## Participatory tools

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<th>Analysis tool/ Evaluation most useful for</th>
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<th>Benefits (+) and shortcomings (–)</th>
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| **Stakeholder surveys** | Collection of data from stakeholder groups using a range of methods, including mail-out, personal interview, telephone interview, electronic tools or combination of methods. There are several styles of surveys, such as focus groups and individual responses. The design of surveys is critical to minimise bias and ensure that the key issues will be addressed through the responses. | + Range of methods available are able to be customised to reach target groups  
+ Able to collect information from the community on performance and investment recipients on implementation.  
+/– Confidentiality needs to be managed diligently  
– May be difficult to gain the confidence of stakeholders  
– Need to consider target population issues, e.g. literacy, geographic spread, ability to deal with complicated language or concepts, etc.  
– May be expensive, especially for person-to-person interviews  
– May be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative information which will require significant data reduction | Australian Bureau of Statistics: [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)  
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| **Most significant change (MSC)**      | MSC is a technique based on the collection of stories and the systematic selection of the most significant of these by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The panel initially searches for project impact and discusses the value of the reported change. This focuses attention on the impact of the program being considered. MSC is a qualitative approach to behavioural change. | + Appropriate and valuable in monitoring and assessing behavioural change  
 + Provides good leading indicators for behaviour change  
 + Discussion required to reach findings is valuable because learning and identification of potential approaches to issues are enhanced  
 – Requires significant commitment because repeated interviewing is required  
 – Requires a large and diverse group to undertake the technique to ensure that findings are balanced and bias is minimised  
 – Because of resource requirements, use in case studies would be appropriate but broad-scale evaluation may be expensive | DECC can provide catchment-specific socio-economic profiles to support NRM decision-making  

*Most Significant Change (MSC) technique: A guide to its use by Rick Davies and Jess Dart:*  
[www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.htm)  
Further detail from Clear Horizon:  
| **Goal-attainment scaling (GAS)** | GAS is a quantitative but non-statistical method for evaluating attainment of multiple goals. It uses a scale to integrate and assess diverse information in a repeatable and transparent way. GAS requires:  
- identification and agreement on what is satisfactory performance  
- development of a scale of descriptors (poor to good) with a quantified score for each  
- assignment of a score of performance toward attaining the goal. | + Widely applicable  
+ Able to use diverse performance information to assess  
+ Panel of experts in field/theme provides validity through debate and agreement  
- Scoring requires careful judgement  
| **Multi-criteria analysis (MCA)** | MCA can be used for evaluations that are based on inputs from groups of lay people or experts in different disciplines. MCA can help ensure that evaluations are representative of divergent views and values. It involves identifying options and evaluation criteria, weighting the criteria and assessing options against the weighted criteria to rank alternatives. | + Able to be used to evaluate qualitative and quantitative data  
+ Provides a structured and transparent process for evaluations that might otherwise be confusing and reliant on informal, subjective judgements  
| Success-case method | Success-case method involves creation of a model of what defines success, seeking out the best and worst stories using survey techniques and documenting the experiences. The stories are corroborated by evidence collected through methods such as triangulation. It is used to find out which parts of an initiative have worked and which have not so that performance can be improved. | + Valuable for community-based programs  
  + Robust and adaptable to different situations  
  + Identifies methods to improve the evaluated program  
  – Limitations similar to stakeholder surveys  
  – May be difficult to identify success or non-success in very complex issues | Australasian Evaluation Society 2006 Conference Papers: [www.aes.asn.au/](http://www.aes.asn.au/) |

*Use for:*  
- Effectiveness