

People & Reef Organisations Tackling Environmental Change Together (PROTECT)

INTEGRATED STEWARDSHIP MONITORING FOR THE GREAT BARRIER REEF



BACKGROUND

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) entered an agreement with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE), which has resulted in the Reef Trust Partnership (RTP). As part of the RTP, the GBRF has agreed to undertake a range of activities with the aim of developing innovative solutions to increase the Reef's resilience for the benefit of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. One of these activities is Integrated Monitoring and Reporting.

Under the Integrated Monitoring and Reporting component, a suite of projects were funded via a Reef 2050 Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Program (RIMReP) prioritisation process in 2020. One of the three projects falling into the category of 'Human Dimensions' is the PROTECT project that will monitor Reef stewardship associated with the Great Barrier Reef.

The PROTECT project recognises that community members have an important role to play in protecting the Great Barrier Reef and maintaining its World Heritage Values, and as advocates for innovative approaches to monitor and improve the health of the Reef via Reef stewardship.

STEWARDSHIP

There is no one definition of stewardship. Stewardship is multi-dimensional, multi-level and contextually based, incorporating a range of potential actions and precursors to action (e.g., motivation, capacity, opportunities). On-ground actions may include participating in restoration of coastal ecosystems or removing marine debris. However, it is not limited to these types of 'in situ' actions—stewardship may encompass civic actions, such as getting involved in a reef-management organisation or petitioning to support decarbonisation, or social actions, such as encouraging others to take action. Stewardship may be undertaken by individuals, or by groups in the community supported by organisations. Importantly, it is argued that stewardship is not just engaging in a physical act. Rather, it also incorporates psychological, social and contextual factors including motivation to engage in actions that protect the Great Barrier Reef as well as the capacity to undertake stewardship actions, and the opportunities available in one's community.

PROJECT AIMS AND OUTCOMES

The PROTECT project aims to monitor how individuals and community organisations engage in Reef stewardship. It will describe and establish a new monitoring activity for the systematic monitoring of community stewardship activities for Reef Health. This work is developmental and operational, and involves designing and implementing a new monitoring activity and an accompanying framework for understanding the causal links between stewardship activity and the desired outcomes e.g. to improve Reef health. Our approach recognises the diverse ways that stewardship can be conceptualised and will engage with stewardship practitioners and other end users to inform the design.

Importantly, the project will seek guidance from the GBRF Traditional Owner Partnerships Team to ensure the monitoring plan appropriately and adequately sits alongside the Strong Peoples Strong Country Framework.

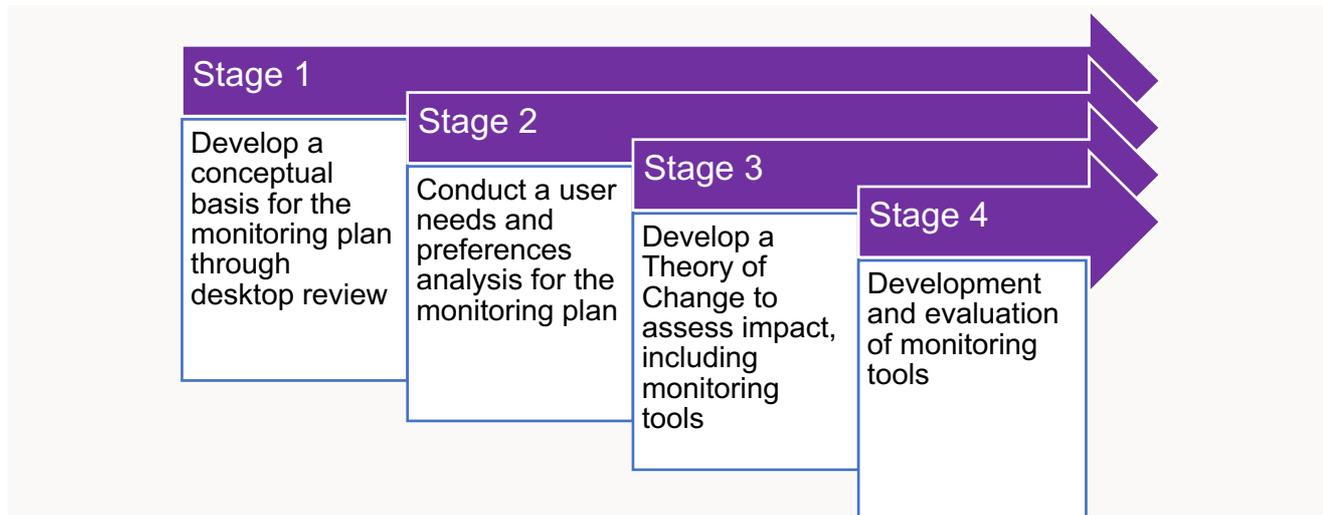
The project will also Develop a Theory of Change for Reef stewardship to strengthen understanding of the relationship between stewardship and impact, and approaches to strengthen impact.

Specifically, by June 2024, the project will provide:

1. A fit-for-purpose and streamlined method to monitor and promote organisational and individual stewardship, as well as stewardship impacts

2. A database (with extractable data) on related stewardship monitoring data
3. A tool that can be used to visualise stewardship monitoring activities in an accessible and synthesised format

PROJECT STAGES



PROJECT TEAM

The project team will be led by Dr Angela Dean from the University of Queensland (UQ) and supported by a consortium of experts from across the UQ, Australia’s national science agency – CSIRO, and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The project team includes researchers with skills in social science and monitoring, human behaviour and economics, human geography, governance, working with Indigenous leaders, data science, machine learning and data visualisation.

The project will also be guided by a Project Steering Committee and Expert Advisory Group with representatives from across government, Reef organisations and community groups as well as context experts.

CONTACT

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