

## TOOLKIT 1

# TARGETING & ESTABLISHING A PROJECT

## *FARMING FLOODPLAINS for the FUTURE*

There is clearly scope for the Farming Floodplains for the Future project approach to be applied in other parts of the country. Therefore, based on the experiences, results and findings of the project, two toolkits have been devised to guide the establishment and implementation of similar projects in other geographic locations.

This first toolkit is aimed at key organisations and decision makers. Utilising Farming Floodplains for the Future as a template, it is intended to guide the targeting and setting up (from inception to engagement with landowners) of projects looking to use land management and land use change as flood management tools<sup>1</sup>.

Toolkits such as these cannot hope to be definitive, covering every eventuality and the nuances of specific geographical areas or individual sites. They are therefore presented as a series of logically ordered questions designed to stimulate structured and challenging thought processes. Key questions are shown in red and blue, with questions that are subsidiary to these being indented and coloured black and green.

Clearly the toolkits have been designed with flood risk management projects in mind, although the thought processes may also be applicable to other catchment-orientated projects. Ideally the toolkits should be considered alongside the other output from the Farming Floodplains for the Future project (i.e. final report, case studies and issue studies) to help to contextualise some of the questions asked. It is also noted that while this toolkit has been subject to consultation, it should be seen as a dynamic document that is likely to evolve and develop over time.

---

<sup>1</sup> The second toolkit provides guidance for project officers, advisers and individual landowners on the identification and realisation of land management and land use change opportunities on individual holdings (from initial assessment to implementation of works).

## PROJECT TARGETING

- Where is the project to be targeted?
- Which settlements are at risk?
  - What does the relevant Environment Agency Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) indicate?
  - Are there other local strategies (e.g. Regional Spatial Strategies or local authority plans) that may be informative?
  - Has local knowledge been tapped? In particular have relevant Environment Agency (flood risk management or development control) staff or local authority or Internal Drainage Board representatives been contacted?
  - Even where a specific location is already in mind, is this the right priority at a major catchment / regional level?
- Which settlements should be prioritised for action? (i.e. Where might land use change make the greatest impact using the finite resources available?)
  - Is there an indication of the scale of flooding in each settlement?
  - Can this be quantified?
    - Are there existing and up-to-date flood models (most likely held by the Environment Agency) that can help in this process?
    - If not, can some basic flood modelling be justified?
    - Is it possible to obtain such models and datasets (i.e. are they freely available, or are licences required)?
    - Can key partners (notably the Environment Agency) interrogate and analyse these tools to inform the project, or will specialists need to be employed?
  - Can analysis of other datasets (e.g. the National Property Database) further inform decisions?
  - Is there a rural catchment upstream of each settlement?
    - Does rural run-off make a substantial contribution to flooding in the settlements at risk?
    - Is this catchment large enough to potentially deliver land use change on a sufficient scale?
    - Are the basic geology, soils, catchment slope and land use suited to the proposed approach?
  - Do the settlements represent strategic priorities (meaning that they are more likely to secure partner support, funding etc)?
- Are there other priorities for the catchment that might also be addressed through beneficial land management or land use change?
  - Is there scope for landscape scale habitat restoration / creation to meet UK, county or other local Biodiversity Action Plan habitat and species targets? (Contact the local Wildlife Trust or BAP co-ordinator)
  - Are there water quality issues, particularly associated with diffuse pollution or sedimentation? (Contact the Environment Agency or local water company)
  - Are there water supply issues, relating to low flows / high abstraction levels? (Contact the Environment Agency or local water company)
  - Are there existing initiatives (e.g. wetland restoration or catchment sensitive farming projects) within the catchments or nearby that can be built upon, developed or collaborated with (such that resources, contacts, local knowledge etc might be shared where appropriate)?
- Are there other factors that might favour or otherwise affect success?
  - What is the nature of land ownership in the catchment?
    - Is ownership dominated by one landowner (and are they likely to be co-operative), or highly fragmented?
  - To what extent have agri-environment schemes already been adopted in the catchments (indicating a potentially receptive audience and/or an opportunity)? (Contact Natural England)
  - Is there sufficient 'connection' between the landowners to be targeted and the settlement(s) at risk (such that they can appreciate the link between what happens on their land and the impacts downstream)?
- While full quantification of all factors (that would allow a completely objective assessment of priorities) may not be possible, has sufficient evidence been gathered such that selected priorities can be justified to key partners and stakeholders?
  - Can a precautionary approach be defended?
  - Can conventional thinking be effectively challenged where required?

CONTINUED.....

- What is anticipated will be achieved by the project? Is the aim simply to reduce flood risk, to reduce pressure on existing flood defences, or to mitigate the potential impacts of climate change?
  - Can these targets be quantified? For example, by how much do flood volumes need to be reduced to significantly lower risk, at what frequency, and how many properties might benefit?
    - Are these targets realistic in relation to the size and nature of the upstream catchment?
  - Are there existing flood models (most likely held by the Environment Agency) that can inform an understanding of the targeted catchment?
    - Is the catchment conducive to a catchment-wide approach (reducing flood propagation, slowing downstream flows and increasing attenuation)?
    - Are there potential opportunities outside the 'functional' floodplain, in headwaters and on tributaries?
    - Is there sufficient scope for the project to deliver cumulative gains?
    - Can the model(s) highlight opportunities? (e.g. Which are the key tributaries on which to focus?)
    - Can the models highlight risks? (e.g. Might flood peaks from different parts of the catchment be caused to combine, resulting in an increase in flooding downstream?)
  - Is it appropriate to set targets in relation to other potential project objectives (e.g. habitat creation, or improvements in water quality)?

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- How is the project to be managed?
- Are there other projects locally, nationally or internationally from which lessons can be learned?
- Is a dedicated project officer to be appointed?
  - If not, who is to act as the public face / point of contact / driving force for the project?
  - What will be the extent of their role – simple awareness raising, advisory or fully involved in delivery?
- How will the project be governed? Will there be some form of steering or management group?
  - What will be its role / terms of reference?
  - Which organisations are to be represented, and why?
    - Does the farming community need specific representation, and if so, by whom?
  - Who is the right individual (from which department) to represent each organisation?
  - Are key partners who are not directly involved in project governance, fully 'on board' with the project?
    - Are there other organisations, or departments within otherwise represented organisations, who may have key operational roles relating to the project (e.g. granting consents or providing funding)?
- Which organisation will lead the project?
  - Is this an organisation that the farming community sees as independent and is likely to be happy to engage with?
- Is the timescale for the project to deliver realistic? (For example reducing risk in a small village may require a couple of years of concerted effort, whereas for a market town in a large catchment work may take years.)
  - Does this take account of the time needed to get the project 'up and running', and the lead-in time required for delivery on the ground?
  - Is there a realistic prospect of the project running into the medium or long term if required?

CONTINUED.....

- **How will the project be funded?**
  - From what source will core project costs (e.g. salaries, travel, equipment, monitoring etc) be covered?
    - If required, are resources available to allow hydrological analysis or other relevant research to be undertaken?
  - How will delivery on the ground be incentivised?
    - Considering both initial capital costs and on-going management, do agri-environment schemes provide sufficient incentive?
    - If not, from where might supplementary funds be made available?
    - Where they are to form a key delivery mechanism, are agri-environment schemes appropriately targeted to focus action on the relevant catchment(s)? (Contact Natural England)
  - Can funding be secured to run the project over a sufficiently long period of time?
- **Is the project satisfied that the cumulative benefits that might be accrued can be maintained sufficiently into the future?**
- **What monitoring needs to be put in place?**
  - How will progress towards set targets (see above) be assessed / measured?
  - What methodologies are to be applied?
    - Are the methodologies fit for purpose, repeatable, simple and robust?
    - Does effective assessment require comparison against a baseline – does this exist or can sufficient be collected prior to delivery?
    - Are the proposed methodologies cost effective both for the initial life of the project and beyond if required?
  - Does this monitoring take account of any secondary / spin-off benefits (e.g. biodiversity gain, or improvements in water quality)?
  - Are there specific questions or issues that targeted research might be able to inform, helping to build the body of evidence to support the role of land management and land use change?

## ENGAGING LANDOWNERS

- **How will the farming / land owning community be engaged?**
- **How many people might be involved (e.g. a handful upstream of a village, or dozens upstream of a market town)?**
  - How will these people be contacted?
    - Is there scope to work with or through recognised representative organisations (e.g. NFU, CLA, FWAG, local Agricultural Societies etc)?
    - Can contact be made via other organisations with extensive landowner contacts (e.g. Natural England)?
    - What methods of engagement are to be used – general mailing, events, press coverage or more direct approaches?
- **What message is the project trying to get across?**
  - How is this best delivered?
    - Does the farming community appreciate the issues and understand its potential role in relation to them?
    - Is the project prepared to overcome negative interpretations (e.g. talk of flooding may bring to mind damage, and loss of management control or income etc)?
  - How does the project want the farming community to respond?
    - Is the project open to two-way interactions with landowners?
  - Are there existing examples, case studies or demonstration sites that can be utilised to re-enforce messages?
  - Has sufficient time been allowed to build the necessary relationships with both the farming community as a whole and individuals?