



Final Report
for
SE03 – Social Research, Development and Extension
funded under the
**NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SALINITY AND
WATER QUALITY (NAP)**

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1.0 Project statement

1.1 Project title and state identification

Social Research, Development and Extension (SE03)

1.2 Background and rationale

The intent of SE03, one of a suite of Social and Economic State-wide Investment Projects, was to fund partnership-based research, development and extension (RD&E) on key social issues for regional natural resource management (NRM), particularly those likely to impact upon NAP implementation.

Quality social and economic research was considered necessary to support regional communities in their development of regional plans, to meet NAP requirements for the social as well as environmental and economic dimensions to be addressed. As regional plans are implemented, there was a similarly recognised need for continuing research, as understanding the effects of social context and capacity is essential to sustainable natural resource management.

SE03 was one of five social and economic projects developed by a Working Group under the Social and Economic (S&E) suite of State-wide Investment Programs (SIPs). Dr Allan Dale headed the SE&A working group, which included representatives of agencies with natural resource management interests (NR&M, DPI, EPA and State Development). The SE03 project was built on a framework of identified priorities for social science research in natural resource management developed by the Consortium for Integrated Resource Management (CIRM). CIRM operates as a formal linkage network of key officers from four universities (University of Queensland, Griffith University, Central Queensland University and James Cook University), CSIRO and three government departments (Natural Resource Mines and Water, Primary Industries and Fisheries, and Environmental Protection Agency). The social science research priorities of CIRM were developed through state-wide agency and community consultation for the CIRM Social Dimensions of Natural Resource Management position paper, and subsequent project prioritisation and development activities of the CIRM Social Dimensions Working Group through workshops with regional communities and research providers.

Using this framework of priorities, SE03 was a state investment in innovative research that would enhance the knowledge base that can be drawn on for implementation and revision of regional plans for NRM. The SE03 investment supported the conduct of participatory social research of specific relevance and benefit to regional bodies. In addition, SE03 was intended to assist regional bodies to develop strong and enduring research partnerships with quality social research providers. It was also envisaged that research outcomes would be incorporated into the development and implementation of regional NRM plans, and would also inform future Queensland and national NRM program development. In order to achieve these objectives, funds specifically supported:

- communication of social RD&E concepts and priorities with regional bodies;
- the establishment of the expressions of interest and research selection processes;
- the conduct of priority RD&E projects within regions; and
- the dissemination of the lessons learned across NRM regions.

2.0 Achievements against objectives

2.1 Identify the social RD&E needs and expectations

SE03 has its genesis in priorities developed through CIRM. Priorities were developed initially for a position paper on the social dimensions of natural resource management, which was subsequently published and disseminated as *Social and Community Dimensions of NRM (2001)*¹. As this process of prioritisation preceded the current regional arrangements, these priorities were further explored and refined through workshops with regional communities, including NAP regional bodies and other community based natural resource management groups, and select social science researchers. Some of the changes to the initial prioritisation were due to emergent internal differences among NAP regions. As such, the identification of priorities and needs was directed towards establishing a delivery model sensitive to local differences. In the context of regional arrangements, additional social RD&E needs included:

- research implementation and access;
- structural adjustment issues;
- equity issues;
- ecosystem services;
- partnerships in natural resource management and related topics;
- understanding community capacity for NRM;
- indigenous participation; and
- engagement/collaboration issues.

The development of priorities was supplemented where appropriate by social research undertaken in other arenas with implications for community based NRM. For example, the research conducted by Professor David Brereton of the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining on the community based development of social indicators was considered of benefit to community based natural resource management, although not directly addressing NAPSWQ regional body issues.

As the first phase of SE03, a consistent and salient state-wide priorities framework was established, which is briefly described in the following table with examples of indicative project areas:

¹ Aitken, L.. (2001) *Social and Community Dimensions of Natural Resource Management*, CIRM Occasional Paper, State of Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Brisbane. Also available on www.cirm.org.au

	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Indicative project areas (from earlier priority identification with regions and NRM sectors)</i>
Cluster 1	Understanding communities as a basis for achieving sustainable NRM outcomes	For example: Community capacity to undertake target-based NRM
Cluster 2	Structuring and supporting partnerships in NRM	For example: Negotiating rights and responsibilities of participants in NRM collaboration
Cluster 3	Institutional Arrangements	For example: Partnerships under the new regional arrangements (Note- regional interest is in limits and place of partnerships in NRM, given recommendations on developing and sustaining partnerships).
Cluster 4	Supporting community and institutional capacity for natural resource management	For example: Recognizing and supporting existing community capacity for NRM Indigenous engagement
Cluster 5	Addressing the social impacts of resource use and change	For example: Ecosystem services and social capital Rural /urban interface
Cluster 6	Awareness and action to facilitate social change	For example: Adaptive management under the new regional arrangements

An audit depicting the range of existing research was captured in a portfolio, published as a Social Innovations in NRM Handbook (2004)², which has proved a valuable resource for knowledge brokering among regional communities and an enduring reference for researchers and regional bodies for further research and research partnership development. It also identified the important knowledge gaps to be addressed through research funded under the SE03 investment.

Based on the identification of knowledge needs and gaps, an integrated social research program was developed and implemented through several avenues, with SE03 funding contributing to a suite of activities and organisations which included PhD scholarships, LWA funding, and an ARC SPIRT/Linkage project with researchers from the University of Queensland.

2.2 Establishment of processes for selection and evaluation

A workshop with representatives from the five projects in the Social and Economic Statewide Investment Projects (SE01 – 5) was held in early May 2003 to develop selection criteria and a selection process with regional communities and their associated social science research advisors. Multi-criteria analysis was developed

² Richards, C and Aitken L (eds.) (2004) *Social Innovations in Natural Resource Management: A Handbook of Social Research in Natural Resource Management in Queensland*, State of Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Brisbane. Also available on www.cirm.org.au and www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au

for the selection process, to reflect the different needs and capacities across the regions, particularly the differing access to resources for project identification and development.

Through the workshop and an accompanying literature and peer review process, the criteria for the selection of projects and research providers were established. Three mandatory criteria were established initially: that the research objectives correspond to the established priorities framework; that the application for funding demonstrate a research partnership between regional bodies and social scientists with relevant experience and expertise; and that the research demonstrate state-wide significance. Beyond these requirements, the overarching criteria were that the research should be innovative, and be collaboratively developed by the researchers and regional bodies in partnership. In addition, project selection considered the following elements:

- the capacity to include regional people in the project;
- leverage from other funding bodies or access to in-kind research;
- buy-in from a regional partner or industry body;
- inclusion of an implementation plan appropriate to regional bodies;
- outcomes provide social innovations for regional plans;
- outcomes will leverage funding for further research;
- that the proposal is accessible and delivered in ways accessible to all; and
- that the research and its recommendations fit within existing (or at least feasible) institutional frameworks/arrangements.

These elements were captured in the following equally weighted selection criteria:

1. Quality of research proposal (which includes research question, methodologies, researchers, project management)
2. Strength of partnership (must include NAPSWQ regional body, preferably with roles. Beneficial to have other key NRM sectors on the team as well)
3. Relevance of outcomes to all regions (other regions should also benefit from the research)
4. Budget with acceptable limits (beneficial to have other sources of funding, in-kind, even be part of larger projects with access to those resources)

In addition, the criteria development process also identified the need for the selection of projects and providers to involve both regions and providers, to provide support for further development of draft proposals, and to be based on an expert review of proposals and project outcomes. As such, the selection panel for each of the project rounds comprised the following:

1. A senior research program manager from a government department
2. A representative from the CIRM Social Dimensions Working Group
3. A social scientist from a tertiary institution
4. A representative from the Regional Groups Collective

Procedures for evaluation of the SE03 project, the research partnerships and the project outputs were also identified through this process. Elements of the evaluation system included:

- How were the objectives met and how relevant they are to regional priorities?
- How efficient, effective and appropriate was the project overall?
- What impact did the implementation of the project have on landscape outcomes, as well as regional planning and implementation processes?
- How sustainable was the project beyond the NAP funding time span?
- Did the project help to integrate the social dimensions of NRM with the biophysical dimensions?

2.3 Progress the conduct of priority social research and development

Following communication with Regional NRM Bodies, the project called for expressions of interest in the establishment of strategic research partnerships in NAP regions in August 2003. Follow up liaison with Regional Bodies supported project development and selection process. Around a dozen submissions were received, and a working party selected 5 partnerships to submit full proposals and 3 to submit scoping proposals. Other projects were given recommendations for linking with other state level activities, researchers or projects, or were given advice on submitting applications for the next round, in August 2004. Full proposals were being submitted at the end of October, and a working party meeting was convened in mid-November to select successful proposals, followed by endorsement by the Program Implementation Board at its meeting late November. First round projects commenced in mid-2004.

Expressions of interest were invited for a second round of funding in 2004, following a similar process, and commenced in mid-2005. Five projects were funded as part of the second round, including two projects which built on the findings and research outcomes of the first funding round.

A brief synopsis on each of the funded research partnerships is attached as Appendix A.

2.4 Assist to incorporate the outcomes of the social RD&E

Five component activities have been undertaken in order to assist with the communication and incorporation of the outcomes of the investment in social RD&E:

1. **Publication of a research handbook:** The publication *Partnership-based social research for sustainable natural resource management in Queensland (2006)*³ has been released as a compilation of the social research undertaken in the two rounds of research funding.
2. **Two symposiums on social research for NRM:** The first symposium was held in June 2005 to bring together regional bodies and participating researchers to share insights at the conclusion of first round projects and the commencement of several second round projects. The second symposium was conducted in April 2006 after the completion of all projects and with an

³ Whelan, J. ed. (2006) *Partnership-Based Social Research for Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Queensland*. State of Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water, Brisbane. Also available on www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au

expanded audience to share research findings and assess the implications of the research projects. Both symposiums provided the opportunity for completion of several milestones relating to the compilation of research findings and for review of the SE03 project's success in establishing collaborative R&D with regional bodies and R&DE providers.

3. **Conduct of a project evaluation:** An independent evaluation process was undertaken by Dr James Whelan from the Cooperative Research Centre for Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management to evaluate the outcomes of the project with respect to the initial objectives. The resulting evaluation report has been used as the basis of this final report.
4. **Discussions with CIRM:** The implementation of the CIRM RD&E 'priorities framework' through the SE03 has implications for CIRM social research priorities. Consequently, part of the process of communicating research outcomes of SE03 is to liaise with CIRM using the findings from the SE03 research partnerships to inform and evolve CIRM investigations of the social dimensions of NRM.
5. **Ongoing communication and knowledge brokerage strategy:** The communication of SE03 research outcomes includes negotiation with the individual regional groups and the Regional Collective for planning refinement and implementation strategies informed by the findings from SE03 projects. This ongoing role may be facilitated within the knowledge brokerage elements of the Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water at the conclusion of the S&E SIP.

3.0 Outcomes and challenges

3.1 Outcomes

Brokered RD&E research in social innovations: SE03 funded eight research partnerships that, while identified by regional bodies as pivotal to their operations, was not an eligible activity for funding in regional investment strategies. It has therefore been fundamental in increasing the understanding of regional bodies, policy makers and the wider NRM community of the socio-cultural aspects of regional arrangements and NRM, and assisted in addressing social barriers to the effective implementation of the NAP.

Publications and presentations: A series of publications, portfolios, reports and symposiums have been generated as a result of SE03 funding, which document research findings, providers, priorities, tools. The amalgam of communication products produced throughout the course of SE03 have been effective in capturing and disseminating the results of projects, enhancing the profile of social research for sustainable NRM, and providing reference for future social research priorities.

Linkages made with research and development bodies: Through the partnership model, SE03 has contributed to the enhancement of effective

relationships between regional bodies, key sectors and RD&E agencies and institutions.

Knowledge, tools and processes: Each of the projects produced an array of new knowledge, tools and processes for regional bodies to undertake effective social RD&E to assist with NAP implementation. Directly applicable knowledge has been generated in areas including:

- the relationships between social, economic and regulatory pressures, local knowledge, landscape change and NRM;
- benchmarking NRM organisational capacity to engage in NRM;
- landholders utilisation of technical knowledge and NRM adoption;
- factors influencing community members' participation in NRM;
- awareness of value and utility of the repository of local community knowledge;
- landholder awareness of and attitudes towards government policy, political issues, and regional practices
- perceptions of producers' impacts on the landscape; and
- the salience of 'social capital' as something real and assessable, with both positive and negative impacts.

In addition, the projects have implemented and fine-tuned methodologies that are applicable in other regions and increased in-house capacity of regional bodies to undertake activities informed by current best-practice social science.

Social RD&E requirements: Through the SE03 investment, greater clarity about regional NRM priorities, needs, expectations and understanding of social RD&E have been identified. This establishes an important baseline of prior research and consensus from which to develop future investment in social RD&E.

3.2 Unintended Outcomes

Emergence of a community of practice: In building on the foundational work of the CIRM program, SE03 has contributed to the development of an increasingly robust and collegial community of social scientists in Queensland working in the NRM field. SE03 has contributed to this community of practice in particular by providing opportunities for post-graduate students and early career researchers, a number of whom have continued to work with regional bodies beyond the SE03 project cycle.

Identification of regional bodies as RD&E providers: The partnership model trialled by SE03 has imbued regional bodies with the confidence to act as social research and information providers and knowledge brokers in their regions. As part of this, there is an increasing tendency for regional bodies to see the provision of research and development as a core function of their contribution to the statewide NRM. Although the SE03 evaluation surveys revealed that regional bodies were ambivalent about their capacity to undertake social research themselves, in general they felt far better equipped to identify social research needs and priorities.

Improved links between government policy and social RD&E outcomes: The

findings from some of the SE03 research partnerships have enabled the regional bodies in NAP regions to participate in and feedback into policy discussions with greater knowledge and understanding. This is reflected especially in the ongoing development of monitoring and evaluation procedures, and NAP region participation in the cross-regional collaborative approaches of CRAMER and MEWRRG⁴.

Improved understanding of the value and role of social research in NRM:

Regional bodies in NAP regions now have stronger leverage in the development of significant future RD&E partnerships to progress the consideration of social issues in NRM. This derives from a high level of clarity with regards to the capacities and methodologies of social research, and greater understanding to identify knowledge gaps.

High level of endorsement for partnership model: There was a greater than anticipated endorsement for the virtues of a partnership approach for progressing RD&E for NRM. The partnership model was suggested to be conducive to the identification of relevant research problems and questions, to generate insights that would not have emerged through conventional research relationships, and to increase the likelihood of the uptake and adoption of research findings and tools. It was regarded as overwhelmingly effective in ensuring that participating stakeholders were informed and involved throughout the conduct of the research. Both researchers and regional bodies involved in SE03 highly recommended the continuation of a partnership model.

Improved plans and implementation: In the evaluation survey, regional bodies considered that the project findings and outputs have the potential to positively impact on regional plans and implementation, both in their region and elsewhere in Queensland and Australia. Some bodies also identified that their involvement in SE03 influenced the way that the regional body engages consultant researchers to complement or substitute for in-house expertise.

3.3 Challenges encountered

Funding did not support project management roles. As research partnerships were often a part-time activity for team personnel, involvement was often a contested compromise between the competing commitments of regional body staff and researchers. Projects experienced high levels of attrition and project team turn-over, and such discontinuity in social research tends to undermine project momentum, organisational learning and institutional memory.

Those research partnerships which required more investment or time to generate meaningful outcomes sought funding from other sources. Whilst this additional leverage contributes to greater validity, broader scope, wider profile, and increased opportunities for adoption, additional funding sources complicated the capacity of researchers to adhere to contractual commitments and project timelines, especially where these were in conflict with non-SE03 milestone requirements.

⁴ CRAMER – Cross Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group. MERRWG – Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Review Working Group

The research partnership model frequently impeded the capacity of individual projects to achieve state-level significant outcomes. Because partnerships were established at the level of a singular regional body, in some instances the research required to address local needs was not applicable or relevant at a state level.

The timing of the SE03 funding occurred during a phase of intense pressure on regional bodies to rapidly develop governance structures, regional plans and investment strategies. The priority of social research and the capacity of staff to contribute to research partnerships were constrained by these competing pressures.

Processes for the evaluation of SE03, including the engagement of an independent evaluator, were not undertaken until after the projects had concluded. As a result, the partnership reporting arrangements were not effectively integrated into project administration or evaluation requirements. In some instances, further material for evaluation purposes was required of research providers who had completed the research more than twelve months prior.

3.4 Partnership Development

Through the development and conduct of the social research, regional bodies, research providers and other organisations participated in research partnership arrangements. Participating organisations included:

- **Participating regional bodies**
 - Condamine Alliance; Burnett Mary Regional Group; Queensland Murray-Darling Committee; SEQ Catchments; and Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM, and Desert Uplands.
- **Participating research institutions**
 - University of Queensland; Griffith University; Central Queensland University; University of Southern Queensland; James Cook University; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, and the Co-operative Research Centre for Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management.
- **Others participating organisations**
 - Greening Australia, EBC consultants, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and Consortium for Integrated Resource Management.

4.0 Key learnings

4.1 Key learnings

The national interest in SE03 is primarily attributable to the project design features of the project, namely that project supported innovative social science research which was partnership-based, community-driven, change-oriented and aligned to carefully identified priority needs. These aspects of the SE03 project led to significant innovations in social research provision, including:

- high level of regional body ownership of research projects and increased capacity to use social research for improved NRM;
- inclusive, participatory research methods and action-learning models with high levels of NRM stakeholder involvement;
- the generation of knowledge and information embedded in the practice of regional bodies;
- effective, collaborative relationships between regional bodies and RD&E providers and the emergence of a robust community of practice; and
- original findings which built upon a solid foundation of consolidated prior research and established consensus amongst regional bodies, researchers and government agencies.

This model of social science research was highly endorsed by participants in the project. However, the high levels of innovation fostered through this approach needs to be matched with appropriate levels of funding and support. For example, research to support adaptive management can create inconsistencies where the methodologies and the funding frameworks are contradictory with this style of research – change oriented research work tends to require several action-research cycles to be effective.

The effectiveness of an investment in RD&E is commensurate with the extent and quality of the communication of its findings. A greater investment in time and energy to communicate research findings and tools to all regional bodies should have been included as part of the project. Consideration should also have been given to commissioning brief, Plain English publications to communicate planning tools and processes to regional body staff, board members and stakeholders. A number of participants highlighted the need for an interim process to consolidate existing knowledge and information prior to the commissioning of further research to maximise the potential for the uptake of research findings.

4.2 Information gaps

One of the intractable information gaps with regards to SE03 will be the absence of a follow-through or longitudinal evaluation to determine the impact of the SE03 investment in the longer term. Changes in the capacity of regional bodies or in community capacity, the uptake of knowledge and practices, and the links between project findings and biophysical or land use changes require a longer time-frame than the twelve months available under SE03 funding to be meaningful or reliable.

Beyond further funding being made available for longitudinal evaluation, this will remain an unbridgeable knowledge gap.

Social research, especially the kind possible given the comparatively modest investment and timeframes provided by SE03, will tend not to provide definitive answers, but reveal complex questions that need to be further considered and explored. Some of the areas for future research identified by SE03 projects include:

- greater understandings of the dynamics of partnerships
- environmental and social psychology contributions for understanding landholder practice
- understanding and engaging with marginalised stakeholder groups, especially traditional owners, amenity agriculturalists, mining interests, non-NRM-networked stakeholders.
- social and economic future and scenario modelling
- GIS representations of social data and information for NRM planning

4.3 Risks

SE03 has been an influential project in generating interest amongst regional bodies in undertaking research into the social issues that underpin the NAP objectives. This is clearly evident in the number of expressions of interest received in both rounds of funding despite the reported lack of resources and competing priorities for regional bodies. Importantly, SE03 has funded research that, while identified by regional bodies as integral to the success of their core business, was not an eligible activity for funding in regional investment strategies. However, the research partnerships funded under SE03 represent the initial instigation of effective social research for NRM, and not a completed process. There is a significant risk that the knowledge, tools and capacity generated through the SE03 investment will dissipate without some mechanism in place to maintain the momentum. Interim investment in mechanisms for knowledge brokerage, including capacity building, communication products and learning tools and strategies, could be used to mitigate against this risk.

Quality social and economic research is needed to support regional communities in their development of regional strategies, and to implement effective management actions to achieve NAP objectives. As regional plans are substantively implemented and reviewed, there will be continuing need for research, development and extension to incorporate an understanding of the social, community and governance dimensions of NRM. However, several factors will impact on the success of future investments social research projects:

- The introduction of the Australian Research Quality Frameworks (RQF) for measuring and rewarding academic research quality, which devalues applied, partnership-based and longitudinal research in comparison with academic research leading to journal and other peer-reviewed publication outputs.
- Aligning the funding and timelines with the needs and capacities of large RD&E providers.

- Building in-house capacity in regional bodies to participate in community based research projects.
- Establishing effective mechanisms for project management implemented as part of funding framework.
- Communication and knowledge brokerage mechanisms that continue to advocate the importance and relevance of best-practice social science for NRM.

5.0 Implications and future recommendations

Future recommendations for the development and implementation of social research, development and extension for improved natural resource management arising from SE03 are listed below. These recommendations are based on the findings of the independent evaluation of the project, project reports, symposium feedback, document analysis and interviews with project management and support staff. These recommendations fall into three broad areas:

1. Future program direction

- 1.1. Future investment in social research for NRM should make available funding for regional bodies to consolidate existing knowledge and research and develop existing information in addition to funding creation of new knowledge through research.
- 1.2. Investment in future national NRM programs should make funds available for state-level or national research into social and economic issues underpinning natural resource management planning and policy development.
- 1.3. Investment in future national NRM programs should be made into a knowledge system that ensures that the knowledge created through previous investment is captured and shared widely.

2. Future Program Implementation

- 2.1. Future investment in social research should adopt the partnership approach used successfully by SE03, with an additional focus of brokering research partnerships to involve multiple regional bodies if appropriate to the project to enable results to be made relevant on a larger spatial scale.
- 2.2. An investment of between 20% and 25% of project resources and time needs to be made to efforts contributing to communication and adoption of research outputs⁵.
- 2.3. Communication products need to be brief and in plain English and communicate planning tools and processes, final reports and project publications to appropriate audiences.
- 2.4. Evaluation is a critical component of all research and it needs to be built-in to the program design at the early stages of program implementation.
- 2.5. Project contracts should clearly specify and include mechanisms to support partners' adherence to reporting requirements and their active

⁵ See Whelan, J. (2006) *Program Evaluation of the 2004–2006 Social, Research, Development and Extension (SE03) Scheme*. Coastal CRC: Brisbane.

participation in communication and knowledge exchange activities. This is particularly significant for projects with multiple funding sources or in instances where the communication activities may be required after the conclusion of the research project.

2.6. Provision should be made in future research partnership arrangements for quality project management staff for the duration of research.

3. Future Research Priorities

3.1. A follow-through (longitudinal) evaluation of the impact of social research projects should be conducted in 2008 to really understand the value of the research undertaken i.e. if regional NRM bodies have taken up the tools, processes and new knowledge.

3.2. Future research is needed in the peri-urban areas where little is understood about the mix of social and economic drivers for peri-urban land managers including conditions for engaging this sector in natural resource management activities.

3.3. Future research is needed in how trust is built in developing partnerships between the critical players in natural resource management.

3.4. Future social research programs can be usefully supplemented by short training and professional development components to better equip regional body staff with skills and capacities for community-based social research.

6.0 Total project or activity funding

Total project funding details

	Proponent funds	Other leverage contributions 1*	Other leverage contributions 2*	NHT/NAP/NLP funds	Total project funds
Approved	\$450,000			\$450,000	\$450,000
Received	\$450,000			\$450,000	\$450,000

	Proponent funds	Other leverage contributions 1*	Other leverage contributions 2*	NHT/NAP/NLP funds	Total project funds
Expended	\$429,257				\$429,257
Commitments	\$20,000				\$20,000
Unspent	\$743				\$743
TOTAL	\$450,000				\$450,000

***NOTE:** There are still some commitments yet to be paid due to an outstanding final report from one devolved grant. Therefore final instalment of \$20,000 has not been made.

Appendix A

Synopsis of Research Partnerships Funded Under SE03

Project: *Building Healthy Social Networks for Sustainable Natural Resource Management*

Description: This research partnership developed knowledge of what brings people together to work collaboratively on natural resource management issues, how to professionally support that collaboration, and what encourages or impedes the motivation. The researchers consider that this knowledge is needed to ensure the success of new policy initiatives developed to support community based natural resource management. The researchers designed and trialled a set of professional development tools to support and strengthen the capacities of existing network facilitators and community members.

Research team: Queensland Murray Darling Committee, Condamine Alliance and Professor Charlie Zammit (University of Southern Queensland)

Research publication: Grasby, D. (2005) Final report on the SE03 project 'Building healthier social networks for sustainable natural resource management in the Queensland Murray Darling Basin', University of Southern Queensland.

Tools and processes: Community-Readiness for Networking Self-Assessment Toolkit; Focus group script; Standardised, semi-structured interview-schedule; and Generic training packages.

Project: *Understanding communities: strategies for supporting interaction of social and natural systems in the Condamine Catchment*

Description: This partnership conducted research into how communities can meet environmental challenges and how they can develop strategies for sustainable management of their natural resources. The project had a particular interest in the role of farming and town women in rural communities, and the influences they may have and that may be supported for sustainable management of natural resources

Research team: Condamine Alliance and Professor Helen Ross / Ken Keith (University of Queensland)

Research publication: Keith, K. and Ross, H. (University of Queensland), Huggins, J., Hamilton, P. and Jukes, H. (Condamine Alliance), (2006) *Understanding communities: Strategies for supporting interaction of social and natural systems in the Condamine Catchment*, The University of Queensland, Gatton. Keith, K. and Ross, H. (2005) *Understanding Eastern Downs communities: social networks and natural systems*, The University of Queensland, Gatton.

Tools and Processes: Felt marker exercise to map community networks; Quantitative analysis of contact between organisations; Shaper, Trends, Implications, Resolve (STIR) community participation tool; Community profiles

Project: *Regional partnership agreements on prioritised investment strategies for the Burnett – Mary Region (Scoping Project)*

Description: This research was a scoping project, to explore the diversity of natural resource management stakeholders in the Burnett Mary Region and means of developing agreements and partnerships between those stakeholders to work together toward sustainable natural resource management. Such partnerships were considered necessary for a coordinated region wide approach to working toward sustaining and improving the natural resource base.

Research team: Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management Inc and Professor Helen Ross/ Ken Keith

Research publication: Keith, K., Ross, H. and Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (2005) Burnett Mary Regional Partnerships Study: Interim Report, School of Natural and Rural Systems Management, The University of Queensland, Gatton.

Tools and processes: Strategic Perspectives Analysis; Proposed process for partnership formation; Classification of stages of partnership formation; Divergence-convergence-divergence process; Capacity needs assessment; Schema for future negotiation and capacity building with Traditional Owners; Partnership agreement templates.

Project: *Partnerships for Desert Uplands Agreements*

Description: This research was a scoping project, conducted in the Desert Uplands. The project team brought together researchers from Universities, agency staff and regional bodies, to develop a research partnership and a larger project to conduct action research into the disparity between recognition of sustainable land management practices, and use of land management practices.

Research team: Burdekin Solutions Limited trading as Burdekin Dry Tropics Board with Desert Uplands Build-up and Development Strategy Committee (sub-region of Burdekin Dry Tropics Board)

Research Publication: Desert Uplands Build-Up and Development Strategy Committee (2005) Scoping the collaborative roles and responsibilities for researchers to action research the use or non-use of natural resource management practices recognised as sound by pastoralists and others, for the eastern Desert Uplands, Final Report prepared for the Burdekin Dry Tropics Board.

Project: *Catchment Scorecard – Developing Effective monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks for Natural Resource Management – Condamine Alliance*

Description: This research partnership used a Catchment Scorecard tool to assist in developing the capacity of the Condamine Catchment region to develop a robust and cost effective monitoring and evaluation strategy for the regional natural resource management plan.

Research team: CSIRO, Greening Australia and the Condamine Alliance

Tools and processes: Catchment Scorecard

Project: *Uptake of ALMS EMS by QMD Farmers: Benchmarking Socio-Economic Drivers and Evaluating QMDC EMS Program*

Description: The research partnership identified the socio-economic and attitudinal motivations (of QMD farmers) that encourage or discourage the uptake of regionally focused EMSs. The researchers consider that this understanding will help to accelerate the uptake of EMSs. QMDC and Dr Toni Darbas/ CSIRO

Research team: QMDC and Dr Toni Darbas/ CSIRO

Research publication: Darbas, T. and Jakku, E. (2005) Evaluation of the QMDC EMS Program: Interim Report (Draft), CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, Brisbane.

Project: *Oral History and Visual Research methodologies as participatory tools to understand and integrate local and technical knowledge for NRM in the Desert Uplands.*

Description: This partnership explored adoption of NRM practices in a social context, utilizing participatory action research to develop tools to access the knowledge of stakeholders and involve them in the interpretation of data, as key to producing change. The tools of oral history and visual research methods were used to represent stakeholder knowledge and enable understanding of how stakeholders make decisions and take action

Research team: Burdekin Dry Tropics Board, Desert Uplands and a range of people from key NRM sectors, as well as researchers from DPI and other regionally based research institutions.

Project: *Monitoring and evaluating the performance of regional NRM bodies in Qld: Applying a capacity model to the performance of regional groups*

Description: This partnership contributed to developing indicators of capacity with involvement of 6 regional bodies, including pre-testing with 2 non-NAP regional bodies (Wet Tropics, and a CMA in NSW), using a developed theoretical framework for capacity and performance.

Research team: Burdekin Dry Tropics Board and Dr Mark Fenton

Research publication: Fenton, M. and Richert, A. (2006) Monitoring and evaluating the performance of NAPSWQ regional bodies in Queensland, Regional Report No.5, EBC, Townsville.

Tools and processes: Indicators to monitor change in the capacity and performance of NAPSWQ regional bodies.

Project: *Linking the social with the environmental: Identifying community capacity in the SEQ Western Catchments Region*

Description: This research partnership drew upon social capital theory and sense of place theory to understand the complexity and diversity of local communities and their links to environmental actions in particular spatial domains, recognising contextual factors in order to use social capital theory in its complexity in NRM. The outcomes of this research augmented and enhanced community awareness of local environmental issues, with potential for higher levels of community involvement; improved linkages across and within groups at the local and regional levels.

Research team: SEQ Western Catchments and Dr Brad Jorgensen and Dr Jeni Warburton

Research publication: Rickson, S., Warburton, J. and Keith, K. (2006) Linking the social with the environmental: Identifying community capacity in the SEQWCG region, SEQWG/SEQC, Brisbane.

Tools and processes: Workshops to establish community partnerships; Processes to identifying barriers.

Project: *Regional Partnership Agreements on Prioritised Investment Strategies for the Burnett Mary region (phase 2)*

Description: Building on phase one (the Scoping project funded in Round 1), this partnership focused on conducting activities to achieve cross-sectoral agreements. The research provided an understanding of the make-up, interests and capacities of each sector for developing capacity building approaches.

Research team: Ken Keith, Helen Ross and Burnett Mary Regional NRM Group

Research publication: Ken Keith, Helen Ross and Scott Gorringer (2006) Regional partnership agreements on prioritised investment strategies for the Burnett Mary Region. Report for Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management, the University of Queensland, Gatton.