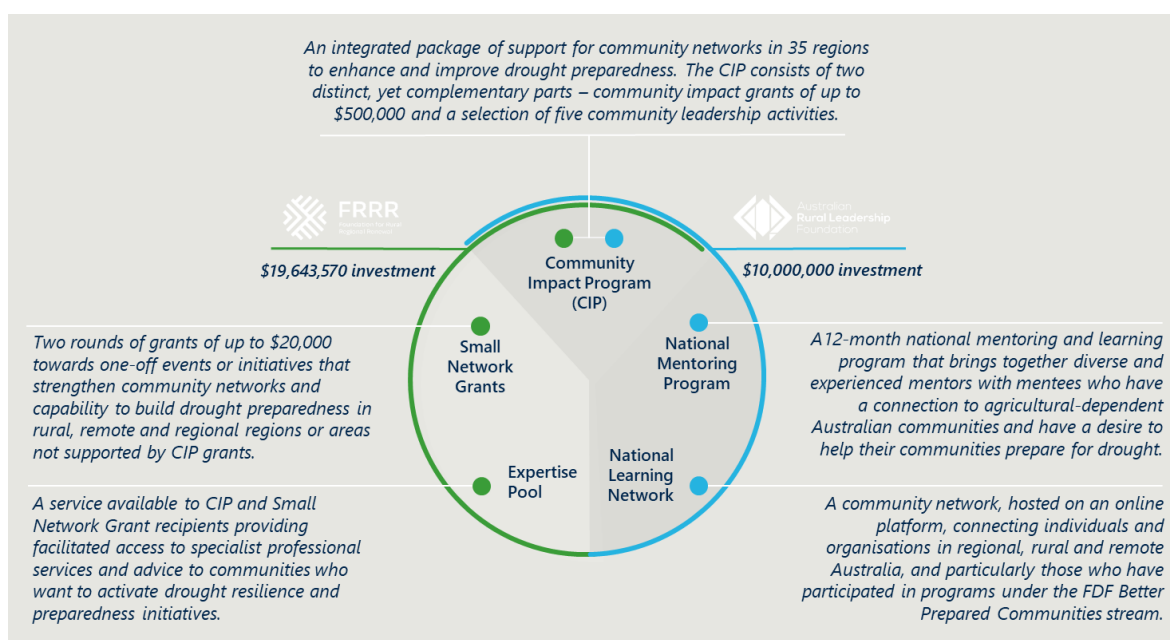
# 1 Executive Summary

## The Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative

The Future Drought Fund (FDF) was established by the Australian Government under the Future Drought Fund Act 2019. The FDF aims to provide secure, continuous funding for programs, grants and arrangements that support Australian farmers and associated communities to prepare for, and become more resilient to, the impacts of future droughts.

The Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought (HRCPD) Initiative is a \$29.65 million investment under the FDF to build community capacity and resilience to the impacts of climate change and drought, and to enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities. There are five program elements of the HRCPD Initiative. A summary is provided in Figure 1 below. The HRCPD Initiative is being delivered by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF), in a staged roll out between July 2022 to June 2025.

Figure 1 | Five elements of the HRCPD Initiative



FRRR and ARLF engaged Nous Group (Nous) to undertake a comprehensive, participatory evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative. This MEL Plan sets out the detailed approach for evaluating the HRCPD Initiative and each of the five elements. This executive summary provides an intentionally brief overview of the evaluation approach, as significant detail is provided in the Framework itself.

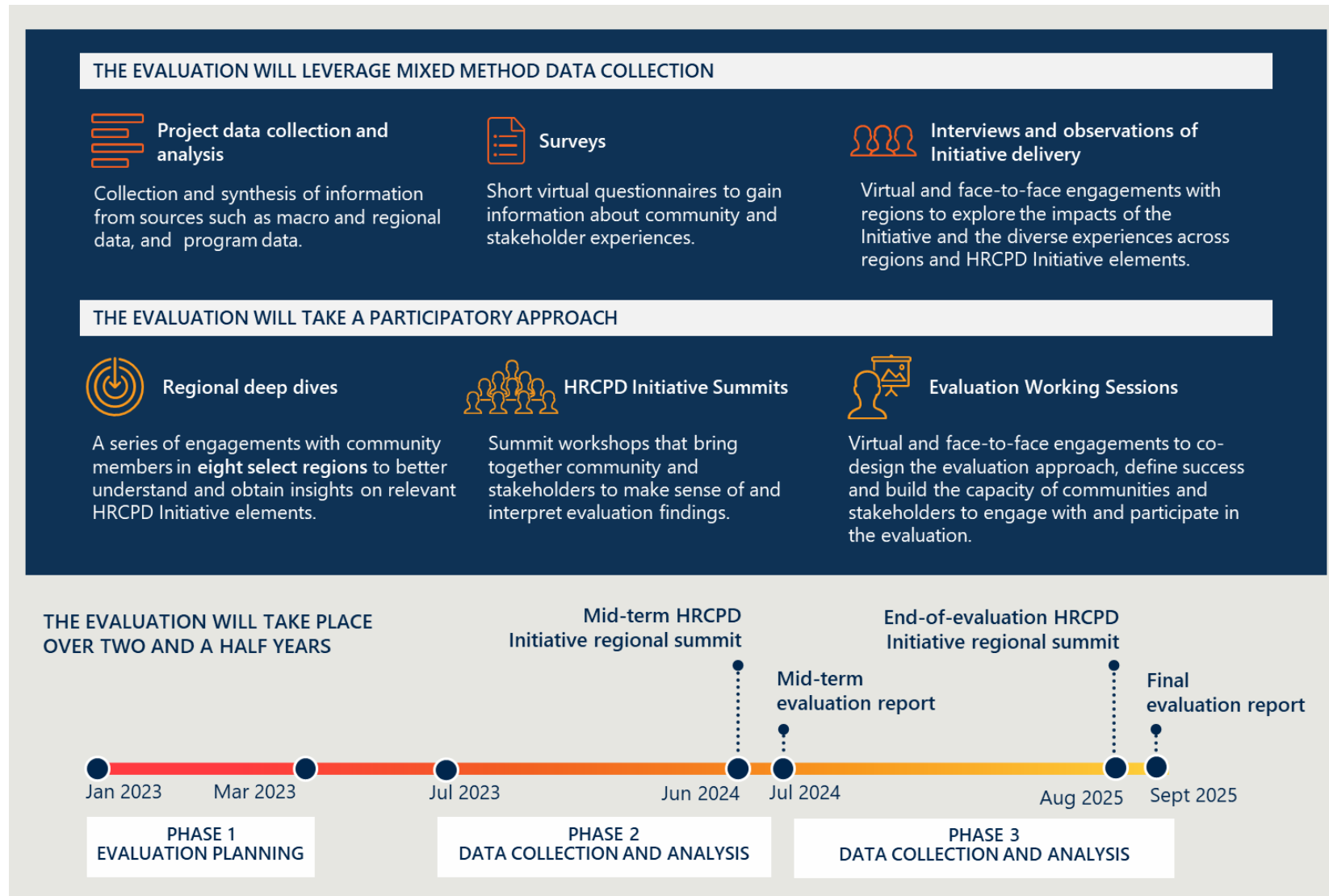
The evaluation will apply a mixed method and participatory approach to collecting, synthesising and making sense of data. It will run from March 2023 to September 2025. A sequential overview of the evaluation approach to data collection, analysis and synthesis that the evaluation will take is provided in Figure 2 on page 2. This describes the process for establishing baseline assessments, building community capability in evaluation methods, and the robust and participatory approach to capturing and interpreting place-based and national level impacts.

An overview of the data collection activities that will be employed throughout the evaluation, and a timeline for the evaluation activities, is provided in Figure 3 on page 3.

Figure 2 | Overview of the evaluation data collection, analysis and synthesis process



Figure 3 | Overview of the evaluation approach and timeline



The focus of the evaluation will be to examine the impact of the HRCPD Initiative, and its five elements, on regional communities. A secondary focus of the evaluation, and to contextualise these findings, will be on the appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Initiative, and on the intermediate (2-4 year) outcomes of component 1 programs (Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program and Drought Resilience Leaders Program).

The evaluation will:

- Use Five Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs), outlined in Section 4.3, that will define the scope of the evaluation and guide the analysis.
- Use a Theory of Change and Program Logic approach to understand the HRCPD Initiative and its intended outcomes. The full program logic for the HRCPD initiative is provided in Section 4.2.1, which articulates the intended short, intermediate and long-term outcomes, and how the inputs, activities and outputs contribute to these outcomes.
- Use seven defined short-term outcomes, and three intermediate-term outcomes, that will provide a consistent basis to measure the progress and impact of the Initiative at the national-level. These short-term outcomes are provided in Section 4.2.2.1, and all outcomes are provided in the program logic in Section 4.2.1. Appendix B provides detail on the indicators against each outcome and how the data collection methods will enable measurement of these.
- Apply a tailored evaluation approach specific to each element of the HRCPD Initiative, leveraging both program data, collected through routine administration of the Initiative by FRRR and ARLF, and primary data that Nous will collect over the course of the evaluation. The evaluation methodology and data collection plan is provided in Section 5, and a detailed data collection plan for each element is provided for each HRCPD Initiative element in Sections 7 to Section 11.
- Have a dedicated focus on enabling participation and building the capability of regional communities. This will provide a robust process for collaborative sense-making by involving HRCPD Initiative participants in the process of interpreting evaluation findings and enable communities to put learning into action and effectively translate knowledge across regions by building evaluation skills. Our four-part approach to local capacity and capability building is described in Section 6.
- Be conducted ethically and include safeguards to ensure participant consent and culturally appropriate methods of engagement and communication. Section 13 outlines our approach to ensuring ethical conduct, data management and following Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) principles.

## 2 Background and context

This section provides an overview of the background and context for the evaluation. It includes an overview of the:

- Future Drought Fund
- Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought (HRCPD) Initiative
- Contextual factors surrounding this evaluation, including existing Monitoring Evaluation and Learning plans and the Productivity Commission review
- Definitions and key terms relevant to the evaluation.

### 2.1 Future Drought Fund

The Future Drought Fund (FDF) was established by the Australian Government under the Future Drought Fund Act 2019. The FDF aims to provide secure, continuous funding for programs, grants and arrangements that support Australian farmers and associated communities to prepare for, and become more resilient to, the impacts of future droughts.

The Australian Government made an initial investment of \$5 billion in the Fund. The FDF makes \$100 million available each year for drought resilience programs, arrangements, and grants.

Programs in the FDF are centred around four interconnected investment themes:

- Better Climate Information
- Better Planning
- Better Practices
- Better Prepared Communities

These investment themes contribute to three strategic objectives of economic, environmental, and social resilience to drought. Design and delivery of programs and spending is guided by the Drought Resilience Funding Plan (2020-2024).

### 2.2 Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative

The HRCPD Initiative is a \$29.65 million investment under the Better Prepared Communities investment theme of the FDF. The HRCPD Initiative aims to build social resilience and community capacity to prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change and drought, and to enhance the public good in agriculture-dependent communities. The HRCPD Initiative extends and integrates the Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program and the Drought Resilience Leaders Program, delivered in 2021-2022. The HRCPD Initiative is being delivered by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF).

There are five program elements of the HRCPD Initiative. A summary is provided in Figure 4 below.

The five HRCPD Initiative elements will be implemented in a staged roll out between 1 July 2022 to end June 2025. A timeline is provided in Figure 5.

Figure 4 | Five elements of the HRCPD Initiative

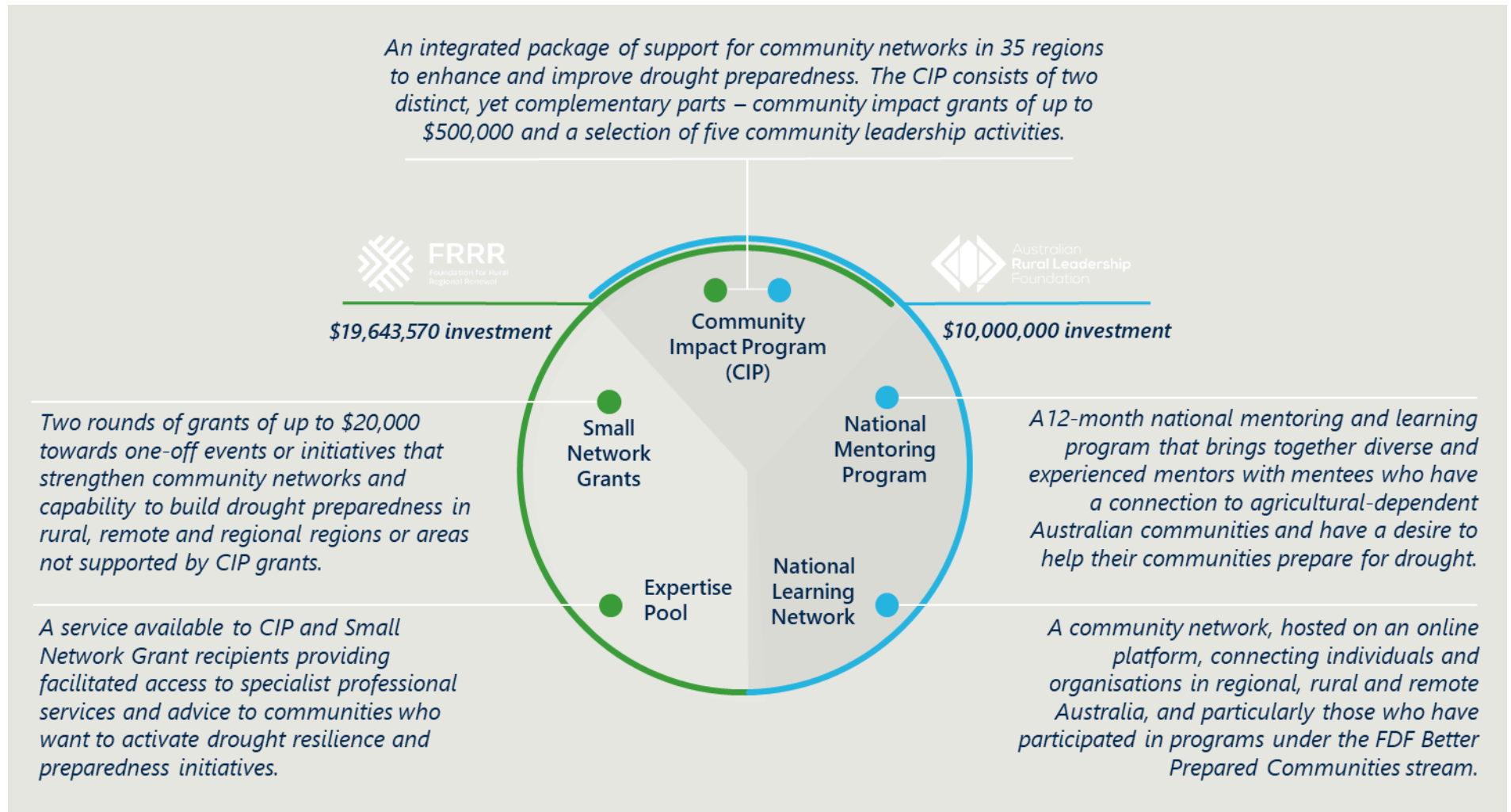
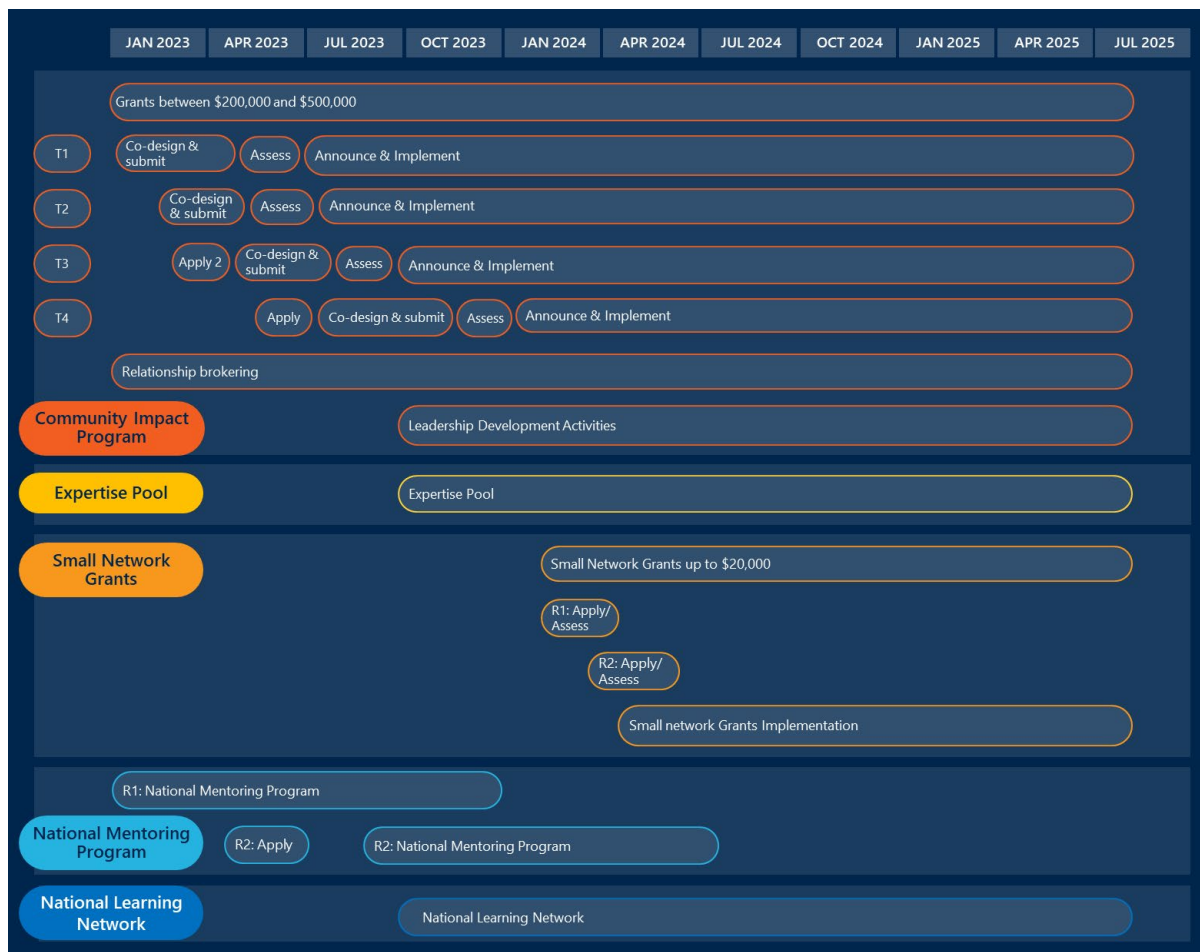




Figure 5 | Implementation timeline for the HRCPD Initiative elements



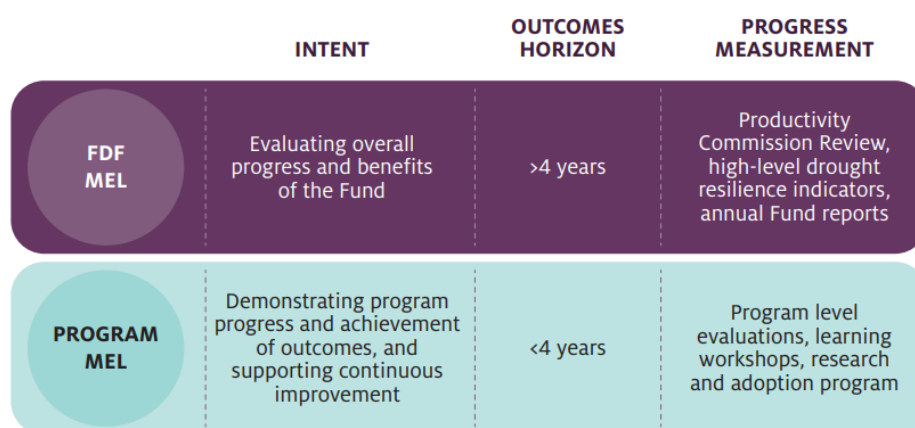
## 2.3 Contextual factors

The sections below outline contextual factors that influence the HRCPD Initiative evaluation.

### 2.3.1 FDF Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

The Australian Government is accountable for monitoring and evaluating the contribution of the FDF to improved drought preparedness and resilience. The FDF MEL Framework details the Australian Government’s approach to monitoring and evaluating the FDF, and programs under the FDF. The single FDF MEL Framework is intended to support the evaluation of the overall progress and benefits of the FDF over long-term (4+ years) outcome horizons. Programs funded under the four interconnected investment themes of the FDF each have program-level MEL Plans – this includes the HRCPD Initiative ‘program’. Program-level MEL Plans are intended to support the demonstration of program progress and achievement of outcomes over shorter (less than 4 years) outcomes horizons, while supporting continuous improvement (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 | Use of the FDF MEL Framework<sup>1</sup>



### 2.3.2 HRCPD Initiative MEL Plan

This document is the HRCPD Initiative ‘program’ MEL Plan, which sits under the FDF MEL Framework described above. This document will guide the monitoring, evaluation and learning activities over the next two years. The components of this MEL Plan, their purpose and the relevant sections of this document are described below:

- **Monitoring** - The evaluation data collection plan (Table 6 on page 25 in Section 5.1) outlines program data that will be collected as part of administration and monitoring of the HRCPD Initiative elements. The monitoring plan in Appendix B further details the monitoring activities that FRRR and ARLF will conduct throughout the evaluation.
- **Evaluation** - The evaluation approach, methodology and activities (including reporting, governance and ethical considerations) are described in detail in Sections 4, 5, and in Sections 7 through to 13. The HRCPD Initiative MEL Plan has a dual function as the program MEL Plan and a detailed framework for guiding the evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative.
- **Learning** - The learning components of the evaluation are detailed in Section 6, which describe how HRCPD Initiative delivery partners and participant learning will be facilitated through capability building activities, and in Section 12 which provides further detail on evaluation management, and reporting. The use of the evaluation findings by stakeholder group are described in Section 3.3. This includes how evaluation learnings will inform future program and policy design.

The HRCPD Initiative MEL Plan aligns with, and contributes to, the long-term outcomes and expectations in the FDF MEL Framework. Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes for the HRCPD Initiative have been drafted and mapped to the FDF intermediate-term (2-4 years) and long-term outcomes (4+ years), outlined in Appendix C. This HRCPD Initiative MEL Plan builds on the outcomes of the FDF programs that preceded the HRCPD Initiative: the Networks to Build Drought Resilience and Drought Resilience Leaders Programs

The HRCPD Initiative MEL Plan (including the development of the program logic and HRCPD Initiative wide indicators) was developed by Nous Group in collaboration with FRRR, ARLF, the DAFF HRCPD Initiative Program team and the DAFF FDF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Future Drought Fund, *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework*. 2020. Available at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/mel-framework.pdf>

### 2.3.3 Other relevant evaluations and reviews

Ongoing reviews have explored the implementation of initiatives under the FDF, including the 2023 Productivity Commission Review into the FDF and FDF Annual Reports. The 2023 Productivity Commission Review is currently underway and was established to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of funding allocated to activities that support drought resilience under the FDF. The interim report of the 2023 Productivity Commission Review was released in June 2023 and found that initial FDF programs have been broadly appropriate for addressing potential underinvestment in drought resilience. Findings from the interim report suggest that initial programs funded under the FDF may largely focus on the achievement of short-term outcomes, with a lack of effective MEL plans to demonstrate linkages between funded activities, outputs, expected outcomes and long-term drought resilience outcomes. Relevant to programs under the FDF Better Prepared Communities stream, the Networks to Build Drought Resilience (NBDR) Final Program Report was not available for consideration at the time of publishing the Productivity Commission interim report. The NBDR Final Report included evidence of 2-4 year outcomes (mapped against the original Stage 1 MEL). The evaluation design for the HRCPD Initiative outlined in this MEL plan intends to build on the NBDR Final Program Report.

Another key theme of the Productivity Commission interim report was whether some FDF activities may be more effectively managed at a state level, rather than nationally. The interim report also suggested that there have been limited mechanisms to facilitate knowledge-sharing between FDF participants. The Productivity Commission Review is ongoing, and findings are expected to be updated with the final report to Government due on 10 September 2023.

Developing a robust MEL Plan, co-designed with delivery partners and communities, will guide the evaluation and inform delivery partners and policy-makers of the appropriateness and impact of the HRCPD Initiative over short (0-2 year) and intermediate term (2-4 years) outcome horizons. Insights from the HRCPD Initiative evaluation will contribute to the evidence base on the value of investing in national initiatives that aim to build and strengthen social resilience to drought within communities.

## 2.4 Definitions and key terms

Definitions to key terms that will be referenced in the evaluation are detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1 | Key terms in the evaluation

Term	Definition
<b>Agriculture-dependent communities</b>	Remote, rural and regional communities with a high economic dependency on agriculture and related industries. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Drought</b>	Drought can incorporate meteorological, agricultural and socio-economic measures. Meteorological measures of drought refer to periods of low rainfall. Agricultural measures refer to crop failure from lack of soil moisture. Socio-economic measures refer to adverse economic and social outcomes, such as reductions in farm incomes or mental health impacts. <sup>3</sup> Note: Drought can be complex to define, with many varied uses of the term. The definition provided is indicative, recognising that there are varied definitions.
<b>Drought resilience</b>	The ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall, and changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental, and social wellbeing. <sup>4</sup> Note: Drought can be complex to define, with many varied definitions of the term. This definition is not conclusive. The evaluation team will work with each region to understand their experience and definition, and adapt our communication accordingly.
<b>Innovative activities</b>	Generating, diffusing and applying knowledge in order to do new things or do existing things in new ways. <sup>5</sup>
<b>Networks</b>	An interconnected and open-ended circle of people linked by a shared interest, occupation, etc. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Public good</b>	A public good is one whose benefits are nonexcludable and nondepletable. <sup>7</sup> In terms of the FDF, public goods are benefits generated by the FDF funding which must be able to be accessed and/or shared by many (public benefits), rather than be captured solely by individual businesses or industries for private commercial gain (private benefits). <sup>8</sup>
<b>Social capital</b>	Features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Social resilience</b>	Social resilience is the adaptive and learning capacity of individuals, groups and institutions to self-organise in a way that maintains system function in the face of change or in response to a disturbance. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. *Future Drought Fund Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan: More Resilient Communities Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan*. 2022. P 9.

<sup>3</sup> N Hughes W Soh, C Boulton and K Lawson, Defining drought from the perspective of Australian farmers, *Climate Risk Management*, 35, Canberra Australian Capital Territory, 2022. Available at: [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212096322000274?ref=cra\\_js\\_challenge&fr=RR-1](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212096322000274?ref=cra_js_challenge&fr=RR-1).

<sup>4</sup> Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. *Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020-2024*. 2020. Available at: <https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/48071/widgets/284939/documents/144176>

<sup>5</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. *Future Drought Fund Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan: More Resilient Communities Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan*. 2022. P 9.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. *Future Drought Fund Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan: More Resilient Communities Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan*. 2022. P 9.

<sup>7</sup> L Robison, *The Cheap Side of Social Capital*, Institute for Social Capital, 2023. Available at: <https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/the-cheap-side-of-social-capital/>.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. *Drought Resilience Funding Plan 2020-2024*. 2020. Available at: <https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/48071/widgets/284939/documents/144176>

<sup>9</sup> Putnam, R. *Bowling alone: America's declining social capital*. *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 6, 1995, Issue 1, pp. 65-78, doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0002.

<sup>10</sup> Maclean, K, Cuthill, M, Ross, H. *Six attributes of social resilience*. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, Volume 57, 2014 - Issue 1. Available at: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/CDD/Planning/communitybenefitsadvisorycommittee/additionalresources/sixattributesofsocialresilience.pdf>

Term	Definition
Strategic drought resilience	Drought resilience that is achieved through a considered and collaborative process (with involved parties/stakeholders), which includes a plan to achieve a particular outcome. <sup>11</sup>
Transformational change	A structural change that alters the interplay of institutional, cultural, technological, economic and ecological dimensions of a given system. It will unlock new development paths, including social practices and worldviews. <sup>12</sup>
Transformative activities	Activities that result in sustained change at a system level. <sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. *Future Drought Fund Program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan: More Resilient Communities Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan*. 2022. P 9.

<sup>12</sup> Mersmann, F. and others. *Shifting Paradigms: Unpacking Transformation for Climate Action. A Guidebook for Climate Finance & Development Practitioners*. 2014. Available at: [https://epub.wupperinst.org/frontdoor/deliver/index/docid/5518/file/5518\\_Shifting\\_Paradigms.pdf](https://epub.wupperinst.org/frontdoor/deliver/index/docid/5518/file/5518_Shifting_Paradigms.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ziervogel, G. *Building transformative capacity for adaptation planning and implementation that works for the urban poor: Insights from South Africa*, Volume 48, 2019, Issue 5, pp. 494-506. Available at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13280-018-1141-9>

## 3 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

This section outlines the focus of the evaluation. It details:

- The key objectives of the evaluation
- The scope of the evaluation, including specifics on what is in and out of scope

### 3.1 Key objectives

FRRR and ARLF engaged Nous to undertake a comprehensive, participatory evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative. This includes designing a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan for the HRCPD Initiative.

The evaluation will seek to address the overarching question of:

*To what extent and how has the HRCPD initiative enabled rural, regional and remote communities to prepare for future droughts through strengthened social resilience, local capacity and capability building?*

In answering the overarching question, the evaluation aims to:

- Demonstrate the contribution of the HRCPD Initiative on enabling rural, regional and remote communities to adapt to and prepare for drought through strengthened social capital and resilience, and an increase in capacity, capability, skills, knowledge, networks, awareness, social connectedness, and attitudinal change over time.
- Provide a robust evidence base on strategies that contribute to drought-resilient communities, and the extent to which the HRCPD Initiative, and component 1 programs (Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program and Drought Resilience Leaders Program) have enabled these at the project, community, regional and national-level.
- Provide FRRR, ARLF and DAFF with insights to refine and adapt the HRCPD Initiative design and delivery, to improve program effectiveness and enhance impact in the future.
- Equip local organisations with practical evaluation skills and resources that strengthen their capacity to assess, articulate and improve the delivery and impact of community projects in the long term.
- Inform broader reviews, evaluations and program design related to the FDF and future investment in Australian drought policy.

### 3.2 Scope

The components in and out of scope of the evaluation are described in Table 2 overleaf.

**Table 2 | Overview of the scope of the HRCPD Initiative evaluation**

Component	In scope	Out-of-Scope
<b>Areas of enquiry</b>	The focus of the evaluation will be to examine the impact of the HRCPD Initiative on regional communities, and the outcomes achieved by funded activities. A secondary focus of the evaluation, and to contextualise these findings, will be on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Initiative, and on the outcomes of component 1 programs (Networks to Build Drought Resilience Program and Drought Resilience Leaders Program).	The evaluation will not entail an economic or cost-effectiveness enquiry.
<b>Breadth of evaluation</b>	The national evaluation will consider the individual and cumulative achievements of the five elements under the HRCPD Initiative, as described in Section 2.2, and of component 1 programs as noted above.	Evaluation of individual HRCPD Initiative funded activities. The evaluation will only be conducted at an element and Initiative level.
<b>Causal evaluation</b>	The evaluation will examine the contribution of the HRCPD Initiative and elements to identified outcomes.	The evaluation will not entail analysis to infer a causal impact of the HRCPD Initiative on specific outcomes, including comparison of outcomes between groups to attribute these with confidence to the Initiative. Further detail is provided in Section 5.3.2.
<b>Timing</b>	The evaluation will be delivered over three stages from February 2023 to September 2025, with initial Mid-term Evaluation findings to be developed by July 2024, with a focus on four evaluation question domains: appropriateness, strategic alignment, efficiency, and effectiveness.  The Final Evaluation findings will be delivered in September 2025, with a focus on all evaluation question domains, including two no previously addressed: long-term impact and recommendations.	The evaluation will not consider impacts of HRCPD Initiative elements and activities beyond September 2025, upon delivery of the Final Evaluation Report.  Ongoing delivery of capability development sessions to regional stakeholders beyond the conclusion of the evaluation project in September 2025 is also not within scope.
<b>Data collection</b>	The evaluation will leverage routinely collected data and documentation collected by FRRR and ARLF as part of the delivery of the HRCPD Initiative elements.	Collecting routine data on the delivery of elements, such as participation reports or grant reporting, is not within scope for the evaluation.
<b>Capability building</b>	The evaluation will have a dedicated focus on building the capability of regional communities. Where possible and appropriate, the Nous evaluation team will build community capability with evaluation methods and good practices. Further detail on how this will be done over the course of the evaluation is provided in Section 6.	Formal training and ongoing capability building is not within scope for the evaluation.

### 3.3 Audience

The Evaluation findings will identify lessons learnt about government investment in drought resilience and preparedness programs and formulate recommendations for future government investment. The Final Evaluation Report may be released to the public and will be shared with relevant stakeholders. Primary and secondary audiences will have different uses for the evaluation findings (see Table 3).

Table 3 | Primary and secondary audiences

Primary Audience	
Stakeholder	How they will use the evaluation's findings
FRRR and ARLF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be accountable to key stakeholders and assess whether the Initiative and the individual elements have achieved the intended objectives.</li> <li>To learn and then adapt program delivery to achieve greater impact and value of drought resilience and leadership investment.</li> <li>To inform future program design and community and capability investment needs.</li> <li>To document, understand and communicate the narrative of the Initiative (and the individual elements), and the outcomes and impact it achieves (including the impact for individuals and communities).</li> <li>To communicate the benefits of co-designed programs and locally informed evaluation processes in rural, regional and remote locations.</li> </ul>
HRCPD Initiative participants	<p>For CPLOs and delivery partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the impact of the Initiative, and the value of drought resilience investment and co-design on the intended beneficiaries.</li> <li>To learn and then adapt future project/program design and delivery.</li> <li>To communicate community outcomes to stakeholders and inform future investment.</li> </ul> <p>For element participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the benefits they and other stakeholders achieved through the individual elements.</li> </ul>
The Australian government, including DAFF and the Productivity Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be accountable to key stakeholders and assess whether the Initiative and the individual elements have achieved the intended objectives and contributed to the overall goals of the FDF.</li> <li>To build an evidence base on the role social resilience plays to support drought preparedness and inform future investment</li> <li>To learn and adapt current and future FDF and other Australian Government drought resilience investment that support improved preparedness and resilience to drought and other impacts of climate change.</li> </ul>
Secondary audience	
Regional Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn from the experience of other regions and communities across Australia to inform their own approach to building community resilience and responding to drought.</li> </ul>
The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the efficacy of national government investments into building social resilience to drought.</li> <li>To inform future investments in the FDF and community resilience-focused initiatives, delivered at a national scale.</li> </ul>
Future Drought Fund Consultative Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To obtain an evidence-base for advising the Ministers and Government on future program design under the FDF.</li> </ul>
Program managers and delivery partners of the other FDF programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To draw lessons for evaluations on other FDF programs and to systematically understand how well programs achieve their goals and impact community drought resilience.</li> <li>To understand what works well and what could be improved in the design and delivery of FDF programs aimed at building community resilience.</li> </ul>



## 4 Evaluation approach

This section describes the theoretical approach of the evaluation. It provides an overview of the:

- Principles guiding the evaluation
- The conceptual approach of the evaluation

### 4.1 Evaluation principles

This evaluation will be conducted in line with six key principles. These principles will inform all stages of the evaluation. They also provide a framework against which Nous and FRRR can assess the success of the evaluation.

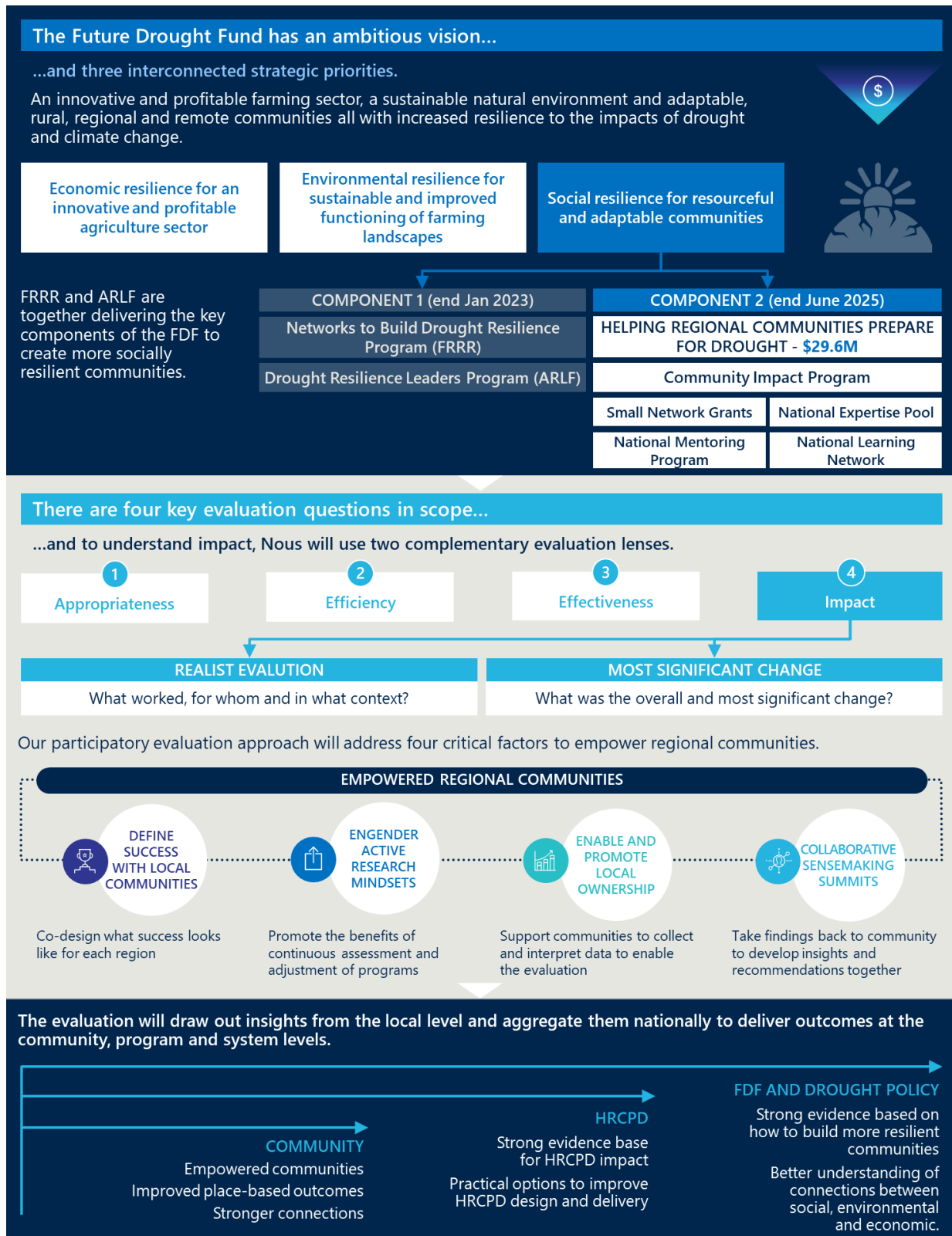
Figure 7 | Overview of guiding principles for the evaluation



## 4.2 Conceptual approach

The conceptual approach for the evaluation is provided in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 | Conceptual approach of the HRCPD Initiative evaluation



## 4.2.1 A program theory will guide the evaluation

### Program theory

A program theory articulates how the Initiative is intended to achieve its goals and underpins the evaluation. The program theory is comprised of two elements:

- The **theory of change** summarises the program logic and explains how activities are understood to produce results that contribute towards achieving the broader goals of the Initiative. The theory of change provides strategic narrative to articulate what impacts are sought through this investment, and how that change can be achieved.
- The **program logic** provides a visual representation of how the Initiative intends to work. It articulates the relationship between desired outcomes of the Initiative and the required inputs, activities and outputs.

These components describe what is expected to happen through investment in the HRCPD Initiative. They provide a guide as to the expected outcomes and how the Initiative is expected to perform and create change. The evaluation observes the actual outcomes of the Initiative and assesses them against the expected outcomes described in the program theory.

### The HRCPD Initiative program theory and program logic

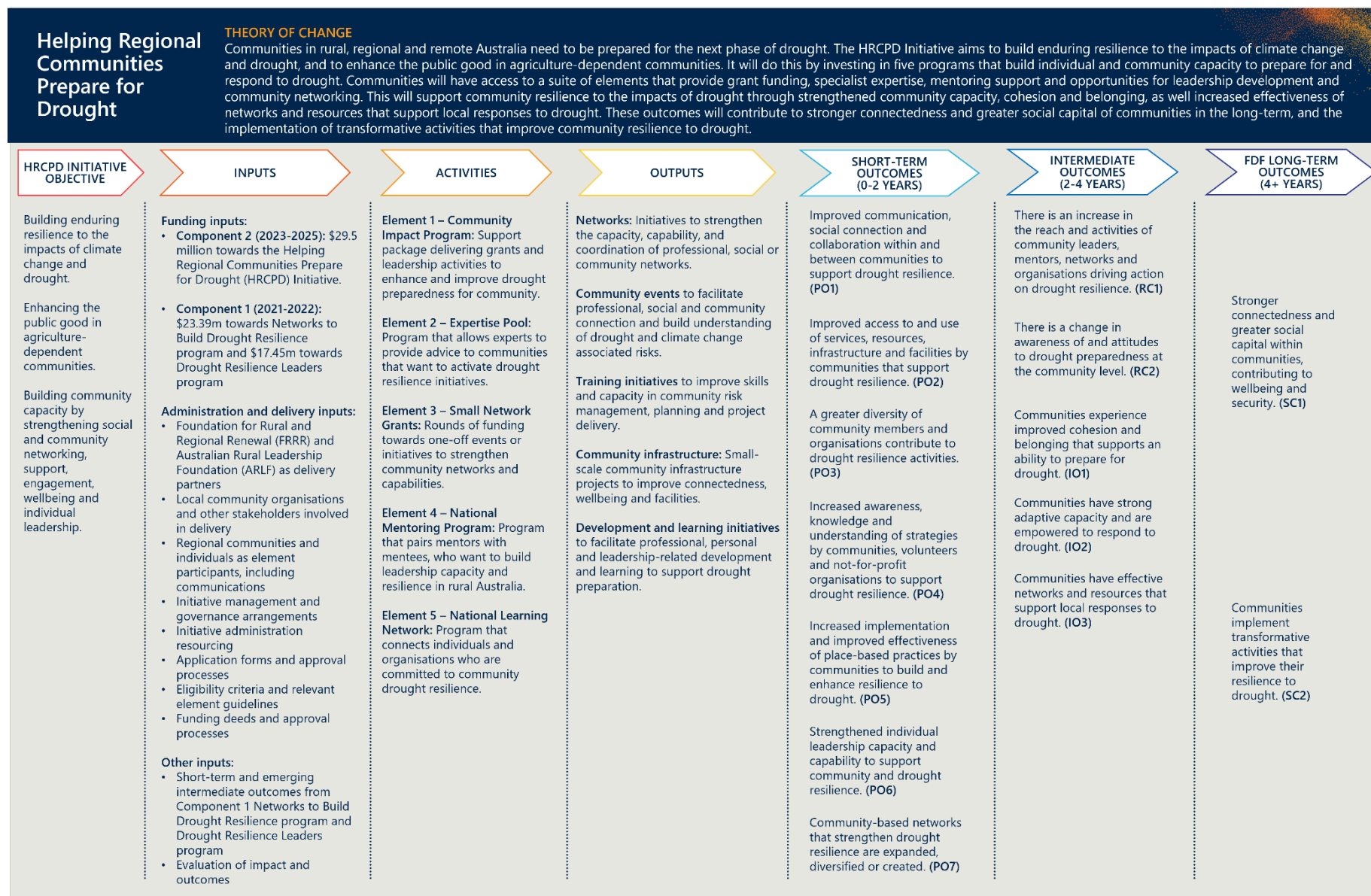
The program theory in Figure 9 overleaf articulates the intent of the HRCPD Initiative, the needs and gaps the Initiative is aiming to address and its intended achievements. It illustrates how the program inputs, activities and outputs are intended to translate into short-, intermediate- and long-term outcomes. The HRCPD Initiative program logic is provided in Appendix C.

The HRCPD Initiative program theory and program logic have four key features:

- **Drawing on the Better Prepared Communities MEL Plan and the Future Drought Fund MEL.** They link the five elements funded through the Initiative to the FDF's intended intermediate and long-term outcomes. The Program Logic needed to align with the long-term outcomes of the FDF, as well as the existing success measures (RC1 and RC2) described in the intermediate term. This provides continuity and consistency between the HRCPD Initiative and the objectives of the FDF MEL.
- **Including a set of short-term and intermediate outcomes.** These outcomes link the outputs of the Initiative to the long-term outcomes of the FDF. Nous drew heavily on the early outcomes observed through the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program and best-practice literature and research relating to social resilience to develop these outcomes. The intermediate and short-term outcomes are not focused on inputs and outputs to assess Initiative contribution to drought resilience for communities. The list of intermediate and short-term outcomes was refined in consultation with key stakeholders, such as FRRR, ARLF and DAFF.
- **Five output types capture the intended activity outputs of the HRCPD Initiative.** Each Initiative element has different activities that in turn have different intended outputs. The first four opportunity types were derived from the Networks to Build Drought Resilience program and describe the types of projects funded through the CIP and Small Network grants. The fifth opportunity type was developed to capture all elements of the HRCPD Initiative.

A series of assumptions and detailed mapping of activities and output types, and short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes underpins the program logic. This mapping and the series of assumptions, including Program implementation, external factors, outputs to 1-2 year outcomes, outcomes from 2-4 years and contribution to long term outcomes (4+ years), is provided in the program logic in Appendix C. The indicators for each outcome are provided in Appendix B.

Figure 9 | Program theory for the HRCPD Initiative



## 4.2.2 The evaluation will be formative and summative

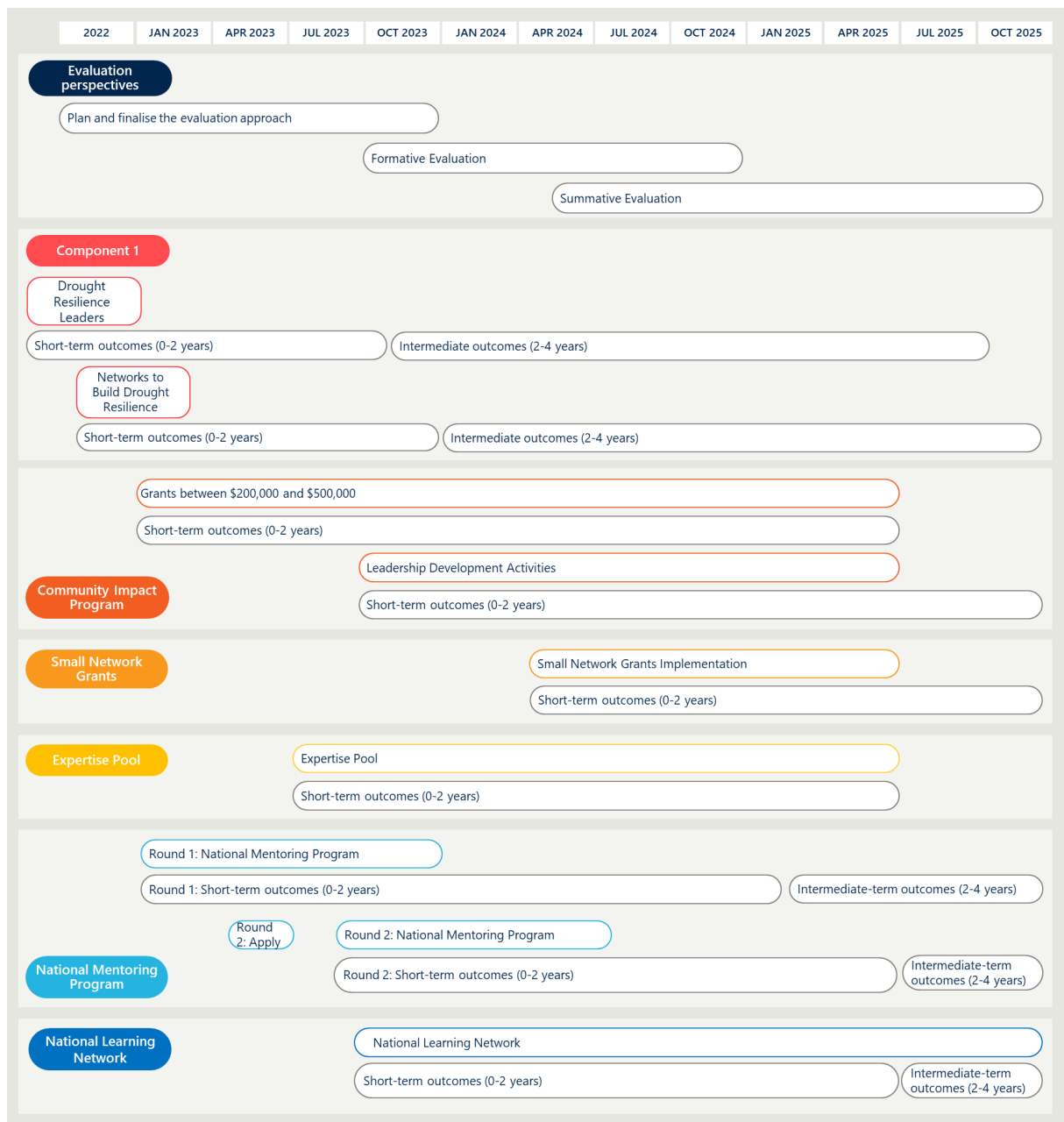
The evaluation has two areas of focus:

- **Formative** – The formative components of the evaluation will be guided by KEQs on appropriateness, strategic alignment and efficiency to assess aspects of the Initiative’s delivery.
- **Outcome and impact (summative)** – The outcome and impact components of the evaluation will be guided by the KEQs on effectiveness, impact and recommendations to assess the extent to which the Initiative is progressing towards and achieving its intended objectives, outcomes and ultimate long-term goals. This assessment will be provided in the Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report.

Figure 10 illustrates the timeline for evaluation reporting on the formative and summative components of the evaluation, and the timeline for observing short- and intermediate-term outcomes for each HRCPD Initiative element.

The outcome and impact components of the evaluation will have a participatory approach to involving stakeholders of the HRCPD Initiative, with particular focus on involving stakeholders in identifying the impacts in their communities. Further detail on the participatory activities in this evaluation is provided in Section 6.

Figure 10 | Timeline for formative and summative evaluation reporting



The evaluation will take three approaches to demonstrating outcomes and impact for the summative component.






#### 4.2.2.1 Seven short-term outcomes will evaluate national level impact

Central to the evaluation is assessing the extent to which the Initiative is contributing to its intended outcomes, including the FDF long-term outcomes. Nous has identified a set of short-term and intermediate national outcomes that will provide a consistent basis to measure the progress and impact of the Initiative over a two-year timeframe. These, along with long-term outcomes that they contribute to, are provided in the program theory in Figure 9 on page 18 and provide updated outcomes to be included in the Better Prepared Communities MEL Monitoring Plan referred to in Section 2.3.2. Nous has reviewed

and updated the outcomes based on community feedback through evaluation working sessions with CPLOs and delivery partners.

Each element of the HRCPD Initiative contributes to a set of these short-term outcomes (as illustrated in Figure 11 below), enabling Nous to measure progress of the HRCPD Initiative against these outcomes at a national level. Each outcome has a set of indicators to measure progress towards achieving these outcomes, drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources in the evaluation. Appendix B provides more detail on the indicators against each short-term outcome.

Figure 11 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative by element

	 Community Impact Program	 Small Network Grants	 Expertise Pool	 National Mentoring Program	 National Learning Network
<b>PO1.</b> Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness	●	●		●	●
<b>PO2.</b> Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness	●	●	●		●
<b>PO3.</b> A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities	●	●		●	●
<b>PO4.</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought	●	●	●	●	●
<b>PO5.</b> Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought	●	●		●	
<b>PO6.</b> Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience	●	●		●	●
<b>PO7.</b> Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created	●	●		●	●

There may be some additional short-term and intermediate outcomes that are realised through the HRCPD Initiative that are not captured in the program logic above. Nous will include aggregate information on all outcomes in reports, including those that are unexpected or that emerge throughout

the course of program delivery, but the focus will be on the seven short-term outcomes and five intermediate outcomes specified above.

#### **4.2.2.2 A realist lens will inform our understanding of outcomes and impact**

The Evaluation will take a realist lens to assess the outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative. This means the Evaluation will seek to identify what worked, for whom (e.g., local organisations, project beneficiaries and their communities) and in what circumstances and context (e.g., rurality, population size or experience of drought). A realist evaluation perspective will drive consideration of matters in delivering positive outcomes for different communities across regional Australia.

The realist lens will be particularly important for the summative evaluation component, which will include a place-based approach to evaluating the cumulative impacts of HRCPD Initiative activities in eight regions selected for deep dives (further detail is provided in Section 5.4). The place-based approach of the regional deep dives will acknowledge that experiences will vary for every community and will depend on their different circumstances and context.

#### **4.2.2.3 The Most Significant Change method will ground evaluation findings in the experience of communities and individuals**

The evaluation will apply a Most Significant Change (MSC) approach to identify what change has occurred in communities because of the HRCPD Initiative, from their own perspective. This will be guided by the short- and intermediate-term outcomes identified in the program theory (see Figure 9 on page 18). The Most Significant Change approach centres on what individuals and community groups perceive as the most significant change that has been generated through the Initiative. The method can bring a range of feedback that may not have been accessed through other elements of the evaluation.

#### **4.2.2.4 First Nations knowledge and perspectives on drought will inform the evaluation**

First Nations knowledge of water management and drought resilience offers an important perspective for the evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative. First Nations oral knowledge tells a much bigger story about the history of drought than the 120-years of rain-fall data used by the Bureau of Meteorology.<sup>14</sup> Research has shown that Aboriginal people consider water management across the geographic spread of river or water systems that feed a wider area, rather than aligning land management practices to State and Territory boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Across Australia, there is increasing adoption of traditional Indigenous Land Management practices such as: using native grasses that better withstand dry periods; fire stick farming; and more gentle stocking rates to retain better ground cover.<sup>16</sup>

Through participation in the HRCPD Initiative, First Nations groups can explore, revive and share their culture and knowledge. In addition, non-Indigenous organisations such as governments and delivery partners can learn and gain from the expertise of the oldest living culture on this planet, who have cared

---

<sup>14</sup> Australian Water Association, What Indigenous knowledge has to offer, from droughts to floods, Mar 31 2022. Accessed here: <https://www.awa.asn.au/resources/latest-news/what-indigenous-knowledge-has-to-offer-from-droughts-to-floods>

<sup>15</sup> Terri Janke & Company Pty Ltd, Drought Resilience and Innovations in Rural and Remote First Nations Communities, June 2022. Accessed here: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/drought-resilience-in-first-nations-communities-report.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Gillies, C., Traditional Aboriginal burning in modern day land management, Landcare Australia. Available here: <https://landcareaustralia.org.au/project/traditional-aboriginal-burning-modern-day-land-management/>



for the land and waters of this country for thousands of years. Capturing the impact of this cross-cultural information sharing will be an important consideration of this evaluation.

Previous research into the impacts of drought on First Nations people has shown that prolonged drought presents substantial and unique adversity for rural Aboriginal communities, compounding existing, underlying disadvantage.<sup>17</sup> For example, the environmental degradation and water shortages caused by drought may require communities to leave traditional lands and disrupt Caring for Country activities. These activities are important forms of connection to land and not participating in these has the potential to greatly impact First Nations social and emotional wellbeing.<sup>18</sup> The evaluation will need to draw on this research to contextualise evaluation findings for First Nations individuals, organisations and communities.

### 4.3 Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) are high-level questions that will guide the enquiry of the evaluation. The KEQs build on the 'key MEL questions' outlined in the FDF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and the 'Key evaluation questions' described in the Better Prepared Communities Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan, and have been developed in partnership between Nous, DAFF, FRRR and ARLF.

The KEQs are specified across five key evaluation domains. Each KEQ includes sub-questions to draw out further details from the evaluation, some of which are applicable to all elements and will be answered at the program level, while other questions are element-specific.

The evaluation will shift focus across the evaluation domains as the enquiry moves from a formative to a summative (outcomes and impact) perspective (see 174.2.2). The evaluation will have a higher focus on effectiveness and impact than appropriateness, strategic alignment and efficiency.

Table 4 outlines the KEQs that will guide the evaluation. The full list of KEQs and sub-questions is provided in Appendix A.

**Table 4 | Key Evaluation Questions**

Evaluation domain	Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs)
APPROPRIATENESS	How appropriate is the design of the initiative to address the identified problem or opportunity, and the needs of rural and regional communities?
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT	How well aligned is the design of the HRCPD Initiative with the objectives of the FDF and other Australian government and state and territory government drought initiatives?
EFFICIENCY	To what extent is the HRCPD Initiative being administered and delivered efficiently and to the expected quality?
EFFECTIVENESS	To what extent is the HRCPD Initiative and its individual elements delivering the outputs and achieving the outcomes (short-term, intermediate, intended and unintended)?
IMPACT	To what extent has the initiative contributed towards to the FDF long-term outcomes (4+ years) and the vision, strategic priorities and objectives of the FDF?

<sup>17</sup> Rigby, C. W., Rosen, A., Berry, H. L., & Hart, C. R. (2011). If the land's sick, we're sick: The impact of prolonged drought on the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal communities in rural New South Wales. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 19(5), 249-254.

<sup>18</sup> Salmon, M., Doery, K., Dance, P., Chapman, J., Gilbert, R., Williams, R., & Lovett, R. (2018). Defining the indefinable: Descriptors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and their links to health and wellbeing.

## 5 Methodology and data collection

This section describes the methodological and practical approach of the evaluation. It provides an overview of the:

- Key Evaluation Questions and data sources to inform these
- Mixed method data collection and analysis approach
- Regional Deep Dives and the sampling approach to selecting these regions
- The approach to establishing baseline measures.

### 5.1 Mixed method data collection

The evaluation will take a robust mixed method approach with formative and summative components, as described in Section 4.2.2. This approach will establish a credible estimate of the change that can be attributed to the implementation of the HRCPD Initiative, through triangulating data from a range of qualitative and quantitative sources.

Table 5 below provides an overview of all data sources that will be drawn on to inform each component of the evaluation. These data sources are mapped to the KEQs in Section 5.2.

The approach to qualitative and quantitative analysis is described in Section 5.1 below.

The approach to establishing a baseline assessment of the HRCPD Initiative is provided in 5.5 below.

A description of how and when each data source will be collected by the HRCPD Initiative element, and the responsible party for data collection (Nous, FRRR or ARLF), is provided in:

**Table 5 | Overview of data collection for each element in the MEL Plan**

	 Community Impact Program	 Small Network Grants	 Expertise Pool	 National Mentoring Program	 National Learning Network
<b>MEL Plan section outlining:</b>					
• Overview of the HRCPD Initiative element and delivery timeline					
• Relevant outcomes	Section 7	Section 8	Section 9	Section 10	Section 11
• Detailed data collection plan					
• Responsible parties and timeline for data collection					

A detailed description of how data sources will inform the measurement of specific outcome and output indicators, and further details on timing and responsibility for data collection and reporting, is provided in Appendix BB.

Table 6 | Evaluation data collection methods

Data collection method	Description of method	Component		
<b>Program data and grant reports (milestone, completion, acquittal, and reflection reports)</b>	<p>Nous will review data and documentation collected by FRRR and ARLF as a routine part of the delivery of the HRCPD Initiative and the Component 1 programs (Networks to Build Drought Resilience and the Drought resilience Leaders program). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant applications, grant progress and completion/acquittal reports collected for administration of the CIP and Small Network Grant, submitted through Grants Gateway.</li> <li>• Quantitative data collected by the service provider of the Expertise Pool element, including on characteristics and experiences of service users, and information on services delivered.</li> <li>• Applications to the National Mentoring Program.</li> <li>• Reflection reports completed by National Mentoring Program participants submitted at the completion of the program.</li> <li>• Activity and participation of National Learning Network members on the online platform, such as Facebook, and with in-person activities and events, where possible, through the online platform insights data and reported event engagement.</li> <li>• Data collected through delivery of elements (such as insights data related to the online platform of the National Learning Network, the National Mentoring Program Mighty Networks platform, and the Expertise Pool website).</li> <li>• Final reports from funded projects.</li> </ul>	Summative		
	<p>Nous will review survey data collected by ARLF as part of delivery of the CIP Leadership Activities, National Learning Network and National Mentoring Program, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys completed by mentors and mentees on commencement (Round 2 only), 6 months and 12 months into the National Mentoring Program.</li> <li>• Surveys completed by members of the National Learning Network when joining, and during their membership.</li> <li>• Surveys completed by participants of the CIP Leadership Activities after sessions.</li> </ul> <table border="0" data-bbox="456 900 1879 1155"> <tr> <td data-bbox="456 900 1151 1059"> <p><b>Number of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two x Surveys of mentors and mentees</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Five x Surveys of members of the National Learning Network</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1151 900 1879 1155"> <p><b>Timing of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – On commencement (Round 2 only), six months and 12 months into program: Round 1 – July 2023, December 2023 Round 2 – July 2023, January 2024, June 2024.</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Following launch and six-monthly during their membership (August and December 2023, May and December 2024, May 2025).</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Number of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two x Surveys of mentors and mentees</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Five x Surveys of members of the National Learning Network</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timing of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – On commencement (Round 2 only), six months and 12 months into program: Round 1 – July 2023, December 2023 Round 2 – July 2023, January 2024, June 2024.</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Following launch and six-monthly during their membership (August and December 2023, May and December 2024, May 2025).</li> </ul>	Formative and summative
	<p><b>Number of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two x Surveys of mentors and mentees</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Five x Surveys of members of the National Learning Network</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timing of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – On commencement (Round 2 only), six months and 12 months into program: Round 1 – July 2023, December 2023 Round 2 – July 2023, January 2024, June 2024.</li> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – Following launch and six-monthly during their membership (August and December 2023, May and December 2024, May 2025).</li> </ul>		
<p>Nous will review multimedia artefacts (such as photos and videos) collected by FRRR and ARLF through reporting channels of the HRCPD Initiative elements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submissions from CPLOs and delivery partners in CIP and Small Network Grant completion reports</li> <li>• Submissions from members of the National Learning Network uploaded to the online platform about events and activities organised.</li> </ul>	Summative			

Data collection method	Description of method	Component																
<b>Evaluation data</b> <b>Interviews (CPLOs, delivery partners and participants)</b>	<p>Nous will conduct semi-structured virtual 1:1 or group interviews during the regional deep dives and prior to the development of the Mid-term and Final evaluation report respectively. These will be conducted with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPLOs and delivery partners of the CIP and Leadership Activities</li> <li>• Participants of the National Mentoring program and the National Learning Network.</li> <li>• Participants of Component 1 (Networks to Build Drought Resilience and Drought Resilience Leaders program), where possible.</li> </ul> <p>Nous will define considerations for identifying a sample of participants for interviews to capture representation of across: elements, type of project, regional profile and drought resilience.</p> <p>Interviews will also be conducted during the regional deep dives with participants of the Expertise Pool and the Small Networks Grants elements.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="459 539 1870 949"> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 539 1153 566"><b>Number of interviews per period</b></td> <td data-bbox="1153 539 1870 566"><b>Time periods for interviews</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 582 1153 609">A minimum of:</td> <td data-bbox="1153 582 1870 609"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 619 1153 678"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Grants)</b> – 10 x Interviews with CPLOs, and 10 x interviews with other grant recipients</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1153 582 1870 641"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2023-2024</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 687 1153 715"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Leadership Activities)</b> – Five x interviews with participants</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1153 651 1870 710"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2024-2025</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2025) and Final data collection in May and June 2025</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 724 1153 751"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Small Network Grants</b> – Five x group interviews with grantees</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 761 1153 788"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expertise Pool</b> – Five interviews with CPLOs</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 798 1153 857"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two group interviews with mentees and mentors (in groups of 10-15 mentees and five mentors)</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 866 1153 949"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – One group interview with 10 National Learning Network members and one group interview with 5-10 National Learning Network Working Group members.</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Nous will spend two days in each deep dive region between February to April 2024 and 2025 to conduct engagements. Additional engagements (if required) will be conducted during the Mid-term and Final data collection periods where there is an identified need to engage with a wider sample of individuals or organisations.</p>	<b>Number of interviews per period</b>	<b>Time periods for interviews</b>	A minimum of:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Grants)</b> – 10 x Interviews with CPLOs, and 10 x interviews with other grant recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2023-2024</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Leadership Activities)</b> – Five x interviews with participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2024-2025</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2025) and Final data collection in May and June 2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Small Network Grants</b> – Five x group interviews with grantees</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expertise Pool</b> – Five interviews with CPLOs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two group interviews with mentees and mentors (in groups of 10-15 mentees and five mentors)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – One group interview with 10 National Learning Network members and one group interview with 5-10 National Learning Network Working Group members.</li> </ul>		Summative
	<b>Number of interviews per period</b>	<b>Time periods for interviews</b>																
A minimum of:																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Grants)</b> – 10 x Interviews with CPLOs, and 10 x interviews with other grant recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2023-2024</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> </ul>																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CIP (Leadership Activities)</b> – Five x interviews with participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2024-2025</b> – During regional deep dives (Feb - April 2025) and Final data collection in May and June 2025</li> </ul>																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Small Network Grants</b> – Five x group interviews with grantees</li> </ul>																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expertise Pool</b> – Five interviews with CPLOs</li> </ul>																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Mentoring Program</b> – Two group interviews with mentees and mentors (in groups of 10-15 mentees and five mentors)</li> </ul>																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Learning Network</b> – One group interview with 10 National Learning Network members and one group interview with 5-10 National Learning Network Working Group members.</li> </ul>																		
<b>Interviews (program leads and experts)</b>	<p>Nous will conduct semi-structured virtual 1:1 interviews with HRCPD Initiative element leads at ARLF and FRRR.</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="459 1177 1870 1332"> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1177 1153 1204"><b>Number of interviews per period</b></td> <td data-bbox="1153 1177 1870 1204"><b>Time periods for interviews</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1214 1153 1273"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with FRRR (on the CIP, Small Network Grants and Expertise Pool)</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1153 1214 1870 1273"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Mid-term and Final data collection rounds in May 2024 and June 2025.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="459 1283 1153 1332"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with ARLF (on the CIP Leadership Activities, National Mentoring Program and National Learning Network)</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>Number of interviews per period</b>	<b>Time periods for interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with FRRR (on the CIP, Small Network Grants and Expertise Pool)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Mid-term and Final data collection rounds in May 2024 and June 2025.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with ARLF (on the CIP Leadership Activities, National Mentoring Program and National Learning Network)</li> </ul>		Formative										
<b>Number of interviews per period</b>	<b>Time periods for interviews</b>																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with FRRR (on the CIP, Small Network Grants and Expertise Pool)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Mid-term and Final data collection rounds in May 2024 and June 2025.</li> </ul>																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three interviews with ARLF (on the CIP Leadership Activities, National Mentoring Program and National Learning Network)</li> </ul>																		

Data collection method	Description of method	Component
<b>Observations</b>	<p>Nous will conduct virtual, and in-person, observations of HRCPD Initiative element activities where appropriate. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIP co-design sessions and CIP and Small Network Grant funded community activities</li> <li>• CIP Leadership Activity sessions</li> <li>• Activities and events organised by the National Learning Network</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 10 observations of events and activities. To be determined based on schedule of activities and events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Time periods for observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined based on schedule of activities and events.</li> </ul>	Formative and summative
<b>Surveys (delivery partners and participants)</b>	<p>Nous will design and support implementation of surveys to delivery partners and participants where this data will not be collected through program delivery, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys of CIP co-design process CPLOs, facilitators and participants.</li> </ul> <p><b>Number of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three surveys per CIP Tranche (one per facilitator, CPLO and participant cohort following each of the four rounds of co-design, 12 in total)</li> </ul> <p><b>Timing of surveys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following completion of each Tranche's co-design process</li> </ul>	Formative and summative
<b>Regional deep dives (longitudinal engagement with delivery partners and participants in eight CIP regions)</b>	<p>Nous will conduct consultation deep dives into eight regions, over the course of the evaluation. This will entail engaging deep dive regions twice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conduct interviews of CPLOs and delivery partners</li> <li>• observe HRCPD Initiative funded activities</li> <li>• develop a deeper understanding of the region's experience building resilience to drought.</li> </ul> <p>Nous will review where additional regional consultation and in-person consultation is required following the completion of the Mid-term data collection period. Additional in-person consultation will be explored where additional virtual consultation is not determined most effective method for engagement and when agreed by Nous, ARLF and FRRR.</p> <p>Nous will engage with the CPLOs in deep dive regions in the Mid-term and Final data collection periods to develop longitudinal case studies of impacts observed in that region. Nous will support CPLOs to articulate significant changes observed in their communities, aligned to the short and intermediate term outcomes defined in the program theory (see Figure 9 on page 18). An example template for these case studies is provided in Appendix E.</p> <p><b>Number of deep dives per period</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight regions selected for deep dives. Nous will spend two days in each region conducting interviews and observations including and in addition to those engagements numbered above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Time periods for deep dives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between February and April 2024</li> <li>• Between February and April 2025</li> </ul>	Summative

Data collection method	Description of method	Component
<b>Multimedia to capture impact stories</b>	<p>Nous plan to leverage our Visual Design studio to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure all reports are visually compelling and engaging, including embedding design elements into the Mid-term and Final reports and developing summary visual placemat versions of these.</li> <li>support the Evaluation team with impactful storytelling, including the development of visually compelling longitudinal case studies from each deep dive region, which incorporate photos and quotes as well as narrative descriptions of impact. These will be in addition to the longitudinal case studies completed by CPOs of the other 27 regions, if they choose to, for which Nous will provide the template.</li> <li>Provide post-production photo and animation support to input into the reports, placemats and case studies, leveraging photos, journey maps, recordings that the evaluation team capture during engagements with participants.</li> <li>Produce a range of audio-visual material across a range of regions (photos, videos, audio recordings, animations) leveraging consultation artefacts that the evaluation team collects (i.e. photos, videos, recordings, as well as self-recorded videos and recordings uploaded by participants during focus groups, such as to an external secure SharePoint site). Nous will produce this audio-visual material for use in reporting evaluation findings. FRRR, ARLF and or DAFF may choose to use the content for broader publication, such as on social media or websites.</li> </ul> <p><b>Multimedia artefacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary animation videos of the Mid-term and Final Evaluation reports</li> <li>Visually compelling longitudinal case studies from each deep dive region</li> <li>A range of audio-visual material across regions (photos, videos, audio recordings, animations or infographics).</li> </ul> <p><b>Time periods for design artefacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 2024 (following completion of the Mid-term Evaluation Report)</li> <li>September 2025 (following completion of the Final Evaluation Report)</li> </ul>	Summative

## 5.2 First Nations evaluation

The HRCPD Initiative will engage First Nations people and First Nations led organisations. First Nations participants are expected to represent a minority of the total HRCPD Initiative participants. The evaluation will maintain a focus on understanding the extent to which and how outcomes were experienced by First Nations participants and organisations.

The evaluation will collect data on the specific experience of First Nations participants in three ways:

- Interviews or yarning circles with First Nations people or First Nations led organisations who directly participated in HRCPD Initiative elements
- Consultation with First Nations community members who have participated in HRCPD Initiative funded activities and events
- Survey data of First Nations HRCPD Initiative element participants.

Nous has considered how to appropriately engage First Nations to ensure their views, experiences and perspectives inform the evaluation. Nous' approach to engaging with First Nations people is detailed below.

### 5.2.1 Ethics approval through the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

Nous will aim to ensure culturally safe engagement with First Nations people in this evaluation. Nous has obtained ethics approval from AIATSIS to conduct the First Nations engagement in the evaluation. Through the ethics process, Nous has appointed Selina Swan and Eamon Ritchie as First Nations Research Expert Advisors. Selina and Eamon will provide expert advice, lead engagements with First Nations individuals and convene a First Nations outcomes panel.

Nous has received Letters of Support from the First Nations delivery organisations that received funding through the CIP as part of the ethics application process. The process of obtaining the Letters of Support included:

- FRRR identified First Nations organisations that received funding through the CIP.
- FRRR contacted First Nations organisations asking whether details of an organisational contact could be shared with Nous.
- Nous conducted short introduction calls with First Nations delivery organisations to explain the purpose of the evaluation and to seek support for evaluation activities through the signing a Letter of Support.
- First Nations delivery organisations signed a Letter of Support template provided by Nous if they agreed to support evaluation activities.
- Letters of Support were submitted with the ethics application to AIATSIS.

Nous' approach to First Nations engagement, as detailed in the AIATSIS ethics application, is outlined below.

### 5.2.2 The Nous approach to First Nations engagement

Nous' approach to First Nations engagement is aligned to the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research principles.

Principle	Nous approach
<b>Indigenous self-determination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nous respects and supports First Nation’s right to self-determination. We will reflect this respect through working with First Nations participants to determine evaluation strategies for their initiatives. This evaluation will reflect Indigenous data sovereignty principles through working with First Nations led organisations to determine what data will best reflect their experiences, and how it will be collected and used. Through Evaluation Working Sessions, Nous will engage directly with all organisations participating in the evaluation, including First Nations led organisations, to build evaluation capability and seek input on the evaluation design.</li> <li>The evaluation approach has incorporated meaningful engagement methods with First Nation people (e.g., has planned for Indigenous team members to conduct yarning circles). The evaluation will continue to be flexible to needs and preferences of the stakeholders engaged.</li> <li>The evaluation and engagement processes have built in appropriate considerations for sourcing informed consent from participants. All organisations and individuals will be informed that participation in the evaluation activities are entirely voluntary, what activities entail, the objectives of these and what the benefits of involvement are.</li> <li>The evaluation team includes two Indigenous team members, and the evaluation leadership team include senior Nous staff who work extensively across First Nations affairs. These team members ensure that the evaluation approach reflects a strong level of cultural competency and safety.</li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to the First Nations representation on the evaluation team, the participatory design of the evaluation will ensure that First Nations evaluation participants will make genuine contributions to the identification and interpretation of evaluation findings. For example, the evaluation findings will be shaped by the perspectives of First Nations individuals and organisations through discussions during the First Nations panel at the sensemaking summit workshops in 2024 and 2025.</li> <li>The mixed method data collection approach of the evaluation will ensure that diverse Indigenous perspectives are considered, including those sourced through stakeholder engagement and through a review of relevant literature.</li> <li>This evaluation will reflect Indigenous data sovereignty principles through working with First Nations led organisations to determine what data will best reflect their experiences, and how it will be collected and used. Nous will provide a short, accessible report to program participants at the final reporting stage, which will communicate findings and de-identified data collected from and about participants, including First Nations participants, but will be made available to all program participants. This practice reflects Indigenous data sovereignty and reciprocity so that Indigenous organisations receive something that is useful to them from the evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact and value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation will deliver several benefits to First Nations led organisations and individuals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building capability in applying evaluation methods and getting access to evaluation resources to apply to their own projects. Participants are provided with pre-reading materials prior to working sessions that include background information on the evaluation, evaluation theory, program logic templates and data collection tools, such as case study templates, suggested survey questions and a data collection plan template. Delivery partners are encouraged to share the pre-reading materials with representatives from their organisations. Participants undertake a facilitated activity in working sessions to complete a program logic for their projects which can be replicated for future projects.</li> <li>Getting access to accessible and useful evaluation findings to help inform the design of future community projects and/or bids for funding. Nous will provide a short, accessible report to participants at the mid-term and final reporting stage, which will communicate findings and de-identified data collected from and about participants, including First Nations participants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Principle	Nous approach
Sustainability and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Getting access to evaluation findings about how Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations have become more resilient to or prepared for drought. The sensemaking summit First Nations outcomes panel discussions will bring people together virtually to discuss how the investment is making a difference in their communities.</li> <li>• The evaluation has duly considered the potential impacts and risks to First Nations participations and has appropriately accounted for these in adapting the evaluation design and by developing the necessary supporting tools and documents, such as a Risk Management Strategy, Distress Protocol, or Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nous have designed the evaluation approach to make best use of community effort and time, and to minimise the potential impost on community. Regional consultations will be limited to 2-3 days to minimise potential burden on community, culture and land. We will also seek explicit approval from First Nations led organisations to visit First Nations communities. We will engage in a culturally sustainable way through genuine and respectful listening, and we will not imbue our worldview whether directly or vicariously.</li> <li>• Nous will apply culturally appropriate engagement approaches during all engagements, including with First Nations facilitators, and the use of yarning circles, other conversational methods and ensuring engagement is conducted in places where First Nations people are comfortable, and having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers lead engagement.</li> <li>• Nous will ensure leadership from Indigenous team members, Selina Swan and Eamon Ritchie, throughout the evaluation. Selina and Eamon will lead all direct engagement with First Nations individuals and organisations.</li> <li>• We will ensure indigenous perspectives help to test, validate and refine evaluation findings at the mid-term and final evaluation reporting stages through the facilitated panel discussions at the sensemaking summits. Nous will adopt a Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) approach to ensure the evaluation findings are reflective of both the technical and lived experience of program participants, including First Nations people.</li> <li>• Nous will enable participants to withdraw from the engagements, or withdraw their data from the evaluation, at any time up to end of June 2025. This includes any written notes captured from participations during engagements, and any multimedia artefacts which include participants.</li> <li>• Nous will provide a short, accessible report to program participants at the final reporting stage, which will communicate findings and de-identified data collected from and about participants, including First Nations participants, but will be made available to all program participants. This practice reflects Indigenous data sovereignty and reciprocity so that Indigenous organisations receive something that it useful to them from the evaluation, which can also support the use of evaluation findings into the future.</li> </ul>

### 5.2.3 Nous’s intended engagement with First Nations individuals and organisations

Nous will engage with First Nations led delivery organisations and program participants in two ways during the evaluation:

1. **Consultations during data collection periods** – Nous will engage directly with participating First Nations led organisations and individuals during the regional deep dives (February to April 2024 and 2025, described in further detail in Section 5.4) and during the data collection rounds (April to June 2024, and April to June 2025, described in Table 6). These will comprise of interviews of program participants and delivery organisations, and observations of HRCPD Initiative activities.

2. **National summits and collaborative outcomes reporting panels** – Nous will incorporate the perspectives of First Nations individuals and organisations by facilitating a dedicated panel during the Collaborative Outcomes Reporting process in the national summits in 2024 and 2025. Further detail on this process is provided in Section 6.1.4. First Nations individuals and organisations will be invited to participate in a facilitated discussion to review and refine evaluation findings, with a focus on short and intermediate term outcomes contributed to by the HRCPD Initiative. These panels (due to their national nature) will be conducted virtually; however Nous will take an adaptive approach to facilitation to maximise involvement.

Nous will provide a short, accessible report to First Nations participants at the final reporting stage, which will communicate findings and de-identified data collected from and about First Nations participants. Further detail is provided in Section 13.5. This practice reflects Indigenous data sovereignty and reciprocity so that Indigenous organisations receive something that it useful to them from the evaluation.

## 5.2.4 Target number of consultations with First Nations people during data collection periods

The HRCPD Initiative comprises of five sub-programs each with a distinct cohort of participants, of which First Nations led organisations and individuals comprise a small proportion. Nous will seek to engage directly with a subset of these organisations and individuals through in-person or virtual engagement. The exact number of engagements will be determined by the number of participants in each program, and their willingness to participate in the evaluation. Table 3 below outlines our target numbers.

**Table 7 | Target number of participants for engagements by HRCPD Initiative element**

HRCPD Initiative – Sub program	Sample size for engagements with general population	Target sample size for engagements with First Nations led organisations and individuals
<b>Community Impact Program – Grants and Leadership Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Interviews with CPLOs, and 10 interviews with other grant recipients</li> <li>• Five interviews with participants of Leadership Activities</li> </ul>	<p>2-4 First Nations led organisations that received funding (grant recipients)</p> <p>4-8 First Nations community members that participated in HRCPD Initiative funded activities or projects.</p>
<b>Small Network Grants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five group interviews with grantees</li> </ul>	
<b>Expertise Pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five interviews with organisations</li> </ul>	
<b>National Mentoring Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two group interviews with mentees and mentors (in groups of 10-15 mentees and five mentors)</li> </ul>	0-2 First Nations participants (depending on rates of participation).

HRCPD Initiative – Sub program	Sample size for engagements with general population	Target sample size for engagements with First Nations led organisations and individuals
<b>National Learning Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One group interview with 10 National Learning Network members and one group interview with 5-10 National Learning Network Working Group members.</li> </ul>	0-2 First Nations participants (depending on rates of participation).

Nous will be guided by the preferences of the participants or organisations engaged by the evaluation and use culturally appropriate engagement methods, such as yarning circles or other conversational methods, where requested. These engagements will be led by Nous’ Indigenous evaluation team members.






### 5.3 Data sources for the Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will draw on a range of data sources to answer the KEQs, across the elements of the HRCPD Initiative. These data sources include:

- **Program data** that include different sources of programmatic data that FRRR and ARLF will routinely collect through the delivery of their programs, based on pre-determined collection channels and key milestones throughout programs. This includes program and grant reports, program surveys, platform data and multimedia from participants.
- **Evaluation data** that includes primary data sources that Nous will collect across the evaluation. This includes interviews, observations, surveys, engagements during the regional deep dives and First Nations engagement methods such as yarning circles.

The data sources mapped against each of the KEQs is provided in Figure 12. Each of the data sources is described in Section 5.1.

Figure 12 | Data sources for the Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Questions	Program Data	Evaluation Data			
<b>HRCPD Initiative Evaluation</b>					
 <b>KEQ 1</b> Appropriateness	Program and grant reports	Multimedia from participants	Interviews (delivery partners and participants)	Observations	Regional deep dives
	Program surveys	Platform data	Interviews (program leads and experts)	Surveys (delivery partners and participants)	
 <b>KEQ 2</b> Strategic Alignment	Program and grant reports	Multimedia from participants	Interviews (delivery partners and participants)	Observations	Regional deep dives
	Program surveys	Platform data	Interviews (program leads and experts)	Surveys (delivery partners and participants)	
 <b>KEQ 3</b> Efficiency	Program and grant reports	Multimedia from participants	Interviews (delivery partners and participants)	Observations	Regional deep dives
	Program surveys	Platform data	Interviews (program leads and experts)	Surveys (delivery partners and participants)	
 <b>KEQ 4</b> Effectiveness	Program and grant reports	Multimedia from participants	Interviews (delivery partners and participants)	Observations	Regional deep dives
	Program surveys	Platform data	Interviews (program leads and experts)	Surveys (delivery partners and participants)	
 <b>KEQ 5</b> Impact	Program and grant reports	Multimedia from participants	Interviews (delivery partners and participants)	Observations	Regional deep dives
	Program surveys	Platform data	Interviews (program leads and experts)	Surveys (delivery partners and participants)	

## 5.4 Data analysis

### 5.4.1 Qualitative analysis

#### Types of qualitative data

Qualitative data sources will include individual and group interviews, observations, yarning circles, survey responses and other program data collected by FRRR and ARLF of participants, including reports and multimedia artefacts. The collection of individual and group interview, and observation data, will be via typed notes taken during the consultation, in response to each question.

For qualitative program data collected (such as grantee application forms and completion reports) Nous will analyse the data to assess:

- Needs, motivations and intended outcomes articulated in applications to assess alignment to the intended outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative, and to assess baseline community resilience of applicants.
- The extent to which participants are experiencing intended outcomes and emerging impacts during and following completion of HRCPD Initiative activities, aggregating by region and demographics where appropriate.

### **Methods of analysis**

Our qualitative analysis will aim to provide rich insights about the outcomes the HRCPD Initiative has achieved and why. Nous will synthesise insights from stakeholder engagements (individual and group interviews, and observations), qualitative multimedia data and survey data using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of grantees during project delivery and the achievement of intended outcomes.

This approach:

- **Enables consistency in analysis between contexts and interviewers.** As data will be collected across the five elements, through different methods and by the members of the evaluation team, there is a need to ensure that data is comparable, and coding is done consistently. All Nous team members have experience interviewing diverse clients and undergo Nous facilitation/consultation training, including in trauma-informed practice, to listen sensitively and to seek to draw out participants' unique stories and the factors shaping them. As a team, we will prepare additionally for the interviews by agreeing on our engagement and style, use of the semi-structured interview guides and how we might probe participants' answers to gain insights. Rigorous coding of input will later allow cross-checking and calibration of interpretation of data.
- **Prevents confirmation bias.** Capturing verbatim notes and systematically coding themes will reduce the inherent bias in interviewers to only recall aspects of the interview that confirmed their hypotheses.
- **Quantifies qualitative input, which can be disaggregated by demographic factors.** Theming all qualitative input, and recording demographic data means the evaluation will be able to comment robustly on the number of times particular issues were raised, and how insights varied by cohort.

Participant cohorts will be defined based on the eligibility criteria of the various HRCPD Initiative elements. The participation criteria was pre-defined by ARLF and FRRR for their respective elements. Data interpretation and reporting will be disaggregated to the element level, and aggregated to include findings at a whole of initiative level.

### **Tools and practices to support analysis**

Nous will analyse all qualitative data for insights and themes. We will do this through careful reading of all interview and focus group/yarning circle notes, and building a list of emerging themes. Each qualitative data that substantiates each theme will have annotations about which group (demographic, location) the theme has been raised by. Each theme will be triangulated to assess the extent to which they are common across participant groups. Relationships between themes will be discussed by the evaluation team and noted through use of an Excel spreadsheet.

Nous will also use case study tools that allow for in-depth investigation which might be, depending on what the data shows:

- Illustrative – to complement quantitative data by describing the experiences of program participants.
- Longitudinal – combining findings from many ongoing experiences of the program over time.

## 5.4.2 Quantitative analysis

The evaluation will use quantitative analysis as one avenue to determine the extent to which the HRCPD Initiative has delivered its intended outputs and outcomes. Quantitative data sources will include program data and survey responses from CIP CPLOs, mentors and mentees participating in the National Mentoring Program, and members of the National Learning Network.

Nous will use descriptive statistics to describe and analyse:

- Quantitative program data to describe what has happened. That is, outputs such as program activities, delivery locations, participation rates and participant characteristics.
- Quantitative survey data to describe the proportion of participant respondents reporting to experience the intended outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative elements.

Nous will also explore the application of statistical and/or factor analysis to explore themes and correlational relationships in the quantitative survey data collected.

### Limitations of quantitative analysis

Nous explored approaches to using inferential statistics to establish causality between the HRCPD Initiative and specific outcomes, including comparison of outcomes between groups to attribute these with confidence to the Initiative. Given the elements of the Initiative are delivered differently between and within regions, there is limited to no way to identify distinct independent variables and isolate the effect of the Initiative from other confounding factors. Therefore, the evaluation will focus on triangulating descriptive quantitative data with qualitative data about the impacts of the elements, and the extent to which stakeholders attribute changes to their participation in the Initiative.

Nous also explored the possibility of using Social Network Analysis (SNA) to evaluate the strength and extent of connection in the HRCPD Initiative elements being implemented as 'networks', including the National Learning Network and the National Mentoring Program. Given the nature of these programs to foster either consistent one-to-one connections (in the case of the Mentoring Program), or a changing membership base with frequent new and evolving membership (in the case of National Learning Network), we determined that a full SNA was not a feasible method of analysis for capturing the intended outcomes of these programs. However, a survey will be conducted to understand connectivity between current network members and the nature of their connections. Further detail is provided in Section 11.

## 5.5 Regional Deep Dives

Regions funded through the HRCPD Initiative are spread across regional, rural and remote Australia. The evaluation will be informed by a place-based approach for three reasons:

1. **The HRCPD Initiative objectives are aligned to community level impact.** A place-based approach allows the Evaluation to consider the totality of investments in the region, rather than to assess the impact of projects individually.
2. **Regional engagement will assess if the 'whole is greater than the sum of the parts'.** To determine the full impact of the HRCPD Initiative on communities requires an evaluation approach that considers how multiple projects and elements delivered within a region interact to deliver benefits beyond those of each individual project.
3. **The evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative must consider the place-based nature of regional development.** Place-based analysis is a valuable lens for understanding the major, long-term challenges associated with remoteness, such as service access or social inclusion. The unique

challenges and context of each region and community will influence the readiness, type, breadth and depth of impact that the HRCPD Initiative investment may have had.

Nous, ARLF, FRRR and DAFF have chosen to focus on a sample of eight regions to strike the balance between sufficient depth of analysis, the overall quantity of consultation and what is feasible within the constraints of the Evaluation project. Nous will consult eight deep dive regions twice across the course of the evaluation. The likely timing of the two periods in which Nous will complete the deep dives is in February and April 2024, and between February and April 2025.

The regional 'deep dives' will help the evaluation to understand the unique experience of these regions' responding to and preparing for drought and to explore the place-based impacts of the HRCPD Initiative funding.

Deep dives will involve the Nous evaluation team spending several days in a region to:

- speak with a broad range of stakeholders involved in HRCPD Initiative elements.
- observe the delivery of HRCPD Initiative activities and programs.
- explore the role the HRCPD Initiative played in enabling the regions response and resilience.
- understand how factors outside the HRCPD Initiative have influenced a regions ability to potentially respond to drought.

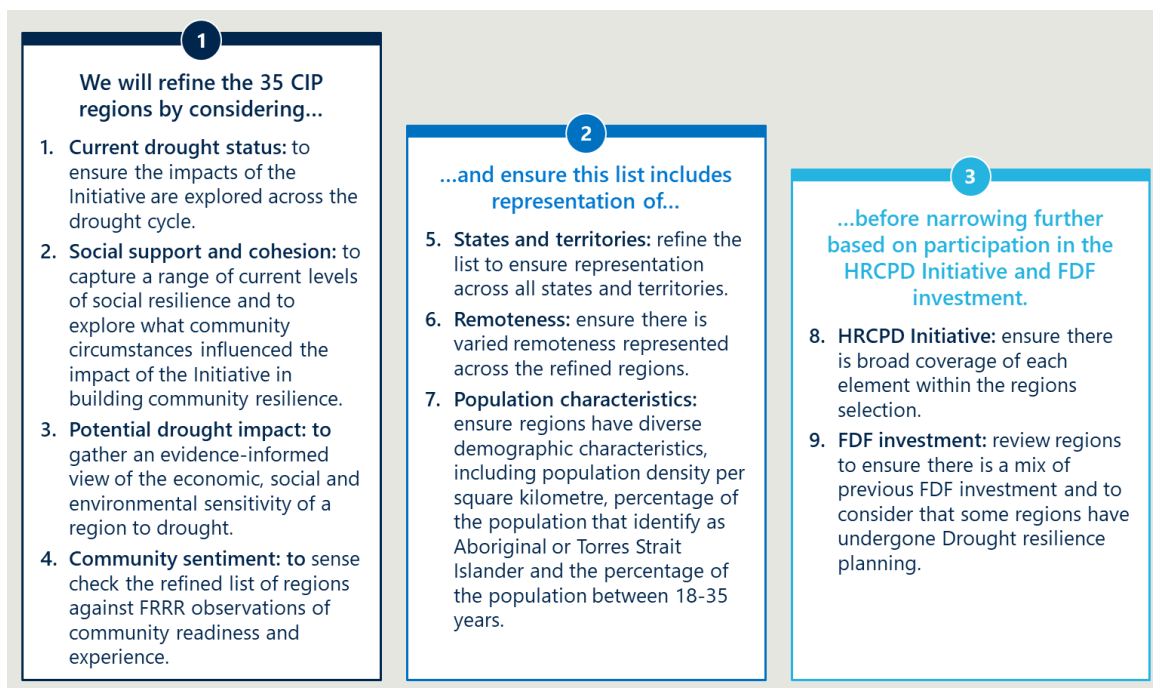
During the regional deep dives, Nous will collect data through interviews and observations. Where possible, we will try to align data collection activities for all elements with the in-person travel to regions for deep dives. The insights collected through deep dives will be used to develop longitudinal impact case studies to describe the impact of the HRCPD Initiative and community resilience over the course of the evaluation.

Nous will agree with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF where additional, in-person consultation might be required to gather additional experiences not reflected in the eight deep dive regions. Following the completion of the Mid-term data collection and reporting period, Nous will review the deep dive regions and determine if additional consultation is required in the Final data collection period.

### 5.5.1 Sampling approach

A sampling frame has been developed to guide selection of the eight deep dive regions. To understand how outcomes may vary by location, criteria were developed to select regions with a diverse range of characteristics and demographics likely to have impacted their response to drought. Nous has worked with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF to develop the sampling frame and to define how it will be applied. The sampling frame is intended to ensure that a broad range of experiences are captured.

**Figure 13 Criteria to inform regions selected for consultation deep dives**



## 5.6 Baseline and contribution analysis

Impact evaluations generally should attempt to develop a counterfactual to compare the observed results to those you would expect if the intervention had not been implemented. An accurate estimate of what would have happened in the absence of a complex, multifaceted interventions is near impossible, since this absence would have affected the situation in ways that cannot be predicted. This is true for the HRCPD Initiative, which includes five elements with varying program designs and eligibility requirements for participants, delivered across 35 regions that each have a unique local context. Nous previously noted that it will be impossible to develop a quasi-experimental counterfactual using quantitative data for the HRCPD Initiative (see Section 5.3.2) due to this complexity.

In place of this approach, Nous will aim to build a strong, empirical case that the Initiative, and its individual elements, contributed to impacts (i.e. the short-term and intermediate outcomes presented in Figure 9 on page 18). Nous will then use a combination of narrative baseline assessments and contribution analysis to make evidence-based assessments on the level of contribution the Initiative has made to the documented impacts. These approaches will form part of the summative evaluation. They are outlined below.

### 5.6.1 Narrative baseline assessments

Nous will develop a narrative baseline assessment of the CIP, Small Network Grants, National Mentoring Program and National Learning Network. This approach will allow Nous to consider a logically constructed counterfactual scenario to compare to the final evaluation findings i.e. consider the change from before to after the intervention. This approach is most useful when attribution is obvious, for example, when relating to an individual project or an individual's experience of a program.

Table 7 below provides an outline of the assessment approach and relevant data sources for each element that we will use this approach for. This information will be mapped to the relevant short-term outcomes, as described in Section 4.2.2.1. Nous will develop detailed baseline assessments for each of the eight deep dive regions, and the National Mentoring Program and National Learning Network. For the other 27 CIP



regions, Nous will develop regional profiles drawing on the assessment structure and data sources below. This will ensure we have either a detailed narrative baseline assessment, or regional profile, to use as a comparison at the final evaluation reporting stage in 2025.

**Table 8 | Content of region or element specific baseline assessments**

Element	Assessment	Data source
<b>Community impact Program and Small Network Grants</b>	<p>Regional specific baseline profiles will summarise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of drought resilience and preparedness</li> <li>• Current community capabilities, connectedness and awareness</li> <li>• Level of involvement in co-design of HRCPD Initiative funded activities</li> <li>• Progress of Drought Resilience Planning in the region</li> <li>• Other FDF investment</li> <li>• A sample of project specific baselines that summarise: the need for a project i.e. the pre-conditions that required the project to be delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications and project information (from grant applications and delivery partners)</li> <li>• Regional Wellbeing Survey results</li> <li>• Drought Resilience Plans</li> <li>• Observations from co-design sessions and surveys of CPLOs, facilitators and participants</li> <li>• Observations from FRRR Community Coordinators</li> <li>• Component 1 evaluation reports</li> </ul>
<b>National Mentoring Program</b>	<p>A cohort baseline that summarises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentee prior and current experience of drought events, or other natural disasters</li> <li>• Mentee goals and objectives in participating in the Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications and program data (from mentee and mentor applications)</li> </ul>
<b>National Learning Network</b>	<p>A cohort baseline that summarises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of members</li> <li>• Member goals and objectives of using the learning network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online platform insights data</li> <li>• Survey of National Learning Network members</li> </ul>

Where possible, Nous will use baseline assessments to identify baseline ‘statistics’ for indicators. For instance, Nous will explore opportunities to ascertain the percentage of participants in each element disaggregated by key demographics of interest (such as First Nations people and gender) through program data. A final statistic for this indicator can be compared to the baseline assessment to understand whether there has been a change in the diversity of participants who are involved in elements.

## 5.6.2 Most significant change (MSC) with regional communities

MSC entails generating and analysing personal accounts of change and deciding which of these accounts is the most significant – and why. Nous will take three steps to implement the MSC approach, to build the narrative assessment of impacts experienced since baseline across the regions and element cohorts:

**1. Provide stakeholders clear guidance on the types of stories that the evaluation wants to collect.** Nous will provide guidance to participants to capture stories that highlight the degree of change in social resilience and/or drought preparedness they experienced or observed in relation to the Initiative activities, when and where the change happened and why they believe the changes occurred. Initial guidance will be provided in the Regional Working Sessions.

**2. Collect stories through a range of mechanisms across the evaluation.** This will include:

- Longitudinal impact case studies of identified regions that will participate in the regional deep dives. Nous will work with the CPLOs of these regions to develop the case studies. An example template is provided in Appendix E.
- Individual stories shared directly by delivery partners and participants during interviews and observations (or via video when appropriate and permitted). This will take place during the regional deep dives.

**3. Share, discuss and analyse the stories with Initiative stakeholders to learn which accounts are most significant and why.** Nous will facilitate stakeholder participation in the process of analysing and interpreting evaluation findings during two national summits prior to the delivery of the Mid-term and Final evaluation reports. The sensemaking process will consider how the stories reflect the different ways stakeholders and communities value the Initiative. The MSC approach will also support the evaluation to explain how change comes about (processes and causal mechanisms) and when (in what situations and contexts).

Further detail on the methods used to facilitate community member participation in the evaluation is provided in Section 6 below.

### 5.6.3 Contribution analysis

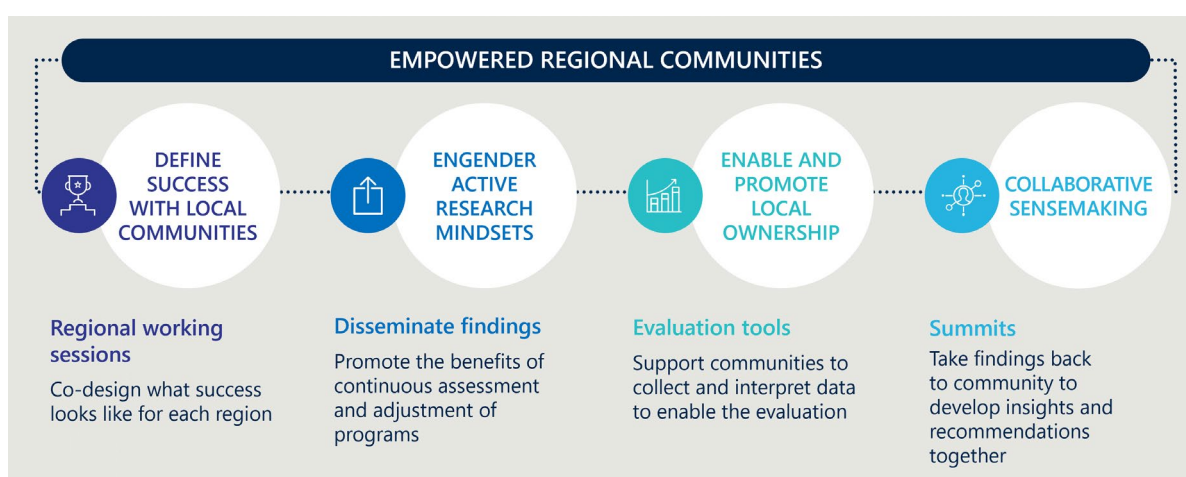
Nous will use the Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) approach to bring all the data collection and analysis methodologies together in a comprehensive narrative of the impact of the HRCPD Initiative. COR is a participatory approach that develops a robust analysis of the contribution story of an Initiative. That is, the contribution an Initiative made to observed impacts. We explore the COR approach for this evaluation in more detail in Section 6.1.4.

## 6 Capability building

### 6.1 Capability building

The evaluation will have a dedicated focus on building the capability of regional communities. This is a key part of helping communities put learning into action and of effectively translating knowledge across regions and communities. We have defined a four-part approach to local capacity and capability building. Each of these are described in further detail below.

Figure 14 | Approach to community capacity and capability building



#### 6.1.1 Defining success with local communities

Nous will conduct a Regional Working Sessions with partner organisations involved in the design and delivery of the CIP and Small Network Grant elements to collaboratively design the evaluation approach and build evaluation capability. These sessions will be conducted virtually and in-person across the 35 CIP regions, at the outset of the evaluation (in Q3 and Q4 of 2023). We will also consider opportunities to run the Regional Working Sessions with participants of other elements where there is value in supporting outcome reporting capability development.

The Regional Working Sessions have three aims, to:

- Build evaluation capability and understanding of the delivery partners to position them to build evidence-based, defensible findings relating to the impact of their CIP and Small Network Grant projects
- Empower communities to identify success of their initiatives, specific to their region and community, to ensure they understand the contribution of their projects to community and drought resilience
- Seek input from regional stakeholders on the evaluation design to ensure it reflects a truly participatory approach.

In preparation for the sessions, Nous has defined an agenda for facilitated regional working session and will prepare a collection of practical evaluation tools (see more detail below in 'Enabler and promote local ownership'). An indicative plan for these working sessions is provided in Appendix E.2

## 6.1.2 Engender active research mindsets

The evaluation will seek to engender active research mindsets by iteratively sharing information and emerging findings during the evaluation with stakeholders. This will help to ensure that current and future program participants benefit from, and can iteratively apply, the findings related to effective drought resilience.

The purpose of sharing evaluation information is to:

- progressively communicate findings on evaluation progress, and emerging outcomes
- regularly identify opportunities to improve program delivery to improve outcomes over time
- facilitate broader continuous improvement in drought preparedness and recovery by sharing emerging evidence on what works, for whom and why based on evaluation findings
- promote collaboration, learning and transparency amongst those working in drought preparedness in pursuit of using evidence to improve outcomes
- help to inform decisions about policy, funding and services during the evaluation.

Table 8 below outlines the three major products that will be used to disseminate findings.

**Table 9 | Products to communicate insights to key evaluation audiences.**

Product	Audience	Description	Format	Timing
<b>Progress reports</b>	FRRR, ARLF, DAFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nous will provide quarterly progress reports to share evaluation progress, aligned to the KEQs.</li> <li>• The progress reports will be used to raise risks or challenges emerging from the evaluation.</li> </ul>	Word document	Quarterly
<b>Evaluation reports</b>	FRRR, ARLF, DAFF FDF delivery teams and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nous will deliver two evaluation reports, a Mid-term and a Final Evaluation report.</li> <li>• The evaluation reports will provide an evidence-base to help ARLF, FRRR and DAFF to make informed decisions about program design, implementation and future funding.</li> </ul>	Word document.	Mid-term Evaluation report – 5 July 2024 Final Evaluation report – 30 September 2025
<b>Visual case studies</b>	FRRR, ARLF, DAFF HRCPD Initiative participants and delivery partners Regional communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth, visually appealing case studies that showcase good practice in drought preparation and recovery.</li> <li>• Case studies will highlight where a community has experienced significant outcomes as a result of the HRCPD Initiative and unpack the factors that influenced this.</li> </ul>	1-2 page online placemat	Twice during the evaluation, aligned to major evaluation reports.
<b>Summary animation video</b>	FRRR, ARLF, DAFF HRCPD Initiative participants and delivery partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nous will deliver a summary animation video of Mid-term and Final evaluation findings</li> <li>• Animation videos will highlight the experience of communities and the outcomes achieved.</li> </ul>	2-3 minute animation video	Twice during the Evaluation, aligned to major evaluation reports.

Product	Audience	Description	Format	Timing
Other audio-visual material across regions	FRRR, ARLF, DAFF HRCPD Initiative participants and delivery partners Regional communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nous will deliver content leveraging consultation artefacts that the evaluation team collects.</li> <li>The content will highlight the experience of communities and the outcomes achieved.</li> </ul>	A range of audio-visual material (photos, videos, audio recordings)	June-July 2024 August-September 2025

### 6.1.3 Enable and promote local ownership

Key to the evaluation is enabling and promoting local ownership of the evaluation activities and findings. Nous will provide evaluation and data collection tools for all CPLOs, delivery partners and HRCPD Initiative delivery stakeholders to support accurate and reliable measurement of Initiative impacts. Accurate, consistent and easy-to-use evaluation tools are critical for ensuring quality data is collected to make defensible findings about the Initiative. A summary of the tools to be developed to support data collection is outlined in Table 9 below.

Table 10 | Summary of the evaluation tools and templates to support local ownership

Product	Description	Format
Program logic templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Editable program logic models will be developed to support regional community members to visually represent the relationships between program inputs, goals and activities, and the expected outputs and impacts.</li> <li>The program logics will be an easy-to-use, simple document that individuals can use as a live document to guide delivery of their projects and activities</li> </ul>	Online, one-page document
Bank of evaluation indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nous will develop short-term outcomes and a suite of indicators to support communities to define and articulate success of their projects and activities. The evaluation indicators will disaggregate from the proposed short-term outcomes, and will work as a full suite of the indicators available to demonstrate achievement of the Initiative's short-term outcomes.</li> <li>The parameters will be developed in collaboration with ARLF, FRRR and DAFF and will be aligned to existing MELs and drought indicators to ensure they balance consistency with local nuance.</li> </ul>	Online spreadsheet
Data collection tools and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nous will develop the following tools for HRCPD Initiative element templates to capture impact; surveys of participants (CIP, NMP, National Learning Network) longitudinal case studies (CIP), rapid impact assessments (CIP Leadership Activities), guidance on uploading multimedia (CIP, National Learning Network )</li> </ul>	Multiple documents. Online, visual and simple tools.

### 6.1.4 Collaborative outcomes reporting

The HRCPD Initiative comprises of many organisations and individuals with expertise in drought recovery, with both professional and lived experience. Nous will adopt a Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) approach to ensure the evaluation findings are reflective of both the technical and lived experience of program participants. COR is a participatory approach to reviewing evidence in an evaluation. Technical

experts (the evaluation team) and program stakeholders (delivery partners and community members) review collated evidence of how the program has contributed to outcomes and impacts.

COR combines contribution analysis and Multiple Lines and Levels of Evidence (MLLE), mapping data against a program logic to create a 'performance story' - a short report drawing on all available evidence on the extent to which the program has contributed to the intended outcomes.

Nous will adopt the steps to COR<sup>19</sup> (as described in Table 10) throughout the evaluation activities and at two points during the evaluation, in the sensemaking summits in June 2024 and June 2025.

**Table 11 | Steps to implementing COR throughout the evaluation**

Evaluation stage	Timeframe	COR step	Description
Evaluation planning	Early 2023	Scoping	The program logic is clarified, existing data is identified, and evaluation questions are developed.
Data collection and analysis	Early 2024	Data trawl	All primary and secondary data is collated.
	Early to mid 2025	Social inquiry	Additional qualitative and quantitative data gathering (i.e., interviews).
		Data analysis and integration:	Data is analysed according to the outcomes in the program logic.
Summit workshops	Mid 2024	Outcomes panel	People with relevant knowledge are brought together to examine the results to assess the contribution of the program towards goals given existing knowledge and explore alternative hypotheses to explain data.
	Mid 2025	Collaborative sense-making summits	Key findings and recommendations including examples of change are synthesised at a large workshop which consists of key stakeholders (program staff, community members, organisations). Further detail is provided below.

### Collaborative sense-making summits

Nous will hold two virtual summits ahead of the Mid-term and Final evaluation reports to test, validate and refine evaluation findings prior to reporting and facilitate the participation of stakeholders in this process. As part of these summits, Nous will present emerging data and findings from the evaluation to support reflective practice and identify opportunities to improve outcomes across the program delivery and broader response to drought.

These summits will involve a series of structured panels to review collated evaluation data and help interpret findings using the Collaborative Outcomes Reporting approach. There will be eight panels in total, specifically focused on:

- Delivery partners and participants of each HRCPD Initiative element
- First Nations led organisations and participants involved in the delivery of the elements
- Young people involved in the elements (aged between 18 to 35)

Participants of engagements during the regional deep dives and data collection will be advised of the panel process, and a sample across each jurisdiction invited to participate. These panels (due to their national nature) will be conducted virtually; however we will take an adaptive approach to facilitation to maximise involvement. Nous will provide panel members with the following support to optimally capture

<sup>19</sup> Better Evaluation, *Collaborative Outcomes Reporting*, [Better Evaluation.org](https://www.betterevaluation.org)

their input on the evaluation findings. Participants of the panel will be compensated for their input in the form of a \$50 voucher.

- Summary of evaluation findings, with a specific focus on findings related to that element or audience group. Where appropriate, Nous will share multimedia artefacts as part of this summary to make the content engaging and accessible to the panel members.
- A structure for the panel discussion, outlining the key objectives, discussion questions and materials.
- Facilitated virtual discussions to assess the contribution of the HRCPD Initiative or element towards its intended outcomes, given the summary of findings and the panel's experience and expertise, and facilitated plenary discussion to summarise and validate the output of panel.

The panel discussions for the First Nations led organisations and participants involved in the delivery of the elements will be facilitated by First Nations Nous team members.

## 7 Evaluating the Community Impact Program

This section describes the approach to evaluating the Community Impact Program, including the Community Impact Grants and the Leadership Activities.

### 7.1 Overview of element

The Community Impact Program (CIP) is an integrated package of support for community networks in 35 regions to enhance drought preparedness. The CIP consists of two distinct, yet complementary parts:

- **Community Impact Grants:** Working with locally relevant community organisations to develop and deliver a tailored program of support to strengthen community networks, capabilities and facilities that support drought preparedness (delivered by FRRR)
- **Community Leadership Activities:** Supporting community members to develop their leadership skills, equipping them to contribute to drought resilience in their community (delivered by ARLF)

Each program component is outlined in more detail below.

#### 7.1.1 Community Impact Grants

The program will provide 35 regional allocations of investment – one for each of the 35 regions – with a maximum total value of \$12.1 million, to be implemented over a 2-year period until the end of June 2025. A multistage application process will be implemented for each region. Regional allocations may range between \$200,000 and \$500,000 per region. Each regional allocation may consist of between 3-15 individual projects per region. The Community Impact Grants will fund projects, events, initiatives, training, capability building and small-scale community infrastructure projects that assist local people and communities to prepare for future droughts through improved capability, and networks.

#### 7.1.2 Leadership Activities

The ARLF will make a suite of leadership activities available to communities through the CIP. There are five leadership activities made available to delivery organisations, as describe in overleaf.



Figure 15 | Overview of the Leadership Activities under the Community Impact Program

Leadership activity	Description	Audience	Joining process
Leadership Program	Five days over an agreed time, modelled on the program delivered in the Drought Resilience Leaders Development Program.	People over 18 who are passionate about their community and who want to contribute to its drought resilience.	Application and selection
Emerging Leadership Program	Five-day outdoor based program for 18-to-30-year-olds. Leadership at an introductory level, with a focus on leadership conversations from a youth perspective, developing their network, community, and personal resilience.	People who are 18 to 30 years old who are passionate about their community and who want to contribute to its drought resilience.	Application and selection
Leadership Action Initiative	An expertly facilitated process that brings together community leaders and external expertise (via the ARLF Alumni) to explore and address complex challenges and opportunities. Includes consultation in preparation and delivery of a report including key findings, and facilitation of a debrief.	Community members established leaders who want to contribute to the conversation and possible solutions for a local 'wicked problem'.	Nomination
Community Learning Series	A series of 4 x 2-day Learning labs designed to build both knowledge and networks. Organisations can choose one of two streams. Proposed to include: Stream A – The Community Changemaker Series Stream B – The Shaping our Future Series	All community members who want to build their knowledge and skills in a particular area.	Event registration
Group Coaching	Coaching offered to a group as they work through a common challenge or opportunity. This could include coaching of a team to deliver an existing project, grant activity, or supporting the establishment of a collaborative partnership. Provided to those leading and/or delivering a project to support their application of leadership behaviours and adaptive leadership.	People leading and/or delivering grant projects, or a group of people from the community working together to build drought resilience.	Nomination

### 7.1.3 Timeline for delivery

Figure 16 | Timeline for delivery of the CIP and Leadership Activities



## 7.2 Data collection plan

Given the distinct design of the CIP Grants and Leadership activities, a separate data collection plan has been defined for each.

### 7.2.1 Outcomes

Figure 17 below outlines the short-term outcomes that the CIP will contribute to. Given the variability of projects funded by the CIP (as described in Section 7.1), we expect that the program will contribute to all the outcomes identified for the HRCPD Initiative.

The indicators to evaluate progress towards these the short-term outcomes are provided in Appendix B. The timeline for observing these outcomes is provided in Section 4.2.2.1.

Figure 17 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes contributed to by the Community Impact Program

	Community Impact Program	Small Network Grants	Expertise Pool	National Mentoring Program	National Learning Network
<b>PO1. Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness</b>	●				
<b>PO2. Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness</b>	●				
<b>PO3. A greater diversity of community members and</b>	●				

organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities	
<b>PO4. Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought</b>	●
<b>PO5. Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought</b>	●
<b>PO6. Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience</b>	●
<b>PO7. Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created</b>	●

## 7.2.2 Data collection plan for the CIP Grants

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the CIP Grants are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

Table 12 | Program data to inform evaluation of the CIP Grants

Grant applications, and grant milestone, completion, and acquittal reports	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	FRRR will collect application forms and reports from grantees directly. Available reports will be provided to Nous prior to the Mid-term and Final reporting periods in 2024 and 2025 respectively.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Grant applications, grant completion and acquittal reports will be collected by FRRR through the Grants Gateway platform as routine data collection for administration of the CIP Grants. Data will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	Nous will provide input to the questions included in the completion reports to ensure questions align to the expected outcomes, minimising burden on respondents, ensuring they understand the responses will be used in the evaluation and ensuring both operational feasibility for ARLF and straight-forward, yet rigorous analysis for Nous.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Ongoing, based on the milestones and completion of CIP Grants projects. FRRR will provide data to Nous in March 2024 and June 2025.
<b>Scope</b>	All CIP Grant recipients will complete application forms, milestone, completion, and acquittal reports.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review program documentation and data such as grantee application forms, investment by region and demographics of successful applications.</li> <li>Conduct thematic analysis of the qualitative content within the completion and application reports.</li> <li>Analyse aggregated data provided through final reports to determine achievement of intended outcomes and emerging impacts.</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys of CIP co-design session participants</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous has designed surveys for participants of the CIP co-design process. Nous will administer surveys to participants via email, with participant contact information provided by FRRR.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	CIP co-design participants will be invited to complete surveys at the completion of the co-design process. Survey data will be collected and stored via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>A separate survey was designed for the CPLOs, co-design session participants, and regional co-design facilitators. The surveys seek to gain information about stakeholder experiences and the effectiveness of the co-design process, including immediate outcomes. Insights from the co-design surveys will contribute to the overall evaluation of the HRCPD Initiative.</p> <p>In designing the surveys, Nous sought detailed feedback from FRRR, ARLF, and DAFF. The final design of the surveys seeks to balance in-depth insight into the experience of the co-design participants, with reduced time commitment to encourage survey completion.</p>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Surveys will be distributed following the completion of each CIP tranche's co-design process.
<b>Scope</b>	All co-design participants, CPLOs, and regional co-design facilitators will be invited to complete the surveys.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from surveys using thematic analysis.

**Table 13 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the CIP Grants**

<b>Interviews with CPLOs and element leads</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct up to 10 individual interviews with CPLOs and 10 individual interviews with other grant recipients, during the regional deep dives.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	<p>Semi-structured virtual 1:1 interviews will be conducted with CPLOs and other grant recipients during the regional deep dives and prior to the development of the Mid-term and Final evaluation report respectively.</p> <p>Nous will confirm the design and approach of engagements with FRRR prior to the interviews. An indicative discussion guide is provided in Appendix E.4. Additional questions may be added, depending on insights gleaned from program data. Key points that Nous will cover include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application and assessment process</li> <li>Current project delivery statuses</li> <li>Achievement of outcomes and impacts</li> </ul> <p>CPLOs and other grant recipients will be invited by Nous to participate in interviews, following a warm introduction facilitated by FRRR.</p> <p>Nous will also organise two interviews with relevant individuals from FRRR involved in administration of the CIP Grants.</p>
<b>Considerations</b>	Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be:

<b>Frequency of collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose, easy to understand and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>Accessibility including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language, offering interviews in an accessible format and being considerate of the interview subject's time.</li> <li>Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> </ul> <p>Nous will conduct interviews prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2023-2024 – During regional deep dives (September 2023 and March 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> <li>2024-2025 – During regional deep dives (September 2024 and March 2025) and Final data collection in June 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	A sampling frame will guide a decision on the sample of ~10 CPLOs and ~10 other grant recipients to engage with. Detail is provided in Appendix D. This may be aligned to the deep dive regions but may be broader.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from stakeholder engagements using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of grantees during project delivery and the achievement of intended outcomes.

### 7.2.3 Data collection plan for the CIP Leadership Activities

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the CIP Leadership Activities are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

Nous has provided input to the design of program data collection methods to ensure questions align to the expected outcomes, minimising burden on respondents, ensuring they understand the responses will be used in the evaluation and ensuring both operational feasibility for ARLF and straight-forward, yet rigorous analysis for Nous.

**Table 14 | Program data to inform evaluation of the CIP Leadership Activities**

<b>Participant application forms</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will collect application forms from a standard participant application form online.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Participant applications will be collected by ARLF through SurveyMonkey Apply as part of the Leader Program and Emerging Leadership Program. Data will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site).
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Ongoing, based on the delivery timeline of the leadership activities. ARLF will provide data to Nous following the completion of rounds of leadership activities.
<b>Scope</b>	All participants of the Leader Program and Emerging Leadership Program will complete application forms.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Data gathered through the application forms will be triangulated against other evaluation data. Nous will review forms to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the reach and engagement of the activities.</li> <li>emerging themes.</li> <li>progress towards intended outcomes.</li> </ul>
<b>Rapid participant self-assessments at the completion of Leadership Activities</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	

<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will support ARLF to facilitate rapid participant self-assessments at the completion of the leadership activities.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Self-assessments will be collected by ARLF through Qualtrics or a similar online and interactive tool. Data will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site).
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Ongoing, based on the delivery timeline of the leadership activities. ARLF will provide data to Nous following the completion of leadership activities.
<b>Scope</b>	All participants of the Leadership activities will be invited to complete a rapid self-assessments at the completion of the leadership activities.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will review participant self-assessments to assess achievement of intended outcome. Data will be captured using quantitative fields where possible to allow for measurement of change.

**Table 15 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the CIP Leadership Activities**

<b>Interviews with Leadership Activity participants and element leads</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct up to five individual interviews with program participants and two interviews with the element delivery leads.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Virtual 1:1 interviews will be conducted prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation report respectively. An indicative discussion guide is provided in Appendix E.4. Leadership Activity participants will be invited by Nous to participate in interviews, following a warm introduction facilitated by ARLF.  Nous will also organise two interviews with relevant individuals from ARLF involved in administration of the CIP Leadership Activities.
<b>Considerations</b>	Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose, easy to understand and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>• Accessibility including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language, offering interviews in an accessible format and being considerate of the interview subject's time.</li> <li>• Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023-2024 – During regional deep dives (September 2023 and March 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> <li>• 2024-2025 – During regional deep dives (September 2024 and March 2025) and Final data collection in June 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	Participants will be selected from across each of the CIP Leadership Activities. A sampling frame will be developed to guide considerations for the selection of individuals for interviews. Interviews will be a key input to development of Leadership Activity case studies. Participants of the Leadership Action Initiative will be prioritised for involvement in the interviews. Interviews are the primary evaluation data collection method of that Leadership Activity.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from participant interviews using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of participants following completion of the activities and the achievement of intended outcomes.
<b>Observations of select Leadership Activity sessions</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	

<b>Collected by</b>	Where appropriate, Nous will observe leadership sessions in-person or virtually.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Nous will work with ARLF to determine which sessions are appropriate for Nous to join and observe. This will include consideration of where it makes sense for Nous to join virtually or in-person.
<b>Considerations</b>	In observing the leadership sessions, Nous will consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant satisfaction with the activity and sessions</li> <li>• Contribution of the sessions towards participants achieving the short-term.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Nous will aim to observe sessions during the regional deep dives, in February and April 2024 and 2025.
<b>Scope</b>	Nous will aim to observe at least one session of each of the Leadership Activities. This will be determined with input from ARLF.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from observations using thematic analysis, aligned to the KEQs. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of participants following completion of the activities.

## 8 Evaluating the Small Network Grants

This section describes the approach to evaluating the Small Network Grants.

### 8.1 Overview of element

The Small Network Grants program provides two rounds of funding towards one-off events or initiatives that strengthen community networks and capability to build drought preparedness. The program will fund a variety of projects that assist local people and communities to strengthen their capacity to prepare for future droughts through network and/or leadership development. Projects may include:

- **Networking events**, such as field days, conferences, forums, summits and seminars relating to drought preparedness. These events build social connection, a sense of purpose and long-term community belonging;
- **Initiatives that improve capability, coordination and collaboration** between professional, social or community networks, community organisations and sectors in local communities;
- Initiatives that increase **skills, knowledge and understanding** of the risks posed by drought and climate change;
- **Leadership capacity building activities** that develop the skills and knowledge required to face the unique challenges posed in regional Australia during drought.

FRRR plans to administer \$1.2 million in funding through the program, but this amount may increase closer to administration of the grants. Priorities for program investment include:

- Activities and initiatives that focus on long-term social connection;
- Activities and initiatives that focus on capability and capacity building for people and communities to adapt to change over time;
- Activities and initiatives that make a clear and distinct linkage to building drought preparedness in local communities;
- Simple, one-off, or seed-type initiatives that are tailored to meet local needs and the unique geographical, climatic and community context;
- Delivery locations with higher potential for drought impact;
- Delivery locations with higher potential for drought impact outside the geographical reach of existing investment locations through the CIP;
- Demonstrated community readiness to support the project at a local level;
- Opportunities for collaboration with a diverse range of community-based organisations at a local or regional level;
- Initiatives that specifically engage local young people and First Nations people or communities; and
- Project alignment with other Future Drought Fund investments, or other community resilience initiatives.

Each grant will support initiatives up to a maximum value of \$20,000.



The Small Network Grants are designed to extend the impact and reach of the CIP grants, and eligibility for the Small Network Grants will be not-for-profit organisations based in the Local Government Areas outside of Community Impact Grant delivery locations.

### 8.1.1 Timeline for delivery

Applications for Small Network Grants will open in January 2024 for Round 1, and in March 2024 for Round 2 (see Figure 18). Delivery of the Small Network Grants program will commence once all grants from Tranche 4 of the Community Impact Program are finalised.

Figure 18 | Timeline for delivery of the Small Network Grants



## 8.2 Data collection plan

The data collection plan for the Small Network Grants program is outlined below.

### 8.2.1 Outcomes

Figure 19 below outlines the short-term outcomes that the Small Network Grants will contribute to. Given the variability of projects funded by the Small Network Grants (as described in Section 8.1), we expect that the program will contribute to a majority of outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative.

The indicators to evaluate progress towards these the short-term outcomes are provided in Appendix B.

The timeline for observing these outcomes is provided in Section 4.2.2.1.

Figure 19 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes contributed to by the Small Network Grants program

	Community Impact Program	Small Network Grants	Expertise Pool	National Mentoring Program	National Learning Network
<b>PO1.</b> Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness		●			
<b>PO2.</b> Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness		●			

<b>PO3.</b> A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities	●
<b>PO4.</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought	●
<b>PO5.</b> Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought	●
<b>PO6.</b> Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience	●
<b>PO7.</b> Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created	●

## 8.2.2 Data collection and stakeholder engagement plan

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the Small Network Grants are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

**Table 16 | Program data to inform evaluation of the Small Network Grants program**

<b>Grant applications, and grant milestone, completion, and acquittal reports</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	FRRR will collect application forms and reports from grantees directly.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Grant applications and grant completion and acquittal reports will be collected by FRRR through the Grants Gateway platform as routine data collection for administration of the Small Network Grants. Data will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	Nous has provided input to the design of the completion reports. A template of these reports is provided in Appendix E. Key considerations in developing the report template were to ensure questions align to the expected outcomes, minimising burden on respondents, ensuring they understand the responses will be used in the evaluation and ensuring both operational feasibility for ARLF and straight-forward, yet rigorous analysis for Nous.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Ongoing, based on the milestones and completion of Small Network Grants. FRRR will provide data to Nous in March 2024 and June 2025.  Nous notes that data collected in March 2024 will include minimal data regarding grant completion, as delivery of the majority of projects will be ongoing.

<b>Scope</b>	FRRR is still confirming the reporting requirements for the Small Network Grants. It is currently understood that all Small Network Grant recipients will complete application forms and completion and acquittal reports.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review program documentation and data such as grantee application forms, investment by region and demographics of successful applications</li> <li>Analyse aggregated data provided through completion reports, such as to determine achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> </ul>

**Table 17 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the Small Network Grants program**

<b>Interviews with grantees and element lead</b>	
<b>Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report</b>	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct up to five group interviews with grantees and two interviews with the element delivery leads.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	<p>5 semi-structured virtual group interviews will be conducted with grantees during the regional deep dives and prior to the development of the Mid-term and Final evaluation report respectively.</p> <p>Nous will confirm the design and approach of engagements with FRRR prior to the interviews. An indicative discussion guide is provided in Appendix E.4. Additional questions may be added, depending on insights gleaned from program data.</p> <p>Key points that Nous will cover include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application and assessment process</li> <li>Current project delivery statuses</li> <li>Achievement of outcomes and impacts</li> </ul> <p>Grantees will be invited by Nous to participate in interviews, following a warm introduction facilitated by FRRR.</p> <p>Nous will also organise two interviews with relevant individuals from FRRR involved in administration of the Small Network Grants.</p>
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose, easy to understand and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>Accessibility including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language, offering interviews in an accessible format and being considerate of the interview subject's time.</li> <li>Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	<p>Nous will conduct interviews prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2023-2024 – During regional deep dives (February and March 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> <li>2024-2025 – During regional deep dives (February and March 2025) and Final data collection in June 2025</li> </ul> <p>Interviews with relevant individuals from FRRR will ideally take place during the Mid-term and Final data collection rounds in May 2024 and June 2025.</p>
<b>Scope</b>	Nous will define considerations for identifying a sample of participants for interviews to capture representation of across: elements, type of project, regional profile and drought resilience.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from stakeholder engagements using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of grantees during project delivery and the achievement of intended outcomes.

## 9 Evaluating the Expertise Pool

This section describes the approach to evaluating the Expertise Pool.

### 9.1 Overview of element

The Expertise Pool provides facilitated access to specialist professional services and advice to communities who want to activate drought resilience and preparedness initiatives.

The service is being delivered by the Social Impact Hub (SIH), an organisation sub-contracted by FRRR to host a public-facing website through which communities can search and access basic details of specialists. Visitors to the website will be able to filter experts by skillsets, core areas of expertise, mode of delivery and geographic location.

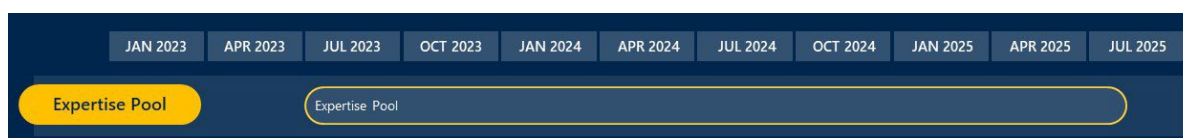
Experts include members from the SIH's Professional Impact Network. This Network was established in 2019, with the aim of providing high-quality support and advice to organisations in the social sector. Members of the Network have a range of business and management backgrounds and bring skills in areas such as branding and marketing strategy, financial modelling and forecasting, social enterprise development and workshop facilitation. SIH is working with FRRR to grow the Expertise Pool beyond the current members of the Professional Impact Network.

Grantees who have received funding through the Community Impact Program and the Small Network Grants program are eligible to access the Expertise Pool. Use of the expertise pool is optional for recipients and is undertaken at their own risk and expense. Grant funds can be used for the expertise pool.

#### 9.1.1 Timeline for delivery

The contract relating to the provision of the Expertise Pool service is currently being executed. It is expected that the Expertise Pool will be launched at the end of June 2023, following contract finalisation.

Figure 20 | Timeline for delivery of the Expertise Pool service



### 9.2 Data collection plan

The data collection plan for the Expertise Pool service is outlined below.






#### 9.2.1 Outcomes

Figure 21 below outlines the short-term outcomes that the Expertise Pool will contribute to.

The indicators to evaluate progress towards these the short-term outcomes are provided in Appendix B.

The timeline for observing these outcomes is provided in Section 4.2.2.1.

Figure 21 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes contributed to by the Expertise Pool service

	 Community Impact Program	 Small Network Grants	 Expertise Pool	 National Mentoring Program	 National Learning Network
<b>PO1.</b> Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness					
<b>PO2.</b> Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness			●		
<b>PO3.</b> A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities					
<b>PO4.</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought			●		
<b>PO5.</b> Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought					
<b>PO6.</b> Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience					
<b>PO7.</b> Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created					

## 9.2.2 Data collection and stakeholder engagement

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the Expertise Pool are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

Table 18 | Program data to inform evaluation of the Expertise Pool service

Monitoring and data collection via the platform of the SIH	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
Collected by	SIH will collect data during administration of the platform.

<b>Collection methodology</b>	<p>Nous has requested that SIH collect data via their platform to inform the evaluation. Nous will meet with SIH following contract finalisation to confirm what data will be routinely collected through delivery of the Expertise Pool service.</p> <p>It is expected that data will include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the organisation and industry of the participants</li> <li>• the type of expert advice received</li> <li>• the timing, mode of delivery and amount spent on the service</li> <li>• satisfaction of the participant and reflections on opportunities for improvement</li> <li>• the contribution of the service to intended project outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>It will also include general statistics and information collected over the implementation period, such as number of website views and the most common filters.</p> <p>This data will inform our understanding of how the Expertise Pool was delivered, as well as the quality of services and who they were delivered to.</p>
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>Nous will meet with the SIH to discuss how they can collect routine data. Key considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to embed data collection in the platform in a way that is feasible and simple</li> <li>• How to ensure data requested from participants is not overly burdensome</li> <li>• How to obtain consent from participants on the use of their data for the evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	On application, and during and following delivery of the service. FRRR (who will receive data from the SIH) will provide data to Nous in March 2024 and June 2025.
<b>Scope</b>	Data will be collected from all participants who engage with the Expertise Pool service.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will review program data collected by the SIH via the platform, to determine the diversity of participants in terms of demographics, and locations and industries of relevant organisations.

**Table 19 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the Expertise Pool service**

<b>Interviews with CPOs and element leads</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct five individual interviews with CPOs, during the regional deep dives and two interviews with the element delivery leads.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	<p>Five semi-structured virtual 1:1 interviews will be conducted with CPOs during the regional deep dives and prior to the development of the Mid-term and Final evaluation report respectively. Nous will identify a sample of CPOs who have used the Expertise Pool service, as part of the regional deep dive.</p> <p>Nous will explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with the service, including the selection process and advice received</li> <li>• Contribution of the service to project success and achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> </ul> <p>CPOs will be invited by Nous to participate in interviews, following a warm introduction facilitated by FRRR.</p> <p>Nous will also organise an interview with relevant individuals from FRRR and the SIH involved in administration of the Expertise Pool prior to the development of both the Mid-term and Final evaluation report.</p>
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose, easy to understand and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>• Accessibility including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language, offering interviews in an accessible format and being considerate of the interview subject's time.</li> <li>• Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> </ul>

<b>Frequency of collection</b>	<p>Nous will conduct interviews prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023-2024 – During regional deep dives (February and March 2024) and Mid-term data collection in May 2024</li> <li>• 2024-2025 – During regional deep dives (February and March 2025) and Final data collection in June 2025</li> </ul> <p>Interviews with relevant individuals from FRRR will ideally take place during the Mid-term and Final data collection rounds in May 2024 and June 2025.</p>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>Nous will define considerations for identifying a sample of participants for interviews to capture representation of across: elements, type of project, regional profile and drought resilience.</p>
<b>Analysis approach</b>	<p>Nous will synthesise insights from stakeholder engagements using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of grantees when using the Expertise Pool, such as satisfaction with services and the contribution of the service to project success.</p>

# 10 Evaluating the National Mentoring Program

This section describes the approach to evaluating the National Mentoring Program.

## 10.1 Overview of element

The National Mentoring Program is a 12-month mentoring and learning program. The program brings together diverse and experienced mentors with mentees who have a connection to agricultural-dependent communities in rural Australia. Mentees and mentors are encouraged to share their experiences and are provided learning opportunities to enhance their leadership, communication and resilience skills in order to support rural Australian communities to prepare and adapt for future drought or other natural disasters.

The National Mentoring Program builds on the Stage 1 FDF Drought Resilience Leaders Mentoring Program that was delivered in 2021-2022. The design of the National Mentoring Program was informed by learnings from Stage 1. The National Mentoring Program will be delivered in two rounds. Both mentors and mentees of each round will participate in the 12-month mentoring and learning program. The delivery timeline is outlined below in section 10.1.1.

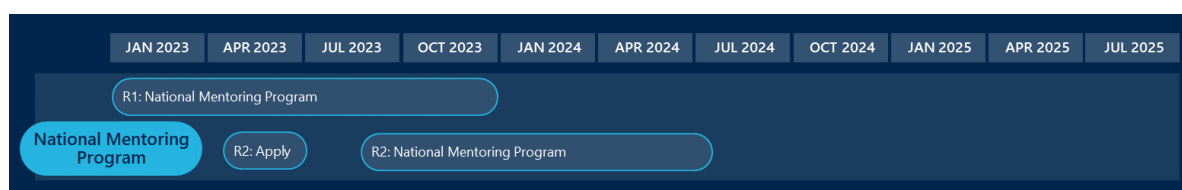
### 10.1.1 Timeline for delivery

Round 1 commenced on 31 January 2023 and will conclude on 12 December 2023. Applications for Round 1 of the National Mentoring Program were accepted between mid-October to mid-November 2022.

Round 2 is scheduled to commence on 31 July 2023 and will conclude in mid-June 2024. Applications for Round 2 were accepted between 1 February to 29 May 2023

An overview of the delivery timeline is provided in Figure 22.

Figure 22 | Timeline for delivery of National Mentoring Program



## 10.2 Data collection plan

The data collection plan for the National Mentoring Program is outlined below.

### 10.2.1 Outcomes and indicators






Figure 23 below outlines the short-term outcomes that the National Mentoring Program will contribute to.

The indicators to evaluate progress towards these the short-term outcomes are provided in Appendix B.

The timeline for observing these outcomes is provided in Section 4.2.2.1.



Figure 23 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes contributed to by the National Mentoring Program

	 Community Impact Program	 Small Network Grants	 Expertise Pool	 National Mentoring Program	 National Learning Network
<b>PO1.</b> Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness				●	
<b>PO2.</b> Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness					
<b>PO3.</b> A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities				●	
<b>PO4.</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought				●	
<b>PO5.</b> Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought				●	
<b>PO6.</b> Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience				●	
<b>PO7.</b> Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created				●	

## 10.2.2 Data collection and stakeholder engagement

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the National Mentoring Program are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

Table 20 | Program data to inform evaluation of the National Mentoring Program

Mentor and mentee application forms

Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report

<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF collected application forms from mentees and mentors as part of the application process for the National Mentoring Program.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Completed application forms were collected by ARLF through SurveyMonkey Apply to select suitable applicants for the National Mentoring Program. Data from the application forms will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	The application form template was created by ARLF prior to the evaluation commencing.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Application forms will be collected throughout the applicant selection process. ARLF will provide application data to Nous, disaggregated by Round 1 and Round 2, when applicants have been selected for Round 2.
<b>Scope</b>	All National Mentoring Program mentors and mentees complete application forms.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review application forms and demographics of successful applicants</li> <li>Undertake thematic analysis of motivations for participating in the program and baseline drought resilience assessment.</li> </ul>

## Reflection reports

Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report

<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will design and administer the reflection report template, in consultation with Nous.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Mentees will submit their completed reflection report electronically to ARLF at the conclusion of their respective round of the National Mentoring Program. Data from the reflection report will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	Nous will work with ARLF to shape the existing reflection report template to capture data that can be used to evaluate the achievement of program outcomes and answer the KEQs.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	ARLF will collect mentee reflection reports within the final month of each round of the National Mentoring Program.
<b>Scope</b>	All mentees involved in the National Mentoring Program will be required to complete the reflection report at the conclusion of the program.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from reflection reports using thematic analysis.

## Surveys

Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report

<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will design and administer the surveys, with input from Nous on survey questions. ARLF will administer surveys through their email channels to maintain one line of communication with mentors and mentees and encourage higher survey completion rates.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	ARLF will invite mentors and mentees to complete surveys on commencement (Round 2 only), 6 months and 12 months into the National Mentoring Program at the following intervals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring Program Round 1 – July and December 2023</li> <li>Mentoring Program Round 2 – July 2023, January 2024 and June 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>Considerations</b>	Key points the surveys will cover include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall satisfaction with National Mentoring Program</li> <li>Achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> <li>How participants have already and will continue to apply leadership skills within their communities.</li> </ul> <p>The content of the 6-month and 12-month surveys will largely be the same. Separate surveys will be sent to mentors and mentees.</p>

	Delivering the survey 6 months and 12 months into the National Mentoring Program will allow for comparison on the progress of outcomes at different points of program delivery.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	For Round 1, surveys will be conducted in July and December 2023. For Round 2, surveys will be conducted in July 2023, January 2024 and June 2024.
<b>Scope</b>	All mentors and mentees will be invited to complete the surveys.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from surveys using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of participants following completion of the activities and the achievement of intended outcomes.

**Table 21 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the National Mentoring Program**

<b>Interviews with mentors and mentees, and element leads</b>	
<b>Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report</b>	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct individual and group interviews with mentors and mentees. Nous will also conduct interviews with the element delivery leads.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	<p>Virtual (or face-to-face where possible) 1:1 and group interviews will be conducted with mentors and mentees. The ARLF element lead will nominate suitable mentors and mentees, based on their engagement with the National Mentoring Program. Nous will then invite mentors and mentees to participate in the interviews. Nous will conduct (per data collection round):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two x group interviews with 10-15 mentees in each interview (representing 38% of mentees from Round 1 and 14% of mentees from Round 2)</li> <li>• Two x group interviews with up to 5 mentors in each interview</li> </ul> <p>If applicable, additional (in person) interviews may be conducted with mentors or mentees during the Regional Deep Dives. The exact location and number of these engagements is to be determined once the Deep Dive regions are selected.</p> <p>Nous will also conduct (per data collection round):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One x 1:1 interviews with National Mentoring Program element leads (prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports, respectively).</li> </ul>
<b>Considerations</b>	<p>Nous will confirm the interview design and approach with ARLF. Questions will remain largely consistent for interviews with Round 1 and Round 2 mentors and mentors to allow for comparison and data aggregation, with scope to refine if necessary.</p> <p>Key points that Nous will cover in interviews include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall satisfaction with National Mentoring Program</li> <li>• Achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> <li>• How participants will apply leadership skills within their communities.</li> </ul> <p>Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose, easy to understand and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>• Accessibility including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language, offering interviews in an accessible format and being considerate of the interview subject's time.</li> <li>• Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection round 1 - Nous will conduct interviews for Round 1 and Round 2 participants during the Regional Deep Dives in February-March 2024, and if required, during May 2024.</li> <li>• Data collection round 2 - Nous will conduct interviews for Round 1 and Round 2 participants in during the Regional Deep Dives in February-March 2025, and if required, during April-May 2025.</li> </ul>

<b>Scope</b>	The ARLF element lead will nominate mentors and mentees to interview, drawing on their interaction with participants throughout the National Mentoring Program.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from stakeholder engagements using thematic analysis to explore the key themes that emerge on the experience of participants during program delivery and the extent to which intended and unintended outcomes are achieved.

# 11 Evaluating the National Learning Network

This section describes the approach to evaluating the National Learning Network.

## 11.1 Overview of element

The National Learning Network is an inclusive and supportive community that will be hosted on an online platform and supplemented with in-person and virtual networking events. The platform is designed to connect people and organisations across regional, rural and remote Australia, and particularly those who have participated in programs under the FDF Better Prepared Communities stream.

The National Learning Network has been co-designed by ARLF and a Design Working Group comprising of a diverse group of select participants from Stage 1 programs. The National Learning Network Design Working Group collectively agreed on the Network's format, structure and goals. The three key focus areas of the National Learning Network include:

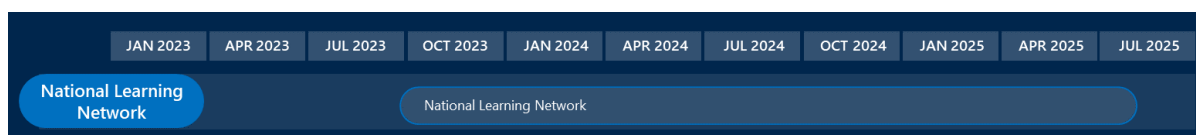
- Learning from others
- Asking for solutions and ideas
- Promoting opportunities and mindset change.

ARLF will play an administrative role to build and encourage engagement within the platform, however, the National Learning Network is intended to be self-sustaining by June 2025. An ongoing National Learning Network Working Group will be established to guide the direction and decision-making of the Network to become self-sustaining and to best service the needs of participants.

### 11.1.1 Timeline for delivery

The National Learning Network Design Working Group co-designed the element between April – June 2023. A pilot for the National Learning Network will be conducted in July 2023 to test the usability and functions of the platform, ahead of launch in August 2023. The National Learning Network is expected to be self-sustaining by June 2025 (see Figure 24).

Figure 24 | Timeline for delivery of the National Learning Network



## 11.2 Data collection plan






The data collection plan for the National Learning Network is outlined below.

### 11.2.1 Outcomes

Figure 24 below outlines the short-term outcomes that the National Learning Network will contribute to. The indicators to evaluate progress towards these the short-term outcomes are provided in Appendix B.

The timeline for observing these outcomes is provided in Section 4.2.2.1.

Figure 25 | Short-term (0-2 years) outcomes contributed to by the National Learning Network

	 Community Impact Program	 Small Network Grants	 Expertise Pool	 National Mentoring Program	 National Learning Network
<b>PO1.</b> Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness					●
<b>PO2.</b> Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness					●
<b>PO3.</b> A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities					●
<b>PO4.</b> Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought					●
<b>PO5.</b> Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought					
<b>PO6.</b> Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience					●
<b>PO7.</b> Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created					●

## 11.2.2 Data collection and stakeholder engagement

The data sources that will be used to evaluate the National Learning Network are described below, along with the collection methodology, frequency of collection and analysis approach.

Table 22 | Program data to inform evaluation of National Learning Network

<b>Platform (such as Facebook) insights data</b>
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report

<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will download insights data from the platform used for the National Learning Network, such as Facebook, at regular intervals throughout the evaluation.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Online platforms, such as Facebook, can typically generate insights data on engagement. ARLF will download this data and share with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	Insights data may differ depending on the platform selected and may be limited in scope. Data will be used to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth of the network through the number of people who have signed up to the network at different periods.</li> <li>• Level of engagement on the platform.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Quarterly to align with three-monthly MEL reporting, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September, December 2023</li> <li>• March, June, September, December 2024</li> <li>• March, March 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	ARLF will provide all information captured in the platform insights report.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse insights data to determine growth of the network through number of participants at different intervals and engagement on the platform.</li> </ul>

### Survey of the National Learning Network members

Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report

<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will design participant surveys, with input from Nous on survey questions. ARLF will administer the survey through the ARLF internal survey platform.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	ARLF will post a link to a survey in the National Learning Network online platform, at the following intervals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2024</li> <li>• May 2025.</li> </ul> The survey will be hosted on the ARLF internal platform.
<b>Considerations</b>	Key points the surveys will cover include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics of members, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical location</li> <li>• Sector/industry</li> <li>• Organisation/role type</li> <li>• Role in community</li> <li>• Demographics (gender, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, young person)</li> <li>• Reason for joining the National Learning Network</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Connectivity between participants</li> <li>• Overall satisfaction with National Learning Network</li> <li>• Achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> <li>• How participants have already and will continue to use the National Learning Network.</li> </ul> The content of the surveys will largely be the same at each data collection interval. This will allow for comparison on the progress of outcomes at different points of program delivery.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Surveys will be administered annually in the following months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2024</li> <li>• May 2025</li> </ul>

<b>Scope</b>	All members of the National Learning Network will be invited to complete the survey.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from surveys using thematic and social network analysis.
<b>Event registration and attendance data</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	ARLF will collect participant registration and attendance data for virtual and face-to-face networking events.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Participant registration and attendance data will be collected by ARLF through various platforms, relevant to the event type. Data will be de-identified and shared with Nous via secure systems (on a secure shared Teams site administered by FRRR).
<b>Considerations</b>	Nous will work closely with ARLF to identify opportunities to collect participant data at virtual and face-to-face events, depending on the event type. Relevant participant data includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of participants</li> <li>• Participant demographics</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Ad hoc - data will be collected for events, as relevant, when they occur.
<b>Scope</b>	The collection of event registration and attendance data will depend on the format of the networking event. Nous recommends incorporating suitable participant data in registration forms.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse registration and attendance data to determine participant diversity, network growth and engagement within the network.</li> </ul>
<b>National Learning Network Working Group decisions</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	The ARLF Element Lead will capture notes from all meetings of the National Learning Network Design Working Group and the ongoing Working Group, respectively. ARLF will share key decisions with Nous.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	The ARLF Element Lead will capture a full transcript and key decisions from each of the respective working group meetings. This data will be summarised into key decisions relevant to the KEQs questions and provided to Nous.
<b>Dive Considerations</b>	Summary of decisions from working group meetings will inform our insights on KEQs, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of impact and change</li> <li>• The direction / design of the National Learning Network</li> <li>• How the platform has evolved and adapted to learnings (the notes will also capture feedback from the National Learning Network online platform feedback mechanism).</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	ARLF will capture notes at every Working Group meeting and distribute a summary of key decisions to Nous when available.
<b>Scope</b>	Meeting notes will capture all key decisions made by the respective Working Groups to shape the direction of the network to be self-sustaining.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will review meeting notes from Working Group meetings against the KEQs to evaluate the extent to which the design of the network and platform were effective and adaptable to learnings.
<b>Photos and videos of activities/projects organised through the National Learning Network</b>	



Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will review photos and videos uploaded by members on the National Learning Network platform.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	ARLF will encourage network members to upload photos and videos of activities organised through the National Learning Network. Nous will have access to the National Learning Network platform to view the photos and videos posted by members.
<b>Considerations</b>	ARLF will provide members with guidance on the caption to include with uploaded photos and videos, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The type and location of activity</li> <li>• Number of people attending</li> <li>• Characteristics of attendees (sectors/industry, gender, age group).</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	Nous will review photos and videos uploaded in the following months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 2024</li> <li>• June 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	Nous will review all relevant posts uploaded by network members.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise the information included in captions using thematic analysis to explore key themes that emerge on the impact of the National Learning Network platform during program delivery and the extent to which intended and unintended outcomes are achieved.

**Table 23 | Evaluation data to inform evaluation of the National Learning Network**

Interviews with Working Group Members, National Learning Network participants and element leads	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will conduct individual and group interviews with participants in the National Learning Network Design Working Group, the ongoing National Learning Network Working Group and other members of the National Learning Network. Nous will also conduct interviews with the element delivery leads.
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Virtual (or face-to-face where possible) 1:1 and group interviews will be conducted with members of the National Learning Network Design and ongoing Working Groups and other participants of the National Learning Network platform. Three rounds of interviews will be conducted, as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 2023 (with the Design Working Group)</li> <li>• April – May 2024 (with the ongoing Working Group, network members, element leads)</li> <li>• During the regional deep dives in November 2024 – April 2025 (with the ongoing Working Group, network members, element leads).</li> </ul> <p>Nous will conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One x group interview with five-ten participants from the ongoing National Learning Network Working Group (Note: The composition of the ongoing National Learning Network Working Group is yet to be determined.)</li> <li>• One x group interview with up to ten members of the National Learning Network</li> </ul> <p>Nous will also conduct (per data collection round):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One x 1:1 interviews with National Learning Network element leads (prior to the development of the mid-term and final evaluation reports, respectively).</li> </ul>
<b>Considerations</b>	Nous will confirm the design and approach of engagements with ARLF prior to conducting the interviews. Key points that Nous will cover include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with the National Learning Network</li> <li>• Achievement of intended outcomes and emerging outcomes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If applicable, the influence of engagement with the National Learning Network Learning Platform on the outcomes of other elements.</li> </ul> <p>Key considerations in conducting the interviews will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring questions align to and collect data relevant to the KEQs and the expected outcomes of the program</li> <li>• Ensuring questions are fit-for-purpose and can be answered by interviewees</li> <li>• Accessibility of the interviews including minimising the number of questions, using clear and concise language and offering interviews in an accessible format.</li> <li>• Ensuring interviewees understand that their insights will be used in the evaluation.</li> <li>• The interviews will be designed and delivered in a way supports accessibility for all participants and is considerate of the time commitment required.</li> </ul> <p>A sample of other members of the National Learning Network platform will be invited to participate in interviews, with consideration of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity (age group, First Nations background)</li> <li>• Participants who have had high involvement in National Learning Network</li> <li>• Participants who have experienced change over time.</li> </ul>
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection round 1 – Nous will conduct interviews with the Design Working Group in July 2023, prior to the launch of the National Learning Network platform.</li> <li>• Data collection round 2 - Nous will conduct interviews with the ongoing Working Group, network members and element lead in May 2024, prior to the development of the Mid-term Report.</li> <li>• Data collection round 3 - Nous will conduct interviews with the ongoing Working Group, network members and element lead in June 2025, prior to the development of the Final Evaluation Report.</li> <li>• If applicable, additional participants may be interviewed in person during the Regional Deep Dives in December 2024-June 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	Participants from the Design and ongoing Working Groups were nominated by the ARLF element lead. A sampling frame will be developed to guide considerations for the selection of other National Learning Network participants for interviews, in consultation with the ARLF element lead. The interviews will play a key input to the development of case studies of impact of the National Learning Network platform.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from participant interviews using thematic analysis. This approach will allow us to explore and define the key themes that emerge with regards to the experience of participants of the National Learning Network platform and the achievement of intended outcomes.
<b>Observations of network activities</b>	
Reported in: Mid-term and Final Evaluation Report	
<b>Collected by</b>	Nous will attend and observe organised network activities where appropriate (face-to-face and virtually, depending on the activity delivery mode).
<b>Collection methodology</b>	Nous will observe and record insights from network activities, against the KEQs.
<b>Considerations</b>	ARLF or the National Learning Network Working Group will notify Nous of appropriate activities to attend.
<b>Frequency of collection</b>	When activities occur as relevant and practically appropriate for Nous resources.
<b>Scope</b>	ARLF or the National Learning Network Working Group to notify Nous of any and all appropriate activities to attend.
<b>Analysis approach</b>	Nous will synthesise insights from observations using thematic analysis.

## 12 Evaluation governance, implementation and reporting

This section outlines the project and risk management approach for this evaluation and details:

- Governance arrangements for the evaluation
- Reporting on evaluation findings
- Approach to risk management, key risks and mitigation strategies including ethical considerations
- Dependencies and limitations of the evaluation
- Evaluation timeline and implementation plan

### 12.1 Evaluation governance

Governance for this evaluation will comprise of three groups: FRRR and ARLF program delivery teams (procuring and overseeing the evaluation); Nous (conducting the evaluation), and the Operational Cluster Group (providing input and direction for the evaluation). The roles of each group are discussed below.

#### ARLF and FRRR delivery teams

ARLF and FRRR have identified individuals with relevant positions and expertise with whom Nous will work collaboratively throughout the evaluation:

FRRR	ARLF
Nina O'Brien, Disaster Resilience and Recovery Lead – FRRR Delivery Lead for HRCPD Initiative elements	Dr Werner Vogels, Manager Learning & Insights – ARLF Co-Lead for HRCPD Initiative elements
Kate Nolan, Program Manager FDF HRCPD Initiative	Lesley Vick, Project Manager Drought and Project Management Office – ARLF Co-Lead for HRCPD Initiative elements
Brooke Williams, Evaluation and Reporting Coordinator – FRRR Evaluation Lead for HRCPD Initiative elements	Louise Adcock, Manager National Learning Network

#### Nous evaluation team

The Nous team is led by Project Director, Carlos Blanco, who has extensive experience in regional development, economic and industry development, and evaluations. Carlos will be accountable for the outcomes of the evaluation, including the quality and timeliness of the delivery. Sally Higgins, the Project Manager, will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project. Hal Crichton-Standish and Melissa Medici are the Project Consultants and will contribute to key evaluation deliverables, stakeholder engagement and analysis of evaluation and program data.

Gill Shaw, Andrew Benoy, Selina Swan and Eamon Ritche are Expert Advisors for the evaluation. Gill and Andrew bring extensive experience in evaluation, regional development, community engagement and primary industries. Selina and Eamon bring deep understanding of how to appropriately conduct First Nations engagement and will contribute to the design of culturally safe and inclusive interviews.

The evaluation team may change over time, and Nous will notify FRRR of personnel changes as required.

## Operational Cluster Group

The Operational Cluster Group will include key stakeholders from across FRRR, ARLF, DAFF and Nous and play a critical role to ensure the evaluation captures the diverse views of all stakeholder groups and is a practical document to inform future funding decisions. The Operational Cluster Group will be engaged for two core purposes.

Table 24 | HRCPD Initiative evaluation governance meetings

Activities	Timing	Input
Fortnightly governance meetings to ensure that evaluation is on track.	90 min meetings fortnightly during evaluation design. 60 min meetings six-weekly throughout evaluation delivery.	Review emerging material and provide input on evaluation design. Inform Nous of delivery risks and implementation changes.
Working sessions to test emerging content and finding.	1-2 hour working sessions to contextualise and test emerging findings before key reporting milestones (ad hoc, as required).	Input from Operational Cluster Group members to be determined in advance of each meeting.

Nous worked collaboratively with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF through the fortnightly Operational Cluster group and meetings with HRCPD Initiative element leads, to collaboratively design the evaluation. During these meetings, the evaluation approach was iteratively developed through testing and refining key components of the MEL Plan, including the overarching approach for each element, the proposed outcomes and indicators, data collection methods and modes of engagement with stakeholders. FRRR, ARLF and DAFF provided extensive feedback on evaluation materials, which was incorporated by Nous prior to the refined versions being shared back with the group.

## 12.2 Evaluation reporting

This section presents a high-level overview of how evaluation progress and findings will be reported. Table 24 overleaf provides an overview of the contents, timing, and audience for evaluation reports.

Table 25 | Evaluation reports, timing, and target audience

Report	Description	Timing	Responsible party	Target Audience
<b>Nous Interim Reports</b>				
Nous will deliver Interim Reports to FRRR quarterly. Interim Reports will provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress updates on completed and upcoming evaluation activities.</li> <li>Updates on key decisions made during the period.</li> <li>Key challenges, risks and mitigation strategies.</li> </ul> <p><b>For the October 2023 and January 2024 reports only:</b> Baseline observations</p>	Interim Reports will be delivered in:	Nous	Interim Reports will be submitted to FRRR.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April, July, October 2023</li> <li>January, April, July, October 2024</li> <li>January, April, June 2025</li> </ul>		
<b>HRCPD Initiative Component 2 Progress Reports</b>				
FRRR and ARLF will deliver HRCPD Initiative Milestone Progress Reports. Milestone Reports will provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of progress of the HRCPD Initiative.</li> <li>Identification of risks and challenges.</li> <li>Summary of learnings and recommendations.</li> <li>Information and data for FDF Annual Reporting</li> </ul>	HRCPD Initiative Milestone Progress Reports will be delivered in:	FRRR and ARLF	HRCPD Initiative Milestone Progress Reports will be submitted to DAFF.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April, July, October 2023</li> <li>January, April, July, October 2024</li> <li>January, April 2025</li> </ul>		
<b>Mid-term Evaluation Report</b>				
Nous will deliver the Mid-term Evaluation Report. The Mid-term Evaluation Report will provide:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mid-term evaluation findings against the KEQs, with a focus on progress towards short-term (1-2 years) outcomes.</li> <li>Findings on the process to co-design the evaluation approach with stakeholders.</li> <li>Identification of risks and challenges.</li> <li>Summary of learnings from the design and delivery of the HRCPD Initiative to date.</li> <li>Summary of indicative recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>The Mid-term Evaluation Report will be accompanied by a variety of written, audio, visual and multi-media content and a plain-English summary version to communicate findings to broader community members.</p>	5 July 2024	Nous	The Mid-term Evaluation report will be submitted to FRRR.
<b>Final Evaluation Report</b>				
Nous will deliver the Final Evaluation Report. The Final Evaluation Report will provide the final evaluation findings against the KEQs, including:		30 September 2025	Nous	The Final Evaluation report will be submitted to FRRR.

- Analysis of all qualitative and quantitative program and evaluation data collected.
- Findings on the effectiveness of the HRCPD Initiative, especially the collaborative, locally-led, multi-step program design process and methodology.
- Insights on progress towards, and achievement of, identified outcomes and impacts of the HRCPD Initiative.
- Place-based case studies on the impact of the HRCPD Initiative in the eight deep dive regions.
- Insights on risks and challenges in the design and delivery of the HRCPD Initiative.
- Summary of learnings on the design and delivery of the HRCPD Initiative.
- Summary of recommendations on areas of growth, investment delivery mechanisms, timing, reach, and effectiveness for very remote, remote, regional and rural locations.

The Final Evaluation Report will be accompanied by a variety of written, audio, visual and multi-media content and a plain-English summary version to communicate findings to broader community members.

The Final Evaluation Report will be of publishable quality and will contribute to FDF Annual Reporting.

### HRCPD Initiative Final Report

FRRR and ARLF will deliver the complete and finalised HRCPD Initiative Final Report, covering the period from the start of 2022 to June 2025.

31 October 2025

FRRR and ARLF

The complete and finalised HRCPD Initiative Final Report will be submitted to DAFF.

## 12.2.1 Nous will develop a plain-English summary of the reports

Nous will release a plain-English summary of the Mid-term and Final Evaluation reports three months after they are due to FRRR to the broader HRCPD Initiative community, including those who have been engaged for Evaluation data collection activities. These summaries will be concise (between 5-10 pages) and visually engaging to ensure the Evaluation findings are easily interpreted by the broader community. The summary versions of the Evaluation reports will include the following select content:

Summary version – Mid-term Report	Summary version Final Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation findings against the KEQs, summarised and visually depicted. Findings will be provided for each element, as well as for the Initiative overall.</li> <li>• Summary of learnings from the design and delivery of the initiative as it relates to funded organisations and participants.</li> <li>• Summary of risks and challenges as it relates to funded organisations and participants of the Initiative.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall Evaluation findings aligned to the outcomes of the HRCPD Initiative, including by each element, target participant cohort (young people and First Nations people)</li> <li>• Summary of learnings on the design and delivery of the program as it relates to funded organisations and individuals.</li> <li>• Summary of recommendations to inform future program design.</li> </ul>

Summary version – Mid-term Report	Summary version Final Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of indicative recommendations and a high-level rationale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place-based case studies on the impact of the HRCPD Initiative in the eight deep dive regions.</li> </ul>

## 12.3 Risk management

We have identified several risks that may have an impact the evaluation, which are summarised in Table 25 below, including mitigation strategies. These risks have been identified based on Nous' experience in conducting social impact evaluations. Nous will monitor risks throughout the project and communicate with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF as needed (e.g. if the level of risk escalates).

**Table 26 | Summarised risks and mitigation strategies**

Risk	Mitigation strategy
<p><b>Insufficient useable data</b> – data is not available, is limited or inaccessible, or is of insufficient quality to enable meaningful analysis.</p>	<p>Nous has designed the MEL Plan in collaboration with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF including HRCPD Initiative element leads who have a detailed understanding of data availability. Nous has worked closely with element leads to design feasible data collection mechanisms to leverage and complement routine program data collection requirements. Nous will also conduct regional working sessions with delivery partners (see Section 6) to finalise the evaluation approach, including data collection, and build evaluation capability to support data collection. To ensure comparable data is collected and accounted for the variability in capability of the stakeholders supporting data collection, Nous will also develop data collection templates and provide periodic support on the implementation of these.</p>
<p><b>Capacity of stakeholders to support evaluation activities</b> – Stakeholders may be unavailable at key points of the evaluation, including for consultations or to support data collection.</p>	<p>As noted in Section 4.1, the evaluation will consider the time-sensitive factors influencing rural and regional community members' availability and capacity to engage in non-essential activities, for example, the timing of harvest and shearing seasons and show days will be accounted for when planning evaluation engagements and data collection.</p> <p>As above, Nous worked closely with element leads to design feasible data collection mechanisms to leverage and complement routine program data collection requirements. Nous will also conduct regional working sessions with delivery partners (see Section 6) to finalise the evaluation approach, including agreement on the mechanisms and timing for data collection, and build evaluation capability to support data collection.</p>

Risk	Mitigation strategy
<p><b>Stakeholder willingness to participate</b> – Stakeholders may have varying degrees of willingness to engage in evaluation activities, in particular those who participated in the evaluation of Phase 1 or already feel over-consulted about government investment in their region.</p>	<p>Nous has worked closely with element leads to design feasible data collection mechanisms to leverage and complement routine program data collection requirements. In particular, this is to minimise the burden on stakeholders and ensure that they will not be over-engaged with during the course of this evaluation.</p> <p>All participation in evaluation activities will be voluntary and explicit consent will be sought prior to any engagement commencing. Further information on participation information sheets is provided in Appendix E.</p> <p>For more time-intensive involvement, such as at the stakeholder summits prior to the Mid-term and Final Evaluation reports, Nous will provide monetary compensation for stakeholders’ time and contributions (likely to be in the form of a \$50 gift card).</p> <p>As noted above, Nous will also conduct regional working sessions with delivery partners (see Section 6) to finalise the evaluation approach. These will entail discussing the planned engagement activities and ensuring these are appropriate for the region. Prior to conducting these working sessions in the regions, and conducting the regional deep dive engagements, Nous will meet with the FRRR Community Coordinators to receive a pre-brief on any contextual information about that region we need to be aware of. This will include any known prior involvement in the Phase 1 evaluation and prior consultation.</p>
<p><b>Other barriers to participation</b> – Some community stakeholders, such as people in very remote areas and/or First Nations people, may be unable to engage with the Evaluation due to language, technical, or other barriers.</p>	<p>Nous will conduct targeted travel to remote areas to ensure regional working sessions and engagements are accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. Sessions and engagements will be conducted in-person or virtually based on the needs and capacity of stakeholders to engage. Nous will continue to review the need for different approaches to support First Nations input to the evaluation. In addition, ‘Plain English’ summaries and clear instructions will be provided during interviews to support First Nations input into the Evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Perceived conflicts of interest or bias.</b></p>	<p>Any potential conflicts of interest at Nous will be clearly outlined to FRRR and ARLF for their consideration. All stakeholder consultations will have more than one Nous team member in attendance to ensure that stakeholders’ perspectives are heard and captured against two records, and team members will hold one another accountable to accurately translate what was discussed during interviews.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation scope</b> – Stakeholders may have expectations of the evaluation that are not aligned with the intended scope, and be disappointed that the evaluation does not investigate individual feedback.</p>	<p>The scope of the evaluation is defined in Section 3.2.</p> <p>Nous will communicate clearly at the start of each consultation and in project deliverables (including interview guides) the scope of the evaluation or the specific activity, to ensure this is transparent to all stakeholders engaged with over the course of the evaluation.</p>



Risk	Mitigation strategy
<p><b>Team member turnover</b> – The Nous, FRRR, ARLF or DAFF teams may experience turnover during the evaluation.</p>	<p>Nous will engage early and often with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF team members through the Operational Cluster group to maintain strong communication and knowledge transfer throughout the evaluation. Where staff turnover occurs, Nous will proactively engage with the new FRRR, ARLF or DAFF team member to provide any required context or explanations.</p> <p>The entire Nous project team will frequently come together to discuss the project and coordinate and share knowledge. In the event of Nous team turnover, Nous will conduct proactive succession planning and an extensive handover from the old team member to remaining team members. Nous will maintain secure and organised knowledge management and record keeping systems to ensure information is shared consistently between the team. Following this, Nous will explore the possibility of an existing team member taking on additional responsibility in the project or propose a replacement team member to FRRR and ARLF from Nous who has knowledge and expertise in the area, and meets all relevant jurisdictional requirements (such as Working With Children or Vulnerable People checks).</p>

## 12.4 Dependencies and limitations

The ability of the Nous team to deliver on the evaluation outcomes will depend on the following:

- **Timely access to quality data for analysis of program documentation.** The evaluation of each element involves analysis of program documentation and data. Nous expects to receive this documentation from key stakeholders, such as delivery partners, as per the agreed evaluation and project plan. If this data is not received in the agreed timeframe or not of the expected quality, there may be delays.
- **Timely access to contact details for relevant stakeholders.** Nous plans to complete interviews and working sessions with key stakeholders during the evaluation, such as during the regional deep dives. Nous is reliant on FRRR and ARLF for the contact details of these stakeholders. Delays to receiving contact details may lead to scheduling issues and impact Nous' ability to obtain insights.
- **Strong and effective working relationships with FRRR, ARLF and DAFF.** Central to success in this evaluation is a cooperative and collaborative relationship between FRRR and ARLF, and Nous. This will support arrangements to engage with stakeholder, effective management of the evaluation from all parties, and the application of a participatory approach to the evaluation of all elements.
- **Strong and effective working relationships with other stakeholders.** Organisations and individuals may choose not to participate in the evaluation due to time constraints and engagement fatigue. Lack of cooperation from these stakeholders, will impact Nous' ability to generate evaluation insights. Nous is reliant on some of these stakeholders to collect and provide data to inform the evaluation, such as grantees through progress reporting.

## 12.5 Evaluation timeline and implementation plan

		2023												2024				
		2023												2024				
		Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep		
		Week commencing																
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING	Monthly Operational Cluster team meeting	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
	Interim Reports (quarterly)	•			•			•			•			•				
	Deliver Evaluation Framework (inclusive of overarching MEL framework, approach, metrics, analysis, agreed quarterly reporting template and data governance)	•																
	Deliver evaluation implementation plan including evidence of activities planned for capacity building	•																
	Report baseline observations: CIP tranches 1 and 2, National Mentoring Program				•													
	Report baseline observations: CIP tranches 3 and 4, Expertise Pool and Drought Ready Network							•			•							
	Evidence of activities undertaken for data collection and capacity building (including internal and external stakeholders engaged)										•							
	Deliver Mid-term Evaluation Report														•			
	Draft structure and planned content of end of program report																	
	Evidence of activities undertaken for data collection and capacity building																	
Deliver Final Evaluation Report																		
REGIONAL WORKING SESSIONS	Finalise approach to regional sessions to build evaluation capability and co-design final evaluation approach																	
	Initial introductory calls and regional working sessions with CIP Tranche 1 CPLOs and delivery partners																	
	Complete regional working sessions for Tranche 2, 3 and 4 CIP CPLOs and delivery partners																	
REGIONAL DEEP DIVES ROUND 1	Select regions for regional deep dives based on final sampling frame																	
	Test and confirm final regions selected for deep dives with operational cluster group																	
	Coordinate logistics of regional deep dive trips, including scheduling interviews and observations of events and activities																	
	Conduct regional deep dives in eight regions, including interviews and observations																	
	Analyse data from regional deep dives to inform Mid-term data collection period																	
MID-TERM DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	Request and analyse program data across all elements (program and grant reports, program surveys, platform data and multimedia from participants) to inform Mid-term data collection period																	
	Identify and recruit participants for additional engagements during Mid-term data collection																	
	Conduct primary data collection: additional engagements (individual and group interviews, and observations) during Mid-term data collection																	
	Identify and recruit participants for collaborative outcomes reporting (COR) panels to participate in sensemaking summits																	
	Analyse and triangulate primary and secondary data																	
	Prepare panel participants with summary of Mid-term evaluation findings, with a specific focus on findings related to that element or audience group, and structure for the panel discussion (key objectives, discussion questions and materials).																	
	Facilitate sensemaking summits including COR panels to review collated evaluation data and interpret findings																	
	Synthesise output of sensemaking summit and panels, and finalise data analysis																	
	Finalise and deliver Mid-term evaluation report																	

		2024			2025									
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
		Month												
		Week commencing												
REGIONAL DEEP DIVES ROUND 2	Coordinate logistics of regional deep dive trips, including scheduling interviews and observations of events and activities													
	Conduct regional deep dives in eight regions, including interviews and observations													
	Analyse data from regional deep dives to inform Final data collection period													
FINAL DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	Request and analyse program data across all elements (program and grant reports, program surveys, platform data and multimedia from participants) to inform Mid-term data collection period													
	Identify and recruit participants for additional engagements during Final data collection													
	Conduct primary data collection: additional engagements (individual and group interviews, and observations) during Final data collection													
	Identify and recruit participants for collaborative outcomes reporting (COR) panels to participate in sensemaking summits													
	Analyse and triangulate primary and secondary data													
	Prepare panel participants with summary of Final evaluation findings, with a specific focus on findings related to that element or audience group, and structure for the panel discussion (key objectives, discussion questions and materials).													
	Facilitate sensemaking summits including COR panels to review collated evaluation data and interpret findings													
	Synthesise output of sensemaking summit and panels, and finalise data analysis													
	Finalise and deliver Final evaluation report													

## 13 Ethical standards

This section outlines the ethical standards and processes for this evaluation, and includes:

- Ethical collection of data and the process for ethics approval
- Data management and processes to ensure data privacy and confidentiality

Nous is committed to delivering an evaluation that meets ethical standards, and safeguards the wellbeing and protects the confidentiality of those engaged during the evaluation.

This section outlines how the evaluation will be conducted ethically.

### 13.1 Ethics approval

Nous will seek ethical review by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Ethics Committee. Nous submitted the preliminary ethics application on July 11<sup>th</sup> and will submit the full application on July 25<sup>th</sup> 2023. This MEL Plan will be updated once the review process is completed.

The Nous evaluation team has also obtained Working With Children (WWC) and Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) checks for all jurisdictions. Evaluation team members conducting engagements where children may be present will have the relevant WWC or WWVP checks for the respective jurisdiction, prior to conducting the engagements.

### 13.2 Data management and privacy

Emphasis will be placed on the careful management of sensitive datasets, avoiding conflicts of interest, and the ethical collection and storage of data. The approach to data management and privacy will be informed by the following principles:

- Only data relevant to the evaluation will be collected. The evaluation will seek data specific to the KEQs.
- The volume of personal and sensitive information collected will be minimised and this data will be managed appropriately.
- Findings will be reported in aggregate to avoid any risk of identifiability, except where explicit approval is granted to report at a community or organisational level. Data will not be reported where the cell size is less than or equal to five.
- All data will be stored in secure systems by Nous, to uphold privacy and confidentiality. Any program data being transferred from FRRR and ARLF to Nous, for the purposes of the evaluation, will be de-identified and transferred through secure systems (such as secure Microsoft Teams site).
- Nous will hold data for the five years required by NHMRC recommendations and destroy all data following this.

## 13.3 Confidentiality

Nous is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the HRCPD Initiative participants and delivery partners, as well as the confidentiality of their work. The following commitments will be carried out by the Nous team:

- Use, access, disclose or retain confidential information only for the purpose of the evaluation, and not disclose confidential information to other Nous employees except on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of completing the evaluation.

## 13.4 Ethical collection of data

### Qualitative data collection

Our stakeholder engagement will be culturally appropriate and respectful. We understand the ethical and safety concerns of interviewing vulnerable people. Nous will ensure cultural safety when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities through use of interviewers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent wherever possible, or with people with strong experience in this sphere.

Consent, trust, and respect will be critical to effective stakeholder engagements. Nous will work closely with FRRR and ARLF to seek participant consent before approaching potential participants, to then recruit them for interviews. Participants will be asked for their consent prior to engagement and will be clearly told what participation entails. Interviewees will be assured of their safety and provided information about Nous' approach to data security, privacy, and confidentiality.

We will be careful to do no harm. If we perceive that any individual is uncomfortable with talking to us, we will politely cease the conversation. If we are concerned about them, we will provide details of support services that may be sought.

Our report will clearly describe our ethical approach so that readers can be confident that the evaluation has followed ethical practices. Given the significant impact and challenges a drought event can present to communities, and the possibility that a drought event may occur during the evaluation, consultations will need to be conducted in a safe environment, and with consideration to the emotional conditions and drought experiences of rural and regional stakeholders. For those opting to participate in consultations where drought events are current or recent, the subject matter may compound trauma or give rise to other vulnerabilities. Consent processes, and a distress protocol, will be an important part of our ethics application and will include localised support contacts for participants. In addition, different experiences within a community means privacy and safety around disclosures will be crucial.

### Quantitative data collection

Nous is committed to seeking the appropriate consent and maintaining the privacy of evaluation participant data. We will ensure that we inform all participants that their data may be used for the evaluation before commencing data collection activities. Participants will be advised that their data will be reported in aggregate and no organisation or participant will be identifiable for the report, unless agreed.

Stakeholders who are invited to complete surveys during the evaluation will be provided with an information and consent form at the beginning of the survey. The statement will outline:

- Nous' engagement by the FRRR, ARLF, and DAFF
- The purpose of the survey
- How data will be managed and kept confidential

- How data will be reported for the evaluation

The information and consent page will require survey respondents to acknowledge they have read and agree to the conditions of the evaluation data collection activities.

## 13.5 Indigenous data sovereignty and Indigenous data governance

Nous will engage with and collect data about First Nations people and communities as part of the evaluation. Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) principles will be used to guide the evaluation process when engaging with and collecting data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

IDS and IDG are emerging international terms to provide high-level guidance that promotes good practice throughout the data lifecycle as data relates to First Nations people and communities.<sup>20</sup> 'Indigenous Data Sovereignty' refers to "information or knowledge, in any format or medium, which is about and may affect Indigenous peoples both collectively and individually."<sup>21</sup> 'Indigenous Data Governance' refers to "the right of Indigenous peoples to autonomously decide what, how and why Indigenous Data are collected, accessed and used. It ensures that data on or about Indigenous peoples reflects [their] priorities, values, cultures, worldviews and diversity."<sup>22</sup>

The principles vary in the applicability to the current evaluation, with principle two being most applicable. See Figure 26 for key IDS principles.

Our approach to engaging with First Nations individuals and organisations is detailed in Section 5.1.1 and summarised below.

- Nous will apply culturally appropriate engagement approaches during Regional Working Sessions and Regional Deep Dives where applicable. Examples of First Nations engagement approaches include the use of yarning circles, other conversational methods and ensuring engagement is conducted in places where First Nations people are comfortable, and having engagement conducted by people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- Nous will adopt a Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) approach to ensure the evaluation findings are reflective of both the technical and lived experience of program participants, including First Nations people. The COR approach is detailed in Section 6.1.4. As part of adopting the COR approach, a panel focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and organisations involved in the delivery of the elements will be facilitated during the summit.
- Nous will prepare and distribute de-identified summary findings of data collected as part of the evaluation as relates to First Nations people and participating Indigenous organisations.
- Nous will develop short, plain language versions of the Final Evaluation Report to distribute to First Nations HRCPD Initiative participants. This report will communicate and reflect what the evaluation has found and how the program is progressing back to First Nations people, in an accessible way.

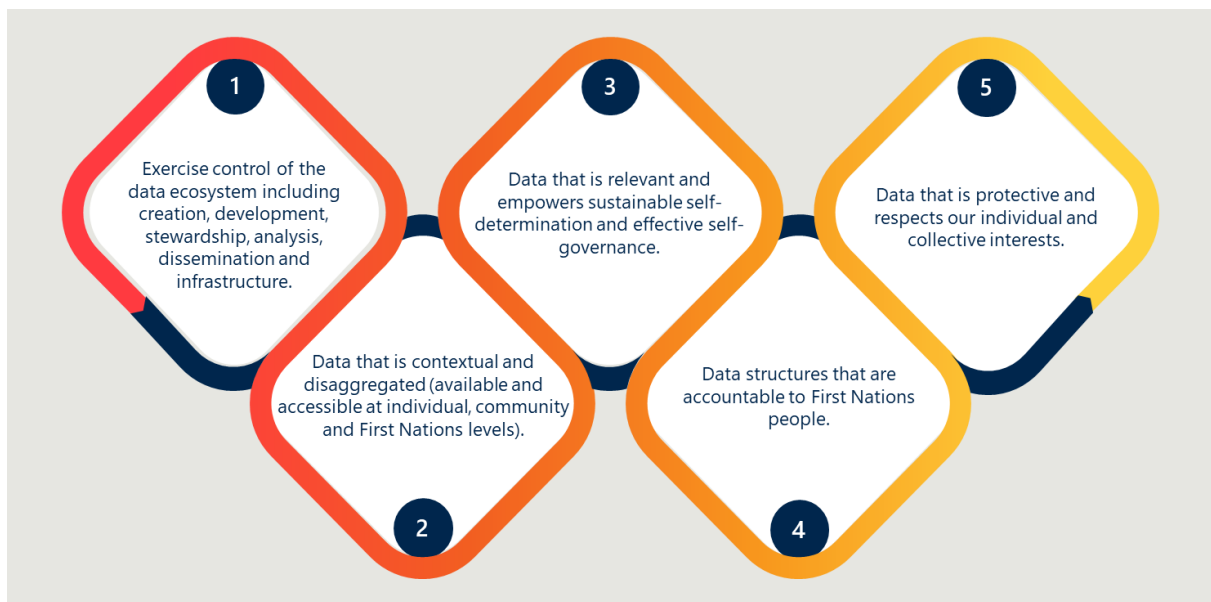
<sup>20</sup> The principles are an output from the National Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit attended by over 40 Indigenous delegates and was published by the Maïam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute agreed upon the key principles for Indigenous.

Maïam nayri Wingara, Indigenous Data Sovereignty Communique Indigenous Data Sovereignty Summit 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Canberra, ACT, 2018. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3043afb40b9d20411f3512/t/63ed934fe861fa061ebb9202/1676514134724/Communique-Indigenous-Data-Sovereignty-Summit.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Maïam nayri Wingara, Defining Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, 2018. Available at: <https://www.maïamnayriwingara.org/definitions>

<sup>22</sup> Maïam nayri Wingara, Defining Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, 2018. Available at: <https://www.maïamnayriwingara.org/definitions>

Figure 26 | IDS Principles



Nous is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of the HRCPD Initiative participants and delivery partners, as well as the confidentiality of their work. The following commitments will be carried out by the Nous team:

- Use, access, disclose or retain confidential information only for the purpose of the evaluation, and not disclose confidential information to other Nous employees except on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of completing the evaluation.
- Upon termination of the contract, copies of confidential information will be returned to FRRR and Nous to confirm in writing that all copies (where relevant) have been destroyed.

# Appendix A Key Evaluation Questions

*Key Evaluation Questions are provided in a separate document.*



## Appendix B Detailed data collection and monitoring plan for outcomes

Nous notes that:

- Output reporting will be conducted quarterly (based on available data) by FRRR and ARLF
- Some of the outcomes will be reported by Nous at the mid-term and final evaluation reports only, and are specified in the 'Reporting frequency' column of the table below. This enables adequate time for outcomes to be realised, and data collection activities to occur, and mitigates the risk of inaccurate short-term reporting of trends.
- Several indicators are repeated across the table, as they report against more than one level of the program logic.

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
Success measures and Intermediate outcomes 2-4 years	There is an increase in the reach and activities of community leaders, mentors, networks and organisations driving action on drought resilience (RC1)	Total number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regions participating in the HRCPD Initiative by LGA</li> <li>• LGAs participating in the HRCPD Initiative (35 regions + additional via Small Network Grants and the National Mentoring Program)</li> <li>• not-for-profit organisations participating in the HRCPD Initiative by region and cohort</li> <li>• number of people participating in the HRCPD Initiative by region and cohort</li> <li>• participants in leadership activities to build drought resilience by region and cohort</li> </ul>	Program data - grant reports	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF
		Change in the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regions participating in the HRCPD Initiative by LGA</li> <li>• LGAs participating in the HRCPD Initiative (35 regions + additional via Small Network Grants and the National Mentoring Program)</li> </ul>	Program data – grant reports	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid term evaluation Report Final Evaluation report	Nous

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not-for-profit organisations participating in the HRCPD Initiative by region and cohort</li> <li>participants in the HRCPD Initiative by region and cohort</li> <li>participants in leadership activities to build drought resilience by region and cohort</li> </ul>					
		Total population of beneficiaries expected to be reached through the project and change since commencement.	Program data - grant reports; interviews	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF
		HRCPD Initiative participants (including community leaders, mentors, networks and organisations) report a greater reach and increase in activities than expected due to the program.	Interviews	Annually	Nous	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
		Total value of devolved grants by region, cohort and output	Program data - grant reports	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF
		<p>Total number of program activities and outputs over the HRCPD Initiative implementation period by region, disaggregated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networks: Initiatives</li> <li>Community events</li> <li>Training initiatives</li> <li>Community infrastructure initiatives</li> <li>Development and learning initiatives</li> </ul>	Program data - grant reports	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
	There is a change in awareness of and attitudes to drought preparedness at the community level (RC2)	HRCPD Initiative element grant recipients and program participants report improved awareness or attitude to drought preparedness in their community, by region, by cohort	Interviews <sup>23</sup>	Annually <sup>24</sup>	Nous	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
			Program data - surveys	Dependent on program delivery <sup>25</sup>	ARLF	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
	Communities experience improved cohesion and belonging that supports an ability to prepare for drought (IO1)	Initiative element grant recipients and program participants report (by region and cohort): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved community participation in drought preparedness activities</li> <li>increased belonging amongst members of their community</li> </ul>	Interviews	Annually	Nous	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
			Program data - surveys	Dependent on program delivery	ARLF	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
	Communities have strong adaptive capacity and are empowered to respond to drought (IO2)	HRCPD Initiative element grant recipients and program participants report (by region), by cohort improved individual/community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>capacity to adapt to drought</li> <li>confidence to respond to drought</li> </ul>	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
	Communities have effective networks and resources that	HRCPD Initiative element grant recipients and program participants report (by region) improved capacity to support local responses to drought by:	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Final evaluation report	Nous, FRRR and ARLF

<sup>23</sup> Interviews referred to in this monitoring plan are those conducted with CPOs, delivery partners and participants. Further detail on interviews is provided in the Data collection table in Section 5.

<sup>24</sup> Primary data collection will be conducted by Nous annually in February to May 2024 and February to June 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Program data will be collected at varying times through the delivery of the five HRCPD Initiative elements. Details on specific timelines for each element is provided in Sections 7 to 11.

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
	support local responses to drought (IO3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying and engaging with people within their networks</li> <li>accessing effective resources</li> </ul>				Progress report in Q4 2025	
			Program data - surveys	Dependent on program delivery	ARLF	Final evaluation report Progress report in Q4 2025	Nous, FRRR and ARLF
Program short-term outcomes 1-2 years	Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness. (PO1)	HRCPD Initiative element program participants report improved communication, within their community or with another community, as a result of participating in the activity, including:	Program data – reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report <sup>26</sup> Final evaluation report	Nous
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more effective communication channels by region</li> <li>increased frequency of communication by region and cohort</li> </ul>	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		HRCPD Initiative element program participants report (by region, by cohort) as a result of participating in the activity:	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in level of social connection within their local community, region or state</li> <li>Satisfaction with the strength of their social connections in their local community, region or state</li> <li>increased collaboration within their community or with another community</li> <li>improved sense of community belonging</li> </ul>	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous

<sup>26</sup> The Mid-term evaluation report will be delivered in July 2024.

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved awareness of supports available in their local community</li> </ul>					
	Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness. (PO2)	Number and type of new or upgraded community services, resources, infrastructure and facilities, by region	Program data - reports	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
Interviews and case studies			Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous	
Participants report (by region) following use of new or existing community services, resources, infrastructure and facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased knowledge sharing between community members</li> <li>improved sense of community connection</li> <li>increased community collaboration</li> </ul>		Program data – reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous	
		Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous	
	A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities. (PO3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants in each HRCPD Initiative element, by region by cohort, by cultural background</li> <li>Total number and value of grants issued to community members through the CIP and Small Network Grants, by region</li> </ul>	Program data - reports	Quarterly (where available)	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF
		Number and type of First Nations specific and culturally safe engagement opportunities (such as yarning circles), by region	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
			Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		Participants, including volunteers and not-for-profit organisations, report (by region, by cohort) as a result of participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved awareness and/or understanding of drought risk</li> <li>improved awareness and/or understanding of climate-related risks</li> <li>increased confidence to prepare for drought events</li> <li>greater preparedness to respond to drought individually</li> <li>improved drought preparedness planning within their community</li> <li>that their community is more prepared to respond to drought</li> </ul>	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
	Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought. (PO4)		Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		Participants report (by region) as a result of participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>awareness of practices they were previously not aware of</li> <li>learning relevant skills or techniques that will enable them to employ new practices or improve existing practices</li> <li>employing practices they had previously not used or that</li> <li>employing practices that were identified in regional drought resilience plans</li> </ul>	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report	Nous
	Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought. (PO5)		Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>modifying existing practices so they more effectively build or enhance resilience to drought</li> <li>employing new practices that more effectively build or enhance resilience to drought.</li> </ul>					
		Examples of place-based practices implemented by communities by region	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		Participants report (by cohort) improved leadership behaviours as a result of participation in the activity, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased involvement in leadership roles<sup>27</sup></li> <li>decision-making, planning or problem-solving in their community</li> </ul>	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
	Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience. (PO6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>group and logistical management</li> <li>advocacy work</li> <li>improved confidence or likelihood to take on a leadership role in their community</li> </ul>	Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
		Participants report (by cohort), as a result of participation in the activity, increased awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what strong leadership looks like in their community</li> <li>opportunities to step into leadership roles</li> </ul>	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
			Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report	Nous

<sup>27</sup> Disaggregated by, people aged 18- 35 years old, First Nations people, Gender where available.

	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
						Final evaluation report	
		Participants report (by location), as a result of participation in the activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved awareness of community-based networks focused on building drought resilience</li> <li>Observing stronger or greater connections within existing or new community-based networks</li> <li>The establishment of new community-based networks focused on building drought resilience</li> <li>Increased participation in community-based networks</li> <li>Increased number of activities organised by community-based networks</li> <li>Increased diversity in new or existing community-based networks (e.g. different types of landowners, businesses owners, other demographic groups, etc)</li> </ul>	Program data - reports, surveys	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
	Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created. (PO7)		Interviews and case studies	Annually	Nous	Mid-term evaluation report Final evaluation report	Nous
Program activities and outputs <sup>28</sup>	<b>Output types:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Networks:</b> Initiatives to strengthen the capacity, capability, and coordination of professional, social or community networks</li> </ul>	Disaggregated by HRCPD Initiative element, output type (i.e. networks, community events, training initiatives, community infrastructure projects, development and learning initiatives) and additional categories (e.g., field days, conferences, forums, etc. for 'events' and skill development, capability building, etc. for 'training initiatives').	Program data - reports	Dependent on program delivery	FRRR and ARLF	Quarterly	FRRR and ARLF

<sup>28</sup> Note that output indicators will be reported on in quarterly reporting by FRRR and ARLF, where data is available from available program reporting. The timing of program reporting will vary across elements and projects/grants. Available information will be summarised by Nous in the Mid-term evaluation report (July 2024) and Final evaluation report (September 2025).



	Program logic component	Indicator(s)	Data source/ method	Collection frequency	Responsible for data collection	Reporting frequency	Reporting party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community events</b> to facilitate professional, social and community connection and build understanding of drought and climate change associated risks</li> <li>• <b>Training initiatives</b> to improve skills and capacity in community risk management, planning and project delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Community infrastructure:</b> Small-scale community infrastructure projects to improve connectedness, wellbeing and facilities.</li> <li>• <b>Development and learning initiatives</b> to facilitate professional, personal and leadership-related development and learning to support drought preparation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total amount of devolved funding to initiatives, by region</li> <li>• Total number of initiatives implemented under the HRCPD Initiative, by region</li> <li>• Total number of participants of HRCPD Initiative programs (i.e. mentors, mentees, network members), by region, by cohort</li> <li>• Total number of individuals interacting with virtual content (e.g., social media, recording viewings, etc.)</li> </ul>					

## Appendix C HRCPD Initiative Program Logic and key assumptions

Objective Source: FDF MEL Framework	Agricultural communities are resourceful, adaptable and thriving				
Future Drought Fund Long-Term Outcomes (SX) (4+ years) Source: FDF MEL Framework	Social Outcome 1 (S1)  Stronger connectedness and greater social capital within communities, contributing to wellbeing and security		Social Outcome 2 (S2)  Communities implement transformative activities that improve their resilience to drought		
Program Success measures (RCX) (2-4 years) Source: FDF Annual Report 2020-21  Other intermediate outcomes (IOX) (2-4 years)	<p>Success Measure 1 (RC1) - There is an increase in the reach and activities of community leaders, mentors, networks and organisations driving action on drought resilience (Reporting to S1, S2)</p> <p>Success Measure 2 (RC2) - There is a change in awareness of and attitudes to drought preparedness at the community level (Reporting to S1, S2)</p> <p>Intermediate outcome (IO1) - Communities experience improved cohesion and belonging that supports an ability to prepare for drought (Reporting to S1)</p> <p>Intermediate outcome (IO2) - Communities have strong adaptive capacity and are empowered to respond to drought (Reporting to S2)</p> <p>Intermediate outcome (IO3) - Communities have effective networks and resources that support local responses to drought (Reporting to S1)</p>				
Program short-term outcomes (POX) (0-2 years)	<p>Program short-term outcome (PO1) - Improved communication, social connection and collaboration within and between communities to support drought preparedness. (Reporting to RC1, RC2, IO1, IO2 and IO3)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO2) - Improved access to and use of services, resources, infrastructure and facilities by communities that support drought preparedness. (Reporting to RC1, IO2 and IO3)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO3) - A greater diversity of community members and organisations contribute to drought preparedness activities. (Reporting to RC1, IO1 and IO3)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO4) - Increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of strategies by communities, volunteers and not-for-profit organisations to prepare for and adapt to drought. (Reporting to RC1, RC2, IO2 and IO3)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO5) - Increased implementation and improved effectiveness of place-based practices by communities to build and enhance resilience to drought. (Reporting to RC1, RC2 and IO2)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO6) - Strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience. (Reporting to RC1, RC2 and IO2)</p> <p>Program short-term outcome (PO7) - Community-based networks that strengthen drought resilience are expanded, diversified or created. (Reporting to RC1, IO1 and IO3)</p>				
Program activities and outputs	<p>Community Impact Program</p> <p>Output types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks: Initiatives to strengthen the capacity, capability, and coordination of professional, social or community networks</li> </ul>	<p>Small Network Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Training initiatives</li> <li>• Development and learning initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>Expertise Pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training initiatives</li> <li>• Development and learning initiatives</li> </ul> <p>(Reporting to PO2 and PO4)</p>	<p>National Mentoring Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Training initiatives</li> <li>• Development and learning initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>National Learning Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Development and learning initiatives</li> </ul>

Objective Source: FDF MEL Framework	Agricultural communities are resourceful, adaptable and thriving				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community events</b> to facilitate professional, social and community connection and build understanding of drought and climate change associated risks</li> <li>• <b>Training initiatives</b> to improve skills and capacity in community risk management, planning and project delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Community infrastructure:</b> Small-scale community infrastructure projects to improve connectedness, wellbeing and facilities.</li> <li>• <b>Development and leadership initiatives</b> to facilitate professional, personal and leadership-related development and learning to support drought preparation.</li> </ul> <p>(Reporting to PO1 - PO7)</p>	(Reporting to PO1 - PO5 and PO7)		(Reporting to PO1, PO3 - PO7)	(Reporting to PO1 – PO4, PO6 and PO7)

### Key assumptions

There are a series of assumptions underpinning the program logic diagram, based on an understanding of how change is expected to happen. They are statements that if they hold true, will enable the change to happen, through to the long-term outcomes sought. The most significant of these assumptions are documented below. The MEL approach will test these, enabling refinements to the Program if assumptions prove untrue, and informing future evaluations.

The assumptions are based on an understanding of drought resilience literature, previous FDF project delivery, specifically Component 1, and the Better Prepared Communities MEL Plan.

### **Program implementation**

- Grantees implement the activities in regional, remote and/or rural communities to contribute towards the HRCPD Initiative goals and outcomes.
- Regional, remote and/or rural communities and individuals have a desire to actively engage in the HRCPD Initiative.
- The HRCPD Initiative will be delivered in accordance with the executed grant agreements and any variations.
- As part of meeting the progress and final report requirements for the project, the grantees will complete all reporting requirements as detailed in the executed grant agreement.

- Relevant connections are made with other FDF programs by FRRR in the selection and delivery of projects and by Nous through the evaluation.

#### **External factors**

- Cumulative impacts of adverse events and stressors may occur throughout the duration of the HRCPD Initiative but will not impede program participation or success.
- FDF investments work cohesively to build drought resilience across the system, and do not impede program efforts.
- Ongoing political support for implementation and priorities supports program efforts.

#### **Outputs to 1-2 year outcomes**

- There is sufficient interest in participating in the HRCPD Initiative.
- Access to funds is a barrier for implementing drought resilience activities.
- Improved communication, social connection and collaboration will improve drought resilience.
- Improved access to services, infrastructure and facilities will result in greater utilisation of those services, infrastructure and facilities.
- Access to and utilisation of services, infrastructure and facilities will help facilitate activities related to drought resilience.
- A lack of diversity of community members and organisations is a barrier to drought resilience.
- Limited knowledge and understanding of strategies to prepare for and adapt to drought is a barrier to drought resilience.
- Limited ability to implement place-based practices is a barrier to building and enhancing resilience to drought.
- Individual leadership capacity will contribute to improved community wellbeing and drought resilience.
- Access to individual leadership capabilities in communities is currently a barrier to drought resilience.
- Limited community-based networks is a barrier to drought resilience.

#### **Outcomes from 2-4 years**

- Participants in the Networks to Build Drought Resilience and Drought Resilience Leaders programs are also eligible to participate in HRCPD Initiative.
- Low levels of awareness about drought resilience is a barrier to change.
- Limited social and professional networks is a barrier to drought resilience.
- Improved cohesion and belonging improves drought resilience.

- The extent to which communities' are empowered and adaptive contributes to their drought resilience.
- Ineffective networks and resources are a barrier to drought resilience.
- The investment results in a net increase in the reach and activities of communities, rather than simply displacing or deferring other activities.

**Contribution to long-term outcomes (4+ years)**

- There is sufficient social capital for networks to be sustainable and add value to drought resilience work.
- There is a willingness from participants to consider and adopt innovative approaches.
- Communities have the capabilities needed to adopt innovative or transformative approaches.
- There is a sufficient will by all stakeholders to enable transformative change to happen within the life of the program.
- There are opportunities to connect with broader FDF investments so that planning adds value rather than duplicates.

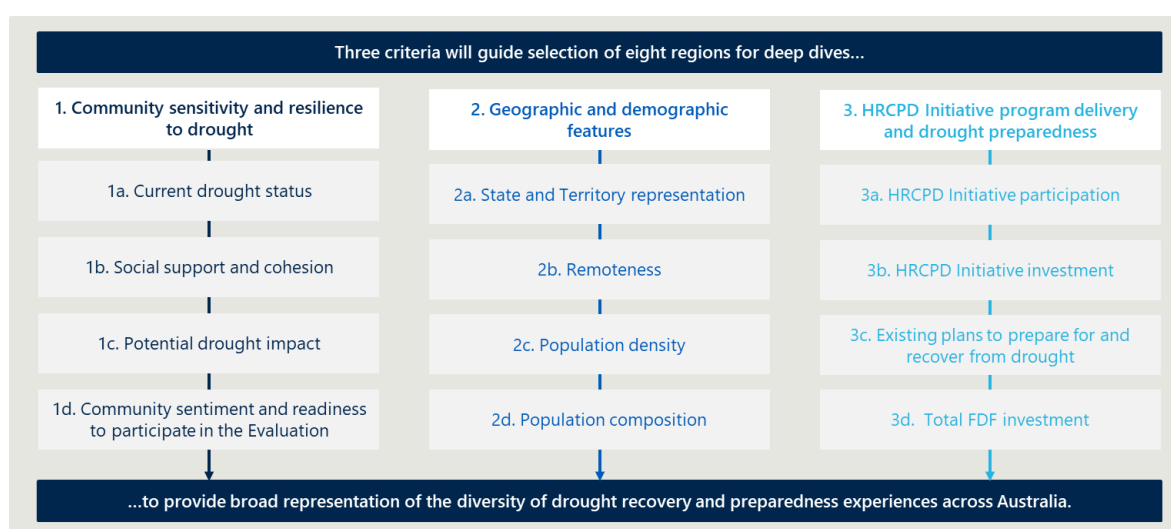
## Appendix D Sampling Frame for Regional Deep Dives

Three criteria will guide selection of regions for evaluation deep dives:

- Community sensitivity and resilience to drought
- Geographic and demographic features
- HRCPD Initiative program delivery and other investments in drought preparedness

Each of the criteria are outlined in further detail below.

Figure 27 | Overview of the criteria to inform the selection of regions for deep dives



### Community sensitivity and resilience to drought

Regions identified for deep dives will be prioritised based on where the impact of drought in the past, and likelihood of impact in future, has been, and is, prevalent.

Regions will have a diverse range of social and economic vulnerability and resilience to drought, as reported through ABARES indices. The potential drought impact index provides a combined view of Farm sensitivity and Community sensitivity to form a relative ranking for a community. This will allow the evaluation to explore if the impact of the HRCPD Initiative varies, based on the region’s composition and risk profile.

The selection of regions will also be informed by qualitative insights and community sentiment, drawn from stakeholder engagements conducted in Phase 1. This will ensure our data-informed understanding of regions is validated with the insights and experience of local community members.

Table 27 | Indicators within the community sensitivity and resilience to drought criteria

	Description	Data required
1a. Current drought status	Drought status reflects community experience of drought. Selecting regions preparing for, responding to, and currently experiencing drought, will allow for insights across different base levels of community drought resilience. This	Drought status is categorised differently in each state and territory.

	will also include consideration for regions that have been exposed to recent natural disaster (i.e., bushfire or flooding).	
<b>1b. Social support and cohesion</b>	<p>Social support is an indicator of trust and reciprocity between people, which contributes to wellbeing. Access to support beyond a person’s own household, provides a sense of security and represents a safety net for people in a time of crisis. The ABS Census survey captures data relating to household social support in times of crisis and can be analysed at an LGA level.</p> <p>Volunteering rates provide an indicator of social cohesion. The contribution of volunteers to a variety of organisations helps to build social networks, increases shared values, and strengthens social cohesion. By volunteering, individuals can become more outwardly focused, leading to a decrease in social isolation, greater social connections, and the promotion of good mental health.</p> <p>Consideration of where a region scores on the index of socio-economic advantage will also be considered to inform community residents’ ability to take opportunities and respond positively to change.</p>	ABS
<b>1c. Potential drought impact</b>	<p>We will select a region with both high and low potential to be adversely affected by drought, to reflect the diversity of experiences in regions across Australia. The Potential Drought Impact index combines farm sensitivity and community sensitivity indicators. These indicators account for both agriculture industry exposure and sensitivity, and community sensitivity: using ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021 data to represent the level of community dependence on agriculture. Whether the Potential drought impact will cause lasting loss or harm, depends on the community’s adaptive capacity. Depending on their adaptive capacity, some communities may be better placed to mitigate the social and economic damage that may occur from a given potential drought impact.</p>	ABARES Potential Drought Impact indicator
<b>1d. Community sentiment and readiness to participate in the Evaluation</b>	<p>We will also consider community sentiment and insights relating to how a region perceives itself to be resilient to the impacts of drought. Important to this will also consideration for a region’s readiness to participate in the Evaluation, as advised by FRRR. This will help the evaluation to establish baseline observations of each region and to explore how the HRCPD Initiative influenced the extent to which regions perceive themselves to be better positioned to respond to, and recover from, drought.</p>	Stakeholder insights gather in Phase 1 and input from FRRR community coordinators.

## Geographic and demographic features

Regions selected for deep dives will make up a representative sample of each state or territory across Australia. This is an important consideration for ensuring the evaluation is national in its approach and insights are collected.

Regions will also include a range of remoteness, as categorised by the ABS. This will allow the evaluation to explore impact of the HRCPD Initiative in areas with relatively lower access to services.

The population density and composition of a region will also be considered. This will ensure that the evaluation explores the experience of more isolated communities, and that the different experience of age profiles is considered.

**Table 28 | Indicators within the geographic and demographic features criteria**

	Description	Data required
<b>2a. State and Territory Representation</b>	Regions will be selected to ensure representation from all states and territories across Australia. This is important for distilling evaluation insights that reflect the diversity of drought experience across Australia, and for capturing national insights.	CIP regions by state and territory.
<b>2b. Remoteness</b>	Regions will represent a range of remoteness areas to ensure the evaluation considers the variety of service provision and accessibility experienced across Australia. This will be important for understanding the broader contextual factors that impact a regions' ability to prepare for and respond to drought. We will prioritise the inclusion of regions that have a strong combination of remote, and potential drought impacts, noting that remoteness amplifies disadvantage in many instances where drought is prevalent.	ABS Remoteness Areas
<b>2c. Population density</b>	Regions selected for deep dives will also have a range of high and low population density. This will be important for understanding the experience of more isolated communities in responding to, and preparing for, drought.	ABS Census population data
<b>2d. Population composition</b>	Regions with varying population compositions will be selected for deep dives, to enable a balance of demographics to be engaged with. This will allow the evaluation to explore how different population groups are impacted by the funding, and the ways in which they prepare for and respond to drought. Representation young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be prioritised for inclusion in the deep dives.	ABS Census population data

### **HRCPD Initiative program delivery and other investments in drought preparedness**

Regions identified for deep dives will have:

- A range of HRCPD Initiative investment in the region
- ideally, multiple HRCPD Initiative elements in operation
- ideally, a range of different funded project types and target cohorts through the CIP and Small Network Grants

This will allow the evaluation to explore place-based impacts. It will also allow an assessment of the cumulative impact of HRCPD Initiative elements.

Deep dive regions will have varying levels of other investments in drought preparedness, such as Regional Drought Resilience Planning. This will allow the evaluation to explore the interaction of the HRCPD Initiative with the other FDF investments and the attribution of the HRCPD Initiative to region-level outcomes.



**Table 29 | Indicators of the HRCPD Initiative program delivery and other investments in drought preparedness criteria**

	Description	Data required
<b>3a. Participation in the HRCPD Initiative</b>	Regions selected for deep dives will have ideally participated in multiple HRCPD Initiative elements. This will ensure the evaluation considers the cumulative effect of the HRCPD Initiative elements and that a broad range of HRCPD Initiative participant experiences are captured.	HRCPD Initiative element participant lists, with participant regions indicated.
<b>3b. HRCPD Initiative investment</b>	We will consider the total monetary value of the HRCPD Initiative activities and the mix of funded projects in the regions to ensure a diverse representation of HRCPD Initiative investment and activity within a region. This will allow the evaluation to explore the extent to which the size and nature of investment impacted the outcomes experienced within a region and by communities.	HRCPD Initiative funding allocation reports.
<b>3c. Existing plans to prepare for and recover from drought</b>	We will consider regions with diverse levels of capability in drought resilience planning and recovery. The regions selected for deep dives will include some regions which have undergone Regional Drought Resilience Planning and other regions with less established community and social resilience structures. This will help the evaluation to explore how the impact of the HRCPD Initiative varied based on existing capability within a region and how other FDF programs have contributed to broader, collective impacts experienced by regions.	Summary of regions which have undergone a Regional Drought Resilience Planning process.
<b>3d. Total FDF investment</b>	We will consider previous FDF programs and investments in regions, and ensure that the deep dives include regions with a mix of low and high levels of previous investment. This will help the evaluation to explore the extent to which regions experience intended and unintended benefits from cumulative investment.	Summary of FDF funding by LGA and CIP region.

## **Appendix E Data collection tools**

### **E.1 Surveys to evaluate co-design process**

**Community Impact Program Participant Co-design Survey – Tranche 1**

*Community Impact Program Participant Co-design Survey attached as a separate PDF.*

**Community Impact Program CPLO Co-design Survey – Tranche 1**

*Community Impact Program CPLO Co-design Survey attached as a separate PDF.*

**Community Impact Program Facilitator Co-design Survey – Tranche 1**

*Community Impact Program Facilitator Co-design Survey attached as a separate PDF.*

## E.2 Regional Working Sessions

The following section outlines Nous' approach conducting the regional working sessions. Nous has conducted introductory calls with CPLOs in Tranche 1 of the CIP prior to submitting the MEL Plan to test the approach and structure of the regional working sessions. This has ensured that the design and method of delivery is appropriate for the regional stakeholders and that the session will deliver genuine value and capability uplift.

### E.2.1 Approach to the working sessions

To streamline the evaluation co-design process and build evaluation capabilities, Nous will provide participants with evaluation materials prior to and immediately following the co-design session. Participants will be guided through the session to build their evaluation approach. Supporting communities with data collection is a critical component to the overall evaluation approach.

Table 30 | Summary of activities to support delivery of the regional working sessions

Stage	Activity	Responsible organisation
<b>Prior to the session</b>	Nous will conduct introductory phone calls with each of the CPLOs to describe the purpose of and plan for the regional working session. The introductory call is intended to support relationship building between Nous and the CPLO and to ensure the design of the regional working session is suited to the organisations requirements.	FRRR to provide warm introduction to Nous. Nous to organise and facilitate the introductory sessions at a time convenient to the CPLO.
	Following the introductory phone call, Nous will share pre-session materials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-page HRCPD Initiative evaluation overview.</li> <li>• Summary of session agenda</li> <li>• Pre-reading of Evaluation 101 material, including the tools to be used in session and an evaluation glossary</li> </ul>	
<b>During session</b>	Facilitated 2-hour working session (see agenda below which outlines the sessions activities in more detail).	Nous will facilitate the session. ARLF, DAFF and FRRR are invited to observe sessions where appropriate and where approval has been sought by Nous in advance.
<b>Post-session</b>	Consolidate insights from working sessions and make refinements to the MEL Plan and approach as required.	Nous will consolidate feedback from the working sessions to adapt the MEL Plan and evaluation approach.
	Share tools and templates to support community data collection and reporting.	Nous will share materials described in session with participants immediately following.
	Conduct routine check-ins with participants, aligned with project delivery timelines.	FRRR

## E.2.2 Overview of the regional working sessions

Below is an indicative agenda for the evaluation co-design working sessions. The PowerPoint slides to support delivery of the session have been provided as an attachment to the MEL Plan.

**Table 31 | Overview of the regional working session agenda**

Session	Session overview	Duration
1.Context setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions and scene setting</li> <li>• An overview of the HRCPD Initiative</li> <li>• Overview of the HRCPD Initiative evaluation, it's key aims and activities</li> </ul>	15 mins
2: Evaluation 101	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce key evaluation concepts and terms, and the rationale for evaluation</li> <li>• Introduce key evaluation tools, such as a program logic</li> </ul>	15 mins
3. Building a program logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a program logic for the participants' project(s)</li> <li>• Provide an overview of the HRCPD Initiative outputs and outcomes, and introduce the evaluation methods and examples data collection tools</li> <li>• Identify which outputs and outcomes relate to the project(s) and feasible data collection methods for capturing these</li> <li>• Discuss what is required from participants to support data collection</li> </ul>	45 mins
4: Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an overview of the evaluation timelines, including the timing of the Mid-term and Final Evaluation reports and future engagements with the evaluation team</li> <li>• Identify key contracts for enquiries</li> </ul>	15 mins

## E.3 Surveys to evaluate program delivery

Nous will conduct surveys with participants of the National Mentoring Program and members of National Learning Network.

Below we outline indicative survey questions in Table 31 and Table 32.

Nous will finalise survey questions with the element leads prior to distribution. Surveys will include an introduction to the evaluation, a confidentiality and privacy clause, and a set of questions based on the KEQs.

**Table 32 | Indicative survey questions for mentees and mentors in the National Mentoring Program**

Survey questions	Survey response options
To what extent do you agree that participation in the National Mentoring Program has improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication within your community?</li> <li>• Communication between your community and other communities?</li> </ul>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.

Survey questions	Survey response options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social connection within your community?</li> <li>• Social connection between your community and other communities?</li> <li>• Collaboration within your community?</li> <li>• Collaboration between your community and other communities?</li> </ul> <p><i>(aligned to PO1)</i></p>	
<p>Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?</p> <p><i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, No, Prefer not to answer.
<p>Are you aged between 18-35?</p> <p><i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Yes: 18-35 years old, No: 35+ years old, No: under 18 years old.
<p>How do you describe your gender?</p> <p><i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Man or male, woman or female, Non-binary, I use a different term (please specify), prefer not to answer
<p>To what extent do you agree that participation in the National Mentoring Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased your knowledge and understanding of strategies to prepare for and adapt to drought?</li> <li>• improved your ability to implement place-based practices to build and enhance resilience to drought?</li> <li>• strengthened your individual leadership capacity and capability to support community drought resilience in your community?</li> <li>• Increased your community network?</li> <li>• Strengthened your community network?</li> </ul> <p><i>(aligned to PO4-PO7)</i></p>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.
<p>How satisfied were you with the application process for the National Mentoring Program?</p> <p><i>(aligned to KEQ 1.4.3)</i></p>	Very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, unsatisfied, prefer not to answer.
<p>Rate the following statement: The National Mentoring Program was what I expected it to be before I applied.</p> <p><i>(aligned to KEQ 4.1)</i></p>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.

**Table 33 | Indicative survey questions for members of National Learning Network**

Survey questions	Survey response options
<p>Rate the number of people you have connected with through being a member of the National Learning Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in your community.</li> <li>• in other communities.</li> </ul> <p><i>(aligned to PO1)</i></p>	0, 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-19, 20+ people
<p>To what extent do you agree that participation in the National Learning Network improved:</p>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.

Survey questions	Survey response options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication within your community?</li> <li>• Communication between your community and other communities?</li> <li>• Social connection within your community?</li> <li>• Social connection between your community and other communities?</li> <li>• Collaboration within your community?</li> <li>• Collaboration between your community and other communities?</li> </ul> <p><i>(aligned to PO1)</i></p>	
<p>Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? <i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, No, Prefer not to answer.
<p>Are you aged between 18-35? <i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Yes: 18-35 years old, No: 35+ years old, No: under 18 years old.
<p>How do you describe your gender? <i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Man or male, woman or female, Non-binary, I use a different term (please specify), prefer not to answer
<p>To what extent do you agree that there has been greater diversity of community members and organisations contributing to drought preparedness activities through participation in the National Learning Network? <i>(aligned to PO3)</i></p>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.
<p>To what extent do you agree that participation in the National Learning Network has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved access to and use of services, infrastructure and facilities that support drought preparedness in your community?</li> <li>• increased your knowledge and understanding of strategies to prepare for and adapt to drought?</li> <li>• strengthened your individual leadership capacity and capability to support community drought resilience in your community?</li> <li>• Increased your community network?</li> <li>• Strengthened your community network?</li> </ul> <p><i>(aligned to PO2, PO4, PO6 and PO7)</i></p>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.
<p>How many events have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organised using the National Learning Network platform?</li> <li>• attended using the National Learning Network platform?</li> </ul>	0, 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 11-19, 20+ events
<p>Rate the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have accessed new information about drought preparedness through the National Learning Network platform that I was not aware of before.</li> <li>• I have accessed new resources about drought preparedness through the National Learning Network platform that I was not aware of before.</li> </ul>	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.
<p>To what extent are you satisfied with the feedback mechanisms of the National Learning Network?</p>	Very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, unsatisfied, prefer not to answer.

Survey questions	Survey response options
To what extent have you felt that your feedback has been incorporated into the design of the National Learning Network platform?	All my feedback has been incorporated, most of my feedback has been incorporated, some of my feedback has been incorporated, none of my feedback has been incorporated, I have not provided any feedback.
Additional questions for members of the National Learning Network Working Group	
To what extent do you agree that the co-design process supported communities to identify and design the National Learning Network to address community needs?	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.
To what extent do you agree that external environmental factors and/or timelines influenced the implementation and success of co-design?	Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, prefer not to answer.

## E.4 Discussion guides for individual and small group interviews (focus groups)

Nous is conducting interviews with key stakeholders (such as element leads, delivery partners, element participants and DAFF) at various points throughout the evaluation.

Below we outline indicative individual and group interview questions for these interviews. Key questions are captured in Table 33 to Table 36.

Prior to each engagement, Nous will develop and share an interview guide. Discussion guides will include an introduction to the evaluation and identify a set of key questions to guide the discussion.

**Table 34 | Indicative interview questions for element leads**

Interview questions
1. What outputs were delivered to whom? How did delivery vary across: elements, communities, geographic regions, stages of drought?
2. Who were the intended beneficiaries, and were they reached?
3. To what extent have the element activities contributed towards the intended outcomes?
4. What were the factors that enabled or hindered element delivery? How did these factors impact timelines and progress towards outcomes?
5. What are potential areas for improvement, and how were or would these be incorporated into the design of the element or future programs?
6. Were project funds commensurate with the outcomes the element sought to achieve?
7. To what extent were reporting requirements and processes adequate and effective?

## Interview questions

8. Were data collection requirements at each stage of element delivery (design, delivery, method, timing and conclusion) appropriate?
9. How did governance arrangements support effective decision-making?
10. What can be done to improve the alignment of the Initiative with the objectives of the FDF? What about other Australian Government and State and Territory Government drought initiatives?

**Table 35 | Indicative interview questions for CPLOs and grantees**

Interview questions	Element <sup>29</sup>	
	Community Impact Program	Small Network Grants
1. How is your project progressing? Have you encountered any challenges during project delivery?	x	x
2. What are your funding arrangements? Are they appropriate?	x	x
3. What are your reporting requirements? Are they working well?	x	x
4. What were the big differences made by the grant funding to your project and what outcomes has the project achieved in the short-term (0-2 years)? Were there any unintended outcomes?	x	x
5. Was the reach of your project broader than what you had expected? Consider people, representatives, organisations, networks and activities. <i>(aligned to RC1)</i>	x	x
6. How has your project contributed to a change in awareness and attitude towards drought preparedness? <i>(aligned to RC2)</i>	x	x
7. How has your project improved cohesion and belonging in your community? Has this supported your ability to prepare for drought? <i>(aligned to IO1)</i>	x	x
8. How has your project contributed to individual and community capacity to respond to drought? <i>(aligned to IO2)</i>	x	x
9. Has your project increased the effectiveness of networks and resources that support responses to drought? If so, how? <i>(aligned to IO3)</i>	x	x
10. How has your project improved the communication, connection and collaboration within your region relating to drought resilience and preparedness? <i>(aligned to PO1)</i>	x	x

<sup>29</sup> Questions relating to intermediate and short-term outcomes are depending on the outcomes expected to be achieved through the delivery of each element, which is summarised in Section 4.2.2.1.



Interview questions	Element <sup>29</sup>	
	Community Impact Program	Small Network Grants
11. Has your project improved access to and use of services, infrastructure and facilities in your community? If so, how has this supported drought preparedness? <i>(aligned to PO2)</i>	x	x
12. Has your project involved a diverse range of community members, such as young people and First Nations people, in drought preparedness activities? If so, how? <i>(aligned to PO3)</i>	x	x
13. How has your project increased the knowledge and understanding of strategies to prepare for and adapt to drought in your community? What about for key groups, such as volunteers and not-for-profit organisations? <i>(aligned to PO4)</i>	x	x
14. Has your project supported communities to implement place-based practices that build and enhance resilience to drought? If so, how? <i>(aligned to PO5)</i>	x	x
15. How has your project strengthened individual leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience? <i>(aligned to PO6)</i>	x	
16. Has your project contributed to the growth and improved strength of community-based networks? If so, how? <i>(aligned to PO7)</i>	x	x
17. What were the factors that enabled or hindered delivery of your project? How did these factors impact timelines and progress towards outcomes?	x	x
18. To what extent would you have been able to deliver your funded project(s) without the CIP/SNG funding? Has the funding changed the pace or efficacy of your projects?	x	x

**Table 36 | Indicative interview questions for other element participants**

Interview questions	Element <sup>30</sup>		
	Expertise Pool	National Mentoring Program	National Learning Network
1. Please provide an overview of the supports you received through the [insert element].	x	x	x
2. What supports did you receive prior to or during project delivery? How did they contribute to project outcomes?	x		
3. What supports did you receive through the National Mentoring Program?		x	
4. How satisfied were you with supports you received?	x	x	

<sup>30</sup> Questions relating to intermediate and short-term outcomes are depending on the outcomes expected to be achieved through the delivery of each element, which is summarised in Section 4.2.2.1.

Interview questions	Element <sup>30</sup>		
	Expertise Pool	National Mentoring Program	National Learning Network
5. What were the biggest differences the National Learning Network made for you?			x
6. How has your awareness and attitude towards drought preparedness changed since participating in the [insert element]? <i>(aligned to RC2)</i>	x	x	x
7. Have you experienced improved cohesion and belonging in your community since participating in the [insert element]? How has this supported your ability to prepare for drought? <i>(aligned to IO1)</i>		x	x
8. How has your capacity to respond to drought changed since participating in the [insert element]? <i>(aligned to IO2)</i>	x	x	x
9. How have your local networks and resources that support responses to drought changed since participating in the [insert element]? Are they more effective? <i>(aligned to IO3)</i>	x	x	x
10. How has your involvement in the [insert element] improved the communication, connection and collaboration within your region relating to drought resilience and preparedness? <i>(aligned to PO1)</i>		x	x
11. How has your access to and use of services, infrastructure and facilities that support drought preparedness improved since participating in the National Learning Network? <i>(aligned to PO2)</i>			x
12. Since participating in [insert element], how has your knowledge and understanding of strategies to prepare for and adapt to drought in your community changed? <i>(aligned to PO4)</i>	x	x	x
13. Have you implemented any place-based practices that build and enhance resilience to drought since participating in [insert element]? If so, how? <i>(aligned to PO5)</i>		x	
14. How has your leadership capacity and capability to support community and drought resilience changed since participating in [insert element]? <i>(aligned to PO6)</i>		x	x
15. How have community-based networks changed in your community changed due to [insert element]? Have they grown or strengthened? <i>(aligned to PO7)</i>		x	x

**Table 37 | Indicative interview questions for DAFF**

Interview questions
1. To what extent have the element activities contributed towards the intended outcomes?
2. What were the factors that enabled or hindered element delivery? How did these factors impact timelines and progress towards outcomes?

### Interview questions

3. What are potential areas for improvement, and what are opportunities to incorporate these lessons into the design of future programs?
4. What enabled or hindered the Initiative from reaching the intended beneficiaries?
5. What were the major risks associated with the Initiative?
6. How well did the Initiative design anticipate and mitigate those risks?
7. Were funds commensurate with the outcomes the Initiative sought to achieve?
8. To what extent were reporting requirements and processes adequate and effective?
9. How did governance arrangements support effective decision-making?
10. What can be done to improve the alignment of the Initiative with the objectives of the FDF? What about other Australian Government and State and Territory Government drought initiatives?

## E.5 Completion reports for grantees

The completion reports are provided as a separate attachment to the MEL Plan. The contents of the completion reports will be refined in collaboration with FRRR, and following completion of the working sessions when CPLOs and delivery partners provide feedback on the evaluation approach.

## E.6 Regional and longitudinal case study templates

Figure 28 | High level regional baseline profile for 35 CIP regions

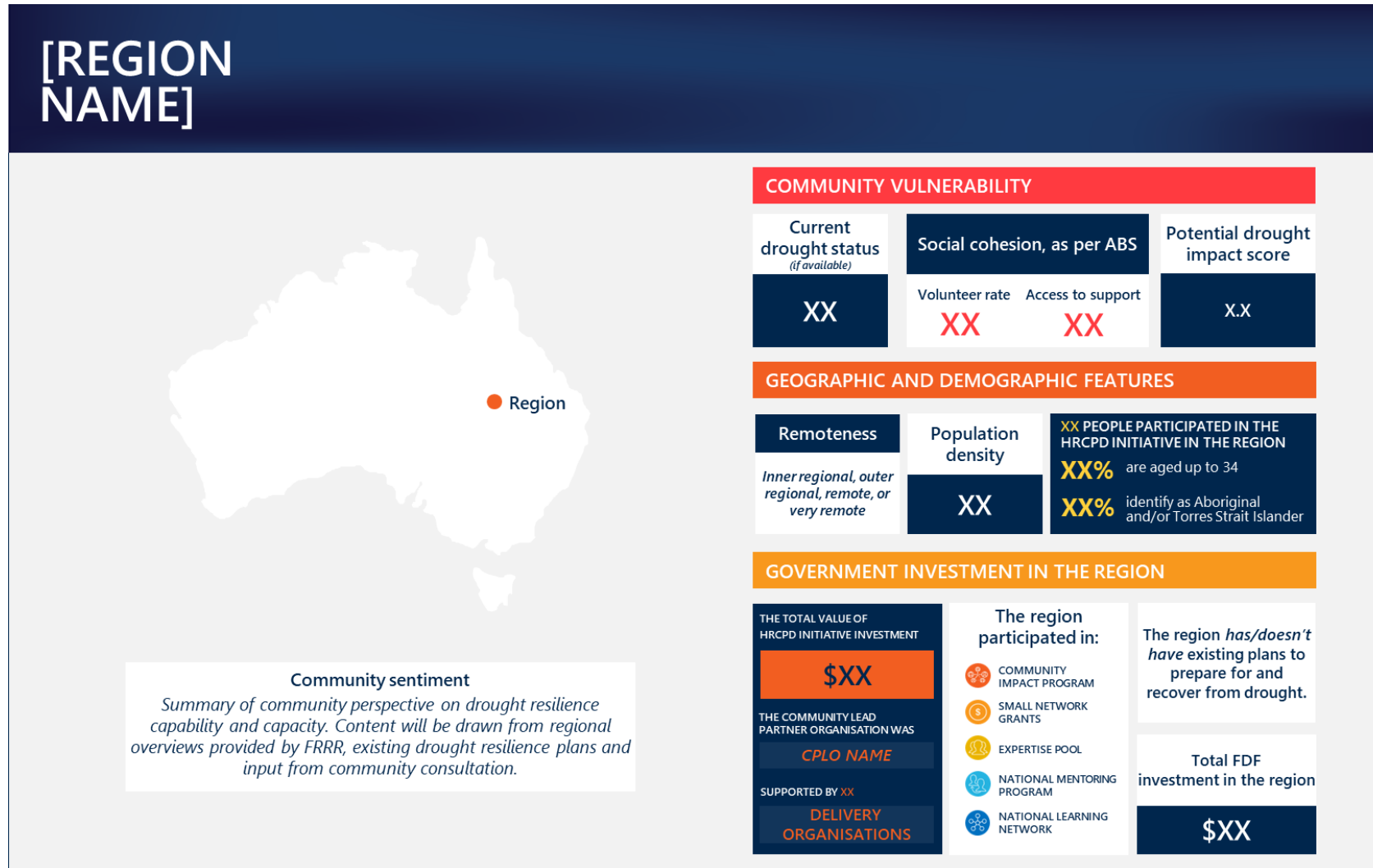


Figure 29 | Detailed regional baseline profile for Deep Dive regions



Figure 30 | Longitudinal impact case study template



## Appendix F Glossary

Glossary terms included below are drawn from the DAFF MEL Template and previous Better Prepared Communities MEL Plan, with additional items specific to the HRCPD Initiative included where relevant.

Term	Definition	Source
ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences	FDF MEL Framework 2020
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	FDF MEL Framework 2020
Activity	Activities are actions taken or work performed to produce specific outputs that contribute to program outcomes.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
Agriculture-dependent communities	Remote, rural and regional communities with a high economic dependency on agriculture and related industries.	DAFF 2022
Appropriateness	The notion of appropriateness includes consideration of the degree to which an intervention's design, implementation and initial results are adequate to respond to the needs of a range of stakeholders.	DAWE 2020b; Markiewicz and Patrick 2016
Assumptions	Assumptions are hypotheses about the factors or risks which could affect the progress or success of an intervention. Intervention results depend on whether the assumptions made prove to be correct.	OECD 2002; UNAIDS 2008
Attribution	Attribution is 'the ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected to be observed) changes and a specific intervention' (OECD 2002:17). It is understood as the extent to which changes were caused by the intervention, that would not have occurred without it. Changes in drought resilience will rarely be attributable to FDF programs, given that other factors (e.g. climatic conditions, business or social drivers, or other government policies) will also influence drought resilience. See also 'Contribution'.	OECD 2002; Simister, James & Napier 2020
Baseline	A baseline is information on objectives and/or indicators collected at a relevant point in an intervention, against which comparisons can be made to understand the changes brought about by the intervention. Baselines should be compiled at (or near) the start of an intervention, to reflect the original situation, against which changes can be assessed.	OECD 2002; Simister and Giffen 2017
Contribution	The contribution of an intervention is any change that is generated jointly by the intervention, when it is just one of a number of interventions that helped to generate or produce that change. It is expected that all FDF programs will contribute to strengthening drought resilience, and its determinants, even if the size of the contribution is hard to measure. See also 'Attribution'.	Simister, James & Napier 2020

Term	Definition	Source
Counterfactual	The counterfactual is the situation or condition which hypothetically may prevail for individuals, organizations, or groups if the intervention had not been implemented.	OECD 2002
Data collection tools	Data collection tools are the methods and instruments used to collect information of interest, including (but not limited to) participant surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, participatory tools (e.g. mapping, ranking, timelines, etc.).	OECD 2002
Drought	Drought can incorporate meteorological, agricultural and socio-economic measures. Meteorological measures of drought refer to periods of low rainfall. Agricultural measures refer to crop failure from lack of soil moisture. Socio-economic measures refer to adverse economic and social outcomes, such as reductions in farm incomes or mental health impacts. <i>Note: Drought can be complex to define, with many varied uses of the term. The definition provided is indicative, recognising that there are varied definitions.</i>	Hughes, Soh, Boulton and Lawson 2022
Drought resilience	Drought resilience is 'the ability to adapt, reorganise or transform in response to changing temperature, increasing variability and scarcity of rainfall and changed seasonality of rainfall, for improved economic, environmental and social wellbeing' as defined in the Drought Resilience Funding Plan. <i>Note: Drought can be complex to define, with many varied uses of the term. The definition provided is indicative, recognising that there are varied definitions.</i>	DAFF 2022
DRMP	Drought Resilience Management Plans	FDF MEL Framework 2020
Effectiveness	Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which program objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Assessing effectiveness includes examining which outcomes were achieved, who benefited from those outcomes, and identifying unintended outcomes.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
Efficiency	Efficiency is a measure of program delivery, of how economically resources or inputs such as funds, expertise, time, etc. are converted into results.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
Evaluation	Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed intervention, its design, implementation and results.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
FDF MEL Framework	The <a href="#">FDF MEL Framework</a> sets out fund-level rationale, scope and approach for MEL activities under the Drought Resilience Funding Plan (2020–2024). It describes expectations for performance measurement and reporting against the Funding Plan, and outlines roles and responsibilities for MEL activities, including what is required by programs, delivery partners, grantees, etc., but not the detailed approach for individual programs.	DAWE 2020b



Term	Definition	Source
Impact	Impacts are the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, whether directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
Indicators	Indicators are quantitative or qualitative factors or variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, assess performance or reflect the changes connected to an intervention. Specific, relevant and appropriate indicators must be identified for outputs, outcomes and impacts, and data collected on these as part of monitoring activities, so that changes over time can be measured.	DAWE 2020b; OECD 2002
Indigenous Data Governance	The right of Indigenous peoples to autonomously decide what, how and why Indigenous Data are collected, accessed and used. It ensures that data on or about Indigenous peoples reflects our priorities, values, cultures, worldviews and diversity.	Maiam nayri Wingara 2018 <sup>31</sup>
Indigenous Data Sovereignty	The right of Indigenous people to exercise ownership over Indigenous Data. Ownership of data can be expressed through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data.	Maiam nayri Wingara 2018 <sup>32</sup>
Innovative activities	Innovative activities involve generating, diffusing and applying knowledge in order to do new things or do existing things in new ways.	DAFF 2022
Inputs	Inputs are the financial, human, and material resources used in the delivery of activities in an intervention.	OECD 2002
Learning	Learning is the generation and sharing of insights and information, within programs and across the FDF, to improve program delivery and inform future policy and program design. Learning should span the full program cycle, from the formation of program assumptions, to design and implementation. Learning processes should use monitoring and evaluation data to build knowledge, capability and practices that can support programs to become more effective over time.	DAWE 2020b
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning	FDF MEL Framework 2020
MEL Plan	A Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan documents what MEL activities will be carried out, and why, and should be developed at or very near to the start of a project or program. MEL Plans should enhance understanding of the tasks ahead and specify the time and resources required for MEL activities. Program MEL Plans will set out the scope and approaches required to monitor, evaluate and learn from program-funded activities, and reporting requirements.	Simister 2017a

<sup>31</sup> Maiam nayri Wingara, Defining Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, 2018. Available at: <https://www.maiamnayriwingara.org/definitions>

<sup>32</sup> Maiam nayri Wingara, Defining Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance, 2018. Available at: <https://www.maiamnayriwingara.org/definitions>

Term	Definition	Source
Monitoring	<p>Monitoring is a continuous function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to assess the extent of achievement of objectives (and the use of allocated funds). Monitoring is necessary to understand whether programs are on track to achieve their intended outcomes, to support adaptive management and communicate progress.</p> <p>A detailed description of the monitoring activities, including indicators used, data collection tools, etc., is described in the program or project MEL Plan (see also, 'MEL Plan').</p>	OECD 2002
NDA	National Drought Agreement	FDF MEL Framework 2020
Networks	A network is an interconnected and open-ended circle of people linked by a shared interest, occupation, etc.	DAFF 2022
Objective	<p>The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other results to which an intervention is expected to contribute. Objectives can be set at many different levels, from broad strategic objectives to very specific project objectives, and range from simple deliverables in a project to long-term goals which may be dependent on many different factors.</p> <p>The Drought Resilience Funding Plan identifies three objectives to achieve the strategic priorities which will enhance the public good by building drought resilience through programs that will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'grow the self-reliance and performance (productivity and profitability) of the agricultural sector</li> <li>2. improve the natural capital of agricultural landscapes for better environmental outcomes</li> <li>3. strengthen the wellbeing and social capital of rural, regional and remote communities' (DAWE 2020a:5).</li> </ol>	DAWE 2020a; OECD 2002; Simister 2017b
Outcomes	<p>Outcomes are the likely or achieved short- and medium-term effects, intended consequences or benefits, of an intervention's outputs. Outcomes can include changes in condition, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, behaviour and relationships as a result of an intervention.</p> <p>If the intervention is well designed, outputs should lead logically to outcomes, because they are within the sphere of influence of the intervention, though unlike outputs, they are not within direct control.</p>	OECD 2002; Stafford Smith 2020
Outputs	<p>Outputs are the tangible products and services of an intervention, that result from implemented activities and that are necessary to achieve the intervention's outcomes and objectives. Outputs relate to the completion rather than the conduct of activities and are the type of results which interventions have direct control over.</p>	Stafford Smith 2020; UNDP 2002
Program logic	A program logic is a tool that explains how program objectives are to be achieved, demonstrating the anticipated causal links between inputs, activities and outputs, and on to outcomes and impacts. The program logic should also include the underlying	Department of the Environment 2015; DPC 2016; OECD 2002

Term	Definition	Source
	assumptions that are thought to affect the achievement of program objectives.	
Public good	A public good is one whose benefits are nonexcludable and nondepletable. In terms of the FDF, public goods are benefits generated by the FDF funding which must be able to be accessed and/or shared by many (public benefits), rather than be captured solely by individual businesses or industries for private commercial gain (private benefits).	Robison 2023; DAFF 2020
RDE&A	Research, development, extension and adoption	FDF MEL Framework 2020
RWS	Regional Wellbeing Survey	FDF MEL Framework 2020
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas	FDF MEL Framework 2020
Social capital	Features of social organisation such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.	Putnam 1995
Social resilience	Social resilience is the adaptive and learning capacity of individuals, groups and institutions to self-organise in a way that maintains system function in the face of change or in response to a disturbance.	Maclean, Cuthill, Ross 2014
Stakeholders	Stakeholders are agencies, organisations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in an intervention or its evaluation.	OECD 2002
Strategic drought resilience	Strategic drought resilience is drought resilience that is achieved through a considered and collaborative process (with involved parties/stakeholder), which includes a plan to achieve a particular outcome.	DAFF 2022
Success measures	FDF success measures describe the outcomes that FDF programs hope to achieve in the medium term (2–4 years) and are designed to help the Fund track and measure success. The success measures were originally identified in the 2020–21 FDF Annual Report.	DAWE 2021
Theory of Change	<p>A theory of change is 'an outcomes-based approach which applies critical thinking to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and programs intended to support change in their contexts' (Vogel, 2012:3), explaining how activities are understood to contribute to desired outcomes, and often presented as a mixture of both diagram and narrative summary. That is, a theory of change is an explicit description of how and why an intervention is expected to achieve its outcomes and objectives or impacts, by outlining causal pathways and the assumptions underlying them.</p> <p>The FDF theory of change describes pathways by which programs and their activities are anticipated to contribute to the overall vision of strengthening drought resilience.</p>	O'Flynn and Moberly 2017; Stafford Smith 2020; Vogel 2012
Transformational change	A structural change that alters the interplay of institutional, cultural, technological, economic and ecological dimensions of a	Mersmann and others 2014

Term	Definition	Source
	given system. It will unlock new development paths, including social practices and worldviews.	
Transformative activities	Activities that result in sustained change at a system level.	Ziervogel 2019