



Benefits Based Management

Description

Benefits-Based Management (BBM) is used in a range of contexts, usually associated with the evaluation of programmes. It was first introduced to leisure and recreation management in 1991. The two-step process involves identifying desired outcomes and then the strategies to achieve them. The first step involves identifying a clear set of desired measurable outcomes (or benefits). These short or long term outcomes can be defined as either improved conditions or the prevention of worse conditions. In the context of tourism management, desired measurable benefits might include economic gains to communities from tourism, coupled with environmental benefits resulting from a stronger environmental ethic among individuals and communities. Once this initial set of desired outcomes or benefits has been identified then it is often valuable to use structured participation techniques such as [charrettes](#), [visioning](#) and [focus groups and workshops](#) to refine and validate them.

The second step is to develop a range of strategies and activities that might be used to achieve the desired outcomes. The success of the management strategy and activities is measured by the degree to which the benefits are achieved. As some benefits may be short term and others long term, BBM is best applied as an on-going evaluation tool.

The essential element of BBM is the focus on outcomes, and the designing of strategies and activities specifically directed towards achieving those outcomes.

How and when the tool is used

In 2001 BBM was used to identify and describe benefits gained by visitors in neighbouring communities, with specific reference to the Otago Central Rail Trail (see resources). A series of semi-structured interviews provided information about actual and expected benefits to the affected communities, which included a heightened sense of community identity and solidarity, opportunities for social contact with people from outside the local area and desired economic benefits.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), through funding by the National Recreation Foundation (NRF), has initiated four demonstration projects to implement a benefits-based recreation programme model to illustrate the impact recreation programmes can have on participants.

The United States Bureau of Land Management has applied BBM in developing conceptual frameworks for planning and managing recreation on public lands.

Application

BBM has been applied to a wide range of activities internationally. In the United States it has been used to evaluate the effects of community programmes as well as for recreation and visitor programmes and activities.

The tool can be used in a range of contexts and at different spatial levels including site level (the Central Otago Rail Trail), community or regional level or national level. It can also be applied to the development and evaluation of short term and long term goals.

BBM is a useful tool for monitoring and evaluating the success of management strategies, programmes and activities.

Our evaluation

While BBM does not appear to have been applied significantly in New Zealand to date, it would appear to be a useful tool in conjunction with other tools. It is most valuable as an evaluation and monitoring tool.