

Framework for Integrated Land Management

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1. Preamble

The concept of Integrated Land Management (ILM) has been implemented through a multitude of approaches in Canada for over 25 years. While the theory underlying ILM is well known, fully translating this into practice has proven extremely difficult. Current ILM approaches vary greatly in their scope, rigour and effectiveness and this has led to an increasing level of frustration and dissatisfaction among practitioners and those who promote this approach to land management. As an organization mandated to further the implementation of ILM in Canada, CLRI is interested in identifying the factors that are potentially compromising progress in order that they may be addressed directly. The development of this ILM Framework is an attempt to step back, build on the collective experience, secure the expertise of practitioners (see Appendix A), bring clarity to what ILM entails, and provide insight to the challenges that are impeding its success. It is also hoped that the ILM Framework can assist in evaluating previous approaches of ILM, offer specific suggestions for improvement to current ILM initiatives, and become a resource for future applications of ILM.

While the ILM Framework is applicable to all lands, the focus of this initiative is on public lands where there may be multiple layers of government and a variety of land users involved. The ILM Framework is not a blueprint and is intended to serve primarily as an umbrella or guidance document. Of necessity, the ILM Framework is generic. As ILM can be applied at the provincial, regional or site-specific level the ILM Framework must thus be interpreted and its elements prioritized according to local circumstances. Not all of its elements will be relevant to all situations and the importance of any element may vary according to the stage of maturity of the ILM process.

2. What is ILM?

Simply, integrated land management attempts to engage all those who have a significant impact or interest on a defined piece of land and integrate their activities so as to gain efficiencies and reduce the overall footprint or cumulative effects of those activities. The intent, generally, is to better achieve long-term goals for the land such as sustainability or the maintenance of ecological integrity that may be compromised by a piecemeal or siloed approach to management. That, however, may be fiendishly complex given the multiple levels of government with jurisdiction over all or part of the land in question, the number of agencies within those governments with regulatory authority, the variety of economic interests that may be in play and the terms of their licenses or tenures, and the range of values of those who reside in the region (and in some cases those who do not). Some interests will be entrenched, others may feel disenfranchised, and some may be in conflict, even within government where different agencies may work at cross purposes to each other.

ILM engages all parties to develop a common vision of what is to be achieved on the land, adopt a shared decision-making approach, implement results, and identify needed institutional change within all parties to support ILM. Conceptually, ILM can be applied at the provincial, regional or site-specific level, obviously at differing levels of detail, providing the opportunity for nested plans and approaches to achieve broader societal objectives.

Properly applied, ILM can find a way through the complexity of land management by fostering collaboration among all parties. Some benefits of ILM include:

- increased predictability of opportunities, risks and anticipated outcomes on the land in question;
- enhanced ability to assess and manage for cumulative impacts of activities;
- greater social mandate for activities on the land;
- development of a broader and shared stewardship ethic;
- shared ownership of the ILM process leading to reduced conflicts over development;
- optimization of land and resource use; and
- regulatory and operational efficiencies.

Achieving these benefits may require a more significant up-front investment of human and financial resources and time than may be associated with other land management approaches but over the long-term ILM, properly applied and supported, can provide a more substantial quantitative and qualitative return on investment.

3. Establishing the Context

As ILM is intended to engage all of those who have a significant impact or interest in the land in question, a key consideration in moving forward is the willingness of those parties to work collaboratively. And even if the willingness is there, the parties require institutional support, adequate information on the land and the activities taking place upon it, and the resources necessary to act on their common interests.

At the outset, then, the existence of the conditions necessary to ensure that ILM can work needs to be assessed. This will include a thorough understanding of the activities occurring on the land in question, the historic relationships among land users, a frank assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of previous approaches to land management, consideration of the existing barriers and incentives for implementing ILM, and an evaluation of the implications of ILM for the parties involved (i.e., what will they need to do differently?).

The following are some of the key contextual issues that need to be addressed in order for the application of ILM to be successful.

3.1 *Willingness of decision-makers to empower others and the ability to establish collaborative leadership*

By definition, ILM brings together those who have a significant impact or interest in the land to work collaboratively towards a common goal. On Crown lands, the ultimate decision-maker will remain the provincial government (and will be the landowner on private lands) but ILM changes the way that decisions are made. All those participating in the ILM initiative will need to respect the collaborative leadership that is established through the process. This requires the development of a healthy relationship among all land users. Each user will have rights and management approaches that may be enshrined in tenure which may make integration with others more difficult. And each regulatory authority will have a different mandate, priorities and set of laws, policies and regulations which may conflict with those of other agencies. Within and among governments, then, mechanisms need to be in place to enable the various government agencies that have regulatory responsibility for the land in question to coordinate their interests and their policy and regulatory activities.

3.2 *An enabling policy and regulatory framework*

It is quite likely that the policy and regulatory regime applicable to the land to be subject to ILM will not have been designed with ILM in mind and will be oriented towards individual elements of ILM. Regulatory barriers can often be an impediment to implementation of ILM. An effective and supportive policy and

regulatory system is thus critical to drive and support performance in ILM. Otherwise, the only incentive to coordinated action is likely economic, such as when several companies can reduce costs by sharing the costs of road establishment, for example. Policy and regulatory mechanisms should drive the achievement of ILM objectives both explicitly and by applying policy and regulatory tools that include institutional arrangements to facilitate effective intergovernmental or interdepartmental collaboration.

3.3 *Current and accessible data, a systems approach and the ability to assess cumulative effects*

Current, comprehensive and accessible data on the social, economic and environmental attributes of the region to which ILM is to be applied is essential as is the ability to collect and maintain that data over time. For ILM to be most effective, it needs to be supported by effective analytical tools that can both monitor the individual components as well as the linkages among them (a systems approach) and can address the cumulative effects of activities in the region subject to ILM.

3.4 *The ability to address the traditional rights of First Nations*

In most of Canada, it will not be possible to implement ILM without the full and equitable participation of First Nations, respecting their rights and titles, laws, policies, their approach to governing land and their decision-making processes and incorporating their knowledge (including traditional knowledge) into management decision-making.

3.5 *Mechanisms for capacity development*

Not all parties who are engaged in the design and implementation of the ILM approach will be able to do so on an equal footing yet each brings something important to the table. Mechanisms need to be established in advance of the development of the ILM approach to ensure that all parties are able to contribute in an informed and equitable manner, recognizing the potential cultural differences among parties. This may include training programs, sharing of technical expertise or the provision of financial support.

3.6 *The commitment of appropriate human and financial resources*

ILM may or may not be more expensive than other approaches to management, depending on the circumstances, but both the timing and sharing of costs will be different due to the nature of the approach. For ILM to succeed, the provision of reliable and sustained financial and human resources, during both the design and implementation phases, is critical and the sharing of those financial and human resources needs to be explicit. A perception of ownership in the process will also lead to the investment of human and financial resources.

4. ILM Design Principles

Effective ILM requires not only the right context to support the approach but also the adherence to a set of design principles that reflect the intent of what is to be accomplished. The following principles are to be applied as a set to provide a framework for the development of an ILM approach. As indicated in Section 1, these principles may not be equally applicable to all circumstances and they may differ in their relevance at different stages in the life of an ILM process; nevertheless, they are a starting point for those evaluating an ILM approach or considering the implementation of ILM.

4.1 *A participatory and equitable approach*

As ILM is a collaborative approach, it can not be imposed on those with an impact on or interest in the land in question. To be successful, the development and implementation of the ILM approach must be participatory and inclusive with procedural fairness. Engagement of all parties must be done early so that all feel a sense of ownership and can exert influence on the direction of the process. Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that all parties are able to contribute in an equitable manner, regardless of the human and financial resources available to them.

4.2 *Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all parties and accountability mechanisms*

All parties engaged in designing and implementing the ILM approach will have differing roles and responsibilities, potentially supported by the capacity building referred to in 3.6, which may change through the process of design and implementation. These roles and responsibilities need to be clearly established and acceptable to the parties involved. Mechanisms for ensuring that all parties do what they say they will do need to be built into the design of the ILM approach with clear procedures and possibly consequences for those who fail to discharge the responsibilities assigned to them.

4.3 *Transparency*

In order to engender trust among all parties to the ILM approach, the design and implementation stages and the decision-making processes throughout need to be transparent. Effective communication mechanisms need to be established both among parties and externally giving consideration to the manner and language in which different parties may best receive and distribute information.

4.4 *Clear decision-making processes*

As discussed in 3.1, the Crown or the private landowner will retain ultimate decision-making authority but in order for other parties to the ILM process to feel enfranchised the manner in which decisions will be taken, and the timing of decisions, need to be clearly established. This does not imply consensus decision-making or that all parties will agree with all decisions but for the collaborative approach to be sustained over time parties must understand how and why decisions are made.

4.5 *An emphasis on performance*

While participants in the ILM approach must have a shared vision there must also be agreement on the critical factors in determining the success of the initiative, both qualitative and quantitative. These need to be expressed as clear and precise objectives, with appropriate indicators selected to monitor progress against those objectives. Triggers should be identified for all objectives to identify when corrective action may be required. Ideally, regulatory drivers should support the achievement of the desired objectives on the landbase and help to foster collaboration among parties. All parties should commit to meeting or exceeding best practices and technologies in fulfilling their responsibilities.

4.6 *Effective monitoring and reporting provisions*

Progress toward the ILM objectives needs to be monitored regularly and reported both to participants and to the public. The responsibility for monitoring may be shared among parties to the ILM approach according to their capacities. As indicated in 3.3, monitoring should extend beyond the various components of ILM and should attempt to assess both the linkages between them and the cumulative social, economic and environmental effects of all activities on the land in question. It is managing those cumulative effects, after all, that is one of the principal reasons for implementing ILM in the first place. Depending on circumstances, monitoring may be supported by verification mechanisms (such as third party audits).

4.7 *Just and fair processes for conflict resolution*

Conflicts among parties to the ILM approach will arise inevitably. These need to be anticipated and processes established for conflict resolution that are seen to be just and fair to all parties.

4.8 *Procedures for knowledge exchange and collective learning*

Through the process of implementing ILM, knowledge will be gained on the individual components of ILM, the linkages among them and the cumulative effects of activities. Sharing the responsibility for collecting information and exchanging that information can also contribute to the development of positive relationships among parties. Transferring knowledge among parties in a timely manner in formats that can be tailored to differing audiences is essential to enhancing the capacity of all parties as well as to facilitating collective learning which will, in turn, lead to improved decisions.

4.9 *Innovation, flexibility and adaptation*

Management is a dynamic process and there may be several differing management systems among the parties to an ILM approach. In most cases, ILM will be a new approach to management of the land that will generate new and perhaps unexpected information and could lead parties to rethink their individual processes and systems. Plans and the process itself must therefore be responsive to the real-world experience of applying the approach and the challenges and opportunities that may arise and should encourage creative thinking and adaptive management. Innovative approaches towards achieving the objectives of ILM ought to be encouraged through providing flexibility in implementation and adapting to new information.

4.10 *A commitment to continual improvement*

ILM is a process not an end and thus its implementation and the process itself should be reviewed on a regular basis to enable adaptation to experience and revisions to the ILM plan where necessary. Priorities, circumstances and societal values may change over time and there is a need to ensure that the ILM approach is responsive and continues to be relevant. A key element of this is an agreed mechanism to enable corrective actions to be taken as required if objectives are not being met.

5. Next Steps

CLRI has applied the above ILM Framework to a selection of existing ILM approaches in Canada in order to get a sense of the degree to which each element is currently reflected in planning at both the provincial and regional level. It is the intent of CLRI to focus its future work on those elements that do not appear to fully integrated into ILM plans to catalyze action in those areas and contribute to the enhanced success of current and future ILM initiatives.

Although the intent of the ILM Framework is only to provide guidance in the development and evaluation of ILM initiatives, it is hoped that agencies involved in resource management in Canada will accept and endorse the ILM Framework for application to their own activities.

And in the spirit of ILM, this framework is a living document and will be revised periodically according to experience and the feedback received. Comments on the ILM Framework may be directed to:

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Appendix I: CLRI Integrated Land Management Framework Advisory Panel

CLRI would like to extend its appreciation to the following individuals who provided input to this project through reviewing the project outline and critiquing both an initial draft and a subsequent version prior to finalization. While CLRI hopes that a broad range of organizations will accept and endorse the ILM Framework, this was not a decision-making exercise. The participation of any individual on the advisory panel should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the final product by the individual or the organization with which they are associated.

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