



Freshwater Policy Evaluation:

Understanding the Barriers and Enablers of Effective Assessment

Why it matters

Our freshwater policies rely on effective measurement of outcomes for public accountability. Despite the introduction of the NPS-FM and associated regulatory tools, current evaluation practice remains patchy.



Barriers

- Unclear or vague policy objectives
- Poor data and fragmented monitoring
- Delayed environmental change
- Evaluation not planned from the start
- Constant policy churn disrupts learning



Enablers

- SMART objectives (specific and measurable)
- Information on environmental outcomes, and the factors contributing to them
- Use of models for prediction and learning
- Linked-up reporting and feedback loops
- Treaty of Waitangi-based partnerships in evaluation processes

*Ecosystems are complex, and it's unrealistic to expect evaluations to resolve every uncertainty. Good evaluation helps us make **more informed decisions** about where to focus, what tools to use, and how to implement them well.*

Download the full report at:

<https://freshwater.science.org.nz/news-publications-jobs/books-and-reports/reports/>

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