



DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

Responding to the “Working Together Strategy”: Creating a research partnership and coordinated planning approach to fisheries and aquaculture R&D in Northern Australia.

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**Queensland
Government**



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Responding to the “Working Together Strategy”: Creating a research partnership and coordinated planning approach to fisheries and aquaculture R&D in Northern Australia.

By

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OBJECTIVES:

1. Facilitate the establishment of a formal partnership that steers tropical fisheries and aquaculture research in northern Australia;
2. Align capabilities and further capacity building activities with the needs of the region; and
3. Develop a clear strategic research and development plan for tropical northern Australia.

1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

This project has initiated a new formal partnership that steers fisheries and aquaculture research in Northern Australia including partners from government research agencies from Western Australia (WA), Queensland (Qld) and the Northern Territory (NT). The northern research partnership (NRP) will target cross-jurisdictional research needs and partner other agencies where additional capability needs are required. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) and terms of reference (ToR) for the partnership have been finalised so that the partnership is properly directed and the group can work together to target funding opportunities to address key knowledge gaps in fisheries and aquaculture research in Northern Australia. The development of a foundation project on stock structure of coastal reef fish has also been undertaken. The development of this project has been successfully undertaken despite it addressing research priorities for only one of the partners (NT). In addition, the project will utilise expertise from Universities in WA, Qld and NT. The NRP has illustrated that collaborative R&D does not always need to address common priorities and that research planning can occur regionally despite the disruption caused by jurisdictional politics.

Stakeholders have provided positive comment on this project as they see it as an opportunity to provide their research needs in a regional context as well as offering a framework for a more efficient use of research funds.

Stakeholders from all jurisdictions were consulted with to discuss the objectives of the project and how this partnership could fit in with, (and benefit) current research and development planning. Two workshops were held to discuss how the partnership could achieve these objectives. The workshops developed a MoU and terms of reference for the partnership, clarifying its scale and how it would fit in with current research and development planning. The NRP will meet biannually to identify Northern Australian fisheries and aquaculture research priorities from jurisdictional research plans to develop cross-jurisdictional projects that will dovetail the Fisheries Research Advisory Body (FRAB) process.

KEYWORDS: northern Australia, collaborative research, strategic planning

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Dr Daniel Gaughan and Dr Warwick Nash for their contributions to both workshops and commitment to initiating and maintaining the NRP. We also thank Professor Andrew Campbell, Mr Malcolm Dunning, Mr Crispian Ashby and Dr Ann Flemming for contributions in the first workshop and comments on the final report.

We would also like to thank Dr Andria Handley, Dr Rick Fletcher and Mr Ian Curnow for their contribution to establishing the project and Patrick Hone for advice during this process.

3. BACKGROUND

The fisheries that operate in the tropical waters of northern Australia exist from the coastal fringes to the Australian Fishing Zone on the continental shelf. They include commercial, recreational and indigenous sectors and target a wide variety of species that exist across all jurisdictions in the tropics. Similarly, aquaculture industries span across tropical north Australia. Common economic, technical, social and environmental priorities exist for both established and emerging industries. While there has been a strong collaborative approach in conducting fisheries and aquaculture research to fill knowledge gaps, these collaborations have been conducted on an adhoc basis and focussed on species or technical commonalities rather than higher level strategic programs. In addition, there has often been duplication and fragmentation of fisheries and aquaculture research across jurisdictions. These issues (of duplication and fragmentation) are common across other fisheries jurisdictions and across primary industry sector generally. To address these challenges, Australian governments through their Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) and the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council have signed off on a national research, development and extension (RD&E) framework. In addition, Working Together: the national fishing and aquaculture RD&E strategy was endorsed by ministers at PIMC on 23 April 2010. The Framework spans 14 primary industry sectors, and eight cross-industry sectors. This framework aims to provide high level advice on future planning and delivery of fishing and aquaculture research by delivery of major support link (MSL) roles of providers to address national strategy themes and priorities. The draft MSL table has revealed aligned capacity, infrastructure and capability to deliver on the national RD&E plan.

The next step from the national RD&E strategy is to form appropriate regional research provider partnerships to provide a more efficient mechanism to deliver research needs by allowing for a more strategic and targeted collaborative approach. The development of partnerships such as the NRP has been facilitated by the formation of the research providers network (RPN) which has been broken down into five hubs (biosecurity, national, northern, south east and south west). The hubs have been responsible for the completion of the MSL and ensuring that jurisdictions work together as much as possible within these geographic regions.

4. NEED

It has been widely recognised that Australia needs to adopt a more coordinated, cross-jurisdictional approach to allow for more efficient and effective research and development. The State/Territory jurisdictions across northern Australia (NT, Qld and WA) would benefit from this approach as they often share tropical wild stocks, similar commercial and indigenous stakeholder aspirations for fisheries and aquaculture developments, common recreational fishing sector ambitions, similar aquaculture stakeholders and occupy similar markets. Collaboration amongst these jurisdictions would deliver better science outcomes by consolidating capability, coordinating the development of new capability, improving networks and stimulating innovation. Social and economic benefits would be realised through more effective resource management and each jurisdiction's ability to attract investment in business, infrastructure and research would be

strengthened. Apart from setting in place a shared vision of tropical fisheries and aquaculture R&D a northern partnership would facilitate a coordinated approach to significant social R&D.

This project directly addresses the national RD&E strategy for fishing and aquaculture that aims to improve the focus, efficiency and effectiveness of RD&E by adopting a more national and co-ordinated approach.

5. OBJECTIVES

1. Facilitate the establishment of a formal partnership that steers tropical fisheries and aquaculture research in northern Australia.
2. Align capabilities and further capacity building activities with the needs of the region.
3. Develop a clear strategic R&D plan for tropical northern Australia.

6. METHODS

Prior to discussions on the detail of the proposed partnership, stakeholders were consulted from all jurisdictions to best identify how such a group could fit within current R&D planning. Stakeholders that were consulted with included:

Amateur Fisherman's Association of the NT (AFANT)
 NT Seafood Council (NTSC)
 Northern Land Council (NLC)
 Charles Darwin University (CDU)
 Recfishwest
 Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA)
 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Association (GBRMPA)
 Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)
 Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
 James Cook University (JCU)

A workshop was held on the 8-9 June 2011 and was attended by Dan Gaughan (WA Fisheries), Warwick Nash (Qld Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QDAFF)), Malcolm Dunning (QDAFF), Thor Saunders (NT Fisheries), Ann Fleming (NT Fisheries), Bryan McDonald (NT Fisheries), Andrew Campbell (CDU) and Crispian Ashby (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)). The intention of the workshop was to identify the scale of the partnership and how it would most efficiently fit into current research planning.

A second workshop was held on the 30 March 2012 and was attended by Dan Gaughan, Warwick Nash, Thor Saunders, and Bryan McDonald. The intention of the workshop was to finalise the function of the partnership and how it fit in within the national RD&E framework as well as finalising the MoU between jurisdictional fisheries and aquaculture research agencies. There was also consideration given to an expression of interest (EOI) being put up to FRDC by the group based on common jurisdictional priorities.

Subsequent phone meetings between Dan Gaughan, Warwick Nash and Thor Saunders led to the development of an EOI titled 'Optimising the management of tropical reef fish through the development of indigenous scientific capability'. In addition discussions were held on jurisdictional research priorities to assess any commonalities that may require the development of a cross-jurisdictional EOI.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the consultation of stakeholders it quickly became apparent that there was a lot of nervousness about the function of the proposed partnership. Particularly, stakeholders did not want researchers determining research priorities. With these concerns in mind, most of the discussions in the first workshop focussed on how the partnership needed to function for it to work. In particular, it was identified that the driver for change was the national prioritisation process/national RD&E strategy as well as the need to rationalise local and shared resources. Consequently, it was identified that the purpose of the project was to consolidate and develop approaches to better use shared capacity and capability with the ultimate outcome being the development of a formal partnership agreement with effective governance in place.

The workshop identified that it was a good time to incorporate a regional partnership into their research strategies given that all jurisdictions were in a similar phase of their research planning cycles.

The group agreed that initially the partnership would work within the current FRDC planning cycles and beneath the FRAB process. Preliminary funding would be targeted from the FRDC cross-jurisdictional component of their funding.

The purpose of the group was identified as:

- Coordinating research policies and cycles.
- Communicating current knowledge and understanding of shared knowledge gaps.
- Identifying and coordinating capability.
- Identifying joint interests/collaborative opportunities.
- Joint investment in common areas.
- Developing shared resource assessment and monitoring.

The ToR for the group were identified as:

- Geographic range Exmouth to Fraser Island.
- Three Jurisdictions (NT, Qld, WA government agencies).
- September 2011 scoping, setting direction of alliance educating stakeholders of function of group.
- Late March 2012 meeting to discuss common research projects.
- September 2012 meeting for strategic planning phase 2.
- March 2013 meeting to discuss common research projects.
- September 2013 Evaluation function of partnership.

In addition the group agreed to:

- Seek endorsement from the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF) and Northern Australian Fisheries Committee (NAFC).
- Work through the MSL table associated with the National Research Themes to see where the partnership would contribute.
- Summarise the workshop (see Appendix 3) and draft the partnerships ToR and MoU.

The second workshop focussed on finalising a MoU between the three government fisheries and aquaculture research agencies and how the partnership would function.

It was identified by the group that the NRP is about conducting cross-jurisdictional research to tackle shared knowledge gaps and sits under the national RD&E strategy which is the national advisory system to steer research investment towards priority themes. It was suggested that the NRP is about 'doing' cross-

jurisdictional research with the northern hub under the RPN being responsible for facilitating cross-jurisdictional research. The group agreed that the partnership would focus on all aspects of fisheries and aquaculture research identified in the MSL table developed through the RPN. Where extra capability was required to complete specific projects it was agreed that research providers would be sought through those identified in the MSL table.

The MoU was completed and captured the 'bureaucratic' aspects of cross-jurisdictional partnerships, including governance arrangements to mitigate partnership risks (e.g. maintaining obligation to the partnership and how non-performance within the partnership was managed) and how will R&D outputs be extended cross-jurisdictionally.

The group agreed that the best way for the partnership to operate was to form a steering group (with membership of fisheries and aquaculture research heads and proxies) to meet biannually to discuss jurisdictional research priorities and decide which would form the basis of a cross jurisdictional project. The first meeting was planned for March each year to decide upon cross jurisdictional projects so there is time to consult with appropriate researchers and stakeholders before submitting an EOI. A second meeting was planned for September each year to evaluate the performance of the partnership and for strategic planning to finalise any application and to discuss what stakeholder priorities could be put up as 'cross-jurisdictional' for the North so these could be targeted in the next round of FRDC funding.

It was decided that this process would be more efficient than trying to encapsulate all of the jurisdictional strategic plans into one 'Northern' strategic plan. This approach was primarily driven by the fact that strategic plan development is extremely time consuming and that the partnership would lose its 'doing research' capability if a lot of time was taken up by developing these documents (see also discussion below).

The group also looked at the FRAB research priorities from each state and it was decided that a foundation project looking at stock structure of important tropical reef species would be submitted to FRDC, led by the NT and supported by Qld and WA. This project would directly address an NTFRAB priority- Understanding critical aspects of coastal reef species including population structure and site fidelity; while it would provide information that could feed into the WAFRAB priority- Development of wild catch resource allocation arrangements that meet sustainability, equity and optimal use objectives- and QFRAB priority- Development of a framework to transparently evaluate stock assessment models considering data availability, fishery functionality and shared stocks and develop effective and consistent communication strategies to clearly explain model evaluation, function and outputs.

The EOI was subsequently developed during phone meetings by the steering group and was submitted as a full application for FRDC's 2013 annual competitive round and has since been funded. The project will involve investigators from the three government agencies in the partnership as well as universities from all three jurisdictions.

The fact that the NRP has been able to successfully function at this level is a testament to the efficiency of how it operates. All of the agencies were heavily impacted by jurisdictional specific political issues during 2012 (e.g. changes of government in NT and Qld and resultant agency restructures and great white shark issues in WA) that meant that the steering group members had very little time to put into the development and participation in the partnership. Consequently, this project illustrates that for any other regional partnership developments to occur in R&D planning, it is critical for them to function in a flexible and efficient manner as jurisdictional priorities will always take time away from participants.

Another important component to the success of this partnership was the willingness of all jurisdictional representatives to work together. Success in this area is about having processes in place such as an MoU but a critical component for success is that the participants want to work together and see the benefits of doing so. The benefits were apparent to the participants in the NRP; however, these may not always be clear

to research providers among other jurisdictions. Consequently, it is important to continue the work under the national RD&E strategy and RPN to develop similar regional partnerships nationally that ensure that research is conducted as efficiently as possible.

8. BENEFITS AND ADOPTION

Benefits:

The partnership from the project will benefit all stakeholders involved in research planning in northern Australia by:

- Increasing the efficiency of research and development planning.
- Providing a coordinated and strategic approach to tropical fisheries and aquaculture research activities.
- Provide a mechanism to identify priority cross-jurisdictional research areas.

Adoption:

All jurisdictions agreed to participate in the partnership and ensure that stakeholder consultation occurs at the state level to facilitate the on-going function of the group and has been formalised via an MoU.

The results of NRP development process have been provided to the RPN steering committee for distribution to all of the hubs and the final report will be provided to all Hub chairs.

9. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The bi-annual meetings will continue to be held with a review of the performance of the partnership being conducted every two years the first of these being in September 2013. These reviews will determine whether the partnership in its current form has continued to be successful and what modifications to the process (if any) are required. The success of the partnership will be measured by the number of cross jurisdictional research projects delivered, whether there has been an even spread of benefits for all jurisdictions and whether the partnership can co-exist with competing jurisdictional priorities.

10. PLANNED OUTCOMES

1. Create a partnership across the region to lead the strategic direction of fisheries and aquaculture.

The project has created a formal NRP to plan and coordinate cross-jurisdictional research and development across northern Australia.

While the NRP will have involvement in the planning and identification of research priorities, this phase will predominantly be led by stakeholders whereas the delivery of research projects will be led by the NRP.

2. Build a strategic framework that clearly identifies how the R&D needs can best be met for the ecologically sustainable development of northern Australian aquatic resources for the benefit of the Australian community.

The partnership will meet biannually to ensure the on-going coordination of the partnership and to maintain a strategic approach to RD&E in northern Australia. It is expected that as the partnership develops, strategic planning will expand and become the driver for coordinated research across northern Australia in concert with the developing hub process now operating nationally.

11. CONCLUSION

This project successfully achieved two of the three objectives and has streamlined the operation of the partnership so as to eliminate the need for the third. A new formal partnership that steers fisheries and aquaculture research in northern Australia was established. The partners include government fisheries and aquaculture research agencies from WA, Qld and the NT. During the workshops, jurisdictional capabilities were identified and additional capabilities required would be obtained by partnering experts from other institutions. A MoU has been finalised between the three agencies and has been signed off from the department heads of all jurisdictions. The third objective of developing a northern strategic research plan was not undertaken. This was because it was recognised by the group in the second workshop that each jurisdiction needed to maintain a current strategy and it would be more efficient for the steering group to identify regional synergies from these. The intent of this approach is to give the partnership a 'doing' rather than a 'planning' focus and is also regarded as strategically sensible because it compliments and supports the National Hub process.

12. APPENDIX 1: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All intellectual property arising from this research project has been made publicly available.

13. APPENDIX 2: STAFF

Name	Affiliation
Bryan McDonald	(NT Fisheries, DPIF)
Thor Saunders	(NT Fisheries, DPIF)
Trix Trojan	(NT Fisheries, DPIF)
Warwick Nash	(QDAFF)
Dan Gaughan	(WA Fisheries)

14. APPENDIX 3: 1ST WORKSHOP AGENDA/SUMMARY

Northern Research Partnership workshop

Goff Letts building, Berrimah Farm

Wednesday 08 June – Thursday 09 June 2011

FRDC Project # 2010/404: Creating a research partnership and coordinated planning approach to fisheries and aquaculture R&D in northern Australia.

Participants

Crispian Ashby (FRDC)

Dan Gaughan (WA)

Bryan McDonald (NT)

Malcolm Dunning (Qld)

Warwick Nash (Qld)

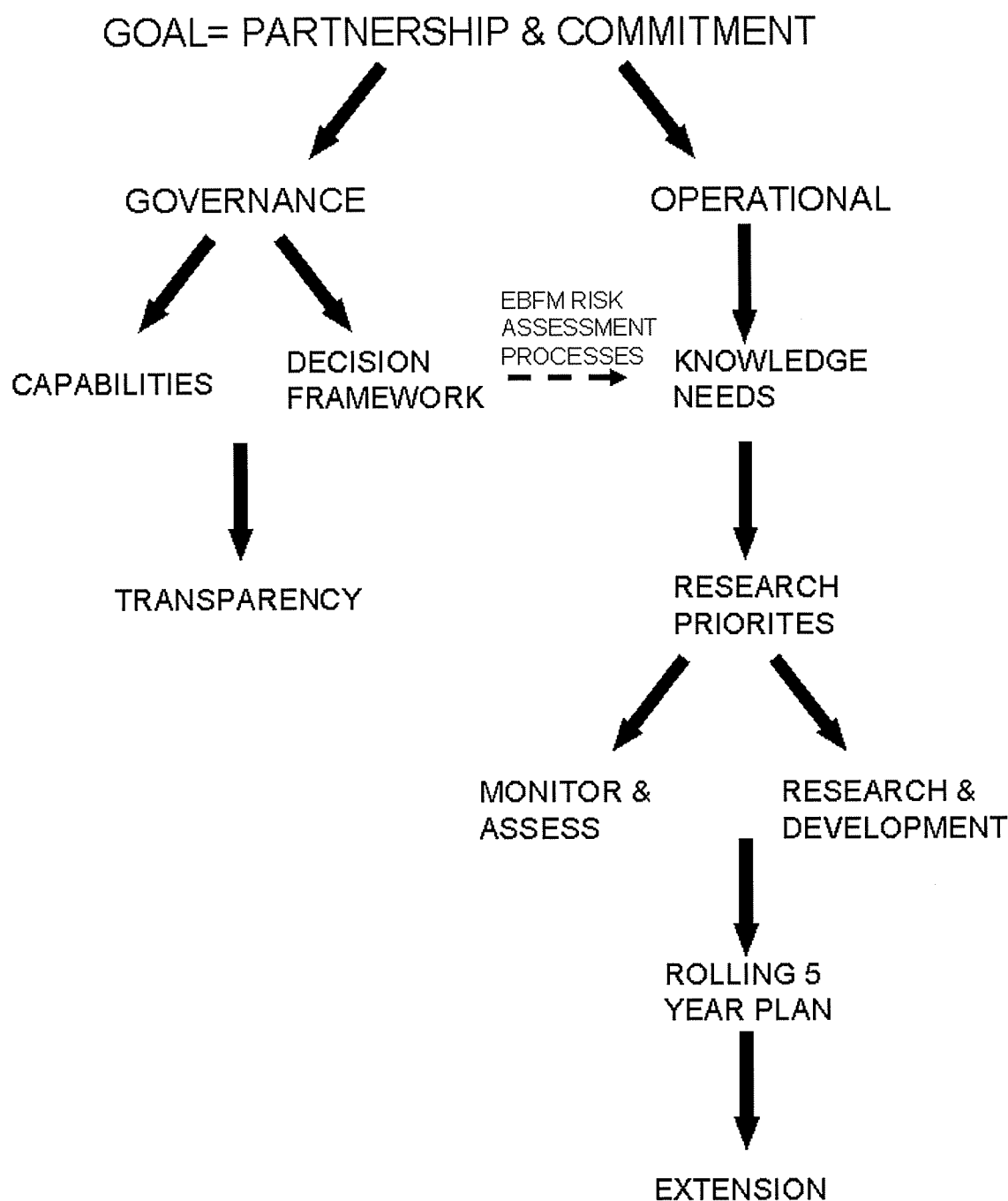
Ann Fleming (NT)

Andrew Campbell (CDU)

Thor Saunders (NT)

Day 1- 08/06/2011

- Purpose of the project and focus of the workshop was identified as consolidating and developing approaches to better use shared capacity and capability.
- The outcome sought is for a formal partnership agreement with effective governance in place.
- For the partnership to work there needs to effective governance, institution champions and agency support for the process.
- Driver for change is the national prioritisation process/national RD&E strategy as well as the need to rationalise local and shared resources.
- Key point made by Andrew Campbell that we need to shift thinking to identify knowledge needs with stakeholders and legitimise scientists determining research priorities to meet those needs (noting the need for transparency to develop shared understanding).
- Presentations by Thor Saunders, Warwick Nash and Dan Gaughan outlined states research capability and planning:
 - NT has significant staff and facility base as well as indigenous liaison capability. Genetic capability available via partnership with Charles Darwin University.
 - Qld has significant staff and facility base and has an ecosystem/habitat skill lacking in the NT.
 - WA has significant staff and facility base and is a leader in Ecological Based Fisheries Management – could be a tool to set research directions via a “weight of evidence” approach.
- Dan Gaughan made the key point that WA is moving to a five year rolling assessment plan to rationalise their approach to research investment.
- Discussions around how the partnership may look was summarized by Bryan McDonald in the following flow chart:



- Presentation by Andrew Campbell on governing and managing collaborative applied R&D. Key points:
 - Relationship durability is critical.
 - Policy makers draw advice from trusted sources so the consortium needs to become a trusted source.
 - Three levels of collaboration – communication, coordination and co-investment.
 - Need to be very clear why we are collaborating.
 - We need to set in place a performance agreement against which to evaluate success and hard wire it in now.
 - We need to commit to “funding the arrows” (the relationships).
 - Need to clarify expectations, articulate the value proposition (i.e. why are we doing it and what we expect to get in return) and set out how decisions will be made.

- Focus energy where we can come together to have an impact.
- Identify our key influencers including rising stars, leaders.
- Respect the no-surprises rule.
- Timing is everything.
- Good relationships need work – value continuity and share the credit.
- Identify an early win to get on the board.
- The group identified that it is a good time for all of us to be developing a shared strategy given our planning cycles.
- Advantages of the partnership were identified as:
 - Consolidation and best use of capabilities.
 - Research and development planning efficiency and creating leverage advantage.
- A key point was brought up that the partnership needed to identify what areas to invest in and what areas to rely on others. To identify these areas the national research themes were used. Research areas that were identified included:
 - **Aquaculture** - Energy use in production, selective breeding, stock enhancement, reduction of environmental impacts and species development.
 - **Wild capture** - Food webs supporting fisheries, system health drivers, environmental observation systems and shared stocks.
 - **Aquaculture/wild capture** - Indigenous engagement and opportunities, South-East Asian engagement, opportunities, access and allocation and biosecurity monitoring.

Day 2- 09/06/2011

- A range of flagship project opportunities were identified:
 - Complimentary management arrangements.
 - Indigenous fisheries/aquaculture development.
 - Access and allocation- indigenous case study.
 - Social/economic studies- recreational case study.
 - Stock structure-identification of knowledge needs.
- There was a discussion about potential governance structures for the partnership which segued into Andrew Campbell's second presentation on governance of applied collaborative R&D. Key points included:
 - Need to consider MoU and the managing agent (one partner's role to make sure it happens).
 - Consider the role of the "program management committee".
 - Need to determine procurement pathways (how will projects get funded – internally, call, tender etc).
 - Need to develop discriminating criteria.
 - Clarity of R&D question, scope, opportunity.
 - Degree of integration, collaboration, capacity-building required.
 - Knowledge about available providers.
 - Desired level of contestability and transparency.
 - Cost-effectiveness (including leverage potential).
 - Outlined knowledge checklists and structures encouraging a scoping study to map out all of the initiatives in place to work out where we could best fit and carve a niche for ourselves.
 - Also encouraged a 10 year scoping study for tropical Australian fisheries and aquaculture against which to align.
 - Need to determine the role of the consortium versus the role of individual jurisdictions and other partnerships etc.
- The FRAB/FRDC process was discussed and how the partnership can best fit into it.

- It was decided to align with that process so that the “committee” meets at times which coincide with FRDC timelines (February and September).
- Purpose and ToR were drafted.

Purpose of Group

- Coordinate research and policy cycles:
 - Communicating current knowledge and understanding of shared knowledge gaps.
 - Identifying and coordinating capability.
 - ID joint interests/collaborative opportunities.
 - Joint investment in common areas.
 - Develop shared resource assessment and monitoring.

Terms of Reference

- Geographic range Exmouth to Fraser Island.
- Three Jurisdictions (NT, Qld, WA) and AFMA Research and management heads or a nominated proxy.
- September 2011 scoping, setting direction of alliance educating stakeholders of function of group.
- Late March 2012 meeting to discuss common research projects.
- September 2012 meeting for strategic planning phase 2.
- March 2013 meeting to discuss common research projects.
- September 2013 Evaluation function of partnership.
- Meetings conducted in each state in turn.

Operations of partnership

- Endorsement from NAFC.
- The MSL table associated with the national research themes was worked through to see where the partnership would contribute. Warwick captured the outcomes of this exercise.
- We committed to developing a summary of the event, a draft ToR and a draft MoU.
- We also noted that we need to inform NAFC of what we discussed.

15. APPENDIX 4: 2ND WORKSHOP AGENDA/SUMMARY

Northern Research Partnership workshop

WA Fisheries and Marine Research Laboratories, Hillarys District Office
30 March 2012

FRDC Project # 2010/404: Creating a research partnership and coordinated planning approach to fisheries and aquaculture R&D in northern Australia.

Participants

Dan Gaughan (WA)

Bryan McDonald (NT)

Warwick Nash (Qld)

Thor Saunders (NT)

- Based on discussions via email prior to the meeting it was decided that the group would focus on finalising an MoU between the three government fisheries and aquaculture research agencies and how the partnership would function.
- It was identified by the group that the NRP is about conducting cross-jurisdictional research to tackle shared knowledge gaps and sits under the national RD&E strategy which is the national advisory system to steer research investment towards priority themes.
- There was a substantial amount of time spent by the group ensuring that the MoU captured the 'bureaucratic' aspects of cross-jurisdictional partnerships, including governance arrangements to mitigate partnership risks (e.g. maintaining obligation to the partnership and how will non-performance within the partnership be managed) and how will R&D outputs be extended cross-jurisdictionally.
- Once the MoU was agreed upon it was decided that the best way for the group to operate was to form a steering group (with membership of fisheries and aquaculture research heads and proxies) to meet biannually to discuss jurisdictional research priorities and decide which would form the basis of a cross jurisdictional project. The first meeting was planned for March each year to decide upon cross jurisdictional projects so there is time to do the appropriate consultation with appropriate researchers and stakeholders before submitting an EOI. A second meeting was planned for September each year to evaluate the performance of the partnership and start to discuss what priorities could be put up as 'cross-jurisdictional' for the North so these could be targeted in the next round of FRDC funding.
- It was decided that this process would be more efficient than trying to encapsulate all of the jurisdictional strategic plans into one 'Northern' strategic plan.
- The rest of the workshop was spent looking at the priorities identified by the FRAB for each state to see if there were commonalities that could be used to target cross jurisdictional funding from FRDC.
- It was decided that a project looking at stock structure of important tropical reef species would be put up, led by the NT and supported by Qld and WA. This project directly addressed an NTFRAB priority- Understanding critical aspects of coastal reef species including population structure, site fidelity and susceptibility to barotrauma; while it would provide information that could feed into the WAFRAB priority- Development of wild catch resource allocation arrangements that meet sustainability, equity and optimal use objectives- and QFRAB priority-Development of a framework to transparently evaluate stock assessment models considering data availability, fishery functionality and shared stocks and develop effective and consistent communication strategies to clearly explain model evaluation, function and outputs.
- The workshop was finalised by the group agreeing to get approval of the MoU from department heads.

16. APPENDIX 5: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING GROUP

The steering group will comprise of the following senior representatives of the jurisdictions responsible for fisheries and aquaculture management in WA, NT and QLD:

- Science Leader, Fisheries and Aquaculture, QLD.
- Executive Director, Research, WA.
- Principal Research Scientist, NT.
- Proxies.

The focus for this MoU is the geographic range from Exmouth (WA) to the QLD/NSW border and may also consider broader issues of shared relevance, and where appropriate seek guidance from the national RPN.

A chair will be appointed from within the steering group. The steering group may co-opt others from time to time as it sees fit.

In keeping with the intent and directions of the northern hub (within the national RD&E framework) the steering group will be responsible for implementing the MoU by:

- Developing, reviewing and fostering research collaboration between the parties.
- Determining the membership and terms of reference for any project groups, including overseeing the operations of the project groups.
- Developing and seeking approval for project proposals.
- Co-ordinating, monitoring and reviewing all joint activities, and report to the respective signatories.
- Work with the northern hub to prepare an annual forward plan which identifies indicative activities and projects agreed by the parties to be undertaken during the following year.
- Periodically reviewing the MoU and recommending amendments as required.
- Undertaking responsibility for dispute resolution.
- Actively seeking opportunities for professional development by staff.

The steering group will meet on the following dates to achieve these outcomes:

- Late March 2012 meeting to discuss common research needs and funding EOI.
- September 2012 meeting to finalise proposals.
- March 2013 meeting to discuss common research needs and funding EOI.
- September 2013 meeting to finalise proposals.