



## Guidelines for Collaborative Knowledge Work in Kimberley Saltwater Country

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## WAMSI Kimberley Marine Research Program

### Final Report

#### Project 1.5.2

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## **WAMSI Kimberley Marine Research Program**

Initiated with the support of the State Government as part of the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy, the Kimberley Marine Research Program is co-invested by the WAMSI partners to provide regional understanding and baseline knowledge about the Kimberley marine environment. The program has been created in response to the extraordinary, unspoilt wilderness value of the Kimberley and increasing pressure for development in this region. The purpose is to provide science based information to support decision making in relation to the Kimberley marine park network, other conservation activities and future development proposals.

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### **Front cover images (L-R)**

Image 1: Satellite image of the Kimberley coastline (Landgate)

Image 2: Kimberley Saltwater Country (WAMSI)

Image 3: Humpback whale breaching (Image: Pam Osborn)

Image 4: Indigenous community representatives from the Karajarri and Yawuru peoples meet in Broome to workshop outcomes of the KISSP project at Notre Dame University Hall June 2016 (Image: WAMSI)

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# Contents

- CONTENTS..... I**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... I**
- 1. INTRODUCTION ..... 1**
- 2. APPROACH ..... 2**
  - 2.1. WORKSHOPS AND INTERVIEWS .....2
  - 2.2. ONLINE SURVEY .....3
- 3. TRADITIONAL OWNER PERSPECTIVES ON ETHICAL COLLABORATIVE KNOWLEDGE WORK ..... 4**
- 4. WESTERN SCIENCE PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ..... 5**
- 5. GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE COLLABORATIONS ..... 7**
  - 5.1. SETTING UP THE PROJECT ..... 8
  - 5.2. WORKING ON COUNTRY .....9
  - 5.3. MAKING NEW KNOWLEDGE .....11
- 6. TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION ..... 12**
- 7. CONCLUSION ..... 13**
- 8. REFERENCES ..... 14**
- 9. APPENDICES ..... 14**
  - APPENDIX 1 – KISSP WORKING GROUP MEMBERS.....14



## Executive Summary

In this report, we present a set of draft guidelines to support collaborative knowledge production between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous partners in Kimberley Saltwater Country. Due to their alignment, the guidelines outlined here should be read as a locally tested and refined application of more generic guidelines (e.g. AIATSIS 2012).

Our aim here is to report on both the perspectives of Traditional Owners and Western Scientist’s on how to facilitate better working relationships and inform the development and use of collaborative research and monitoring tools. We also hope to expand the scope of such guidelines beyond simply research to include both land and sea management practices. This is particularly important given that Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is better understood to be a set of knowledges-practices-beliefs that are intertwined with the people-places we know as Kimberley Saltwater Country.

There is a great deal of good-faith underpinning these guidelines from Traditional Owners, scientists and managers of natural, cultural and economic resources in the Kimberley. There will no doubt be challenges faced in implementing and enforcing such guidelines. However, it is proposed that a lack of familiarity, experience and shared understanding of the complex intercultural context of Indigenous land and sea management is the source of barriers than a lack of collaborative spirit.

### *Guidelines for Collaborative Knowledge Work*

Stage of Collaboration	Alignment with Multiple Evidence Base Approach	Guidelines
Setting Up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing dialogue &amp; mobilising knowledges</li> <li>2. Planning for an enriched picture</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Build relationships and get local people involved</li> <li>4. Empower Indigenous &amp; intercultural institutions</li> <li>5. Two-way free, prior &amp; informed consent (FPIC)</li> <li>6. Build &amp; maintain two-way communication</li> <li>7. Start with equity between knowledges</li> </ol>
On Country	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Building the knowledge base</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognise Traditional Owner authority.</li> <li>2. Follow protocols for entering, being on, and leaving Country</li> <li>3. Include <i>all</i> knowledge holders</li> <li>4. Include young people</li> <li>5. Use local languages</li> <li>6. Build balanced teams</li> <li>7. Deliver training both ways</li> <li>8. Stick to the plan!</li> </ol>
Making New Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Analysing, interpreting &amp; communicating</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Use and store information properly</li> <li>10. Interpret results together</li> <li>11. Present achievements together</li> <li>12. Make outputs accessible to all</li> <li>13. Facilitate community feedback</li> <li>14. Share benefits equally</li> <li>15. Plan for the future together</li> </ol>



## 1. Introduction

In this report, we present a set of draft guidelines to enhance collaborations between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous partners that are focused on looking after Kimberley Saltwater Country. There have been numerous documents developed to help assist in the co-production of knowledge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia (e.g. AIATSIS 2012). Due to their alignment, the guidelines outlined here should be read as a locally tested and refined application of more generic guidelines to working with Traditional Owners in Kimberley Saltwater Country.

Our aim here has been to build on previous work by reporting on both the perspectives of Traditional Owners and Western Scientist's on how to facilitate better working relationships and inform the development of collaborative research and monitoring tools (see other KISSP outputs at: <http://www.wamsi.org.au/research-site/indigenous-knowledge>).

We also hope to expand the scope of such guidelines beyond simply research to include both land and sea management practices and monitoring that is increasingly being undertaken by Indigenous people in Australia. This is particularly important given that Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is better understood to be a set of knowledges-practices-beliefs that are intertwined with the people-places we know as Kimberley Saltwater Country.

Further, though in the same light, we seek to move beyond the 'two-way' understanding of such collaborations that has become popular in the past. In theory at least, Western Scientific Knowledge (WSK) is one-dimensional and can be described as a single homogenous knowledge system. In contrast, IK is multifaceted, dynamic, embodied, practiced and lived. The knowledge held by an individual, including processes to generate and manage it, may be common knowledge (i.e. held also by kin). Alternatively, certain knowledge may be restricted to one or only a handful of individuals (i.e. knowledge holders). As such, reducing the interactions of WSK and IK to a dichotomous interface is overly simplistic and risks ignoring the diversity of knowledges held by Traditional Owners of Kimberley Saltwater Country. This linguistic 'laziness' has the potential to underestimate the value and use of the multiplicity of knowledges, practices and beliefs that can be woven together through collaborative knowledge work.

This report is part of the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project (KISSP)<sup>1</sup> and relating specifically to Objective 1, which asks Indigenous people, scientists and practitioners to consider a suitable approach to:

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***Integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and management practices into Kimberley marine conservation and management.***

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Another product was developed as part of KISSP Objective 1:

- *Mobilising Indigenous Knowledge for Kimberley Saltwater Country*

These reports should be read together as they inform each other and the other products generated through KISSP. This work is closely aligned with Objective 2 and Objective 3 of the KISSP, which can be accessed at: <http://www.wamsi.org.au/research-site/indigenous-knowledge>.

The guidelines presented here are based on the fundamental principles outlined in the *Mobilising Indigenous Knowledges* report and are part of translating these principles to actions. These guidelines provide a useful rubric

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<sup>1</sup> The KISSP was funded by the Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI) and ran from February 2016 – July 2017. Further information on WAMSI is available at: <http://www.wamsi.org.au/>

to inform project design and the development of capacity building resources to help Indigenous people, rangers and their partners to look after Country in a way that produces multiple benefits for both People and Country.

## 2. Approach

### 2.1. Workshops and Interviews

The research approach for KISSP was largely defined by the project Working Group (see Appendix 1) whom, after a workshop held in Broome in 2014, outlined a process of holding individual, one-day ‘On Country’ workshops with Traditional Owners. These workshops were organised by the local Indigenous ranger group in coordination with the KISSP research team.

The KISSP Research Team was assembled under the authority of the KISSP Working Group. Expressions of interest to be involved in the project were sought from research practitioners that were known to various Working Group members based on their experience working with Traditional Owners in the Kimberley region. Through a competitive selection process involving presentations of project proposals, the Working Group decided to appoint CDU, UWA, KLC and Mosaic Environmental jointly as the KISSP research team based on each of their specific skills and capacity (See Appendix 2).

Workshops were coordinated through the Working Group and jointly planned with all co-investigators to maximise outcomes from each meeting. Each community decided how the research happened (i.e. workshop or interviews) and who attended. Local Ranger Groups and KISSP Working Group representatives designed and organised each of the workshops with local Traditional Owners. They were equally resourced by the KISSP project to do this work. The local organisers were also responsible for identifying who were the ‘right people’ to be involved in the workshops, which mostly included Traditional Owners, Rangers and Prescribed Body Corporate staff.

In total, there were 103 participants in five (5) Traditional Owner workshops and one (1) Knowledge Holder interview. Participants were asked to identify ‘rules’, ‘guidelines’ or ‘protocols’ they would like to see in place – and abided by – *before, during and after* collaborative knowledge projects are undertaken that involve both WSK and IK practitioners.

Table1. Traditional Owner workshops and interviews held under KISSP

Date	Traditional Owners	Location	Activity	# Participants
23-24 May 2016	Nyul Nyul	Beagle Bay	Workshop	21
25-26 May 2016	Dambimangari	Derby	Workshop	17
21 June 2016	Balangarra	Kalumburu	Workshop	15
17-20 June 2016	Wunambal Gaambara	Kalumburu	Interviews	20
27-28 June 2016	Bardi Jawi	One Arm Point	Workshop	19
30 June- 1 July 2016	Karajarri/Yawuru	Broome	Workshop	23

An informal, conversational style was adopted that allowed sufficient time and discussion between participants. The list was checked on numerous occasions throughout the workshops/interviews, both for accuracy and to provide opportunity for other related examples to arise throughout the conversation.

The data collected from workshops and interviews consisted of:

- Co-produced guidelines that were written on large pieces of paper and reviewed by the whole group;
- Interview transcripts;
- Workshop notes kept by the research team.

The research team conducted a thematic analysis of these data to produce the results presented in Appendix 1. All Traditional Owner groups were provided with individual workshop reports and given a period of one (1) month to provide feedback, make amendments or add anything that was missing. These reports are not publically available, but were returned to each of the PBCs/Ranger groups who have ownership of the reports.



Figure 1. Different sources of authority give rise to guidelines for working with multiple knowledges.

Further, an analysis has been conducted whereby the specific guidelines are categorised as coming from either:

- Traditional Owner authority and responsibilities to Country; or
- A requirement of good-faith intercultural partnerships.

The knowledge production that is the focus of the KISSP takes place on Kimberley Saltwater Country and, therefore, must start with satisfying local Indigenous requirements of ethical behaviour and good epistemic practices (see: Fig. 1 above and *Mobilising Indigenous Knowledges* report for more detail).

## 2.2. Online Survey

In parallel to the Traditional Owner Workshops, Gina Lincoln and Beau Austin conducted an online survey of WSK practitioners who had experience working in the Kimberley region. Invitations were sent through the networks of the KISSP Working Group, including Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI), Western Australian Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW), Western Australian Department of Fisheries, the National Environmental Science Programme (NESP) and various researchers based in universities or other institutes that collaborate with Traditional Owners in Kimberley Saltwater Country.

In total 78 invitations were sent via email. Invitees were asked to follow a link to a survey hosted by Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The survey was made up of multiple choice and open ended questions, which allowed respondents to express their personal opinions. Of the 78 invitations there were 26 responses received. This is a return rate of 33%, which is quite a good response to an online survey. Respondents were offered anonymity.

### 3. Traditional Owner Perspectives on Ethical Collaborative Knowledge Work

Workshop and interview participants spoke with clarity about how collaborations between IK and WSK practitioners should work. This is largely due to the now long history and familiarity of Traditional Owners attempting to bridge knowledge systems to produce the best available knowledge for managing Country. However, in general, participants were somewhat frustrated by the lack of awareness of some of their non-Indigenous knowledge-making partners and that guidelines needed to be:

- More clearly explained, and
- More strictly adhered to by visiting knowledge collaborators.

In total there were 44 guidelines identified by workshop participants (see Appendix 1). For the sake of brevity, and to satisfy our purposes here, we will work with only those guidelines mentioned by a majority of Traditional Owner groups (i.e. at least 4 out of 7 groups). This is not to suggest that guidelines that did not meet this threshold are insignificant – hence their inclusion in appendices for reference. Further description of each of these guidelines from the workshops and interviews is provided as an appendix to this report. Although some the guidelines were grouped to make a more succinct list, the principles and practices described by Traditional Owners and Rangers have not been greatly modified (as discussed in Section 5).

Table 2. Traditional Owner identified guidelines for knowledge collaborations

Source of Guideline	Before	During	After
<b>Local Authority and Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect Local Law</li> <li>• Empower Local Indigenous Governance</li> <li>• Obtain Permissions and Permits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise TO Authority</li> <li>• Follow Cultural Protocols</li> <li>• Include Knowledge Holders</li> <li>• Include Young People</li> <li>• Use the Right Language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean Up After Yourself</li> <li>• Follow Cultural Protocols</li> </ul>
<b>Intercultural Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take Building Relationships Seriously</li> <li>• Empower Local Intercultural Governance</li> <li>• Ensure Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC)</li> <li>• Facilitate Local Participation</li> <li>• Begin with Knowledge System Equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build Balanced Teams</li> <li>• Stick to the Plan</li> <li>• Do Training Both Ways</li> <li>• Communicate Clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Information Appropriately</li> <li>• Make Outputs Accessible</li> <li>• Facilitate Feedback</li> <li>• Interpret Results Together</li> <li>• Present Achievements Together</li> <li>• Share Benefits Equally</li> <li>• Store Data Properly</li> <li>• Plan for the Future Together</li> </ul>

Each of the guidelines in Table 2 were deemed to be significant for the majority of Traditional Owners and, as such, have been used as the basis for final guidelines which are described in detail below in Section 5. Workshop participants made it clear that the guidelines described were not simply ‘aspirational guidelines’ but should be seen as minimum standards to be met if collaborative knowledge projects are to be pursued.

## 4. Western Science Practitioner Perspectives

Given the relatively high accessibility of guidelines for conducting scientific research, we have not focused here on reproducing those guidelines. Instead, we risked the assumption that scientists embody such guidelines in their scientific practices and, as such, by asking them their opinions on working with Indigenous people in the Kimberley we could gain insight into the amount of potential conflict between guidelines identified by Traditional Owners and those practised by WSK holders when working in Kimberley Saltwater Country.

Of the scientists surveyed, 19% responded that they had worked with Indigenous people across the “whole Kimberley coast”. The remainder had worked with the following Kimberley Saltwater Country people:

- Bardi Jawi (20%)
- Yawuru (15%)
- Dambimangari (10%)
- Mayala (10%) (not a KISSP project partner)
- Nyul Nyul (7%)
- Balangarra (5%)
- Karajarri (5%)
- Wunambal Gaambera (5%)
- Miriuwong Gadjerong (3%) (*not a KISSP project partner*)

Seventy-nine percent (79%) said that their research integrated Indigenous knowledge and/or Indigenous values. Integration was most likely to occur through:

- The use of both Indigenous knowledge and western science to produce useable data;
- Indigenous knowledge used to influence the design of research methods and/or fieldwork;
- Using Indigenous knowledge to interpret data and results;
- Indigenous people assisting in the identification/negotiation of research topics; or
- Using Indigenous knowledge to turn research results into management recommendations.

All respondents said that integration played a beneficial role in their research; with 59% stating that it was ‘very important’, ‘critical’, ‘integral’ or ‘essential’. Only 18% suggested that, though useful, Indigenous knowledge had no potential to contribute to their scientific work.

WSK practitioners suggested that their usual first point of contact when commencing collaborative research projects was with some form of Indigenous-led governance structure, for example:

- Kimberley Land Council (37%)
- Local Prescribed Body Corporate (30%)
- Local Indigenous Ranger Group (22%)
- Traditional Owners (11%)

However, these groups and organisations have varying degrees of capacity to engage in negotiations concerning research agreements. This may be a contributing factor that led respondents to identify that, as a whole, there was a need for:

- Clearer processes, expected timeframes and identified points of contact for negotiating agreements;
- A need for faster processing of approvals (especially to take advantage of funding opportunities as they arise); and
- A greater level of consistency in research agreement processes across the Kimberley region.

Given that 48% of survey respondents used their own initiative to identify the most appropriate group or organisation to contact regarding their proposed research, it is difficult to argue that there is a lack of information available to facilitate appropriate first points of contact with local Indigenous governance institutions. A further 41% of WSK practitioners said that they used colleagues to help identify appropriate contacts, with only 7% suggesting that it was local relationships that guided early engagements.

The main drivers of collaborations were non-Indigenous research institutions (60%). Of this portion, WAMSI was the largest proponent, instigating 40% of the work. Respondents with experience of working on projects that had originated from Traditional Owners (14%) or the KLC (9%) were far less common.

The focus of the research conducted was in most cases (46%) initially defined by external, non-Indigenous organisations (e.g. research institutions, large research programs and/or government). However, these initial topics were negotiated by 64% of responding researchers during the engagement phase of projects with Traditional Owners, PBCs and/or ranger groups. Researchers said that negotiation of research topic and approach had positive effects, such as:

- Ensured relevance of the research to local people;
- Made researchers accountable to Traditional Owners;
- Ensured research integrity;
- Incorporated training/skills/capacity development into the projects.

However, this type of engagement also meant that researchers reported that they had to be flexible with the study sites they could work at and the amount of time taken to complete research tasks.

Most survey respondents suggested that it was the research success and enjoyment from working with Indigenous people that was the best outcome from their collaborative knowledge work. WSK practitioners cited the following as additional benefits:

- It allowed for two-way knowledge exchange.
- Built the research capacity of Indigenous people through training opportunities.
- Outputs had high research impact, were locally relevant/useful and produced management outcomes.

Researchers were asked to imagine themselves as a new researcher to the Kimberley, and to working with Traditional Owners, the most useful advice or information they would like to receive before starting their work was:

- Maps that describe the location of Traditional Owner group Country that are linked to information about that group (e.g. plans of management, etc.).
- An up to date list of contacts for engaging Traditional Owners in research projects.
- A clear description of research engagement protocols.
- Cultural awareness training for researchers.
- Take time to travel to research sites and form relationships with TOs, rangers and PBCs.

One hundred percent (100%) of respondents suggested that they would like to continue working with Indigenous people in the Kimberley, supporting Indigenous peoples' requests to think long-term and build relationships that last the span of a career rather than a single project.

### Help Wanted!

Survey respondents suggested that they themselves need to improve their engagement with Indigenous people by:

- Commencing the process earlier,
- Dedicating more time for collaborative interpretation of results and report writing, and
- Actively seeking feedback on outcomes of the project.

Also, there was a general awareness that collaborative research requires much more flexibility regarding milestones and schedules than purely WSK projects.

To assist them in their collaborative work, WSK practitioners would like Indigenous people to provide clearer guidance on:

- The correct process for engagement;
- Faster approvals processing, and;
- Identified, publicised and up to date points of contact for Traditional Owner groups.

## 5. Guidelines for Knowledge Collaborations

It is proposed that, based on these two consultations, there are no apparent conflicts in the interests of WSK and IK practitioners in collaborative knowledge projects. There seems to be no reason that the guidelines identified above by Traditional Owners cannot be implemented in full. There is a significant level of good faith and willingness to reach 'good enough' ways of working together. Improvements sought by WSK practitioners are more concerned with a desire for more information, not necessarily a negotiation/modification of guidelines and processes.

The exception to this may be the perceived need for more clarity regarding research agreement processes and faster processing times, as identified by some WSK practitioners. Traditional Owners may respond to this with a request for patience and understanding that the process involved in identifying the Right People for the specific research topic concerned may take longer than expected, though is vitally important to ensuring the long-term success of collaborative research. Nonetheless, the KISSP has taken heed of this advice and produced capacity-building tools for both PBCs and WSK researchers and institutes to be able to expedite this process in as streamlined a way as possible.

It is suggested that the majority of issues raised through workshops, interviews and the survey are due primarily to a lack of familiarity and practice at collaborations between IK and WSK. This is due to the on-going effects of colonisation and the 'original sin' of *terra nullius*. The frustrations and confusions of IK and WSK practitioners are in many ways a good sign – they suggest that there is a tremendous willingness to collaborate based on the acknowledgement of the utility of employing multiple evidence bases. Non-Indigenous WSK practitioners are attempting to increase their understanding of IK holders and local Indigenous governance mechanisms. IK practitioners are figuring out ways of articulating their knowledge-practices-beliefs to non-Indigenous and non-local audiences in ways that makes obvious their importance and usefulness for looking after Country. What is needed is increased capacity for each party to articulate their knowledges and practices to each other and to collaborate through intercultural partnerships.

Based on the consultations in KISSP we have identified twenty (20) guidelines to support working with multiple knowledges in Kimberley Saltwater Country. Each of these guidelines are described in brief below. They are not designed to be prescriptive as the way in which they are applied will depend on the nature of specific projects and the relationships formed between western science practitioners and Indigenous people. The implementation of these guidelines, both through other KISSP products and subsequent work directed by the Working Group, will be discussed in brief below (see Section 5) and will be discussed in detail in the forward looking *Navigating Knowledge Currents in Kimberley Saltwater Country* report.

Table 3 Guidelines for collaborative knowledge work

Stage of Collaboration	Alignment with Multiple Evidence Base Approach	Guidelines		
Setting Up	1. Establishing dialogue & mobilising knowledges	1. Build relationships and get local people involved 2. Empower Indigenous & intercultural institutions 3. Two-way free, prior & informed consent (FPIC)		
	2. Planning for an enriched picture	4. Build & maintain two-way communication 5. Start with equity between knowledges		
On Country	3. Building the knowledge base	6. Recognise Traditional Owner authority. 7. Follow protocols for entering, being on, and leaving Country 8. Include <i>all</i> knowledge holders 9. Include young people 10. Use local languages 11. Build balanced teams 12. Deliver training both ways 13. Stick to the plan!		
		Making New Knowledge	4. Analysing, interpreting & communicating	14. Use and store information properly 15. Interpret results together 16. Present achievements together 17. Make outputs accessible to all 18. Facilitate community feedback 19. Share benefits equally 20. Plan for the future together

### 5.1. Setting up the project

#### *Guideline 1: Build relationships*

- Meet face to face and begin to build working relationships, rapport and trust.
- Visit Country as early in the project as possible.
- Involve local people, including knowledge holders and young people.
- Acknowledge the responsibilities and obligations that you are adopting by offering to work in collaboration with Indigenous people to look after their Country.

#### *Guideline 2: Empower Indigenous institutions*

- Create space for Traditional Owners to make decisions about their engagements in knowledge

collaborations.

- Engage Indigenous representative organisations (e.g. PBCs, the KLC, rangers, etc.) as first point of contact.

*Guideline 3: Ensure Two-Way Free Prior Informed Consent*

- Indigenous peoples affected, or potentially affected, by proposed knowledge-making activities must be consulted in full prior to the commencement of projects. This consultation should also be in a form that is accessible by Traditional Owners, and will likely take place through the knowledge brokering of PBCs and other representative organisations.
- Indigenous people also need to make sure that they spell out clearly what their interest is in knowledge collaborations. This can be simply practical (e.g. fee for service income) or more in depth (like sharing and co-producing new knowledge for Country), but the most important thing is that all partners involved are aware of Indigenous interests.
- Sign proper Research Agreements (see: *Guide for Researchers*)

*Guideline 4: Build and maintain two-way communication*

- Use Indigenous representative organisations such as the KLC, PBCs and other self-organised Indigenous groups to make and maintain contact. This makes communication easier and empowers Indigenous peoples' organisations.
- Employ knowledge brokers (experienced Indigenous or non-Indigenous people) to assist in communicating and translating. Collaborative knowledge production requires deep-shared understanding of questions, concepts and research activities, not just languages.
- Use plain English in all verbal and written communication.

*Guideline 5: Start with knowledge system equity*

- Indigenous knowledge is to be taken seriously as an equally legitimate and useful source of evidence and information as Western science.
- Indigenous knowledge holders and Western science practitioners are both experts with equal authority in collaborative research teams.
- Consider adopting a Multiple Evidence Base approach as it offers a structured process for mobilising multiple knowledges to produce enriched pictures of Country.

## 5.2. Working on Country

*Guideline 6: Recognise Traditional Owner authority on Country*

- Whenever on Country Traditional Owners have special authority over access and activities that visitors (including scientists) may engage conduct.
- Listen to local rules for safety (e.g. do not go where you should not, do not take photos without permission, listen to weather advice, etc.)
- There should be no data collection can take place without the presence of Traditional Owners or Rangers. This is an important aspect of governing the production of knowledge about Country.
- Be adaptable with fieldwork timeframes as Traditional Owners and Scientists both have competing priorities for their time and attention. However, give notice of changes as far in advance as possible.

*Guideline 7: Follow protocols for entering, being on, and leaving Country*

- Traditional Owners have important protocols for entering, being on and leaving Country. These should be adhered to at all times, as they are as much about your personal safety as doing the right thing by people and Country.
- Leave Country the way you found it. There should be no rubbish left behind or physical harm caused to Country.

***Guideline 8: Include all knowledge practitioners***

- Make sure that the knowledge holders for the topic of your research are included in the project, especially Old People who are experts and have special authority.
- In some cases, Rangers themselves will be knowledge holders, but most of the time there will be others who need to be involved. Rangers and local PBCs will be able to assist in identifying the right people and the best way to include them

***Guideline 9: Include young people***

- Ensure that Young People have an opportunity to engage in research work, especially working alongside their elders. This can provide important opportunity for intergenerational knowledge transmission.
- Young People are vital to the future health of Kimberley Saltwater Country and are a resource worth investing in.

***Guideline 10: Use local languages***

- A great deal of knowledge is conveyed in language itself. It is often difficult to fully respect and mobilise Indigenous knowledge without using the local names for people, places and things.
- As much as possible, researchers should adopt local terminology for concepts and objects of collaborative research projects.

***Guideline 11: Build balanced teams***

- Research teams should be made up of equal numbers of local Indigenous people and collaborating visitors.
- Mutual respect should be exercised and the contributions of each team member appreciated equally.
- As above, local ways of knowing, being and doing should be embraced by scientists and other researchers.
- It is vital to form good rapport between team members by spending time socialising and yarning together, both on and off the job. This enables genuine relationships to develop between equals and communication that is more effective.

***Guideline 12: Deliver training both ways***

- In most cases, collaborative research agreements will involve aspects of training in theoretical and practical aspects of research. This training should be delivered in line with agreements and is an important component of working collaboratively.

***Guideline 13: Stick to the plan!***

- All aspects of a project will be discussed, negotiated and agreed to by all parties in the 'setting up' phase of projects. It is vital that these agreements are honoured and that everyone sticks to the plan.
- In some situations, plans will need to be modified or amended due to unforeseen circumstances. If issues arise, the project team and relevant authorities (PBCs, KLC, etc.) will need to work together to revisit, renegotiate and re-agree to an amended collaborative research agreement. This is important as changes may require approval from the Right People with authority for the Country or specific topic being investigated.
- Payment of research participants should be discussed in all agreements including an appropriate means of transferring funds. All payments should be timely and in line with these agreed processes.

### 5.3. Making new knowledge

#### *Guideline 14: Use and store information properly*

- Traditional Owners and their representative bodies should be kept informed of how data and information is being used in all stages of the work.
- Agreed means of storing data and information should be abided by all parties to agreements.

#### *Guideline 15: Interpret results together*

- Traditional Owners who are involved in collaborative projects should be involved in the interpretation of results.
- Given the different perspective and modes of producing knowledge employed by local Indigenous people and collaborating scientists, co-interpretation is likely to produce novel and more comprehensive results.

#### *Guideline 16: Present achievements together*

- Traditional Owners, Rangers and participating representative bodies should be acknowledged in all publications and communications coming from the research team.
- Local Indigenous people should be involved in the drafting of publications and communications, particularly critical and constructive reviews of manuscripts.
- Research teams should facilitate opportunities for Traditional Owners to co-present research results at meetings and conferences.
- Traditional Owners should be encouraged and support to co-produce media products, particularly local media outlets.
- Acknowledgement of skills and expertise is crucial (e.g. co-authorship, co-presentations, etc.).

#### *Guideline 17: Make outputs accessible to all*

- All of the outputs of a research projects should be made sufficiently accessible to all of the participants (e.g. enough copies available, appropriate and accessible formats used, plain English employed as much as possible, local languages incorporated, etc.).
- Opportunities to communicate results of collaborative research to Young People through workshops with schools should be encouraged.

#### *Guideline 18: Facilitate community feedback*

- An important component of collaboration is making time and space for reflection and evaluation of project outputs and outcomes. Not only does this encourage constant learning, adaptation and innovation, but offers Traditional Owners, Rangers and Indigenous representative bodies an important opportunity to provide constructive advice to scientists and to plan for the future.
- In some situations, Traditional Owners and scientists may want to provide their feedback and advice independently of the collaborative research team. This parallel evaluation should be encouraged and support where desired.

#### *Guideline 19: Share benefits equally*

- All benefits of collaborative research projects should be shared equally. This includes:
  - Access and use of new knowledge.
  - Intellectually property.
  - Commercialisation benefits.

#### *Guideline 20: Plan for the future together*

- Working on collaborative research projects encourages the formation of relationships and respect. This can form the basis of fulfilling and productive long-term research partnerships.
- At the end of projects, collaborative research teams should work together to identify future

opportunities for collaboration, seek sources of funding together, and maintain communication as much as possible.

- Most importantly, though working to co-produce knowledge interculturally can be complex, it does not mean that it is not fun. Teams should celebrate the success they have achieved together and reflect on the on-going importance of their work.

## **6. Towards Implementation**

Before these guidelines can be implemented, Indigenous representative bodies and interest groups such as (Prescribed Body Corporates and the Kimberley Land Council) should be given the opportunity to provide feedback. Due to relatively short timelines and restricted resources, this version of draft guidelines was reviewed by the KISSP Working Group only. Thus, until a broader review and appraisal, these guidelines remain only in draft.

Similarly, WSK practitioners and partnering institutions (government, research, NGOs, etc.) should be offered an opportunity to comment on drafts. This will have multiple purposes:

- refining the final wording,
- building awareness, and
- Encouraging buy-in for implementation.

An efficient mechanism for the review of these guidelines may be their presentation and scrutiny at the annual Kimberley Ranger Forum. Ranger groups can then facilitate a discussion with PBCs about the guidelines and any amendments required. In this sense, the implementation of these guidelines to achieve consistency across the Kimberley region can occur through self-organised and voluntary Indigenous networks and institutions. This will give the guidelines additional authority and increase buy-in to support enforcement by PBCs and Traditional Owners. There is potential for the future manifestation of the KISSP Working Group to perform a role in facilitating this process.

Upon adoption, it is assumed that the implementation and enforcement of guidelines will be conducted by relevant PBCs through the collaborative research negotiation and approval process. Over the long-term, only researcher that abide by the guidelines, or at least demonstrate sufficient efforts to abide by the guidelines, will be granted permission to work in the Kimberley on an on-going basis. This seems to be the most appropriate mechanism for supporting Traditional Owner authority to decide who visits Country and what activities that are allowed to conduct.

However, it is important to here to note that PBC Boards and Staff are incredibly busy managing the affairs of Traditional Owners and Country. There is often an assumption that there are sufficient resources for PBCs to govern Country effectively. Many PBCs remain under-staffed, under-resourced and under pressure to meet aspirations and obligations to Traditional Owner, Country and their partners. There needs to be ongoing investment in building the capacity (financial, human and infrastructure) of PBCs to exercise their authority to produce win-win outcomes for Traditional Owners and their partnering organisations.

One issue that will influence the effective implementation of these guidelines in line with the Multiple Evidence Base approach is the need to establish equity between knowledge systems (Austin et al. 2017). An approach to this may be the collaborative development of case studies that demonstrate the ‘conceptual models’ and ‘theories of change’ that are embodied in Indigenous peoples’ looking after Country. In turn, this will:

- Increase the awareness of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing Country.
- Clearly demonstrate the usefulness of these approaches for managing complex social ecological systems and mitigating contemporary threats;
- Inform better decision-making and policy about how to collaboratively look after Kimberley Saltwater Country; and

- Encourage further investment in Indigenous land and sea management by demonstrating effectiveness in producing a range of benefits.

In addition to this, subsequent to the implementation of guidelines, an evaluation of the value produced by adopting collaborative, multiple evidence-based approaches to looking after Country needs to be conducted.

This will allow Indigenous people and their partners to:

- communicate achievements
- promote modes of working with multiple knowledges
- Justify the extra investment of time and resources in working collaboratively.

## **7. Conclusion**

This report has communicated the perspectives of Traditional Owners that participated in KISSP workshops, along with those of western scientists who participated in an online survey, to identify and describe a set of 20 guidelines to support and guide collaborative knowledge work in Kimberley Saltwater Country.

The main contribution of these draft guidelines is to offer enhanced clarity and reduced risk through the clear communication of expectations, processes and obligations concerning collaborative knowledge work in Kimberley Saltwater Country. They represent the next iteration of mutually beneficial partnerships between Traditional Owners and their collaborators, based on the mobilisation of multiple knowledges for enhanced use, management and conservation of the Kimberley coastal and marine environment.

The draft guidelines build on national guidelines for ethical research published by AIATSIS (2012) and embody parallel principles and practices. However, these guidelines have been drafted in direct consultation with Traditional Owners of Kimberley Saltwater Country, who have had the opportunity to consider local contextual nuances and concerns for mobilising their knowledges-practices-beliefs alongside Western Scientific Knowledge.

There is a great deal of good-faith underpinning these guidelines from Traditional Owners, scientists and managers of natural, cultural and economic resources in the Kimberley. There will no doubt be challenges faced in implementing and enforcing such guidelines. However, it is proposed that a lack of familiarity, experience and shared understanding of the complex intercultural context of Indigenous land and sea management is the source of barriers rather than a lack of collaborative spirit.

## 8. References

AIATSIS (2012). Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander Studies, Canberra. Available at: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/research-and-guides/ethics/gerais.pdf>

Austin, B.J., C.J. Robinson, G. Lincoln, R. Dobbs, F. Tingle & S.T. Garnett (2017). Mobilising Indigenous Knowledge for Kimberley Saltwater Country. Report to the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project (KISSP), Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI). Broome, July 2017.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – KISSP Working Group Members

Traditional Owner Group	Representatives
Balanggarra	Tom Nagle, Ranger Coordinator
Bardi Jawi	Daniel Oades, IPA Coordinator ( <i>Deputy Chairperson</i> ) Kevin George, Co-Chair & Head Ranger
Dambimangari	James Mansfield, Ranger Coordinator/IPA Manager
Karajarri	Sam Bayley, IPA Coordinator Joe Edgar, Traditional Owner Dooli King, Senior Ranger
Nyul Nyul	Mark Rothery, Ranger Coordinator Albert Wiggin, Ranger ( <i>Deputy Chairperson</i> )
Yawuru	Julie Melbourne, Manager Land & Sea Unit Dean Mathews, Yawuru Project Officer ( <i>Chairperson</i> )
Wunambal Gaambera	Tom Vigilante, Healthy Country Manager Rob Warren, Ranger Coordinator