



Impacts and Achievements of the MTSRF

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Showcasing the Australian Government's investment
in the MTSRF for improved sustainability of the
North Queensland region, and Australia

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Pullman Reef Hotel & Casino
Cairns, North Queensland



Abstract

[MTSRF Project Number 4.9.6](#)

Knowledge attributes of collaborative governance in Great Barrier Reef regions: An assessment framework

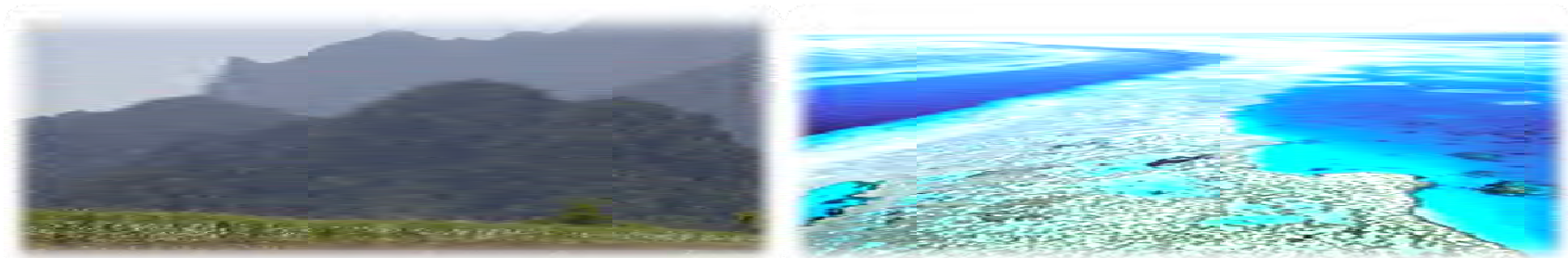
Cathy J. Robinson¹, Bruce Taylor¹ and Karen Vella²

¹Sustainable Ecosystems, CSIRO ; ²Terrain Natural Resource Management

Improving water quality entering Australia's Great Barrier Reef from diffuse sources relies on the necessary co-operation and coordination between multiple environmental decision-makers and activities. Mechanisms to enable different types of knowledge to be integrated into planning objectives, translated to inform strategic decision-making, and fed-back into adaptive action is central to this collaborative effort. Using knowledge sharing functions of collaboration as a framework, this paper assesses the performance of decentralised regional decision-making arrangements to facilitate water quality program investments in Queensland's Wet Tropics. The results highlight the challenges initially faced by regional bodies to test, co-produce and institutionalise knowledge needed to tackle the complex planning issues facing this World Heritage Area. This research also shows how the framework was saliently applied by the regional NRM group to improve collaborative decision-making in this region. These findings highlight the value of using knowledge sharing functions as a pragmatic and effective assessment framework to assess collaborative governance performance. This study also highlights the value of action-based co-research to enable this framework to support strong collaborations at regional and multiple scales.



Adaptive approaches to collaborative governance in Great Barrier Reef Regions



MTSRF Project 4.9.6a

Cathy Robinson and Bruce Taylor (CSIRO),

Allan Dale and Karen Vella (Terrain Inc), Rachel Eberhard (RWQP)

Contact: e: Catherine.Robinson@csiro.au p: 07 3214 2328



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Research focus and approach

- Explore the **contribution of partnerships** in water planning to the achievement of “good governance”
- Develop and apply **assessment frameworks** to inform water quality planning partnerships in the Wet Tropics and the GBR
- Trial a **co-research approach** to underpin adaptive management of WQIP, Reef Plan, Regional Body and Reef Partnership initiatives

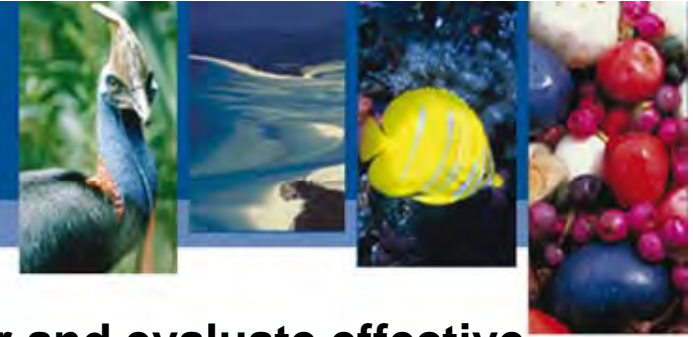




The assessment framework:

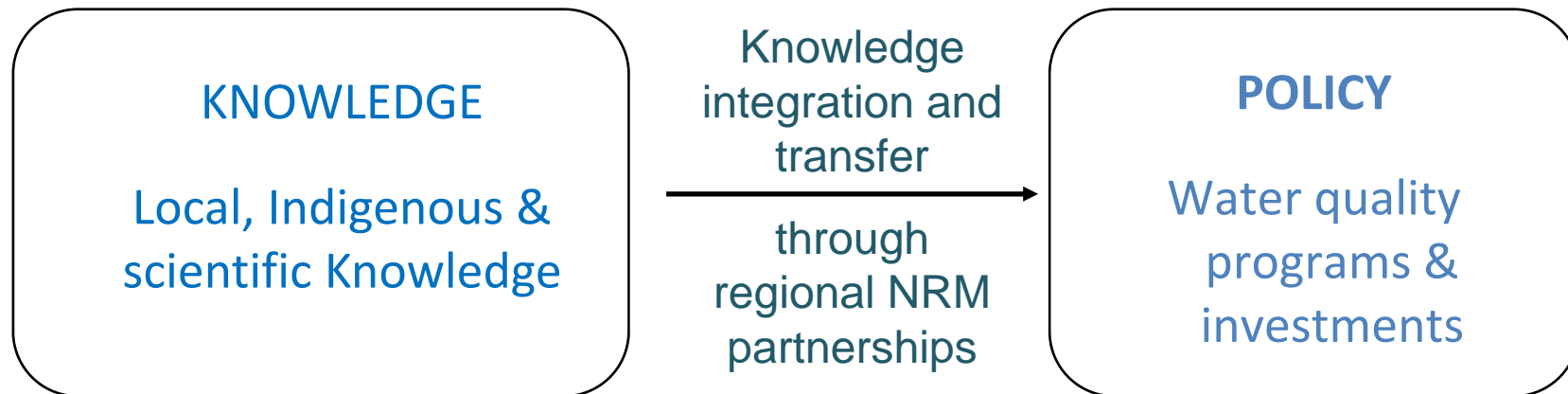
- The integration of knowledge to improve water quality targets and measures;
- The alignment of delivery efforts between collaborators and also with other relevant plans and activities, and
- Improved monitoring and evaluation functions to embed catchment, regional and Reef wide learning responses into new knowledge, delivery and investment activities





Using knowledge indicators as a metric to monitor and evaluate effective environmental governance

The robustness and responsiveness of decision-making partnerships to handle the breadth, depth and use of available knowledge is a critical attribute of an effective governance system



Kroon FJ, Robinson, CJ and Dale, AP. 2009. Integrating knowledge to inform water quality planning in the Tully-Murray basin, Australia, Marine and Freshwater Journal, 60, 1183-1188.





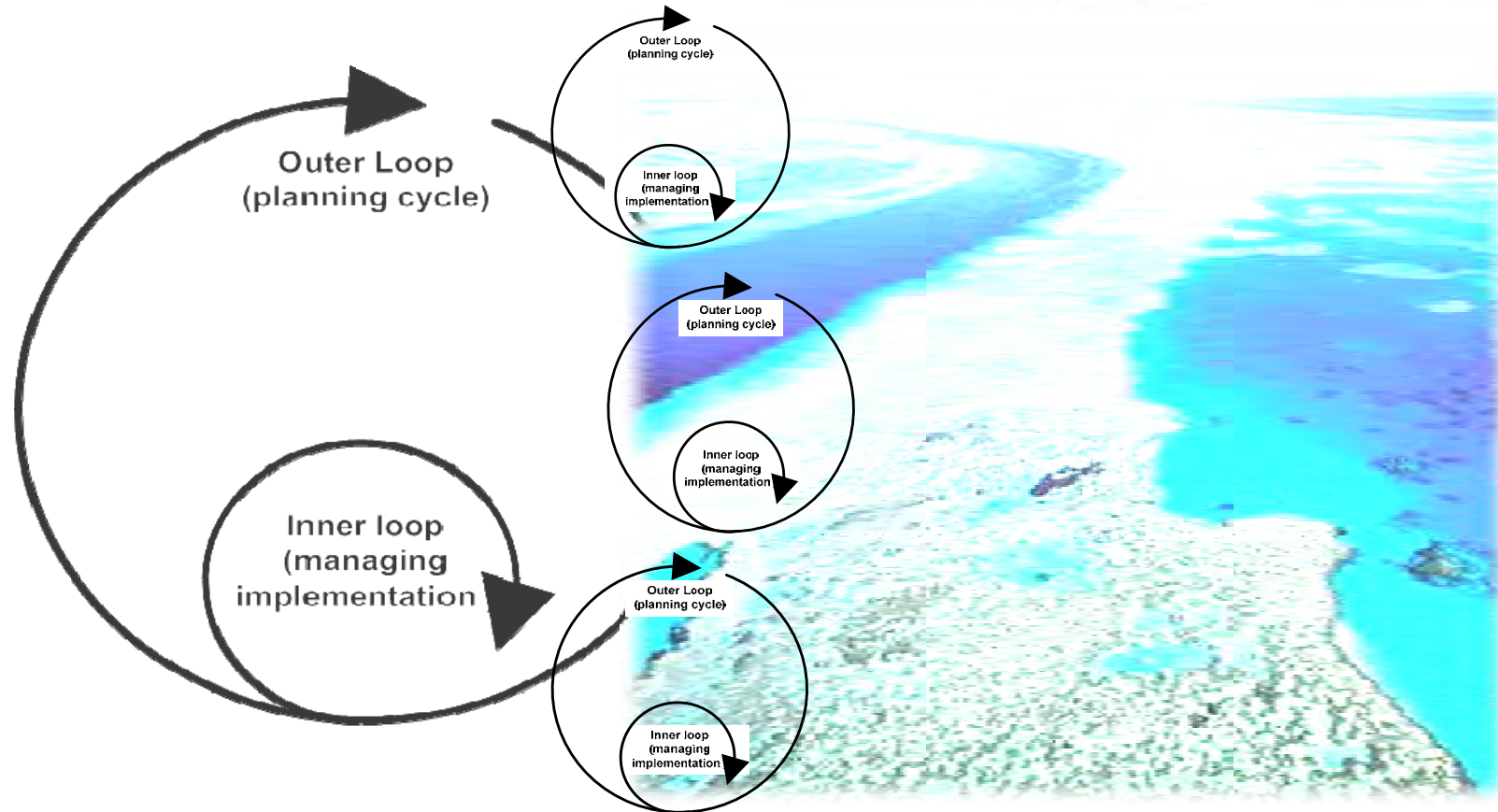
Research approach

- Developed and used knowledge metrics of adaptive approaches to collaboration to assess governance performance
- Applied to assess knowledge sharing and use capacities of collaborative decision- making in a GBR region
- Qn asked – What tends to facilitate knowledge sharing, negotiation, and transfer across the ‘boundaries’ of knowledge and decision-making?

Eberhardt, E, Robinson, CJ, Waterhouse, J, Hart B, Parslow J and Grayson R. 2009. Adaptive management for regional water quality plans in the Great Barrier Reef catchments, Marine and Freshwater Journal, 60, 1189-1195



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.Eberhardt, E, Robinson, CJ, Waterhouse, J, Hart B, Parslow J and Grayson R. 2009. Adaptive management for regional water quality plans in the Great Barrier Reef catchments, Marine and Freshwater Journal, 60, 1189-1195.

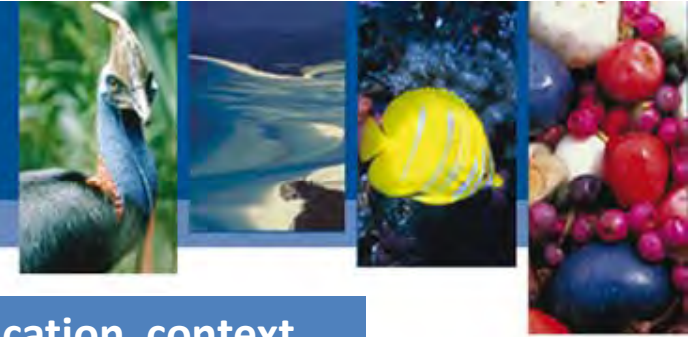


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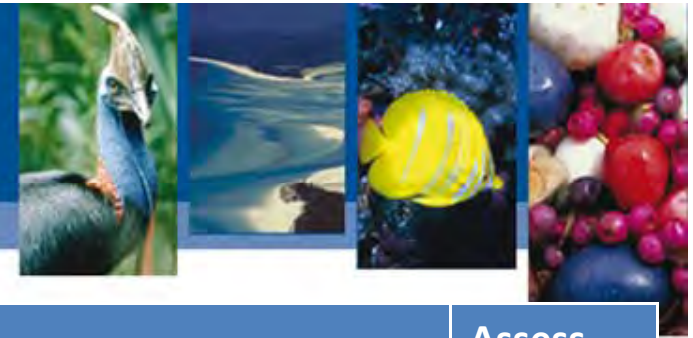
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Knowledge sharing functions	Indicators	Application context
Integration	Diversity, Deliberation and Inclusiveness	Scoping and problem/task framing stage.
Translation	Credibility, saliency, legitimacy	Design and implementation stage
Adaptation	Relevance, roles & responsibilities, capacity	Feedbacks for learning / assessing program effectiveness
Impact	Outputs and outcomes	Determines progress towards intended outcomes and positive / negative consequences



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Knowledge translation attribute	Assessment rationale	Assessment (Yr 1-2)
Credibility	<p>Extension officers and Assessment Panel have better information base to inform investment decisions</p> <p>Applications need to include information about farm location and capability of applicant to enhance decisions about priority projects</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p>
Legitimacy	<p>Regional NRM body roles as broker supported by regional partners. This needs continued support and can be challenged by unilateral policy-level activities and decisions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p>
Saliency	<p>There was sufficient time to consider available information, engage with landholders and prepare R.Rescue applications</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+</p>





Key findings (1): Knowledge integration, translation and feedbacks underpins adaptive approaches to collaboration

Assessing knowledge use in collaborative decision-making provides useful indicators to judge the efficacy of regional governance structures and processes



Robinson, CJ, Taylor, B and Vella 2009. *Understanding knowledge functions for collaborative environmental decision-making in Great Barrier Reef regions: An assessment framework. MTSRF Milestone Report.*



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Key findings (2): Co-research supports adaptive management

A co-research approach to this assessment improved the incorporation of research into regional-industry partnerships and water quality program delivery

As a result these activities become responsive and robust enough to enable scientific and technical knowledge to be critically considered and ‘co-produced’





Key finding (3): Bargaining *and* targets for effective NRM implementation

Getting agreement and commitment to implementing more sustainable water quality practices means issues of cost-sharing and accountability become impediments to achieving targets if not negotiated upfront.

Taylor, B (forthcoming) Between argument and coercion: social coordination in rural environmental governance, Journal of Rural Studies.



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Regional approaches to integrated NRM are maturing and require new capabilities by government and non-government partners

Regional institutions need to be sufficiently robust and responsive to ensure NRM planning processes and outcomes are strategic and coordinated.

'Scaling down' regional NRM planning support for local NRM activities – be realistic about the extent to which landowners, local communities and Aboriginal people are can achieve the goals for sustainable natural resource management expected from government program objectives and timelines.

'Scaling up' regional NRM planning activities is required and relies on effective institutional collaborations at policy decision-making levels

'Regional scale' integration is necessary but incurs broad and significant costs to partners in their efforts to develop and sustain partnerships in order to build and deliver a coordinated suite of NRM programs.



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Thank-you

Cathy Robinson, CSIRO

http://www.rrrc.org.au/mtsr/f/theme_4/project_4_9_6.html.



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