



National Environmental Science Programme

Project 4.12 Measuring cost-effectiveness and identifying key barriers and enablers of lasting practice change in the cane industry

Project Summary

This project is evaluating past and current government investments in practice and land use change. This project will evaluate 10 programs that aim to reduce the amount of pesticides and/or nutrients entering Queensland waterways or change the way land is used. Teaming up with on ground stakeholders and Federal and Queensland Government agencies, this project spans across geographical areas from Mackay to the Wet Tropics and will include evaluation of programs across a range of different locations. The assessments will run from 2018 to 2020 and involves the application of cost-effectiveness assessment and social assessment methods (social surveys and collective intelligence).

Problem

According to the Scientific Consensus Statement (2017) current initiatives will not deliver the water quality targets. To accelerate change in on-ground management, improvements to program design, delivery and evaluation systems are urgently needed, so too are greater incorporation of social and economic factors, and better targeting. Now is an appropriate time to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of programs that are currently underway with regard to their impacts on Reef health. This project will develop an understanding of reasons behind program uptake (or not). Where appropriate this project will build an understanding of the extent to which the different approaches have previously or can be expected to engender lasting practice change that in turn enhances water quality.



Sandy Creek, Mackay, Queensland

How Research Addresses Problem

Understanding which projects are most appropriate for cost-effectively engaging a broader cross section of the agricultural sector by location guides future investment. Investors are better placed to deliver lasting practice change to enhance Great Barrier Reef water quality when they know what works. The project will involve a mixed method design. Collective intelligence will work with all project stakeholders to identify barriers preventing change. Solutions that can be implemented on ground to help overcome barriers will be identified. This project will assess progress made to date in each project through social surveys and assess the cost effectiveness of current and past projects. Together, the project will provide valuable insight for informing future investments.



Further information

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This project is supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program