

## **Setting Goals and Objectives in the Context of the Adaptive Management Cycle**

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Over the past few years, there has been growing interest in the conservation community in setting goals and objectives as the foundation for improving both management work and monitoring and evaluation efforts. All too often, however, practitioners have difficulty in setting meaningful and credible goals and objectives. Problems arise because practitioners in a project or program team often do not have a common understanding of the situation they are dealing with, are unable to specify the parameters that they need to change, and have not been trained as to what makes for a good goal or objective. To address these problems, we have developed and field-tested around the world a methodology for setting goals and objectives in the context of the adaptive management cycle. A critical step in this process involves developing a conceptual model of the situation that the project or program team is trying to affect. Once the team members have developed this model, they can then develop goals and objectives for their work. A good goal meets the criteria of being visionary, relatively general, brief, and measurable. A good objective meets the criteria of being impact oriented, measurable, time limited, specific, and practical. In this paper, we provide an overview of this methodology, illustrate its use in several examples, and discuss how it serves as the foundation for doing good adaptive management.