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**Setting National Goals, Monitoring & Evaluation : a comparison
of approaches across selected countries**

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The Monitoring and Evaluation of government policy: appropriate alignment
across the spheres and functions of government.

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate and compare government organisation and M&E related activities in a few countries around the world, particularly in terms of goal setting and how goals are linked to policies, programmes, projects and M&E activities, and how they were linked to national- and regional-level departments. The country descriptions are brief and selective, giving where possible, one example of a government priority and its translation to departments, regions and M&E activities.

1. *Australia*

Australia (formally, the Commonwealth of Australia) has a democratic, federal government system and recognizes the British monarch as sovereign. There are three levels of government: central government (Commonwealth) that governs at the federal level, states and territories, and local government. The mainland administrative divisions comprise of six states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) and two self-governing territories (Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory)¹. Central and state governments are for the most part financially and administratively independent of each other. The central government is based in Canberra, the capital (in Australian Capital Territory). The Commonwealth and States have their own constitutions, while the territories do not (the legislatures of these territories exercise powers delegated to them by the Commonwealth). The Queen's representative at federal level is the Governor-General, with the executive head being the Prime Minister. Each state has a Queen's representative Governor, a premier, and each self-governing territory a chief minister.

The federal government is responsible for defence, foreign affairs, immigration, trade, armed forces, taxation, and international relations. States and territories generally have responsibility for education, health, policing, electricity, water, transport, main roads,

¹ Norfolk Island also has limited self-government. There is one other mainland territory (Jervis Bay Territory) and several offshore territories or dependencies (Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Australian Antarctic Territory, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands, Jervis Bay Territory, Territory of Head Island and McDonald Islands) which are administered federally or by a neighbouring state.

ports, local government and housing. The federal government provides financial assistance grants and special purpose funding to councils but has no formal responsibility for local government. The powers of local government vary from State to State and are the responsibility of State Governments under the relevant legislation. In general they include town planning, construction and maintenance of local roads, streets and bridges, water, sewerage and drainage systems, public health and sanitary services, supervision of building, administration of slaughtering, weights and measures and other regulations, and the development and maintenance of parks, recreation grounds, swimming pools, public libraries and community centres (<http://www.australia.gov.au/>).

Australia has gone through “two generations” of M&E in government. After an initial period (1983-1987) during which power was devolved more to departments and the philosophy had been to “let the managers manage”, the Labour Government pursued a centrally driven (by the Department of Finance and Administration DoFA) approach from 1987 to 1996, with formal M&E requirements, continued encouragement by the DoFA of M&E in departments, and the use of M&E reports in the budget process (Mackay 2004). The Australian National Audit Office also played a very important role in reviewing programmes and programme evaluations. Despite quality issues regarding the reports produced, the approach is regarded as having improved efficiency, accountability and policy advice. The coalition conservative government (1996 until now), preferred a reduced public sector approach with greater autonomy for departments. Heads of departments became CEOs with formal performance agreements with their minister, there were reduced administrative requirements and greater outsourcing. The new framework requires that departments agree with their ministers about the outcomes (government objectives) towards which they are working and the outputs which will help to achieve these. Budget appropriations related to outcomes sought. Along with the positive emphasis on outcomes, however, the role of the DoFA was diminished considerably, departments were largely left to pursue their own approaches and the emphasis shifted to the collection of performance indicators rather than evaluation. The devolved / decentralised approach is regarded as having reduced the quality and

availability of crucial information required for planning and budgeting by central agencies such as the DoFA and other ministries (Mackay 2004). The Australian National Audit Office has continued to play an important role in reviewing performance reports.

Despite the independence of state and federal governments and the decentralised approach, there have also been “joined-up government” or “whole-of-government” initiatives relating to issues that cross the traditional boundaries between Cabinet ministers’ portfolios and between the Australian, State and Territory levels of government and require a long-term strategic focus (Barrett: <http://www.apsc.gov.au/mac/connectinggovernment1.htm>). The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) was established in 1992 so as to increase coordination and cooperation between the federal, state and local levels of government and to provide a forum for consideration of whole of government issues. In 2003, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet established the Cabinet Implementation Unit, which supports major whole-of-government activities as one of its functions.

Issues which were identified by the Prime Minister as requiring a whole-of-government approach included (Howard, 2002.):

- national security, defence and counter-terrorism,
- helping young families to balance work and family life,
- dealing with an aging population,
- a continuing commitment to science and innovation,
- a continuing emphasis on education and the diversity, quality, equity and sustainability of its provision,
- ensuring that the use of natural resources is on a sustainable basis for future generations,
- ensuring that there is continuing, competitive, reliable energy to underpin growth and economic prosperity,
- supporting communities in rural and remote Australia, strengthening regional self-reliance and co-ordinating national responses to, for example, drought, and

- the need for a national integrated land transport infrastructure.

For each of these issues, centrally co-ordinated committees or task-forces were established and in many cases formal agreements with states and territories instituted, together with local or community level interactions. Federal government departments involved in efforts in cooperation with state and local governments to achieve national objectives include the Department of Family and Community Services, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Education, Science and Training.

One of the whole-of-government issues identified above was that of “a sustainable environment”. The Natural Heritage Trust (NHT, established in 1997) and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ, established in 2000) are two major programs through which action is being taken. The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry jointly administers these with the Department of the Environment and Heritage. State / Territory and local governments, together with community groups, industry and landholders are also involved. The Australian Government and State/Territory governments negotiated arrangements for regional bodies, accountability, administration and delivery of the NHT and the NAPSWQ.

Regional plans are being developed in each of 56 regions by local communities supported by Government and scientists. Natural resource management plans will be developed for each and will consider all environmental, social and economic impacts of natural resource decisions on a regional basis. The NHT provides funding for environmental activities at a national, state, regional and community level (local projects are funded through the Envirofund – community groups can apply for grants of up to Aus\$30 000).

The Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, on which governments of all states and territories and the Australian Government are represented, was established

in 2001 to develop a coordinated approach to issues affecting natural resource management. The Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group was established by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and contains representatives from each jurisdiction. To ensure that programs have the desired outcomes, the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council developed the National Resource Management Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to assess the “performance of programs, strategies and policies that provide national approaches to the conservation, sustainable use and management of these resources” (<http://www.deh.gov.au/land/publications/nvf/framework2.html>). The M&E framework is aimed at ensuring that processes are simple, affordable and practical. Monitoring arrangements are outlined in the bilateral agreement for the NHT and the NAPSWQ. Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Plans are required from each State or Territory and in turn at the regional level, as this is a requirement for the accreditation of regional natural resource management plans (<http://www.deh.gov.au/land/publications/nvf/framework2.html>). The Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council also established the National Framework for Natural Resource Management Targets. Regions are required to establish targets within three years of signing their bilateral agreement. The development of Resource Condition Indicators is being coordinated by the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group; the indicators will provide detail on how to monitor each issue identified in the targets as set out in the National Framework for Natural Resource Management Standards and Targets. The indicators are intended to measure the performance of investments made under programs such as the NAPSWQ and the NHT, and to assess resource condition.

Other examples of successful whole-of-government initiatives in Australia include:

- Centrelink: A statutory authority within the Family and Community Services portfolio which includes four other government agencies. Centrelink is responsible for the provision of government services (e.g. income support, employment services) on behalf of 16 agencies (e.g. Australian Taxation Office, Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Dept of Family and Community Services and the Dept of

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Business partnership arrangements are established with these agencies.

- The Indigenous Community Coordination Taskforce (ICCT): Given the failure of programmes to address issues in disadvantaged communities, a structure, led by COAG and including a Ministers group, a group of departmental secretaries, and the ICCT was formed. A performance management framework was established to measure and report on progress towards achieving the outcomes identified by the agencies involved and participating indigenous communities. The issues, needs and interventions required are complex and cross organisational boundaries (e.g. health, education, housing, community infrastructure and employment), as shown by the 'COAG Indigenous Trials'. For example, the Wadeye Trial, found that population growth had placed pressure on housing and that overcrowding had had negative effects on health and education. While all the factors were linked, it was decided that housing was a key factor.

The importance of clear whole-of-government governance arrangements, particularly with respect to M&E, was highlighted by Barrett (undated) who sites the example of an audit of the Federation Fund Programme in 2001-02. The audit found that no Commonwealth department held the responsibility for monitoring the performance of the programme. Other important features, noted by Barrett (undated), requiring clear governance agreements are (i) the differing legal and accountability requirements of the private and public sectors which may be jointly involved and (ii) the auditing of whole-of-government initiatives.

2. Chile

Chile is, since 1990, a democratic unitary state with an executive president. There are 13 administrative regions, each of which is headed by an intendant (*intendente*) (Global Edge website: <http://globaledge.msu.edu/>, Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile>). Two more were declared in 2005, bringing the total to 15. Every region is further divided into provinces headed by a governor. Finally, each province is divided

into various municipalities (*comunas*), each with its own mayor (*alcalde*). Intendants and governors are appointed by the president; mayors are elected by popular vote (Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile>).

Chile has what is considered to be a well-performing, home-grown M&E system. The system is run by the capable and respected Finance ministry, which has developed the M&E system progressively over the years. The focus of M&E development has been on the annual budget cycle and its information needs and has been in response to fiscal pressures and public sector reforms (Mackay 2006). Major milestones include the following (Mackay 2006):

- *Cost-benefit analysis* were required for all government projects (1974).
- *Performance indicators* were collected for all government programs (1994) (about 1600 indicators) and used in the formal reports prepared for the Congress, and to provide data for various evaluations.
- *Comprehensive Spending Reports* (1996).
- *Government Program Evaluations* (1996) review programs and include detailed program objectives, a logframe analysis, desk review and analysis of existing data. Their average cost is about US\$11 000 and they take from 4 to 6 months to complete.
- *Rigorous impact evaluations* (2001) entail primary data collection, and often the use of control groups and difference-in-differences. Their average cost is \$88,000 and they take up to 18 months to finish. About 60% of the government's budget has been evaluated by means of either these impact evaluations or the government program evaluations.
- *Comprehensive Spending Reviews* (2002) of all programs within a particular functional area, looking also at issues of inefficiency and duplication. These include desk reviews and cost about \$48,000.

Thus, there is a variety of types of M&E undertaken by the Chilean government. In addition, the M&E work is of a high quality, and the information generated by the M&E activities is intensively utilized. The evaluations are outsourced to consultants and

academics and are used by the Finance ministry for resource allocation decisions within the budget process, and to impose management and efficiency improvements on sector ministries (World Bank, 2005). The Finance ministry also ensures that M&E information is reported fully to the Congress. Individual ministries make budget requests with proposals in logframe format and evaluation also uses the logframe format. The Finance ministry decides on budget allocations based on the alignment of ministries' proposed projects with government priorities and strategies. In addition, a component of public sector pay is linked to organisational performance.

The central, forceful and important role of the Finance ministry and the long history of M&E suggest that Chilean government's M&E system is sustainable. However, the central role of the Finance ministry has had the side effect of low levels of ownership and use by sector ministries and their agencies (Mackay 2006), who have not taken or seen the opportunity to use the information for their own strategic planning, policy development and management. In addition, the use of external consultants and academics may also reduce the sense of ownership and the use of information by departments (Mackay 2006).

The Chilean government identified the following priorities for 2005 (Communication and Culture Secretariat 2005):

- The finalisation of Constitutional reforms
- The fight against poverty and unemployment
- The constitutional recognition of the indigenous peoples of Chile
- The continued pro-growth agenda
- Improving of government transparency
- Social protection, health and education reforms, particularly aimed at the poor
- Health infrastructure investments
- Continued implementation of the criminal trial reform and family courts
- Implement the Santiago new public transportation network
- Pass laws to protect native forests and give increased power relevant authorities

- Strengthen / expand community safety programs (safe township and neighbourhood block plans)
- Advance proposed gun control and juvenile crime bills.

3. Malawi

Malawi is a parliamentary democracy unitary state (CLGF 2004a) with three administrative regions. One initiative which has made the goal-setting method more explicit (and transparent) is that of the UNDP via the African Futures Group (AFG) which undertook National Long Term Perspective Planning (NLTPP) studies in several African countries (17 have been completed). The NLTPP is an approach developed by the AFG which involves (<http://www.sdn.org.mw/~esaias/ettah/vision-2020>):

- (i) identifying issues and grouping these into themes,
- (ii) obtaining and analysing background information on these issues (this was called a Strategic Intelligence Matrix), and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (a SWOT analysis)
- (iii) constructing and exploring scenarios about the future and developing a 'vision' for the countries,
- (iv) formulating strategies based on the needs and desires from (i), the current status and trends from (ii), and the possible futures from (iii), and
- (v) developing, implementing and evaluating short-, medium- and long-term plans to achieve the vision.

The product of the NLTPP became known as Vision 2020. The process was initiated in 1996 in Malawi, with the interactive parts of phases (i) to (iv) taking place in a first workshop in 1997 with a Working Group. The Working Group included a wide range of stakeholders including chiefs, trade-unionists, representatives of political parties, special interest groups, civil servants and members of parliament. Later, further meetings were held with the broader population. A second workshop was held with the Working Group to revise the vision and discuss institutional frameworks for implementation and to formulate a national development strategy. These were discussed with Cabinet and representatives from all government ministries. Importantly, besides the vision,

'strategic challenges' were identified which were grouped into the broad themes relating to good governance, economic growth, education etc.

In discussing the implementation of the Medium Term Economic Framework approach Anipa *et al.* (1999) found that, although it was the intention to use Vision 2020 as a basis for agreement of government priorities, this had not yet happened. Rather the 'sector reviews' and 'policy framework' were used for allocating budget to priority sectors. (However, some government planning documents do mention Vision 2020 and it is possible that the Vision was implicitly referred to or integrated rather than explicitly). Sector reviews are undertaken by ministries to identify or review sectoral objectives, policies and strategies, identify activities needed to achieve the objectives, and to prioritise activities so as to fit within the pre-determined 'resource ceiling' (preliminary budget). Since 1996, all Ministries have used the logical framework approach, which indicate their goals, objectives, expected outputs, and the activities necessary to achieve the outputs and objectives (Anipa *et al.* 1999).

The Poverty Alleviation Programme and decentralisation initiatives have further influenced the Malawian approach to goal setting and vertical / horizontal integration of M&E.

4. Malaysia

Malaysia, a constitutional monarchy (the monarch is selected by and from a group of hereditary leaders) and parliamentary democracy, is a federation of 13 states and three federal authorities (CLGF 2004d). Planning, policy analysis and evaluation in Malaysia is undertaken by the Economic Planning Unit and other central agencies. The Implementation Coordination Unit is intended to ensure that "the implementation of government policies and strategies are in line with the objectives of the national development policies", to monitor and evaluate implementation (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003b). The two units are integrated at various points of the planning process and, for example via the Inter-Agency Planning Groups. A sophisticated information system has been established in the Implementation and Coordination Unit –

departments update the system every three months with management information, statistics and research data which is used to monitor all programmes and policies (Executive Resource Group, 1999)

All government agencies abide by Directive No 1 of the Prime Minister which is issued at the launch of the Outline Perspective Plans (currently the Third Outline Perspective Plan for 2001-2010) and Five Year Development Plans. These are also formed in the context of longer term policies such as the current National Vision Policy for 2001-2010. The institutional framework for this process is depicted in Table 1. In addition, the National Council for Local Governments was formed to coordinate policies and laws among the federal, state and local governments (CLGF 2004d).

Table 1. Institutional framework for implementation of Malaysia's Outline Perspective and Five Year Development plans (based on Hussain and Commonwealth Secretariat 2003b)

Name	Function and members	Meetings		Name	Function and members	Meetings
Federal NDC ↕	PM is chair, Minister of Finance and other ministers	Twice a year	↔	State Level SDC	Chief minister of state is chair. Members are heads of depts of the state	Four times a year
NDWC ↕	Ensures decisions / directives of NDC are implemented efficiently & effectively; monitors implementation of projects so that in line with objectives of National Development Policy & FYDP	Monthly	↔	SDWC	Chair is state secretary	Monthly
MDC ↕	Send proceedings to ICU. Impact evaluation at programme/project level. Heads of departments with secretary general (of what?) as chair	Monthly		District Level DDC	District officer is chair. Members are heads of district depts	Monthly
ICU for M&E	Impact evaluation at macro-level. Secretary of NDC is chair of this and secretariat of NDWC, MDC and State level DC and DWC are all members. In the Prime Minister's Dept. ICU is secretariat to NDC					

NDC= National Development Council

NDWC= National Development Working Committee

MDC= Ministerial Development Committee

ICU= Implementation Coordination Unit for M&E

SDC= State Development Council

SDWC= State Development Working Committee

DDC= District Development Committee

FYDP= Five Year Development Programme

The Malaysian government has made various attempts to encourage departments to be "mission oriented" (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003b) through the quality management

initiatives introduced in 1989. All government departments are “required to formulate vision and mission statements” and to set organisational goals and objectives. Many organisations undertake annual strategic reviews examining their goals, objectives and strategies. The Economic Planning Unit and the Implementation Coordination Unit, both of the Prime Minister’s Department, undertake policy evaluation and monitoring of programme implementation respectively.

5. New Zealand

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy (Queen Elizabeth II of England being the monarch) and a unitary state with parliamentary sovereignty (CLGF, 2003b). Central and local government are largely financially and administratively independent of each other. New Zealand’s annual budget and planning cycle includes a strategic phase for establishing the government’s priorities in the short, medium and long term. The New Zealand approach to cross-cutting issues has been more systematic than that of Australia as the government formulates a number of Strategic Results Areas, Networks and Key Results Areas which transcend department perspectives and portfolios (Mackay 2004). In 1998 the New Zealand government replaced the SRAs approach with a new framework of Overarching Goals and Strategic Priorities (SSC 1999). This move was intended to help government to focus on its priorities and key desired outcomes so that Ministerial Teams, supporting lead agencies and departments can focus on these. Components of the government’s vision are translated into goals and, in turn, outcomes and policies and programmes. “Key government goals for achieving sustainable development” were identified in 2003 and are given as (http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/dpmc/publications/key_goals.html):

1. *Strengthen national identity and uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi* (“Celebrate our identity in the world as people who support and defend freedom and fairness, who enjoy arts, music, movement and sport, and who value our diverse cultural heritage; and resolve at all times to endeavour to uphold the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”).

2. *Grow an inclusive, innovative economy for the benefit of all* (“Develop an economy that adapts to change, provides opportunities and increases employment, and while reducing inequalities, increases incomes for all New Zealanders. Focus on the Growth and Innovation Framework to improve productivity and sustainable economic growth.”)
3. *Maintain trust in government and provide strong social services* (“Maintain trust in government by working in partnerships with communities, providing strong social services for all, building safe communities and promoting community development, keeping faith with the electorate, working constructively in Parliament and promoting a strong and effective public service.”)
4. *Improve New Zealanders' skills* (“Foster education and training to enhance and improve the nation's skills so that all New Zealanders have the best possible future in a changing world. Build on the strengthened industry training and tertiary sectors to ensure that New Zealanders are among the best educated and most skilled people in the world.”)
5. *Reduce inequalities in health, education, employment and housing* (“Reduce the inequalities that currently divide our society and offer a good future for all by better co-ordination of strategies across sectors and by supporting and strengthening the capacity of Maori and Pacific Island communities. Ensure that all groups in society are able to participate fully and to enjoy the benefits of improved production.”)
6. *Protect and enhance the environment* (“Treasure and nurture our environment with protection for eco-systems so that New Zealand maintains a clean, green environment and builds on our reputation as a world leader in environmental issues. Focus on biodiversity and biosecurity strategies.”)

Government Priorities, which presumably are intended to align with the goals mentioned above, were identified for the decade 2006 to 2016

(<http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/government-priorities.html>) as:

- Economic Transformation: continue progress to a high income, knowledge based market economy, which is both innovative and creative and provides a unique quality of life to all New Zealanders. Sub-themes include: growing globally competitive firms, developing a world class infrastructure; creating innovative and productive workplaces, underpinned by high standards in education, skills and research; creating an internationally competitive city (Auckland); manage for environmental sustainability.
- Families - young and old: ensure that all families, young and old, have the support and choices they need to be secure and be able to reach their full potential. Sub-themes: include developing strong families, healthy confident children, safe communities, improving health for all and ensuring a positive ageing experience.
- National Identity: ensure that all New Zealanders are able to take pride in who and what they are, through arts, culture, film, sports and music, appreciation of the natural environment, understanding of New Zealand's history and its stance on international issues. Sub-themes include: strengthening New Zealanders' identity in terms of who they are, what they do, where they live and how they are viewed by the world.

Departments are supposed to take these priorities, which are subsequently referred to as "themes," into account in their planning and to consider how activities can be aligned to support the three priority themes and, as appropriate, be expressed in Statements of Intent. Support is given to departments from The State Services Commission, Treasury, Dept of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The written guidance for departments suggests that they begin by "identifying the outcomes they and their Minister want to pursue, now and over the next three to five years" (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003a, pg 31).

The New Zealand Department of Conservation's Statement of Intent for 2005—2008 ([http://www.doc.govt.nz/Publications/001~Corporate/Statement-of-Intent-\(2005-2008\)/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/Publications/001~Corporate/Statement-of-Intent-(2005-2008)/)) refers rather to the link between the department's outcomes and outputs and the

Government's goals (rather than the three themes/priorities). The links made by the Dept of Conservation are reproduced from their website as Figure XX.

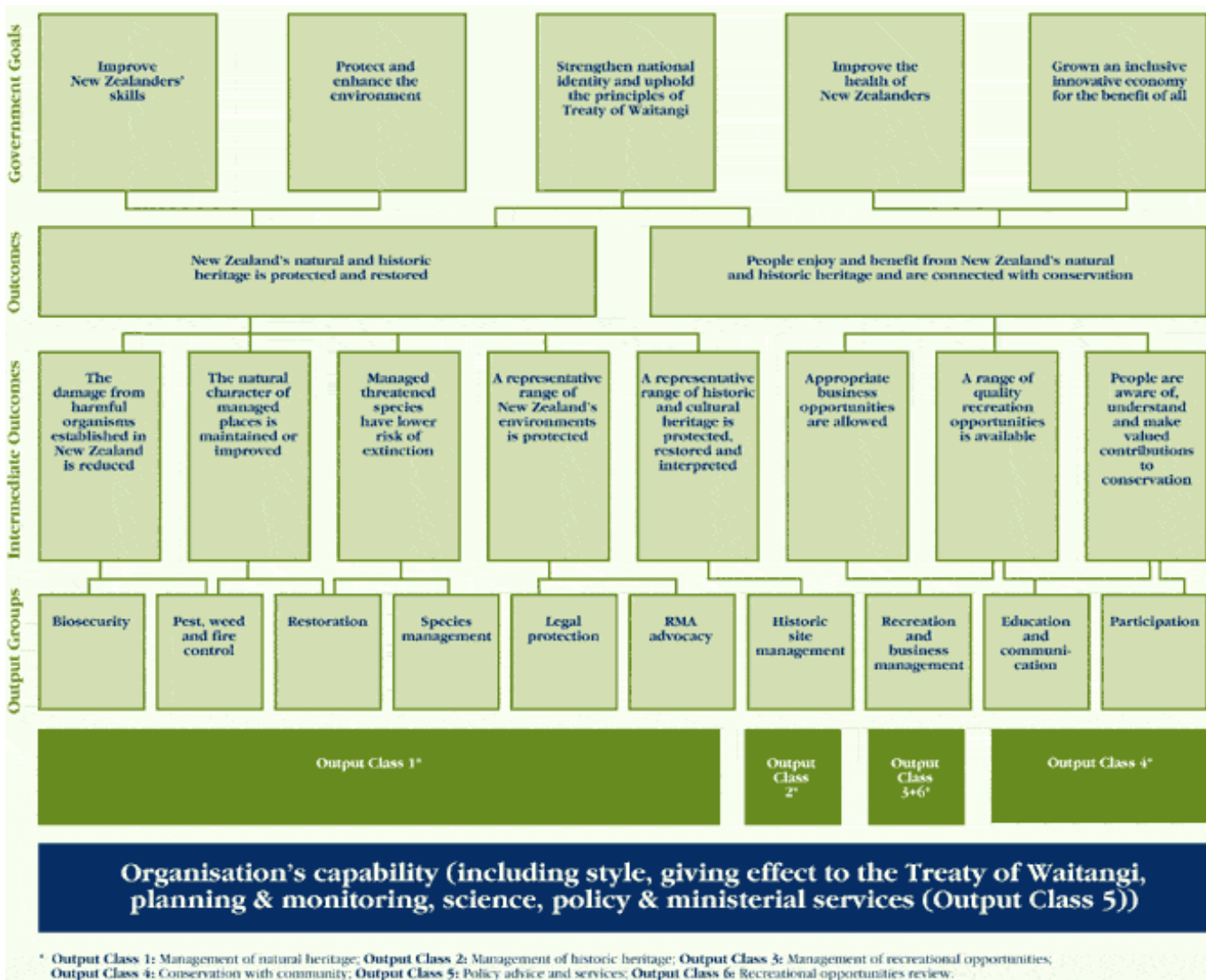


Figure 1 New Zealand Department of Conservation's Statement of Intent 2005-2008

However, despite these developments and the ongoing examination and adjustment of New Zealand's government-public sector, the translation of goals into departmental strategies and the reciprocal translation of perceived needs from departments and regions into government policy and goals appears to remain a problem (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003a, pg 28, pg 30). The Commonwealth Secretariat (2003a) review and

another by the States Services Commission (SSC 2003) both found that there was “lack of precision about the priority policies and outcome areas” (SSC 2003, pg 19), that co-ordination and prioritisation of evaluative effort was still lacking and although in some sectors, lead agencies do drive this process their mandate and scope was still unclear. It was also felt that there was a limited demand from Ministers for “evaluative evidence of effectiveness and efficiency of major policies and programmes” (SSC 2003, pg 19). Additionally, Strategic Results Areas had not been fully integrated into the budget process and therefore were less influential than they might have been: the SSC has been trying to improve the linkages between priorities and budgets (Executive Resource Group, 1999).

There are various initiatives underway which are intended, amongst other things, to improve the identification of objectives and goals and their alignment with government objectives as well as vertical/horizontal linkages. These include (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003a):

- (i) The ‘*Managing for Outcomes*’ initiative - heads of departments are responsible for outputs and for ‘managing for outcomes’ but not directly for achieving outcomes,
- (ii) New Zealand government departments are now required to produce Statements of Intent – these are intended to improve the link between departmental outputs and government’s desired outcomes - Statements of Intent provide a clear account of what the department is doing and plans to do to pursue outcomes.
- (iii) The *Pathfinder project* is a ‘pilot’ of eight agencies implementing outcome management systems,
- (iv) Three ‘*circuit-breaker teams*’ have been set up which are trying to address long running inter-sectoral problems (managing funding for services relating to domestic violence, migrants and truancy),
- (v) A ‘*mandated regional network*’ is being piloted. The cross-agency group of senior regional managers is to identify outcome priorities for the region which require central government intervention and to develop a joint plan of action to pursue the outcome (government established a regular central and local government forum to co-ordinate services in 2000),