



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Pacific Islands Area (PIA) works closely with private landowners, local and state governments, and other partners to develop solutions for natural resource challenges.

PIA NRCS has developed a new paradigm for delivering technical and financial assistance through Farm Bill programs. We call this new business model the Targeted Conservation Delivery Model (TCD).

TCD focuses on leveraging partnerships and funding to invest federal dollars strategically to restore, conserve, and protect PIA's natural resources.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

The Targeted Model is:



Partner-Centric: NRCS works closely with local, state, and federal partners and with non-governmental organizations to identify and strategically focus our investments on the highest-priority resource needs on our islands.



Cost Effective: By collaborating with partners, NRCS leverages additional funding sources from other partner groups to make the most effective use of limited federal conservation dollars. Leveraging funds increases the total conservation investment that helps build resilient islands and thriving agricultural communities.



Focused & Targeted: Instead of funding conservation projects on a farm-by-farm approach, we harness the power of multiple landowners undertaking similar conservation projects to achieve a broader local or regional outcome.



Results-Oriented: The targeted approach emphasizes planning with a more impactful result in mind. NRCS staff work with local partners to set measurable goals to track and achieve meaningful conservation outcomes.



Management Tool: The targeted approach helps NRCS leadership and field staff better prioritize, track, plan, and monitor conservation projects on-the-ground. This way of doing businesses allows us to more effectively deliver project planning and increases our efficiency in implementation.

This Targeted Conservation Delivery Model aligns
with PIA's Strategic goal:

Deliver Highly Effective Conservation Solutions for Our Customers

The building blocks to our strategic approach are Targeted Conservation Plans (TCP) — strategies we develop locally and collectively with stakeholders and partners. Each TCP is the culmination of a multi-partner effort that:

- Identifies a specific natural resource concern
- Sets goals and objectives
- Evaluates alternatives
- Establishes partner roles
- Develops an implementation and monitoring plan.



The Vision

- Over the next 5 years, PIA NRCS will transform how we plan and deliver our technical and financial assistance across our islands; called ***“Targeted Conservation Delivery”***.
- TCD will enhance our ability to work with local partners in order to solve high priority natural resource concerns in a focused and strategic manner.
- Investments of federal, state, local, and private dollars needed to address resource issues are used more effectively.
- We have empowered employees in the field with strong technical skills, partnership support, and the ability to coordinate this strategic effort in their communities.
- Communities find success in addressing the environmental issues that matter most to them.

The Process for Implementing this Model

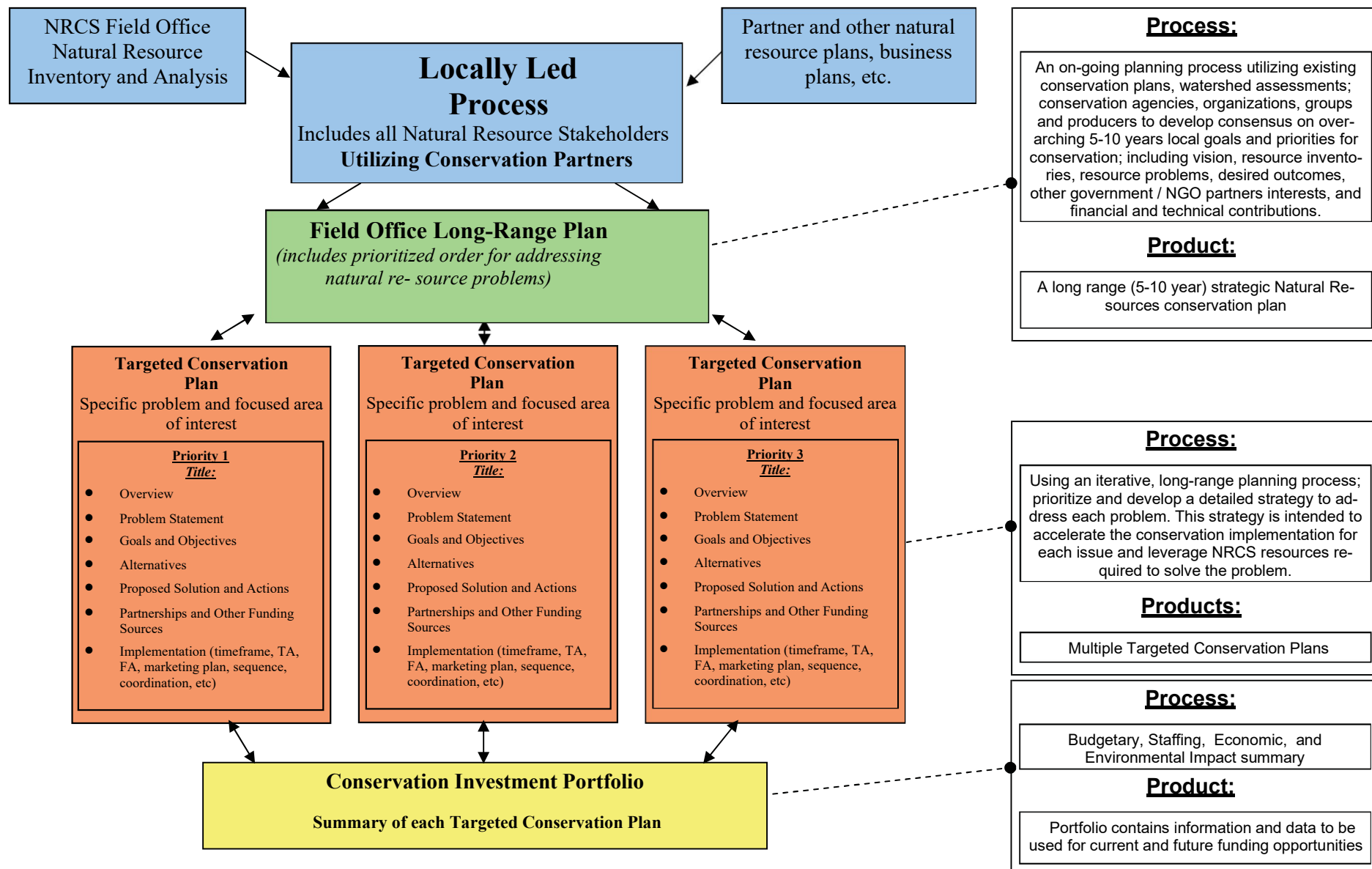
- Every NRCS PIA Field Office will develop an **Long Range Plan (LRP)** which describes resource concerns that are identified through facilitated Local Working Group discussions, Soil Water and Conservation District (SWCD) Long Range Plans, and other available information from many conservation partners. This can be a broad and visionary plan.
- Using the envisioned outcomes from the long-range plans as an overarching goal, county-level NRCS staff work with local partners to determine more specific goals and focused efforts needed to achieve them.
- **‘Targeted Conservation Plans’ (TCP)** are derived from the field office long-range plans and lay out up to 5 years of technical and financial needs for a specific near term goal. More specifically, they describe the primary resource objectives, evaluate alternatives, propose solutions, establish partner roles, selects monitoring and evaluation methods, and summarizes funding and staffing needs. The outcomes must be measurable, defensible, and demonstrably help achieve the vision of the LRP.
- New TCP proposals are submitted each year and compete for funding. NRCS leadership uses evaluation criteria developed with input from the State Technical Committee to select which TCPs will receive funding for the duration of the proposal.
- The approved TCPs are used to develop NRCS PIA’s budget and State Resource Assessment for the year, identifying where the agency will invest its staff and financial resources.
- Field Offices will begin with a single TCP but may get additional TCPs approved in following years and may have multiple TCPs being funded at the same time.
- We are committed to continual improvement of the approach by an ongoing discussion of challenges and successes through a steering committee .

Getting our Conservation and Business Operations "house in order"

Conservation	Business Operations
Decreases field office workload	Potential 60% reduction in modifications
Increases time in the field	Potential 25% reduction in cancelled contracts.
Increased conservation on the ground	\$500,000 savings/year over life of Farm Bill stays in PIA
Better decision making	Gain in administrative efficiencies
Provides funding certainty to field offices and partners	Audit Readiness
Regulatory certainty	Increased opportunity to put additional Boots on the ground
Focuses Technical Support	Improved /efficient SRA population
Allows DC's to Plan ahead	Reduces field office administrative burden
Fosters good partnerships and leveraging	Provides a framework to "tell a conservation story"
Effective outreach	Provides opportunity for partner investment and collaboration
Increases landowner participation	Shifts paradigm from contract planning to conservation planning
Achievable goals and outcomes	Improved /efficient SRA population
Conservation planning efficiencies (NEPA, Cultural Resources, Biology)	Technical support needs easily identified into the future
Increases outside funding opportunities, ie. AWEF, Two Chiefs, RCPP....	Training and Job Approval Authority needs easily identified into the future
Portfolio of Targeted Conservation Plans	Locally driven through the LWG process

PIA's Strategic Approach to Conservation

Goal: to invest strategically to solve natural resource problems and be more effective, efficient, and accountable for staffing, funding, and partnerships.



Targeted Conservation Plan Guidelines

The **Targeted Conservation Plan (TCP)** supports each project in the Conservation Investment Portfolio. Each project in the Conservation Investment Portfolio will be planned to meet PIA NRCS planning criteria and support rational and transparent decisions. The TCP will describe the information and planning that has been done that allows NRCS and partners to know exactly what their investments will 'buy' in conservation benefits. The NRCS 9-step planning process is the basis for the development of the TCP. Each project must go through a locally led process to identify actions that will be implemented to solve a priority natural resource concern. The TCP can be developed from NRCS or partner planning processes if certain criteria are met.

The TCP includes a detailed description of a specific natural resource problem that a local partnership is proposing to *solve* over the course of a few years. Each strategy is developed based upon one of the resource problems described in a Field Office's Long-Range Plan. The strategy should be aligned with the Mission, Vision, and NRCS Strategic Plan in order to make a clear, compelling case as to why we, our partners, and the community should invest in the solution by answering the kinds of questions listed below.

The outline below is a suggested, not mandatory, format for the TCP. The product can be just a few pages or dozens depending on the needs of the local situation, project, or strategy. Typically, a TCP will answer most of these questions even if individual reports look different.

Suggested Outline of a Targeted Conservation Plan

Title Page:

Project Name and Location

- Include a map that delineates the proposed geographic target area and, and where conservation will be implemented.
- Provide a short Goal Statement or Problem Statement – Should focus on a priority resource concern and identify why and where treatments are needed.

Report:

Overview/Background Information

- How does it fit within the PIA Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan?
- What is the purpose and need for this TCP, how does it help achieve LRP vision and goals?
- Why is this important to do now? What are consequences of not doing it?

Problem Statement

- What is the specific issue or resource concern?
- Why is it a concern?
- Where is it occurring?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- What is the extent of the problem?

Goals and Objectives

- What are the locally defined desired future conditions?
- What needs to be done to solve the problem?

- What is the goal of the strategy?
- How will progress towards the desired future conditions be measured?
- What are the expected outputs and outcomes?

Alternatives

- What alternatives are there for solving the problem (short summary of alternatives, describe what happens if no action is taken)?
- Are there NEPA considerations (e.g. do partners need NEPA to be completed before funding it)?

Proposed Solution and Actions

- What is the proposed solution?
- Why is it the preferred solution?
- What information about the solution must be considered to meet the objectives?
- What are the benefits/costs for implementation?
- What conservation actions/practices/projects are needed to solve the problem?

Partnerships and other Funding Sources

- Who needs to be involved in making the solution happen (who are the partners in the effort and who will need to participate to make it happen)?
- What landowner participation rate is necessary to solve the problem?
- What role, technical, and financial contribution will each partner bring to the solution?
- How much is the solution going to cost the partnership (and what is the NRCS piece of that)?

Implementation

- What additional planning needs to be completed to implement the project(s)?
- What is the timeframe for this project or series of projects?
- How much financial assistance is needed to complete the project(s)?
- How much technical assistance and staff time from the NRCS and the partners is needed to implement the project(s)?
- How and where are projects/practices prioritized and sequenced?
- How are the implementation efforts going to be coordinated and managed?
- What marketing and outreach needs to be done? Is there a plan for the O&M?

Progress Evaluation and Monitoring

- How will progress towards the goals and objectives be measured?
- How will progress be reported, to whom, and how often?
- What evaluation of the process will be done so that ineffective efforts can be adjusted?
- What, how, and by whom will on-the-ground projects be monitored?