



Indigenous cultural and natural resource management would benefit from non-government investment.

Larrakia Rangers



**Northern Australia
Environmental
Resources
Hub**

National Environmental Science Programme

Strengthening investment to help manage Country

Key findings and recommendations
for Indigenous ranger programs

Indigenous rangers need new funding options

This factsheet is about a research project that investigated new kinds of funding for Indigenous rangers and their land and sea management enterprises. Indigenous cultural and natural resource management (ICNRM) creates many benefits for all Australians.

Since the 1980s, the number of ranger groups and programs has grown a lot and direct government funding has played a key role in this. But to keep growing, we need new kinds of ICNRM funding and income, also called investment.

This new investment needs to come from sources and places other than government departments that are focused on Indigenous and environmental issues. Larger and more diverse investment can make stronger foundations for the future.

Understanding diverse kinds of investment

The project investigated diverse ICNRM investment by looking at

- who provides investment – including corporations, non-government organisations, family and/or private organisations that seek benefits for others (known

as philanthropists), purchasers of ICNRM services (known as fee-for-service customers), and Indigenous communities themselves

- what form the investment takes – including direct funding, in-kind knowledge and advice, labour or fee-for-service income
- what ranger activities investors want to support – including biodiversity, carbon, threatened species and education
- what outcomes and impacts investors want – including environmental, social, cultural, health and other benefits.

Who worked on the project?

The project collaborators were CSIRO (Australia's national science agency) and three long-term ICNRM providers and their communities – Kalan Enterprises (Coen, Queensland), Kowanyama Aboriginal Land and Natural Resources Management Office (Kowanyama, Queensland) and Larrakia Rangers (Darwin, Northern Territory).

These providers have experience with different kinds of investors, including international non-government organisations, industry clients, and/or working in other industries such as road-building to strengthen their ICNRM skills and programs. They also provided examples of how their local Indigenous communities support and invest in their activities.

Key findings and recommendations for attracting key investors

The CSIRO team interviewed three kinds of external investors: the philanthropic sector, the corporate sector and the fee-for-service sector. These interviews revealed

key insights and recommendations for each sector. These insights and recommendations are shown below.

Attracting corporate investors

Design activities that match.

Find out the core activities, values and priorities of target corporations and create activities and projects that suit shared interests.

Design projects with multiple impacts and benefits.

Corporate investors are like philanthropic investors – they want to see more than one positive change from their investment.

Look for corporate philanthropy.

Some corporations set up separate philanthropic organisations to manage their grant-giving.

Explore investment beyond money.

Corporations can provide many other ways of building ICNRM organisations and people.

Learn about corporate reporting frameworks.

Corporations measure their own success with frameworks like the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, the United Nations Global Compact, Reconciliation Action Plan, and other social, governance and environmental measures. They will apply this thinking to their ICNRM investment.

Attracting philanthropic investors

Create a marketplace.

ICNRM organisations need a place where they can advertise themselves and find new philanthropic partners. Government, investors and ICNRM organisations can work together to create this marketplace.

Show the wider benefits of investment.

Philanthropic investors also like to see multiple benefits (called co-benefits) from their investment – the social, cultural, health, economic and other community benefits that come from what they invest in.

Show the direct impact of investment.

Philanthropic investors like to see how their investment directly improves Indigenous Country, their organisation and their staff.

Attracting fee-for-service customers

Ensure an independent service.

Fee-for-service customers need to know the goods/services that they are buying have not already been paid for by someone else.

Extend contract terms.

Longer contracts reduce transaction costs and enhance staff development.

Create a marketplace.

Fee-for-service customers and ICNRM organisations need a place where they can find one another, match their interests and priorities and develop financial relationships.

Develop a shared reporting framework.

ICNRM fee-for-service customers benefit from shared supplier and purchaser reporting frameworks.



This project collaborated with ICNRM groups and communities around Darwin, Kowanyama and Coen.



Filming a climate change documentary in Kowanyama, Qld. Photo: Kowanyama Aboriginal Land and Natural Resource Management Office.

Looking to the future

Everyone – communities, governments, philanthropists and corporations – has a role to play in helping the ICNRM sector to adapt and grow. Some key steps to work on together include

- creating marketplaces
- developing products and services that meet shared needs
- aligning reporting frameworks
- ensuring projects and programs have multiple impacts and benefits.

These actions can support new and diverse funding and investment into ICNRM, creating stronger and more sustainable foundations for Indigenous people and the Country they manage.



*Kalan Rangers and Justin Perry collecting samples.
Photo: Michael Lawrence-Taylor.*

Further information

The CSIRO project team included Kirsten Maclean (project leader), Marcus Barber, Taryn Kong, Jane Addison, and Marlee Hutton. The project Indigenous Steering Committee included Ricky Archer (Chair – NAILSMA), Dion Creek and Tim Jaffer (Kalan Enterprises), Ben Smith (Larrakia Rangers), Tanya Major and Viv Sinnamon (Kowanyama Aboriginal Land and Natural Resources Management Office), Will Durack (Kimberley Land Council), Fiona Peek (Northern Land Council), Nerida Bradley (Australian Land Conservation Alliance), and Tom Vigilante (Bush Heritage).

Project factsheets and final report are available from the project webpage at nespnorthern.edu.au/projects/nesp/guiding-resource-investment

For more information, contact Kirsten Maclean at kirsten.maclean@csiro.au



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nespnorthern.edu.au

nesp.northern@cdu.edu.au



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