SCIENCE-PLANNING PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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Effective conservation planning and landscape management are supported by relevant, up-to-date scientific information. However, practitioners don't always have ready access to the large, rapidly-changing body of scientific information and science is not necessarily targeted at the most important issues for managers. Facilitating knowledge exchange between scientists and practitioners is a significant, ongoing challenge.

In Australia, regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) bodies are responsible for strategic landscape management planning. The Federal Government has funded NRM bodies to incorporate climate change adaptation strategies into updated plans, and concurrently funded research consortia to provide supporting scientific information. We present the Wet Tropics cluster project 'Knowledge to manage land and sea' as a model for facilitating co-operation between research and practice. A "brokering hub" brings scientists and practitioners together to make collaborative decisions about research direction, the allocation of project resources, and long-term science-planning partnerships in the region.

The first stage of the project involved an analysis of the major impacts of climate change on socio-economic-ecological systems in the Wet Tropics cluster region, producing a report that synthesises scientific knowledge and expert opinion in relation to the key issues for NRM groups, identified through an iterative, collaborative process. The report is directly relevant to NRM groups and has been adapted for use in planning workshops and other stakeholder engagement activities. The project is currently focussed on participatory planning work, including co-identification of priority adaptation pathways, as well as the delivery of spatial tools for prioritising carbon and biodiversity planting.