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Land and Water

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA IRRIGATION FUTURES

Providing new knowledge, tools, and processes to support debate
and decision making regarding irrigation in northern Australia



CSIRO Land and Water / CRC IF / NT, QLD, WA & Australian Governments

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

(Updated 27 January 2006)



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NORTHERN AUSTRALIA IRRIGATION FUTURES PROJECT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. SUMMARY

Deciding on whether to irrigate in northern Australia, and if so what irrigation should look like, where it should be located, and how it should be managed, requires improved understanding of river and catchment attributes and the risks associated with irrigation. Various studies are underway to improve that understanding and ensure decisions are made with the best information available about the long term implications for tropical catchments. The Northern Australia Irrigation Futures (NAIF) project is funded by the Commonwealth Government and the Governments of Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory with the aim of providing new knowledge, tools and processes to support debate and decision making regarding irrigation in northern Australia.

The NAIF project comprises of two key phases. Project initiation in 2003 was funded through Land and Water Australia's (LWA) National Program for Sustainable Irrigation (NPSI) and funding through the CRC for Irrigation Futures (CRC IF) for PhD students to undertake research consistent with the NAIF objectives. Subsequent to that, the QLD, NT, WA and Commonwealth Governments provided additional resources to the research by funding a new position of Sustainability Specialist. While the initial research under the LWA/NPSI program concludes in mid 2007, further follow-on work is anticipated as the funding agreement for the Sustainability Specialist position with the NAIF project extends to October 2008.

A Steering Committee (SC) with representation from the key funding partners and expertise in key project areas has been established to help guide the project.

The project schedule under the LWA / CSIRO funding agreement requires the development and implementation of stakeholder engagement and communication strategies to drive and direct activities over the course of the project. The strategies will help manage project risk, protect and enhance the reputation and credibility of the project, and help maximise the benefits from the project.

Following SC approval of changes to the NAIF Stage 2 Work Plan on 1 December 2005, completion of the strategies is to be reported against in the NPSI Milestone 4 Report, due 31 January 2006.

This document sets out the Stakeholder Engagement and Communication (SE&C) Strategy for the NAIF research project. The Strategy identifies the target audiences and segments them by audience type and communication needs. Sub-Strategies are provided for each segment. Status of the strategies will be reported through the NPSI Milestone Report process.

2. CONTEXT

Northern Australia holds an iconic status for many Australians. The interplay between the landscapes, rivers and strongly monsoonal weather patterns has resulted in unique and diverse ecological systems that will need special care to retain their integrity. At the same time, with some 70 per cent of Australia's available fresh water discharging from our tropical rivers, there are pressures from various quarters to extract some of the water for irrigated agriculture. There is, however, widespread recognition that mistakes were made in the past in southern Australia, and internationally, where many irrigation systems are now degraded or degrading. No one wants to see those mistakes repeated in northern Australia.

Deciding on whether to irrigate in northern Australia, and if so what irrigation should look like, where it should be located, and how it should be managed, requires improved understanding of river and catchment attributes and the risks associated with irrigation. Various studies are underway to improve that understanding and ensure decisions are made with the best information available about the long term implications for tropical catchments.

The NAIF project has been established as a collaborative arrangement between the Commonwealth, QLD, NT and WA governments to provide new knowledge, tools and processes, including an overarching sustainability framework, to support decisions on these complex issues. It is anticipated that the project will also provide new information and tools with which to consider the sustainability of new and existing irrigation in southern Australia.

3. THE NAIF PROJECT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The considerable risks associated with the NAIF project are widely acknowledged. The project is attempting to provide a framework to address extremely complex and difficult issues of sustainability on a perhaps unprecedented scale. The project area covers the entire tropics of Australia, which encompasses many local, state and national jurisdictions, numerous complex and in many cases poorly understood hydrological systems, and an extensive range of stakeholders with sometimes competing interests and values.

Extensive changes are taking place in water resources and irrigation management across Australia. The COAG National Water Initiative, which continues and refines the significant progress Australia has made in water resource management since 1994, has focussed political attention and community expectations on shifting towards more sustainable use of our water and land resources. There is, therefore, also widespread acknowledgement of the very considerable benefits that will accrue from a successful NAIF project. Strong project management that includes flexibility to adapt to emerging issues and opportunities is critical to achieving that success.

The NAIF Project Management Framework (Figure 1) has been established to provide project governance and help ensure project success.

The Work Plan provides a detailed account of the approved activities to be carried out by the Project Team and others. The Work Plan includes a Gantt chart showing project activities, timelines and linkages to assist project management on an ongoing basis and against which progress will be assessed.

The SC has responsibility for guiding the project to help ensure appropriate outputs are created and useful outcomes are achieved. The SC is responsible for approving the NAIF Work Plan and changes to it that are required from time to time to address issues and opportunities. Changes to the Work Plan that have a significant impact on the project or its deliverables will also be reflected in the NPSI Milestone Reporting process.

The Sustainability Specialist is responsible for maintaining the NAIF Project Management Framework, in consultation with the Project Team, and for reporting progress to the SC in accordance with the Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

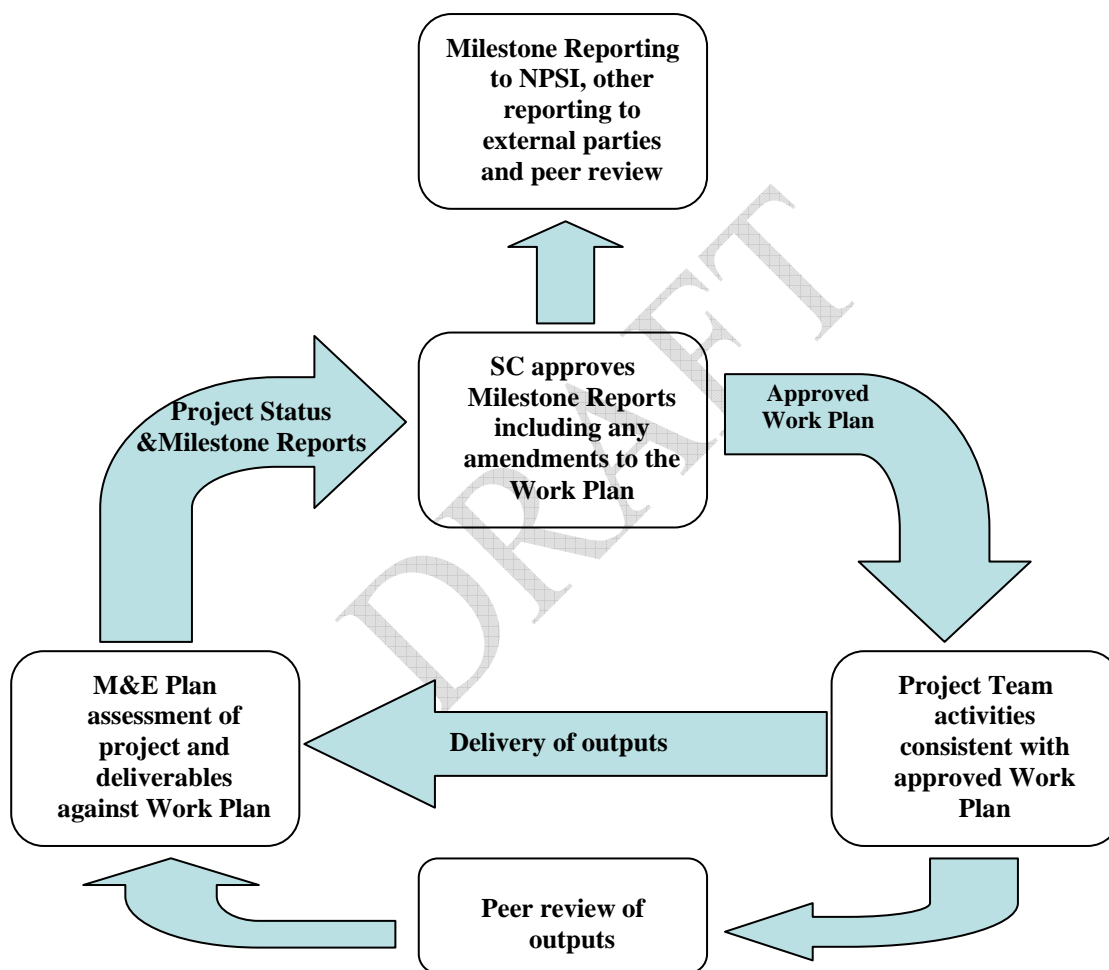


Figure 1. The NAIF Project Management Framework

4. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Project Goal ²

The NAIF project goal is “To provide a sustainability framework that community and policy makers can use to ensure sustainable irrigation in northern Australia”.

The project will contribute to a sustainable irrigation industry in northern Australia that delivers economic and social benefits while minimising environmental impacts.

Project Objectives ³

The NAIF project objectives are to:

1. Delineate key landscape attributes (including soil & water resources, climate, vegetation, rivers, near shore marine environments, & where appropriate links to people, industries, markets) relevant to sustainable irrigation development across northern Australia
2. Use key landscape attributes to develop sustainability indicators and associated management criteria covering a range of scales (field, farm, district, irrigation scheme, catchment) for northern Australia
3. Develop an overall framework that, through their involvement, is embraced by policy makers, regulators, investors and managers, to help ensure irrigation developments in northern Australia are managed in a consistent and sustainable manner
4. Use a number of linked case studies to inform and support development and enable testing of the framework
5. Through provision of a robust framework, contribute tools and knowledge to support considered debate & long term strategic planning for northern Australia & Australia as a whole

5. THE NEED FOR A STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

There is widespread interest and a broad range of views about the future of northern Australia and the role that irrigation might play in that future. As a result, there is considerable nervousness amongst some stakeholder groups that some research projects may generate increased support for irrigation in northern Australia. These concerns have been raised with respect to the NAIF research project.

Since its inception the NAIF project has taken a fairly ad hoc approach to communications. Apart from a flurry of media coverage at its launch in 2003, the project has received little public attention. Most communications about the project have been through existing R&D

² From NAIF Land & Water Sustainable Irrigation Project Application Form, 2003.

³ Objective 3 is slightly different to the original project objectives. The reason for this change is detailed in the NPSI Milestone 4 Report.

communication channels, and have not made their way into the domain of general public information.

By early 2005 it had become apparent that the project had attracted a number of critical opponents who sought to question certain elements of the project. Initially criticisms were made through informal consultations and more recently documented through letters and in the public domain through media interviews and media reports.

A communications risk assessment was undertaken to identify the various sources of communications risk faced by the project and determine both the likelihood and impact of those risks on the project's reputation, credibility and efficacy. Key issues and considerations identified through that assessment are detailed in Section 7 of this strategy.

Effective strategies need to be put in place to engage the many interested parties, at a range of levels of involvement, to ensure that all important issues are captured and the project continues to make good progress. Communication strategies are needed to address not only those individuals and organisations that wish to be directly involved in the project but also those who simply wish to receive information about the research and project findings.

Improved stakeholder and broader community awareness and understanding of the intent, activities and outcomes of NAIF research project are expected as a result of this SE&C Strategy. The Strategy establishes important opportunities for interested parties to put their views forward, to provide important data and information and to benefit from the information, tools and processes that will be generated through this research.

A list of all NAIF project publications and significant workshops and meetings facilitated by or involving NAIF is at Attachment 1. An updated list of NAIF publications, reports and other important information is available at <http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/index.html>.

There is a need to significantly increase the level of stakeholder engagement and project communications through the remainder of the NAIF research project.

6. CURRENT AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The NAIF research project currently has two stages: Project Initiation and Definition; and Development and Testing a Sustainability Framework. If the project is successful in delivering a sustainability framework that is of practical use to decision-makers, including individuals, communities and governments, a third stage supporting the utilisation of the sustainability framework is envisaged. The Stages of the NAIF project are represented in Figure 2.

Stage one of the NAIF research project was launched during the Australian National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (ANCID) conference in October 2003. Stage 1 focussed on engaging a broad range of clients and stakeholders, and formulating a work plan, project team and funding arrangements for Stage 2.

The main outcomes of project activities in Stage 1 were the widespread support for the project and for proceeding with a Stage 2, establishment of a project team and budget for review, and approval by key stakeholders, including the SC, NPSI and CRC IF, for

proceeding with Stage 2. There was strong support for the NAIF research project to be linked to key case study sites.

NAIF PATHWAY TO A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

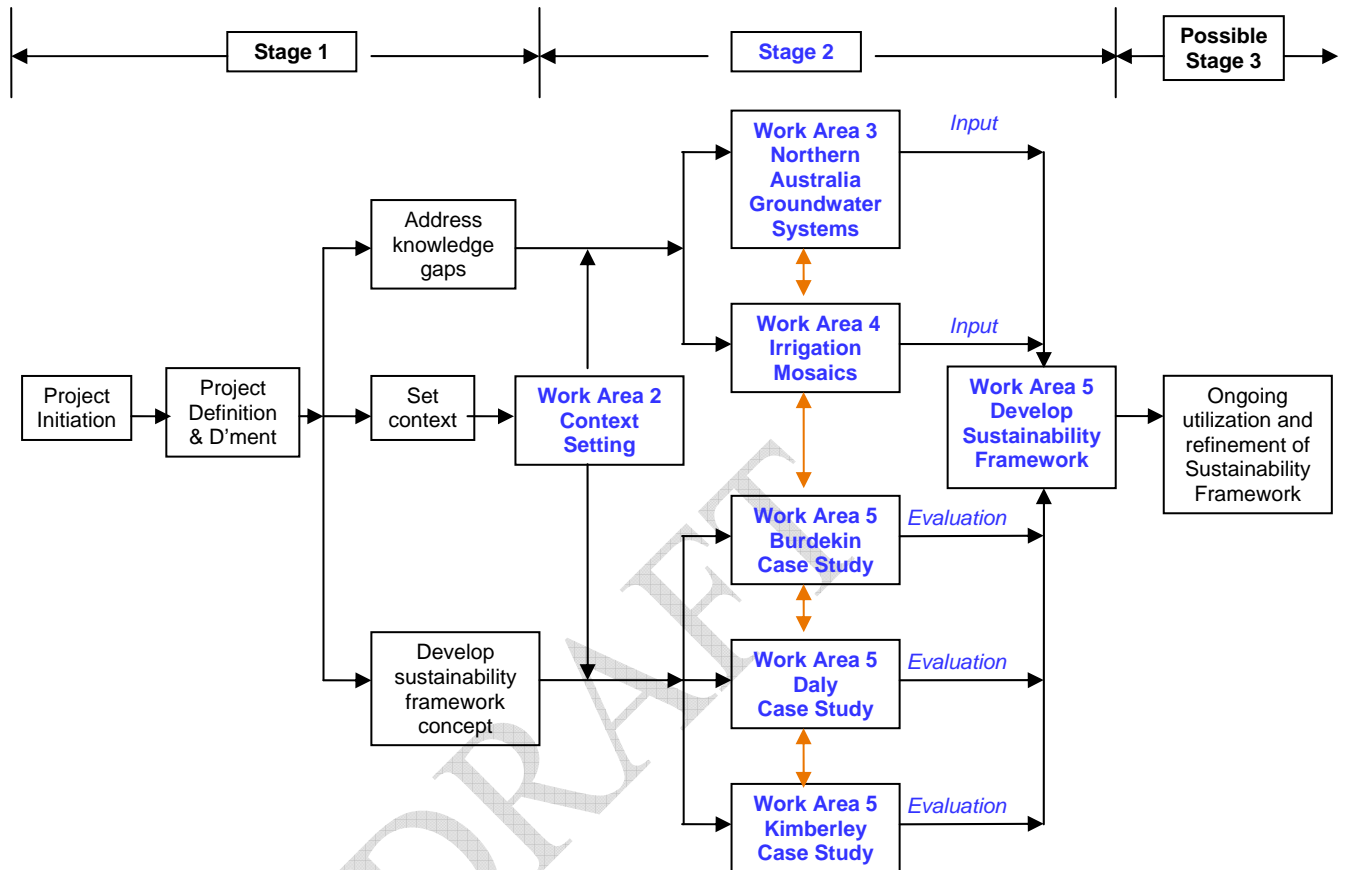


Figure 2. Key stages and components of the NAIF project.

Reviews of Stage 1 noted that because of limited time and resources, the NAIF research project would need to be clear about what it can address and what others need to address. A key to managing the issue would be the development of linkages with other activities and initiatives.

Of particular importance in the development of the Stage 2 Work Plan was a workshop of Australian governments (WA, NT, QLD and Commonwealth) associated with the future of northern Australia and the likely role irrigation could play in that future. This workshop was held in Darwin on 26-27 May 2004 in the presence of some of the key project stakeholders, including NPSI and the CRC IF. The report of the Darwin workshop, and other consultations, is available on the NAIF Project website at http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/documents/Report_Darwin_Workshop_220604.pdf.

The key issues identified at the Darwin workshop were:

- Meeting indigenous needs and taking account of indigenous knowledge
- Institutional arrangements to address scale
- Focus on groundwater and conjunctive use

- Irrigator behaviour and management
- COAG water reform framework
- Role of decision support tools and trade-off analysis
- Move to private investment environment (all states)
- Emphasis on biophysical (vs socioeconomic knowledge needs and gaps)
- Database management
- Communication and delivery.

The key implications for the NAIF project emanating from the workshop were grouped into content and process, and summarised as:

Content

- The importance of independent groundwater systems in the future of irrigation development in northern Australia and as a key component in the biophysical component of the sustainability framework;
- The importance of irrigation system design where indigenous communities are involved;
- The development of more specific produce definitions and delivery systems. This will be important to both developing cash resourcing opportunities as well as providing greater appreciation of benefits and confidence in the project by different stakeholders;
- Clarification of whether the project will develop decision support systems and if so, the types of support systems envisaged;
- Better definition is needed between the interface of the biophysical components with socioeconomics, or with social, economic and institutional components of the framework; and
- There are significant differences in northern Australia regarding the possible scale, shape and design of irrigation developments.

Process

- Significant opportunities are present in linking with other State/Territory and Commonwealth initiatives to both extend the skills available to the project and to enhance its resourcing for meeting its objectives;
- The project may need to focus on key issues should it be limited by cash resources and success with linking with other initiatives;
- A strong communication strategy will need to be developed including the effective engagement with key stakeholders, development of a common language, and the management of expectations. As engagement of communication imperatives can be resource demanding, the resourcing of such communication requirements should be recognised and resources made available to the project;
- The design of specific engagement processes for indigenous communities and the injection into project skills of some appreciation of the indigenous view of landscape and the associated design of irrigation developments; and
- Further clarification will be required in developing useful types of decision support tools and how far the framework extends to addressing the need for tradeoffs between environmental, social and economic benefits and costs across a range of spatial scales.

A primary consideration in finalising the Stage 2 Work Plan was the need to meet a range of SC and stakeholder interests and to ensure the development of the sustainability framework proceeds in a way that provides the best likelihood that it will be both supported and of practical use to individuals, community groups, governments and others making decisions in

relation to the future of irrigation in northern Australia. A case study approach will be taken to achieve this.

The Stage 2 Work Plan was approved by the SC on 1 December 2005. In addition to the development of a sustainability framework, Stage 2 will deliver improved understanding of the hydrology of northern Australia and an understanding of the concepts of irrigation mosaics and their application in northern Australia.

7. KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

A communication risk assessment of the NAIF project was undertaken for the NAIF project. A key issue identified in that assessment for consideration in the development of this SE&C Strategy was public and private criticisms on several aspects of the project including: (i) that it had a pro-development bias; (ii) that it was not effectively engaging or properly managing relationships with stakeholders (eg indigenous groups and environmental NGOs) beyond the immediate project partners; and (iii) that it posed a significant threat to the ecological integrity and biological diversity of Australia's tropical rivers and wetlands because it did not meet the accepted definition of ecologically sustainable development.

Many of the current issues and concerns about the project, particularly the perception of a pro-development bias, can be related to deficiencies with project communications. Specifically, the project has not yet successfully addressed through communications a few core negative perceptions about the project amongst key stakeholders.

Opportunities exist to reduce communications risk by:

- Establishing agreed key messages for the project that address specific stakeholder concerns
- Establishing agreed protocols for communicating with key stakeholders
- Improving document management and
- Improving coordination of communication and engagement activities.

Projects with a high-risk profile and a complex network of stakeholders and interest groups such as NAIF, require a comprehensive communications strategy in order to manage communications-based risk and protect and enhance the reputation and credibility of the project. This confirms the need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy that will drive and direct communications over the life of the project and that is integrated with a stakeholder engagement strategy.

8. AIMS OF THE NAIF PROJECT

The aim of the NAIF research project is to provide new knowledge, tools and processes to support debate and decision making regarding irrigation in northern Australia.

The project will deliver a sustainability framework for use by policy makers, regulators, community organisations, managers, and investors to support more robust debate and improved decision making regarding if and where to irrigate in northern Australia, what tropical irrigation systems could look like, and how they should be managed to meet social,

cultural, environmental and economic sustainability objectives. The sustainability framework will also allow assessment of the performance of existing irrigation areas to help determine if and what changes may be necessary to make them more sustainable.

The project will draw on past experience of irrigation and development new knowledge of groundwater systems and irrigation mosaics to build understanding of risks associated with irrigation and of key landscape attributes critical to sustainable irrigation in northern Australia. This knowledge will be used to provide the information required in the framework.

9. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION AIMS

The aim of this SE&C Strategy is to significantly increase stakeholder and community awareness of the NAIF research project intent, activities and outputs in order to improve stakeholder engagement, develop greater community support for the project and maximise project benefits.

10. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The behavioural guidelines for this SE&C Strategy are:

Clarify the objectives and goals of engagement and evaluate the appropriateness of techniques.

Understand related processes and be clear about how the engagement fits in with official decision-making processes.

Manage information in an accessible way without using complex concepts or jargon.

Support the development of capacity in understanding and applying the research concepts.

Ensure transparent identification of stakeholder groups and invitations to be involved.

Build trust with and between participants for the long term.

Allocate sufficient time to develop process, build partnerships and strengthen networks.

Encourage feedback and ensure flexibility to adapt to that feedback.

11. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The main stakeholder engagement and communication objectives are:

- Awareness:* To raise overall awareness of the project, its intent, activities and outputs.
To promote the benefits and positive aspects of the project.
To raise awareness of the linkages between the NAIF project and other research projects.
To ensure stakeholders are aware of the project and how to be involved.
- Attitudes:* To reduce communications risks by encouraging a positive view of the project.
To manage expectations of what the project can and can't deliver.
- Behaviours:* To encourage public demonstrations of support for the project.
To encourage key stakeholders to engage in project activities.
To provide tools for project partners and collaborators to communicate the project intent, activities and outputs.

12. STRATEGIC APPROACH

Because of the iconic status of northern Australia to so many Australians, every audience for communicating messages about the NAIF project is also a stakeholder or potential stakeholder. It is difficult and unnecessary to separate strategies for communication from strategies for stakeholder engagement in these circumstances and, consequently, the approach taken is to establish a combined SE&C Sub-Strategy for each of the identified Stakeholder Groups.

Key strategies are:

- Building direct, positive relationships wherever possible
- Utilising media and stakeholder networks where direct relationships are not possible
- Building strong linkages between NAIF and other relevant research and researchers
- Facilitating information sharing and information sharing networks
- Demonstrating how NAIF is contributing to a broad range of research and societal goals
- Harnessing third party advocates to champion the research
- Using a matrix of communication tools in a sustained program

13. STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The following key stakeholders and target audience groups have been identified at three levels. Details of individuals and organisations in each of these groups are drawn from a NAIF Project Stakeholder Network database, which is continually updated.

Level 1 Stakeholders

Group 1 – Key R&D funding and partner organisations

- CSIRO
- Land and Water Australia
- National Program for Sustainable Irrigation
- CRC for Irrigation Futures
- Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Northern Territory Department of Environment, Natural Resources and the Arts
- Western Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Ord Irrigation Cooperative
- Sunwater
- Project Team

Level 2 Stakeholders

Group 2 – Government

- Relevant Commonwealth Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Queensland Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Western Australian Government agencies and Ministers
- Northern Australia local governments

Group 3 – Researchers

- CSIRO
- Universities
- Cooperative Research Centres
- Commonwealth Government
- Queensland Government
- Northern Territory Government
- WA Government

Group 4 – Non-government interest groups

- Environmental NGOs
- Indigenous organisations
- Irrigation industry organisations
- Fishing NGOs

Group 5 – Case Studies

- Case study area governments, researchers, non-government interest groups, general community and media.

Level 3 Stakeholders

Group 6 – General community

- General scientific community
- Northern Australian residents
- Other Australian residents

Group 7 – Media

- National media
- QLD, NT and WA state media
- QLD, NT and WA regional and local media

14. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Steering Committee

The SC was established on 11 March 2004 to help ensure appropriate outputs are created and useful outcomes are achieved. The SC is the primary mechanism for setting the strategic direction of the project, for providing guidance in adapting to emerging priorities, and for engaging and communicating with the key project funding and partner organisations. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Group 1.

Stakeholder Reference Group

The NAIF is intended to be a primary mechanism for linking with key stakeholders. Attempts will be made to ensure that the SRG is representative of the key stakeholders but, where this is not possible attempts will be made to secure members that have an understanding of likely stakeholder views on critical issues. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Group 4.

NAIF Stakeholder Network

A Stakeholder Network database of people who wish to be involved or kept informed about the NAIF project has been established. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Groups 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Government briefings

As major project funding partners, senior management briefings will be provided for Commonwealth, QLD, NT and WA government Ministers, their staff and agencies. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Groups 1 and 2.

Publication of scientific research

All key project reports are reviewed and published through normal CSIRO pre-publication procedures and external science review processes for journal/conference publications. New publications are advertised on the NAIF website and in the NAIF Newsletter. Publications will include a summary Research Bulletin of the project and its key findings of relevance to end users at project completion. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Group 3.

Meetings with key stakeholder representatives

The development of personal relationships between NAIF and key stakeholders is critical to

generating understanding and trust. Meetings with key stakeholder representatives play a critical role in this. Where possible and necessary, meetings will be supported with exchange of correspondence confirming issues discussed, agreements reached and outstanding matters for further consideration. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Group 4.

Presentations, exhibitions and posters

Presentations, exhibitions and posters at conferences, workshops etc are an important mechanism for directly informing larger numbers of key stakeholders through their organisations. Presentations, exhibitions and posters are on the NAIF project in general and on specific components of the research, depending on the needs of the audience and the project. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Group 4.

Newsletters

The Stakeholder Network receives regular updates on NAIF project. A Northern Australia Irrigation Futures Newsletter will be created and distributed bi-monthly. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Groups 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Web site

The NAIF project website has been established and is updated regularly. It contains details of the project, project reports and publications, hot links to other relevant projects, programs and organisations, and provides an opportunity for feedback to the project team. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Groups 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Media releases and press advertisements

Media releases are used to reach local, regional and national audiences at important milestones in the project. Advertisements will generally only be used to support information distributed through stakeholder networks, for example supporting calls for expression of interest in the Stakeholder Reference Group. This tool is particularly relevant to Stakeholder Groups 6 and 7.

Key messages and Q&A

Key messages and a series of questions and answers (Attachment 2) have been prepared to help project spokespeople and other stakeholders deliver consistent messages and improve understanding of the NAIF research project. This tool is relevant to all Stakeholder Groups.

15. SUB-STRATEGY 1: KEY R&D FUNDING AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Key R&D Funding and Partner Organisation Stakeholders

- CSIRO
- Land and Water Australia
- National Program for Sustainable Irrigation
- CRC for Irrigation Futures
- Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Northern Territory Department of Environment, Natural Resources and the Arts
- Western Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- NAIF Project team

Primary Objectives of Sub-Strategy

The primary objectives of engaging and communicating with the key R&D Funding and Partner Organisations are:

- To report on project progress and direction
- To seek guidance on project direction
- To support project outcomes by encouraging use of project outputs
- To demonstrate value for money from funding contributions

General approach

The SC is the primary mechanism for setting the strategic direction of the project, for providing guidance in adapting to emerging priorities, and for engaging and communicating with the key project funding and partner organisations. Terms of Reference for the SC are at Attachment 3.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

The SC was established on 11 March 2004 to provide strategic advice and guidance to the project to ensure that it secures adequate resourcing to develop, test and deliver an acceptable framework to stakeholders to ensure sustainable development, management and improvement of irrigation systems in tropical Australia. The SC meets in person occasionally, with other meetings held by telephone conference call. SC members will be provided Project Status Reports and draft NPSI Milestone reports one month prior to forwarding Milestone Reports to NPIS. The SC will receive updates on relevant specific issues at each SC meeting.

In addition to the SC meetings, the Principal Investigator and Sustainability Specialist interact regularly with SC members, and direct personal contact between the Project Team and SC members is expected on an as needs basis.

Key Issues

At inception, it was recognised that the composition of the SC may need to adapt over time. The current composition has been questioned by some stakeholder groups who consider that it has insufficient expertise in indigenous and environmental issues. The Steering Committee composition will be reviewed against the Terms of Reference to determine whether changes should be made to address the concerns raised.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Key R&D Funding and Partner

Organisations is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement & Communication Plan for Key R&D Funding and Partner Organisations

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Steering Committee meetings	Chairman/Di Popham	As required, but at least quarterly
Review of Steering Committee membership and any proposed changes to SC agreed	Keith Bristow / Jeff Camkin/SC	31/3/06
Standard Q&As available for use by all SC members	Jeff Camkin	14/2/06
Summary of the NAIF project as a PowerPoint presentation available for use by all SC members	Jeff Camkin	31/3/06
Project Status Reports & NPSI Milestone Reports to SC	Jeff Camkin	1/4/06, 31/10/06 & 30/6/07
Presentation to NPSI Investors Forum	Keith Bristow	14/10/06 & October 2007

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16. SUB-STRATEGY 2: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Government Relations Stakeholders

- Relevant Commonwealth Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Queensland Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies and Ministers
- Relevant Western Australian Government agencies and Ministers
- Northern Australia local governments

Primary Objectives of Sub-Strategy

- To ensure all levels of Government have sufficient understanding of the NAIF project
- To generate support for the project
- To support project outcomes by encouraging use of project outputs

General approach

Briefings by SC members and the project team are the main method of direct engagement with relevant federal, state and local government agencies and their Ministers.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

Opportunities for personal briefings of Ministers, their advisors and key agency staff will be sought through the life of the project. Letters providing updates on the NAIF project and seeking face to face briefings will be forwarded to Ministers and relevant agencies at regular intervals.

Key Issues

Ministers and senior agency staff are inevitably busy and they may need to be convinced of the benefits of receiving briefings on the NAIF project. SC members will assist the project team in creating opportunities for formal briefings for relevant Minister and their agencies briefings and will take other opportunities as they arise.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Government Relations is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Government Relations

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Briefings for Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on project plan, key messages & communication and engagement strategies	KB &/or JC & SC member	30/06/06 & 30/06/07
Briefings for QLD Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, as above	KB & GC	30/06/06 & 30/06/07
Briefings for NT Minister Natural Resources, the Environment and Heritage, as above	KB &/or JC & IS	30/06/06 & 30/06/07
Briefings for WA Minister for Water Resources and Minister Assisting, as above	JC & SC member	30/06/06 & 30/06/07
6 monthly letter from SC Chairman to update above Ministers on project status	Jeff Camkin	Feb. & August annually
Separate briefings for relevant NT, QLD and WA government agency staff	SC members to arrange	6 monthly
Letter from SC Chairman to QLD, WA and NT Minister's and Department's of Local Government advising them of the NAIF project.	Jeff Camkin	31/3/06

17. SUB-STRATEGY 3: RESEARCHERS

Researcher Stakeholders

- CSIRO
- Universities
- Cooperative Research Centres
- Commonwealth Government
- Queensland Government
- Northern Territory Government
- WA Government

Primary Objectives of Sub-Strategy

- To identify and cultivate linkages between NAIF project and other research projects and programs
- To raise awareness of NAIF outputs for use in other research projects.

General approach

The general approach to engaging and communicating with other researchers will be through existing research networks.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

All key NAIF project research will be published through normal CSIRO procedures and will be available to a broad national and international audience. Existing networks of researchers and research organisations will be utilized to raise awareness of the NAIF project and opportunities for presenting NAIF research to conferences will be sought on an ongoing basis. Regular meetings of leaders of key projects across the north (NAIF, Tropical Rivers Inventory etc) will be established to share knowledge, ensure relevant linkages are built between projects and duplication is minimised. Summaries of the meetings will be posted on the websites for each project to inform the wider community about the collaboration and outcomes.

Key Issues

Some stakeholders have expressed concerns about potential for contradiction between the LWA Tropical Rivers Inventory and Assessment Program (TRIAP) and the NAIF project. Meetings to ensure strong linkages and collaboration between these projects and Charles Darwin University have been established on a regular basis, chaired by NAIF.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Researchers is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Researchers

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Chair NT research collaboration tele-meetings (NAIF, TRIAP, CDU, NT Dept. of NRETA)	Jeff Camkin	Bi-monthly
Tropical Rivers Program membership on NAIF Steering Committee and vica versa	Keith Bristow	Ongoing
Publication of NAIF reports in scientific journals	Keith Bristow	Various
Presentations at key scientific conferences, workshops and meetings as opportunities arise	Keith Bristow	Various
Regular communications between NAIF and SKI proposal proponents	Keith Bristow	Various

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18. SUB-STRATEGY 4: NON-GOVERNMENT INTEREST GROUPS

Non-Government Interest Group Stakeholders

- Environmental NGOs
- Indigenous organisations
- Irrigation industry organisations
- Fishing NGOs
- Pastoral industry organisations

Primary Objectives of Sub-Strategy

- To identify issues of importance to key stakeholders for consideration in NAIF activities

General Approach

The main approach to stakeholder engagement and communication with non government interest groups is the development of direct relationships between NAIF project team and representatives of stakeholder organisations.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

The SRG is a primary mechanism for engaging and communicating with key stakeholder groups and for seeking feedback on the NAIF research and future research. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the SRG is at Attachment 4. The SRG will provide an important point of reference for feedback on current research and guidance on future research.

Opportunities for the project team to meet with representatives of key stakeholder organisations will be taken throughout the course of the project. The purpose of these meetings will be to update stakeholder organisations on progress, to identify issues that need to be addressed and, where appropriate, to encourage membership on the SRG.

Key Issues

Stakeholder Reference Group – A request for Expressions of Interest for membership of the SRG was advertised nationally in August 2005. The SC subsequently endorsed all nine nominations as members of the SRG. While the current members of the SRG bring significant knowledge and skills relevant to the NAIF project, some key stakeholder groups remain unrepresented. Membership of the SRG will remain open and the unrepresented key stakeholder groups will continue to be encouraged to join.

Indigenous stakeholder needs - The specific needs of indigenous communities in stakeholder engagement and communication are recognised. The Northern Land Council is represented on the SRG and the project team will also work with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance to address the need for effective engagement with indigenous communities.

ANCID 2006 – The Australian National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage Annual Conference will be held on 15-18 October 2006 in Darwin. The Conference will focus national attention on irrigation in northern Australia and should draw participants or interest from a range of key stakeholder groups. It provides a major opportunity to raise awareness of the NAIF project. A face to face meeting of the SRG and other NAIF activities will be developed around the Conference.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Non-Government Interest Groups is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Non-Government Interest Groups

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<i>General</i>		
Presentations at the following forums: - ANCID 2006 -	- TBA	October 2006
<i>SRG</i>		
Establish SRG	Keith Bristow	30/09/05
Review of SRG membership	Jeff Camkin	28/2/06
Encourage unrepresented sectors to join SRG	Jeff Camkin	Ongoing
Face to face meeting during ANCID conference	Jeff Camkin	18/10/06
<i>Indigenous community needs</i>		
Work with SRG and NAILSMA to identify and address specific needs of northern aboriginal communities as they relate to NAIF project engagement and communication	Jeff Camkin	
<i>Environmental NGOs</i>		
Meet with NAEA to address and resolve any misunderstandings about the NAIF project	Keith Bristow / Jeff Camkin et al	By 30/4/06
<i>ANCID conference</i>		
Proposed NAIF activities during ANCID conference to SC for approval	Jeff Camkin	31/05/06

19. SUB-STRATEGY 5: CASE STUDIES

It is essential that the research project deliver a sustainability framework that is demonstrably a practical tool. Three case study sites are proposed to help achieve this. The three case study sites will provide insights to inform the development of the sustainability framework.

The case studies will also:

- Allow the NAIF project to link closely with and draw from other activities taking place in the case study areas
- Help ensure that the sustainability framework can provide for the incorporation of ecological, social, economic and cultural values by those wishing to use the framework
- Ensure that risks and limitations of irrigating in northern Australia are clearly identified
- Ensure the Stakeholder Reference Group has the opportunity to understand the direct relevance of decisions about irrigation in northern Australia to the future of those individuals and communities.

Case Study Stakeholders

Level 1, 2 and 3 stakeholders relevant to each case study area. These stakeholders will be identified in conjunction with the SC member for each jurisdiction.

Primary Objective of Sub-Strategy

To ensure that practical issues of importance to local stakeholders are identified for inclusion in the development of a sustainability framework, thereby ensuring that it is of practical use.

General Approach

Existing state/territory government networks will be used to identify relevant stakeholders and issues of importance to them. Where possible, existing government processes will be used as the mechanism for stakeholder engagement in each case study area.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

The stakeholder engagement and communication tools for each case study will be developed in collaboration with the SC member from that state government jurisdiction and outlined in the Case Study work plans.

Key Issues

The success of the case studies will be very dependent on contributions from the relevant state governments and on stakeholder engagement in the case study areas. Operational Plans and Case Study Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plans are being developed in consultation with the relevant SC member from each of the QLD, NT and WA governments.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Case Studies is given in Table 5.

Table 5: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Case Studies

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Finalise QLD Case Study Operational Plan and Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan	Jeff Camkin/QLD SC member	14/2/06
Finalise NT Case Study Operational Plan and Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan	Jeff Camkin/NT SC member	28/02/06
Finalise WA Case Study Operational Plan and Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan	Jeff Camkin/WA SC member	28/02/06

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20. SUB-STRATEGY 6: GENERAL COMMUNITY

General Community Stakeholders

- General scientific community
- Northern Australian residents
- Other Australian residents

Primary Objective of Sub-Strategy

To raise awareness of the NAIF research project intent, activities, outputs and benefits across Australia.

General Approach

The use of mass media and electronic information will be the primary mechanism for reaching the largest possible audience in the general community across Australia.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

A Northern Australia Irrigation Futures Newsletter will be produced every two months for distribution through the Stakeholder Network. Brief simple language fact sheets will be prepared to summarise key project outputs, such as technical reports.

Key Issues

Nil.

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for General Community is given in Table 6.

Table 6: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for General Community

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Establish and maintain Stakeholder Network database	Di Popham	Completed
Distribute NAIF Project Newsletter to Stakeholder Network	Jeff Camkin / Di Popham	Quarterly
Fact sheets on key project research activities	Jeff Camkin	According to Work Plan
Maintain NAIF website with regular updates on project plan, activities, outputs and communications.	Keith Bristow/Di Popham	Ongoing

21. SUB-STRATEGY 7: MEDIA

Media Stakeholders

- National media
- QLD, NT and WA state media
- Regional and local media

Primary Objectives of Sub-Strategy

To provide opportunities for national, state and local media to present positive stories about the NAIF project intent, activities, outputs and benefits.

General Approach

The general approach to engagement with media stakeholders is to proactively prepare a range of products relating to key project activities and milestones, and to respond to media opportunities as they arise.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Tools

A list of standard NAIF project Q&As will be available for the SC and project team to respond to media interest. There will be at least one media release every six months about the status of the project, key milestones, key issues or project outputs.

Key Issues

The following opportunities/options for media statements have been identified:

- Item on changes to SC membership to increase environmental and indigenous expertise – 1st quarter 2006
- Item on commencement of case studies – 2nd quarter 2006
- Item on research leading to report *Overview of Irrigation in northern Australia* – 3rd quarter 2006
- Item on NAIF activities at ANCID Conference – 4th quarter 2006
- Item on research leading to report *State of knowledge of groundwater flow systems in northern Australia* – 4th quarter 2006
- Item on research leading to report *Current understandings of irrigation mosaics* – 1st quarter 2007
- Item on research leading to report *Research findings, modelling results and applications for irrigation mosaics in northern Australia* – 2nd quarter 2007
- Item on completion of case studies – 2nd quarter 2007
- Item on release of NAIF Final Report / sustainability framework – 3rd quarter 2007
- Other opportunities that arise as the project progresses.

Potential media target list

The following list identifies potential targets for proactive media activity. For each individual media activity, a more refined target list will be produced to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of each target to the media activity.

- National Newspapers - The Australian, The Australian Financial review
- Regional and Country Newspapers – eg the Bowen Independent, The Northern Miner (Charters Towers), Townsville Bulletin, Katherine Times, Broome Advertiser and Kimberley Echo

- Local newspapers in each case study area
- Metropolitan Newspapers - The Daily Telegraph, The Sydney Morning Herald, Herald Sun, The Age, The Courier Mail, The Advertiser, The West Australian
- Trade - Water (Australian Water Association), Irrigation Australia, Habitat Australia, Ecos Magazine
- Radio - ABC, ABC Country Hour and local radio in each case study area

The Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Media is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan for Media

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Q&As provided to SC and project team	Jeff Camkin	31/03/06
Communications protocols and key messages approved by SC	Jeff Camkin	28/02/06
At least one media statement every 3 months	Jeff Camkin	Each financial quarter
Agree communications tactics and protocols with ANCID, LWA and NPSI prior to ANCID conference in October 2006	Jeff Camkin	30/06/06
Maintain watching brief on issues of interest (media/stakeholder) and report relevant issues to SC	Jeff Camkin	Ongoing
Direct contact will be made with key northern Australia media to explain the intent, activities and deliverables of the NAIF project	Jeff Camkin	Ongoing

22. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROTOCOLS

Responsibilities

Role of the Steering Committee

The role of the Steering Committee with respect to stakeholder engagement and communications will be to:

- Review and agree on the SE&C Strategy
- Facilitate briefings for relevant Government Minister's and their agencies
- Facilitate awareness
- Decide on a communications approach to significant issues as they arise and are identified by the communications manager
- Approve media statements (note – CSIRO media approval processes will also need to be met)
- As individuals, assist the development of relationships between the project and key stakeholders.

Role of the Stakeholder Reference Group

The stakeholder reference group is a key to how we manage our external relationships. The aim of the SRG is to facilitate greater understanding about the project with stakeholders and providing a mechanism for them to give feedback. We do not expect participants to necessarily agree with or support the project and the aim is not to convince members of the SRG to support or endorse the project. The SRG will provide advice on the project, in particular, how to convert the learnings from local case studies into a framework that has applicability across northern Australia.

Role of the Principal Investigator

Dr Keith Bristow, the Principal Investigator, has overall responsibility for the NAIF project. Dr Bristow will have primary responsibility for Sub-Strategy 3 – Researchers.

Role of the Sustainability Specialist/Communications Manager

Jeff Camkin will assist Dr Bristow in building and maintaining effective engagement and communication with various Australian, WA, NT and QLD Government Departments, key local Governments, and various environment and community groups, including regional NRM bodies.

Responsibility for managing communications should rest with a single point of contact within the Project Team. As project communications manager, Jeff Camkin will provide that point of contact for the NAIF project.

The communications manager will be responsible for:

- Making decisions about media interview opportunities
- Identifying forward-looking media and communications opportunities
- Developing and managing the implementation of the SE&C Strategy
- Drafting media statements
- Drafting project updates
- Drafting fact sheets and summary presentations (as PowerPoint presentations)

- Ensuring compliance of Project Team with communication protocols (including CSIRO and other partner protocols if appropriate).

Project Media Spokesperson

The number of spokespeople should be limited to as few as possible to minimise the risk of straying off-message and to provide a sense of continuity to the project. Where media communications are proactively developed or where there is sufficient time to develop a written statement, Jeff Camkin will typically be the media spokesperson as communications manager for the project. Dr Keith Bristow will be the spokesperson where the focus is on detailed scientific issues. Either party, as appropriate, will take the role of media spokesperson where short timeframes are available prior to responding or where local content is particularly important (for example, where there is media interest following a meeting or presentation. Where possible, the Communications Management Team will discuss the proposed responses.

Approvals

Media Statements

Require approval of the Communications Management Team, which consists of the SC Chairman Greg Claydon, Dr Keith Bristow and Jeff Camkin

NAIF web page updates

Additions and changes to be approved by Dr Keith Bristow and Jeff Camkin

Scientific publications

To be approved by normal CSIRO procedures. Publications which include potentially sensitive material of a scientific or political nature require the approval of the communications team. SC members will be given the opportunity to comment prior to publication of material that is scientifically or politically sensitive.

Project updates and communiqués

Project updates and communiqués are to be approved by the Communications Management Team.

Correspondence

Correspondence of a general nature will be approved by Dr Keith Bristow or Jeff Camkin. Correspondence that includes or responds to potentially sensitive material of a scientific or political nature will require approval of the Communications Management Team. SC members will be given the opportunity to comment on such correspondence.

23. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The NAIF Monitoring and Evaluation Plan requires reports against the SE&C Strategy to be included in each Milestone Report, including evidence of NAIF taking a proactive approach to identify key audiences, issues and strategies to address them.

This SE&C Strategy itself will be considered by the SC on 14 February 2006. The Strategy will be reviewed informally on an ongoing basis and formally during January 2007.

Recommendations from the review will be put to the SC for consideration at its first meeting in 2007.

24. CONFIDENTIALITY

This SE&C Strategy will be publicly available on the NAIF project website. The Strategy is subject to the Copyright and Disclaimer information on page 2.

25. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

The following are provided as attachments to this report:

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
Attachment 1	Stakeholder engagement and communication activities to date
Attachment 2	Key messages and Q&A
Attachment 3	Steering Committee Terms of Reference
Attachment 4	Stakeholder Reference Group Terms of Reference

Updated 6-1-05

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES TO DATE

NAIF Publications:

Kellett, B.M., Walshe, T. & Bristow, K.L. 2005. Ecological Risk Assessment of the Wetlands of the Lower Burdekin. CSIRO Land and Water Technical Report No. 26/05. 30 pp.

Bristow, K.L. & S. MacKinnon. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures (NAIF) - Research, Frameworks and Sustainability. IAA Journal, Vol 20 No. 2 pp. 54-55.

Kellett, B., Bristow, K.L. & P.B. Charlesworth. 2005. Indicator Frameworks for Assessing Irrigation Sustainability. CSIRO Land and Water Technical Report No. 01/05

NAIF Presentations at Conferences, Workshops and Meetings

Bristow, K.L., Petheram, C. & Kellett, B.M. 2005. Irrigation in northern Australia – is it worth the risk? ASA-SSA national Conference, 6-10 November, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA (Agron. Abstr. 2005 CD-ROM)

Kellett, B.M., Bristow, K.L., Moore, G., Beilin, R. and F.h.s. Chiew. 2005. Reflecting on stakeholders' perceptions in an ecological risk assessment workshop. In: Proceedings of the Environmental Research Event Conference. 29th November – 2nd December, 2005, Hobart, Tasmania.

Bristow, K.L. & C. Petheram. 2005. Irrigation and groundwater systems in northern tropical Australia. ANCID Conference, Mildura, Victoria (24-26 October 2005)

Bristow, K.L. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. Land and Water Australia Sustainable Irrigation Program Investors Forum, Mildura, Victoria (23 October 2005)

Bristow, K.L. 2005. The Northern Australia Irrigation Futures Project. Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (ERISS), Darwin, Northern Territory (7 October 2005)

B.M. Kellett & K.L. Bristow. 2005. Risk and Resilience for Adaptive Irrigation Planning. CRC for Irrigation Futures Annual Forum, Mildura, Victoria (19-21 September 2005)

Bristow, K.L., C. Petheram & B.M. Kellett. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures: An update. CRC for Irrigation Futures Annual Forum, Mildura, Victoria (19-21 September 2005)

Bristow, K.L., Jolly, P., Smith, I., Petheram, C. & P.B. Charlesworth. 2005. Groundwater systems and their potential role in irrigation in northern Australia. Workshop on Groundwater Surface Water Interaction in the Tropics, Darwin, NT, Australia (26-27 May 2005)

- Kellett, B.M. Bristow, K.L., Charlesworth, P.B., Malano, H., Moore, G. & F. Chiew. 2005. Accounting for stakeholders' assumptions and cultural understandings in environmental risk assessment for irrigation: A groundwater nitrate case study. Irrigation Association of Australia (IAA) Conference on Restoring the Balance. Townsville, QLD, Australia (17-19th May 2005)
- Bristow, K.L., Charlesworth, P.B., Thayalakumaran, T., Narayan, K.A. & C. Petheram. 2005. Water and irrigation management on the Burdekin coastal floodplain. OzWater WaterShed Conference, , Townsville, QLD, Australia (5-7th May)
- Bristow, K.L. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. Northern Australia Environment Alliance, Brisbane, QLD (22 February 2005)
- Kellett, B.M. 2005. A Sustainability Framework to Guide Irrigation Development in Northern Australia. BBIFMAC Office, Ayr (14 February 2005)
- Kellett, B.M. 2005. A Sustainability Framework to Guide Irrigation Development in Northern Australia. The University of Melbourne, Melbourne (4 February 2005)
- Bristow, K.L. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. SunWater, Ayr, QLD (1 February 2005)
- Bristow, K.L. 2005. Irrigation within a broader sub-catchment context: The lower Burdekin. CSIRO Floreat Park, Perth, WA (28 January 2005)
- Bristow, K.L. 2005. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. WA Water Task Force, Perth. (27 January 2005)
- Bristow, K.L. 2004. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. CRC for Irrigation Futures Sustainability Challenge Workshop, Stamford Airport Hotel, Sydney, (17 November 2004)
- Kellett, B.M. 2004. A Sustainability Framework to Guide Irrigation Development in Northern Australia. PhD Introductory Seminar, CSIRO Land and Water, Davies Laboratory, Townsville (15 October 2004)
- Bristow, K.L. 2004. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures: An Update. ANCID Conference, Barossa Valley, Tanunda, South Australia (10-13 October 2004)
- Bristow, K.L. 2004. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. Land and Water Australia Sustainable Irrigation Program Investors Forum, Barossa Valley, Tanunda, South Australia (10 October 2004)
- Bristow, K.L. 2004. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. CRC for Irrigation Futures Annual Workshop, University of Western Sydney, Sydney (20 September 2004)
- Kellett, B.M. 2004. A Sustainability Framework to Guide Irrigation Development in Northern Australia. CRC for Irrigation Futures Annual Workshop, University of Western Sydney, Sydney (20 September 2004)

Bristow, K.L. 2003. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures: Building a basis for developing sustainable irrigation across northern Australia. ANCID Conference, Shepparton, Victoria, Australia (19-22 October 2003)

Bristow, K.L. 2003. Northern Australia Irrigation Futures: Building a basis for developing sustainable irrigation across northern Australia. Land and Water Australia Sustainable Irrigation Program Investors Forum, Shepparton, Victoria, Australia (19 October 2003)

Radio:

Northern Australia Irrigation Futures. ABC North West WA Radio News (6 May 2004)

Water futures. Curtin FM Seeling Solutions with Retirees WA (27/3/2003)

Television:

Tropical river systems and North Australian Irrigation Futures. ABD6 State Television News, Darwin (2 February 2004)

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WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS AND MEETINGS FACILITATED BY OR FEATURING NAIF

(Participant numbers (#) does not include NAIF team members or NAIF consultants)

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
2005			
Meeting, Office of Water Strategy, Perth	7 December	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Water Strategy Dept of Water Dept of Agriculture
Meeting, Water Smart Australia, Canberra	2 December	≈ 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Water Commission National Farmers Federation Victorian Farmers Federation Cotton Australia Twynam Agricultural Group Ricegrowers Association of Australia Irrigation Association of Australia NSW Irrigators Council South Australian Murray Irrigators SunWater CRC for Irrigation Futures National Program for Sustainable Irrigation SA Murray Darling NRM Board NT Agricultural Association Pratt Water Aust. National Committee on Irrigation & Drainage Cth Dept of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries Southern Rural Water CSIRO (Jeff Camkin)
Meeting, CSIRO, Perth	2 December	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dept of Water
Meeting, Office of Water Strategy, Perth	1 December	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Water Strategy WA Irrigation Review Steering Committee Dept of Water (formerly Dept of Environment) Dept of Agriculture Water Corporation
Cross Project Collaboration tele-meeting	1 December	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NT Dept Natural Resources, Environment & the Arts Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist
Meeting, CSIRO, Perth	1 December	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dept of Industry Resources
Meetings, Darwin	23-24 November	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NT Dept Natural Resources Environment & the Arts NT Dept of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mining Amateur Fishing Association of NT NT Horticultural Association Charles Darwin University Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Aust. National Committee on Irrigation & Drainage

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
Meetings organised by ANCID, Darwin	21-22 November	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aust. National Committee on Irrigation & Drainage • NT Dept Natural Resources, Environment & the Arts • Ord Irrigation Cooperative • NT Dept of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Mining • Charles Darwin University • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist
Cross Project Collaboration tele-meeting	31 October	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Dept Natural Resources, Environment & the Arts • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist • Charles Darwin University
Meeting, Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (ERISS), Darwin	7 October	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSD • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist • NT Dept Natural Resources, Environment & the Arts • NT Dept of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mining • Cth Department of Environment and Heritage • WWF • CSIRO
Meeting, Northern Australia Groundwater Systems, NRETA, Darwin	3-5 October	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT Dept Natural Resources, Environment & the Arts • QLD Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • CSIRO
CRC IF Annual Research Forum, Mildura	19-21 September	>80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRC Irrigation Futures • CSIRO Land and Water • QLD Dept Natural Resources, Mines and Energy • National Program for Sustainable Irrigation • Land and Water Australia • VIC Dept of Primary Industries • University of Melbourne • University of Southern Queensland • University of South Australia • University of Western Sydney • Charles Sturt University • NSW Agriculture • South Australian Research and Development Institute
Meeting, Sustainability Challenge, North Burdekin Water Board Case Study, Ayr	27 July	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • South Burdekin Water Board • CSR • QLD Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • Burdekin Shire Council • Canegrowers • CSIRO • University of New England • BSES
Meeting, Sustainability	30 June	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • CSIRO

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
Challenge, North Burdekin Water Board Case Study, Ayr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of New England • BSES
Workshop, Lower Burdekin Knowledge Platform, Ayr	17 June	≈ 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • South Burdekin Water Board • Sunwater • Burdekin Dry Tropics Board • Burdekin Shire Council • Canegrowers • QLD Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • BBIFMAC • QLD Dept of Primary Industry and Fisheries • BSES • James Cook University ACTFR
ERA workshop, Ecological Risk Assessment for the Wetlands of the Lower Burdekin	1 June	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • South Burdekin Water Board • Burdekin Dry Tropics Board • Townsville City Council • Canegrowers • Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • BBIFMAC • Dept of Primary Industry and Fisheries • EPA • ACTFR • University of Melbourne • University of Western Australia • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority • Australian Sweet Forage Pty Ltd • Earth Environmental Consulting • Haughton Catchment Committee • Creek to Coral Waterwatch • CRC for Irrigation Futures • Burdekin Productivity Services Ltd • Monash University • CSIRO Land and Water
NT Stakeholder Meeting, Darwin	30 May	≈ 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAIF Steering Committee • NT Dept Infrastructure Planning and Environment • NT Dept Business Industry & Resource Development • CSIRO • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist • Land & Water Australia • NT Agricultural Association • NT Cattleman's Association
Workshop: Groundwater surface water interaction in the tropics, Darwin	26-27 May	≈ 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SKM • QLD University of Technology • QLD Dept Natural Resources & Mines • Charles Darwin University • CSIRO • NT Dept Infrastructure Planning and Environment • NT Dept Business Industry & Resource

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
Challenge, North Burdekin Water Board Case Study, Ayr			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of New England • BSES
Workshop, Lower Burdekin Knowledge Platform, Ayr	17 June	≈ 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • South Burdekin Water Board • Sunwater • Burdekin Dry Tropics Board • Burdekin Shire Council • Canegrowers • QLD Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • BBIFMAC • QLD Dept of Primary Industry and Fisheries • BSES • James Cook University ACTFR
ERA workshop, Ecological Risk Assessment for the Wetlands of the Lower Burdekin	1 June	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Burdekin Water Board • South Burdekin Water Board • Burdekin Dry Tropics Board • Townsville City Council • Canegrowers • Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • BBIFMAC • Dept of Primary Industry and Fisheries • EPA • ACTFR • University of Melbourne • University of Western Australia • Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority • Australian Sweet Forage Pty Ltd • Earth Environmental Consulting • Haughton Catchment Committee • Creek to Coral Waterwatch • CRC for Irrigation Futures • Burdekin Productivity Services Ltd • Monash University • CSIRO Land and Water
NT Stakeholder Meeting, Darwin	30 May	≈ 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAIF Steering Committee • NT Dept Infrastructure Planning and Environment • NT Dept Business Industry & Resource Development • CSIRO • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist • Land & Water Australia • NT Agricultural Association • NT Cattleman's Association
Workshop: Groundwater surface water interaction in the tropics, Darwin	26-27 May	≈ 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SKM • QLD University of Technology • QLD Dept Natural Resources & Mines • Charles Darwin University • CSIRO • NT Dept Infrastructure Planning and Environment • NT Dept Business Industry & Resource

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development EWL Sciences Pty Ltd Australian National University Ord Irrigation Cooperative
ERA Workshop: Irrigation in the Katherine-Daly region, Darwin	18 May	≈ 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NT Dept Infrastructure Planning and Environment NT Dept Business Industry & Resource Development Charles Darwin University NT Horticultural Association Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist Cth Department of Environment and Heritage CSIRO
Darwin meetings	17 May	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sue Jackson, CSIRO Peter Jacklyn, CRC Savanna's Peter Jolly et al, NT DIPE
SunWater, Ayr	10 March	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaun Davidge – Project Manager: Water for Bowen
Sustainability Challenge Project Meeting, Charles Sturt University, Albury	25 February	≈ 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRC Irrigation Futures CSIRO Land and Water QLD Natural Resources and Mines South Australian Research and Development Institute University of Western Sydney Charles Sturt University NSW Agriculture
Northern Australia Environment Alliance (NAEA), Brisbane	22 February	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stuart Blanch – Manager Freshwater WWF Australia Kerryn O'Connor - Wilderness Society Henry Boer - Queensland Conservation Council Matthew Durack – CRC IF
CRC IF Sustainability Challenge, Townsville, Ayr	15-17 February	≈ 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRC IF Sustainability Challenge (Christen, Shepherd) North Burdekin Water Board BBIF MAC SunWater
BBIFMAC, Ayr	14 February	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain MAC
University of Melbourne – Confirmation Seminar, Melbourne	4 February	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Melbourne CRC for Irrigation Futures National Program for Sustainable Irrigation
Sunwater, Ayr	1 February	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunWater
WA Water Task Force, Perth	27 January	≈ 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See minutes of meeting
2004			
CRC IF Sustainability Challenge Project Workshop, Sydney	17 November	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRC Irrigation Futures CSIRO Land and Water SunWater QLD Natural Resources and Mines South Australian Research and Development

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute • University of Western Sydney • Charles Sturt University • NSW Agriculture
ERA Workshop Townsville	10 November	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSIRO Land and Water • National Program for Sustainable Irrigation • Monash University • Australia Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research • NT Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment • QLD Dep. of Primary Industries • QLD Dept of Natural Resources and Mines • Ord Land and Water • Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain MAC • Burdekin Dry Tropics Board • CSR
Seminar – Kellett; CSIRO Davies Laboratory Townsville	15 October	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSIRO Land and Water • CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems • QLD Environmental Protection Agency • QLD Natural Resources and Mines • North Queensland Area Consultative Committee • Individual Farmers
CRC IF Annual Conference	20 September	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRC Irrigation Futures • CSIRO Land and Water • QLD Dept Natural Resource Mines and Energy • National Program for Sustainable Irrigation • Land and Water Australia • Victoria Department of Primary Industries • University of Melbourne • University of Southern Queensland • University of South Australia • University of Western Sydney • Charles Sturt University • NSW Agriculture • South Australian Research and Development Institute
Brisbane Workshop	3 August	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QLD Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries • QLD Environmental Protection Agency • QLD Dept Natural Resources Mines and Energy • QLD Dept State Development and Innovation • CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems • CRC Irrigation Futures • Land and Water Australia
Darwin Workshop	26-27 May	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cth Bureau of Rural Sciences • CSIRO Land and Water • National Program for Sustainable Irrigation • Cth Dept of Fisheries, Forestry & Agriculture • NT Dept of Business, Industry & Resource Development • CRC for Irrigation Futures • Land and Water Australia • Cth Dept of Environment and Heritage • Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising

Seminars Meetings Workshops	Date	#	Organisations Represented
			Scientist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QLD Dept of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy • NT Dept of Infrastructure, Planning & Environment • WA Dept of Environment • WA Dept of Agriculture
Kununurra Meeting 2	7 May	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Dept of Agriculture
Kununurra Meeting 1	7 May	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Dept of Environment
Kununurra Seminar	6 May	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWF • Ord Cucurbit Growers • WA Dept of Agriculture • Ord Land and Water • Ord Irrigation • Ord Irrigation Coop • Kimberley Primary Industries Association
Broome Seminar	5 May	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environs Kimberley • Kimberley Land Council • Gray's Organic Produce • Individual Farmers • Kimberley Area Consultative Committee • Kimberley Sustainable Regions Advisory Committee
Karratha Seminar	5 May	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Dept of Environment • WA Dept of Agriculture
Perth Seminar	4 May	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WA Farmers Federation • WA Dept of the Premier and Cabinet • Irrigation Association of Australia, WA Region • CSIRO Land & Water • WA Dept of Environment • WA Dept of Industry and Resources • Conservation Council of WA • Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA

KEY MESSAGES RELEVANT TO ALL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

KEY MESSAGES	DETAILS
The aim of the NAIF research project is to provide knowledge and tools for sustainable decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAIF project will provide knowledge and tools to support debate and decision-making about the future of irrigation in northern Australia. • The major output of the project will be a sustainability framework, which will help ensure any decisions about irrigation in northern Australia can be made according to the principles of ESD. • The sustainability framework will also provide knowledge to assess existing irrigation systems in northern Australia with the aim of making those systems more sustainable. • The NAIF project will not make decisions about current or potential irrigation in northern Australia – these decisions will remain the responsibility of the relevant governments and communities. The sustainability framework aims to support that decision-making.
The sustainability framework is being developed in consultation and cooperation with the people of northern Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The end-users of the sustainability framework – community groups, governments and individuals will participate in its development through a series of on-ground case studies across northern Australia. • The NAIF project recognises the important role of indigenous communities in debate and decision-making about the future of irrigation in northern Australia and will provide for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and considerations. • A Stakeholder Reference Group, including environmental, indigenous, community, agricultural and irrigation interests, has been formed to provide knowledge and express points of view about irrigation in northern Australia to the project.
The sustainability framework will be practical and robust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study sites have been selected to represent a range of geographic, economic and social factors present across northern Australia: the Kimberley in WA, the Daly in the NT and the Burdekin in QLD. • Important and technically complex aspects of the sustainability framework will be subject to peer review. • A case-study approach combined with peer-review ensures that the sustainability framework will be practical, objective, transparent and best practice. • The NAIF project acknowledges other important research examining irrigation and sustainability in northern Australia and will work closely with these programs, including the LWA Tropical Rivers Program and the CRC IF Sustainability Challenge.

KEY MESSAGES	DETAILS
The NAIF project will deliver the sustainability framework by July 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustainability framework will be developed through the case study process, which will run from January 2006 until March 2007, and finalised by July 2007. Further follow on projects are expected. • As part of the development of the sustainability framework, the project will also deliver a range of reports and tools, which will provide knowledge on the current state of irrigation in northern Australia, ecological risk assessments and bio-physical information about surface and groundwater interactions.
The NAIF research project is a co-operative effort between Australia's leading federal research organisations and the governments of QLD, NT and WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NAIF project is funded through a partnership between LWA and the NT, QLD and WA governments, and is being managed by CSIRO. • The project is being overseen by a Steering Committee which aims to have both representation of the funding partners and expertise in key project areas, including the environment, sustainable irrigation and indigenous communities.

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NAIF PROJECT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following are a series of potentially negative or ambiguous questions that may be asked about the project. These questions and answers are provided to improve understanding of the project and to correct misunderstandings.

Q. Isn't this just a pro-irrigation project?

A: No, not at all. The aim of the NAIF project is to provide knowledge and tools for sustainable decision-making about irrigation in Northern Australia. The major output of the project, a sustainability framework, will help ensure that any decisions made are consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Q: What is LWA doing being involved in a pro-irrigation project?

A: Firstly, this is not a pro-irrigation project. While I cannot speak on behalf of others, the driving motive for partners in this project is *sustainability* – to ensure that any decisions about irrigation in Northern Australia are made according to the principles of ESD.

Q. Isn't this project all about making maps that will identify areas for future development?

A: No, it isn't. The project will develop a framework so that future decisions about whether or not to irrigate can be made based on actual knowledge of river and groundwater systems and according to the principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Q: How can you say the sustainability framework is comprehensive when it only covers bio-physical factors?

A: The sustainability framework will incorporate social, economic and cultural linkages, which will be identified and incorporated through the case study process, in addition to bio-physical factors. We recognise that our knowledge is continually building, and so the framework will be specifically designed to allow for incorporation of future data across all these factors as it becomes available.

Q: Why does the steering committee have representatives of two irrigation organisations and no environmental representative?

A: The sustainability framework must take into consideration current knowledge of irrigation systems. The Steering Committee includes members who have broad expertise about irrigation systems and techniques and as such provide an important source of knowledge to the project.

Q: You have been accused of “collaborating with agricultural industries”. Is this the case?

A: We are collaborating with all stakeholders to develop the sustainability framework. This includes environmental groups, community groups and indigenous groups as well as agricultural and irrigation groups, research groups and government.

Q: How can you say the project is independent when it is being funded by government and has government representatives on the steering committee?

A: The project is guided by a Steering Committee which aims to have both representation of the funding partners and expertise in key project areas, including the environment, sustainable irrigation and indigenous communities. The NAIF project also includes a number of mechanisms to ensure it is transparent and objective, such as an open and consultative case-study process to develop the framework, independent peer review of important and technically complex aspects of the framework and collaboration with other independent research projects and initiatives.

Q: Who are the relevant experts on the SC for: (i) environmental issues; (ii) indigenous issues; (iii) economic issues; (iv) social issues?

A: We are currently reviewing the SC membership to ensure that it has appropriate expertise. Any changes to the SC membership will be announced ASAP.

Q: The NAEA has been very vocal about this project. Why aren't they on the steering committee or reference group?

A: We aim to have a Steering Committee with both representation of the funding partners and expertise in key project areas, including the environment, sustainable irrigation and indigenous communities. The NAIF project also includes a number of mechanisms to ensure it is transparent and objective, such as an open and consultative case-study process to develop the framework, independent peer review of important and technically complex aspects of the framework, collaboration with other independent research projects and initiatives and a Stakeholder Reference Group. NAEA has been formally invited to join the stakeholder reference group and we encourage them to do so.

Q: But they refused, right? Doesn't this undermine your credibility if the peak ENGO is not on board?

A: No, not at all. Whether the NEAE decides to be part of the process is a matter entirely for them, but we have made the invitation and would encourage them to participate. In any case, we will always listen to stakeholder concerns and welcome any useful contributions they may wish to make to the project.

Q: There have been criticisms that the project management of the NAIF is not sufficient to ensure the project will be delivered on time. Is this correct?

A: We have recently revised our work plan for Stage 2 of the project and have significantly bolstered the resources dedicated to project management and engagement with stakeholders. We are confident the project will achieve its stated aims.

Q: There has been a lot of turnover in staff within the project – why has this been?

A: The level of staff turnover within the project has not been any greater than average for similar-sized research projects. The project leader has been with the project since its inception, and it is good to have some staff turnover which brings new skills and ideas to the project.

Q: On what basis were the case study sites chosen?

A: Case study sites have been selected through discussions with the steering committee and others to represent a range of geographic, economic and social factors present across Northern Australia: the Kimberley in Western Australia, the Daly in the Northern Territory and the Burdekin in Queensland. These largely represent an undeveloped, partially developed and fully developed system, respectively.

Q: It has been suggested that the senior project staff do not have sufficient experience in sustainability issues and are effectively pro-irrigation. Is this correct?

A: No, that is not correct. The project staff have a range of skills and experience and together have expertise in all aspects of sustainability, including the bio-physical, environmental, social and economic factors of irrigation. In addition and to ensure transparency and objectivity, technically complex aspects of the sustainability framework will be also subject to peer review. We have also developed close links with the Tropical Rivers Program and will draw on their knowledge and expertise as appropriate.

Q: It is unclear how this project will work with related research projects and policy initiatives. How will you ensure this will happen?

A: The NAIF project acknowledges other important research examining irrigation and sustainability in Northern Australia. The work plan specifically identifies and specifies linkages to other programs such as including the Land & Water Australia's Tropical Rivers Program, the CRC for Irrigation Futures Sustainability Challenge and CSIRO's Land and Water Policy and Economic Research Unit. For example, NAIF chairs monthly meetings of NAIF, Tropical Rivers Inventory and Assessment Program, Charles Darwin University and the NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts to ensure cross-collaboration between researchers and government policy makers.

Q: What decisions will the NAIF project be making about irrigation in northern Australia?

A: The NAIF project will not be making any decisions about irrigation in northern Australia - communities and governments have and will continue to make those decisions. The NAIF project is about providing the knowledge, tools and processes so that communities and governments can make the best informed decisions to achieve long term sustainability.

Q: Will the NAIF research really make a difference?

A: Clearly many past decisions have not adequately addressed environmental issues. This can be seen from the many problems experienced in southern Australia and elsewhere around the world. In some cases, the problems currently being experienced have been caused by inadequate understanding of the potential impact of irrigation on catchments and communities. Our aim is to help governments and communities to learn from and avoid repeating those mistakes in northern Australia by providing them with better knowledge, tools and processes than they currently have.

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NAIF STEERING COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Objective:

The Steering Committee will provide strategic advice and guidance to the project to ensure that it secures adequate resourcing to develop, test, and deliver an acceptable framework to stakeholders to ensure sustainable development, management and improvement of irrigation systems in tropical Australia.

It will do this by:

- Maintaining a close working relationship with the Project Leader and project team.
- Ongoing review and approval of project goals and objectives, timelines and implementation / delivery strategies.
- Identifying strategic project risks and approving actions to address these risks
- Identifying, influencing and securing appropriate funding for the project to meet its goals.
- Identifying key data sources and activities (competing & synergistic) important to the success of the project.
- Assisting with communication between the project and key stakeholders in line with advice received from the Stakeholder Reference Group.
- Identifying comparable work being undertaken by other agencies/organisations.
- Collaborating closely with the Stakeholder Reference Group.

Composition:

A small (8-10) skills based committee to provide strategic advice and guidance to ensure the NAIF project meets its goals. To be headed by an 'independent' Chair

Key skills required: (*need to match potential members to these skills and through this process pick up some broad 'representation'*)

- Knowledge of and skills in project management and delivery (governance)
- Knowledge of and ability to influence / secure resource opportunities (resources)
- Knowledge of and skills in stakeholder engagement and communication strategies (engagement/communication)
- Knowledge and understanding of north Australian landscapes, environment and irrigation systems (technical aspects)

Current Steering Committee Membership:

- Greg Claydon (Chair)
- Murray Chapman
- Ross Dalton
- Kevin Devlin
- Mathew Durack
- Andrew Kelly
- Jos Mensink (replacement to be identified)
- Ian Smith
- Tom Aldred (replacement to be identified)

STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Stakeholder Reference Group will advise and assist the Northern Australia Irrigation Futures Project to ensure the project has a robust Stakeholder engagement strategy which meets the requirements of a broad network of stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Reference Group will act as a conduit in:

1. Working with stakeholders to identify key environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability issues of relevance in meeting project objectives
2. Collaborating closely with the Steering Committee
3. Maintaining regular communication with the Sustainability Specialist, Project Leader and Steering Committee on key issues affecting stakeholder engagement and stakeholder issues
4. Identifying stakeholders and their requirements to assist the project in developing and delivering a robust stakeholder engagement strategy
5. Identifying opportunities for effective partnerships between the project and other stakeholders
6. Helping facilitate interagency and inter organisational collaboration and cooperation

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