Overviewing a new (draft) process for land & sea research on Kimberley saltwater Country

Developed through the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project 2016-2017

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On behalf of the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science (KISSP) working group
The Kimberley region is unique in terms of its natural wealth and the rich culture of its Indigenous people.

As a result it provides significant research opportunities.

Background
In the Kimberley, Indigenous land & sea managers have come to value the contribution that western science makes to management of their saltwater Country in contemporary Australia.

“All the rangers are working with science and it is a good thing.”

“Science data is important to enable people to make decision for themselves for their own country”

“Some of the monitoring we can use Traditional Knowledge, but we can also use science to back us up”

“Science can fill gaps we don’t know about, Bardi Jawi fill gaps in science too”

“We are monitoring to enhance ability to look after country”
Over time, many Kimberley researchers have found that the western science they bring to their research projects is only one side of the equation, with Indigenous knowledge providing the balance.

They come to place high value the input of Traditional Owners, Indigenous Rangers and other traditional knowledge holders to research projects.

“For some of the species we relied on traditional knowledge to gain a better understanding of reproductive ecology - which is relevant to how we interpreted results”

“For an analytical perspective we are working with cutting edge methods, but we relied heavily on traditional knowledge to find the species we were working on”

“We gained some historical understanding of how marine communities have changed over time which was beneficial for interpreting our work”
...and make good use of the network of Indigenous people with skills, knowledge, expertise, resources and interest in land and sea management, monitoring and research.

“It was through traditional knowledge that we were able to find and access and collect the samples we required”

“The success of our project would not have been possible without the help of the traditional owners and rangers”

“We were unlikely to have been able to find what we were looking for without Indigenous knowledge”

Photo © Kimberley Land Council 2017
Collaborative research (working ‘two-ways’ or ‘right-way research’) is the best-practice approach supported by Indigenous people in this region.

It works because it:

✓ respects both types of knowledge and culture,
✓ meets the research needs of all research partners and
✓ makes best use of available resources.

It can be thought of as land and sea research that is jointly owned and run by Indigenous people and their western science research partners in a way that values the contributions of both groups and builds knowledge together.
Building knowledge together

What we’ve been learning about in this project is how knowledge is both integrated and co-produced during collaborative research projects.

This approach allows two quite different knowledge and belief systems to sit next to each other towards a common output, with a range of benefits not commonly associated with scientific research projects.

It provides strength to a research project because it gives your research a multiple evidence base.

Go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg01sA8_ZAg
Achieving strong collaborative research has not been easy for Kimberley researchers, particularly those new to working with Indigenous land and sea managers.

It also hasn’t been easy for local Indigenous people to facilitate.

Supporting both groups to realise the many benefits of collaborative research is essentially the focus of the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project (KISSP).
KISSP products in development:

- A multiple-evidence base approach for knowledge integration in Kimberley Saltwater Country
- A road-map for enhanced knowledge integration in Kimberley saltwater Country
- Guidelines for two-way knowledge work in Kimberley saltwater Country
- Regional Kimberley saltwater monitoring framework
- Saltwater monitoring toolbox for Indigenous Rangers
- Research Protocol for land and sea research on Kimberley saltwater Country
To get to this point we collated input from:

• Around 30 western scientists with Kimberley research experience

• Over 100 Indigenous community members

• A dozen staff members involved in research process development
At present, this process applies only to land and sea research in Kimberley saltwater Country, whose Native Title holders agree to support it. A formal process of requesting the free, prior, informed consent of Aboriginal Corporations in each area is occurring over the next few months (starting mid May). However the best-practice principles can be applied more widely.
Research Protocol for land and sea research on Kimberley saltwater Country
The process of research within the Guide for Researchers has been put into six stages for land & sea researchers to follow:

1. Preparing for Research
2. Joint Development & Proposal
3. Assessment & Consultation
4. Agreement Brokerage
5. Working on Country
6. Communicating Results

Relationship building throughout
Stage 1 - Preparing for Research

In this foundational stage, researchers are asked to:
• invest time to develop their knowledge of local land and sea management and research priorities
• to learn about the local Indigenous people and their Country
• to extend their understanding of how Indigenous Knowledge can be used to support research
• and learn more about the nature of collaborative Kimberley Indigenous-western science research

Resources are provided throughout the Guide to support progress through each stage
For example, if you are proposing a research project on Dambimangari Country, you’d go to a page of resources about their people and culture, management plans etc. to have a look through.

If you needed to brush up on local governance arrangements, you’d head to that page and select links around that topic.
Components of Stage 1 - Preparing for Research

A. Explore this guide
B. Determine a mutually beneficial area of collaborative research
C. Identify how the topic of research supports management practices of the local Ranger Group/s
D. Determine how the project relates to other research (past, present, proposed)
E. Reflect on the ways in which you can apply the principles of two-way research to projects
F. Learn about the local Indigenous people, their ranger group and their Country
G. Undertake some background research on the Kimberley
H. Familiarise yourself with the research proposal form
I. Develop an understanding of critical agreement terms
J. Begin to fill in the research proposal form
Critical Agreement Terms

There are several parts of research agreements that are consistently the focus of negotiations between the university and the PBC lawyers.

This process often involves a series of ever smaller changes to the wording of conditions between lawyers, each change requiring a complete re-assessment of the entire agreement wording.

This is a source of considerable delays for researchers and for this reason a new approach is proposed within the Guide.

In response to the feedback from dozens of Kimberley researchers who have asked that the process of research projects be expedited, a different approach is being floated.
Critical Agreement Terms – Your advice?

Instead of both parties starting with the positions that suit them the most, then negotiating to a shared position acceptable to both over successive agreement iterations, researchers are asked to determine early on all of the different, mutually beneficial positions they (and their institutional lawyers) are prepared to accept in each of six core areas:

1. Intellectual property
2. Publishing
3. Acknowledgement
4. Confidential information
5. Accompaniment
6. Liability/insurance
Resources useful for Stage 1

- Maps
- Key NRM planning documents for each area
- Links to an information page on each group
- Links to the research proposal form
- Key concepts
- Related documents

Relevant resources are provided for each of the stages 1-6
Stage 2 - Joint Development & Application

Once you have worked through Stage 1 the next step is to talk through your ideas with the relevant first point of contact (FPOC)

The FPOC in each area is the most appropriate community person to contact to introduce yourself as a researcher, discuss potential research areas and co-develop research projects.

They will be your local eyes and ears, provide guidance, and are also the conduit between researcher and the local PBC, who are the in-principle decision-makers in the process (pending approval from the relevant Traditional Owners)
Components of Stage 2 - Joint Development & Application

- **A**: Identify the FPOC/s in the geographical area of interest
- **B**: For research involving multiple groups, decide on the best communication strategy
- **C**: Talk to other researchers with Kimberley experience
- **D**: Maintain communication with the relevant FPOC/s to develop the research concept
- **E**: Develop a plain English communication aid to help the local FPOC/s explain the research concept locally
- **F**: Outline a simple training plan to support the involvement of local Indigenous Rangers in the project
- **G**: Complete the proposal form with advice from the FPOC/s as needed. Include options of field work location if possible
- **H**: Ensure your institution supports the content of your proposal form in particular your ‘critical agreement terms’ selections
- **I**: Save a pdf copy of the completed application for future reference. Submit it in full, including all required attachments.
Stage 3 – Assessment and Consultation

Completed proposals are tabled at the next available timeslot at an upcoming PBC meeting.

Researchers can arrange to attend the PBC meeting to present the research proposal or make arrangements with the local FPOC to be available remotely during that time.

If supported in principle by the PBC Directors, the next step is to receive the free, prior, informed consent of the Traditional Owners of the area of land or water under application.

This is usually facilitated by the local FPOC, Indigenous Rangers and/or PBC Directors on your behalf.
Components of Stage 3 – Assessment and Consultation

A. Check with the local FPOC when the proposal is likely to be tabled at the PBC Director’s meeting

B. Arrange with the FPOC how you will respond to any questions about the research proposal

C. Answer any queries quickly and clearly, using audience-appropriate language and presentation.

D. Be in touch with the FPOC two to three weeks after the PBC Director’s meeting to check on progress

E. Await advice on whether or not the PBC supports the proposed project

F. Be patient while the process of consultation with Traditional Owners occurs. Expect delays during ‘business’ & peak season

G. Become familiar with the main components of a Kimberly research agreement. Request a template copy from the FPOC
Stage 4 - Agreement Brokerage

The step involves developing and signing off on a research agreement with the local PBC.

The purpose of a research agreement between partners is to define in a legally binding format, what has been agreed to and the standards required for research to go forward in a fair and respectful way.

Groups use their own standard template updated regularly to reflect current circumstances and tailored to each research project.
## Components of Stage 4 - Agreement Brokerage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Request a research agreement template from the FPOC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Encourage your institution’s lawyer to use the PBC’s research agreement template</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Develop the information required in the works plan with input from the local FPOC</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Keep in touch with your institution’s lawyer and FPOC to keep abreast of agreement progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Begin preparations for any agreed payments, training or other in-kind services</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Ensure you have applied remote risk management strategies in project planning.</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Make arrangements to undertake cultural awareness training as recommended by the FPOC</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Allow yourself time with Indigenous research partners in their community after field work is complete</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Budget to return to the Indigenous community to present the research findings</td>
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Components of Stage 5 - Working on Country

A. Get in touch with the FPOC a week or so before the field work is scheduled to begin

B. Be sure to check the weather and road conditions close to field work commencing

C. Take a signed hard copy of the full research agreement with you

D. Allow extra time for logistical preparations once you arrive in the community

E. Seek media consent as arranged with the FPOC

F. Undertake the cultural induction as arranged

G. Undertake the field work as agreed. Use local place, plant and animals names whenever you can

H. Spend time with the research participants in their community after the field work

I. Ensure any agreed payments are received promptly

J. Make arrangements to return the research results to the community (in person or remotely)
Components of Stage 6 – Communicating Results

| A | Maintain communications with research partners throughout the data analysis & interpretation stage |
| B | Involve Indigenous Rangers in data analysis, interpretation & write-up where possible |
| C | Return preliminary results of the research to or the local community |
| D | Provide opportunity for Indigenous research partners to contribute their perspective |
| E | Appropriately acknowledge the contribution of all participants, including co-authorship |
| F | Provide final drafts of any products to Indigenous research partners for their feedback |
| G | Return digital copies of all media |
| H | Fill in a Researcher Feedback Form so we can learn from your experience |
The Guide is open for comment over the next month (9\textsuperscript{th} May).
This process needs to work for the research community - your input is important.

Fill in your contact details on the sheet going around if you'd like to be sent a draft copy of the Guide to provide comment.

Any other questions – please be in touch:
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Thankyou