



What Makes a Project Successful?

Defining success

A successful stormwater management project is one that functions as designed and meets the overall goals and objectives of the project. Every stormwater best management practice (BMP) will have its own specific measures of success based on the initial goals and specifications. Goals and objectives should be established at the beginning of every project. These, supplemented with a set of metrics and a monitoring plan, will allow you to evaluate the success of your project.

Many successful projects share one or more of the following characteristics:

- The BMP meets expectations of public/client.
- The BMP meets regulatory requirements.
- The BMP functions as intended (water quality and quantity goals are met).
- The BMP remains viable and attains the intended design aesthetic over its intended lifespan (maintenance requirements have been developed and executed properly).

Success vs. acceptance

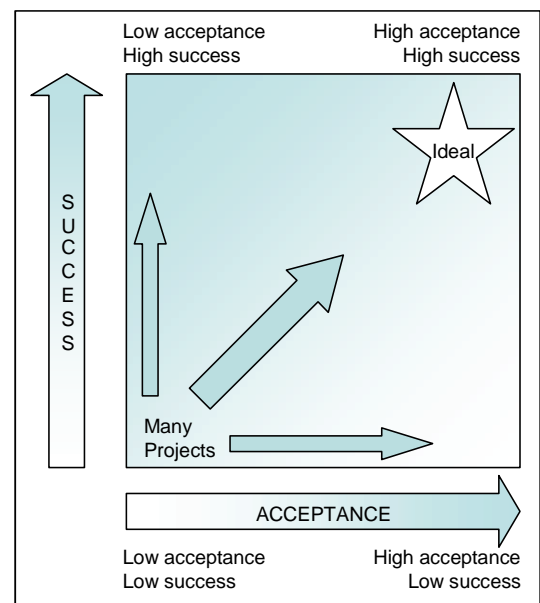
There are two ways to describe the end result of any project: whether it is successful and whether it is accepted. A successful project, as indicated above, is one that accomplishes its intended purpose or achieves a stated goal. A project that is accepted receives a favorable reception and is met with approval by the various stakeholder groups. Ideally, a project will be both highly successful and highly accepted.

Predicting success

It is impossible to predict with certainty whether a project will be successful. Each BMP project has a unique set of goals and metrics, a defined set of resources, and is developed in a particular regulatory, social, and political climate. There are, however, certain factors that may increase the likelihood that you will achieve the ideal of high success and high acceptance:

Communication:

- Effective communication is probably the most important aspect of a successful project and it's the one you have the most control over.
- Communication should start early and be frequent, consistent, respectful and responsive.
- Introduce ideas and projects slowly – start simple and small and build from there.
- Involve key decision makers early in the process and strive to obtain buy-in for your ideas and projects.



Collaboration:

- Solicit participation from multiple stakeholder groups.
- Involve the public. Educate them on the benefits and requirements of your installation.
- Identify what motivates different groups and use that to pitch your ideas.

Design/Development:

- Take an integrated approach – a stormwater project can address water quality and quantity goals while simultaneously providing added aesthetic, recreational, or other amenities to the site or the community at large.
- Develop projects that respond to and respect the character and function of the site in particular and the larger community in general.
- Bring technical expertise to the project to ensure that it is designed to meet performance goals with minimal maintenance.
- Pay close attention to potential problems during installation and make modifications as necessary through each stage of development.
- Be proactive in your approach to removing obstacles to implementation.
- Address all stakeholder concerns in turn and work with them to identify acceptable solutions.
- Always include a maintenance and monitoring strategy as part of the development plan.
- Maintain installations to uphold the standards and values of the surrounding community.

Other factors:

- View every stormwater BMP installation as a marketing opportunity for your next project
- Remove any road blocks you can identify in advance and anticipate the needs of your stakeholders.
- Establish demonstration projects so people can experience BMPs in action.
- Keep the project design as simple as possible – fewer “bells and whistles” lead to fewer complications.

There are also some external factors that may impact the level of success and acceptance your project can achieve, including regulatory and social factors. The following are aspects of a community that is receptive to new ideas and approaches:

- A regulatory framework is already in place to accommodate non-traditional approaches to stormwater management.
- Interdisciplinary planning teams are a common aspect of many projects.
- The public or your client is already familiar with the potential benefits of stormwater BMPs.
- The community favors environmentally friendly or sustainable development and supports a green aesthetic.

You may also be interested in:

[Bring Your Ideas to the Community Metrics and Measurement](#)

[Drivers and Motivating Factors Using Rainwater to Grow Livable Communities](#)