

Appendix 6: Defining success

Because mediated modeling is a process-oriented tool, its success or failure has to be measured in process terms as well.

In the *short term*, a mediated modeling project is successful when a group of about 20+ diverse stakeholders has a better-shared understanding of a complex problem and reaches consensus on a course of action to address this problem. Individuals in the group become aware of the interdependency among group members and between economical, ecological, social and/or other relevant aspects. They develop a greater appreciation for the roles played by the other members of the group, and an improved sense of how common goals can be achieved.

Sustained interaction among the group members to collaboratively implement, monitor and assess the recommendations is a *medium term* sign of success. The group has formed new working relationships among its members that are likely to change the way decisions are made in the future. Decisions are evaluated on their cohesiveness concerning short, medium and long-term impacts from a dynamic perspective and are forged from a shared vision. At this level a result is evaluated in gradations according to its position on the spectrum between “where we are” and “where we want to be”. If the gap is closed, the problem is “solved”, if the gap became smaller, the situation has “improved”, and if the gap is unaffected or widens “insights are gained”.

A *long term* success is characterized by the ability of the model building process to incorporate newly gained information as it becomes available over time and to function as the backbone of the stakeholder involved, collaborative learning process. However, a model should be abandoned when the reason for building it is accomplished. Hanging on too long inhibits innovative thinking and learning.

Characteristics of an Action Plan

Each action point should include Who, What, Where, When and Why. The “why” is specified with a link to the model, where possible. This may involve extrapolation from a specific local solution and envision what is possible at a wider scale. Actions will be recorded and may be brought into the process at any point; beginning and end.