ISWAG Guide to
Kimberley Saltwater Science

Green turtle on Yawuru Sea Country.
Credit: Jenna Hounslow (Murdoch University/DBCA),
Yagarrajalajalan Nagula Buru Project

A best-practice guide to working the Right Way with Traditional Owners on collaborative sea country science projects in the Kimberley

Version 1, August 2026

Green turtle research on Yawuru Sea Country.
Credit: Jenna Hounslow (Murdoch University / DBCA), Yagarrajalajalan Nagula Buru Project

Warning

This guide may contain images, names of or references to deceased Aboriginal people.

Acknowledgements

This guide was adapted from an earlier detailed document: Lincoln, G. et al. (2017) Collaborative Science on Kimberley Saltwater Country - A Guide for Researchers V17.03, prepared as part of the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project (KISSP).

It was developed by the Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group (ISWAG) in consultation with member Ranger groups: Balanggarra, Bardi Jawi, Dambimangari, Karajarri, Jabirr Jabirr-Ngumbarl, Mayala, Nimanburr, Nyangumarta, Nyul Nyul, Wunambal Gaambera and Yawuru.

Thank you to our members and the following partners for their input and feedback: Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI), Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Marine Science Program, Kimberley Land Council.

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Limitations

This guide applies only to coastal/marine (Saltwater Country) research projects within the Kimberley region. It does not apply to purely terrestrial, land-based, or commercial projects, filming or photography proposals, or projects outside the Kimberley. No part of this guide is legally binding on Indigenous Rangers, Traditional Owners or their representatives.

Version	Date	Description	Author/s
V1	August 2026	ISWAG Guide to Kimberley Saltwater Projects 2026	Phoebe Martin Amy Young

Contents

Installing acoustic receivers in Yawuru Sea Country.
Credit: Carmela de Benito Abello (Murdoch University),
Yawuru Nagula Buru Acoustic Array Project

About this guide

Purpose

This guide sets out a clear, agreed process for how researchers, managers and Indigenous partners should work together on collaborative saltwater science projects in the Kimberley.

It is designed to ensure that projects are Indigenous-led and co-designed, Traditional Owners (TO) and Indigenous Rangers are central decision-makers at all stages, and that projects address Indigenous land and sea management priorities and deliver real benefits for people, culture and Country. The guide is based on the premise that Indigenous Sea Country managers should be respected as exactly that, and that research should benefit the people whose Country it happens on.

It is a best-practice process for collaborative projects, endorsed by all Saltwater Indigenous groups in the Kimberley.

Preface – why follow this process?

For Indigenous Sea Country managers, this guide establishes regional standards and provides useful guidance, templates and tools. Using this guide should strengthen groups' capacity to screen new opportunities, set clear expectations and ensure that projects address their needs and can be applied in the real world. Ultimately this guide aims to:

- improve the relevance and practical application of research outcomes;
- support Indigenous self-determination, data sovereignty and cultural heritage;
- address historical power imbalances and extractive research practices; and
- strengthen Indigenous Sea Country management.

For researchers, following the Kimberley Saltwater Research Cycle provides a single, structured pathway into a complex landscape, connecting them with the right people from the outset. Building relationships with Traditional Owners the right way means researchers gain access to invaluable local expertise. The structured approach also strengthens research quality, as findings are more relevant and applied, data is enriched by multiple knowledge systems, and publications are better positioned for co-authorship, broad uptake and regional impact.

Researchers who follow this process build enduring partnerships that open doors to future funding and ongoing collaboration. Most importantly, research is more likely to make a meaningful contribution to Kimberley Sea Country management.

> "We are not only knowledge holders, but ongoing custodians and managers of Country with deep cultural, ecological, and governance responsibilities. Research needs to be guided not only by scientific priorities, but also by our cultural values, local knowledge, community concerns and on-ground management needs.
>
> Dean Mathews,
> ISWAG Co-Chair, 2026

Does this guide apply to my project?

Follow this guide if your project:

- Is in the Kimberley region
- Includes research, fieldwork, desktop work, management or monitoring activities
- Is in saltwater (marine) or coastal areas, and
- You want to work collaboratively and respectfully with Traditional Owners and/or Indigenous Rangers.

This guide does not apply to:

- Purely land-based or terrestrial research
- Projects outside the Kimberley
- Commercial projects, or filming and photography proposals.

TIPS

Other Approvals: this guide may not be the only approval process you need. See the ***Other Approvals*** section for permits, licenses and other requirements.

Research Agreements are essential. Following this guide and completing an Application Form is a first step, not a substitute for entering a Research Agreement with the relevant Traditional Owners. See ***Stage 4.***

Wunambal Gaambera Rangers monitoring dugongs via drone.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC

ISWAG Members and Kimberley sea country

"Indigenous people are increasingly responsible for sea country management, including IPAs and jointly managed marine parks. The Kimberley region is unique because we have strong Native Title rights and interests over our Sea Country. This puts us in an even stronger position.

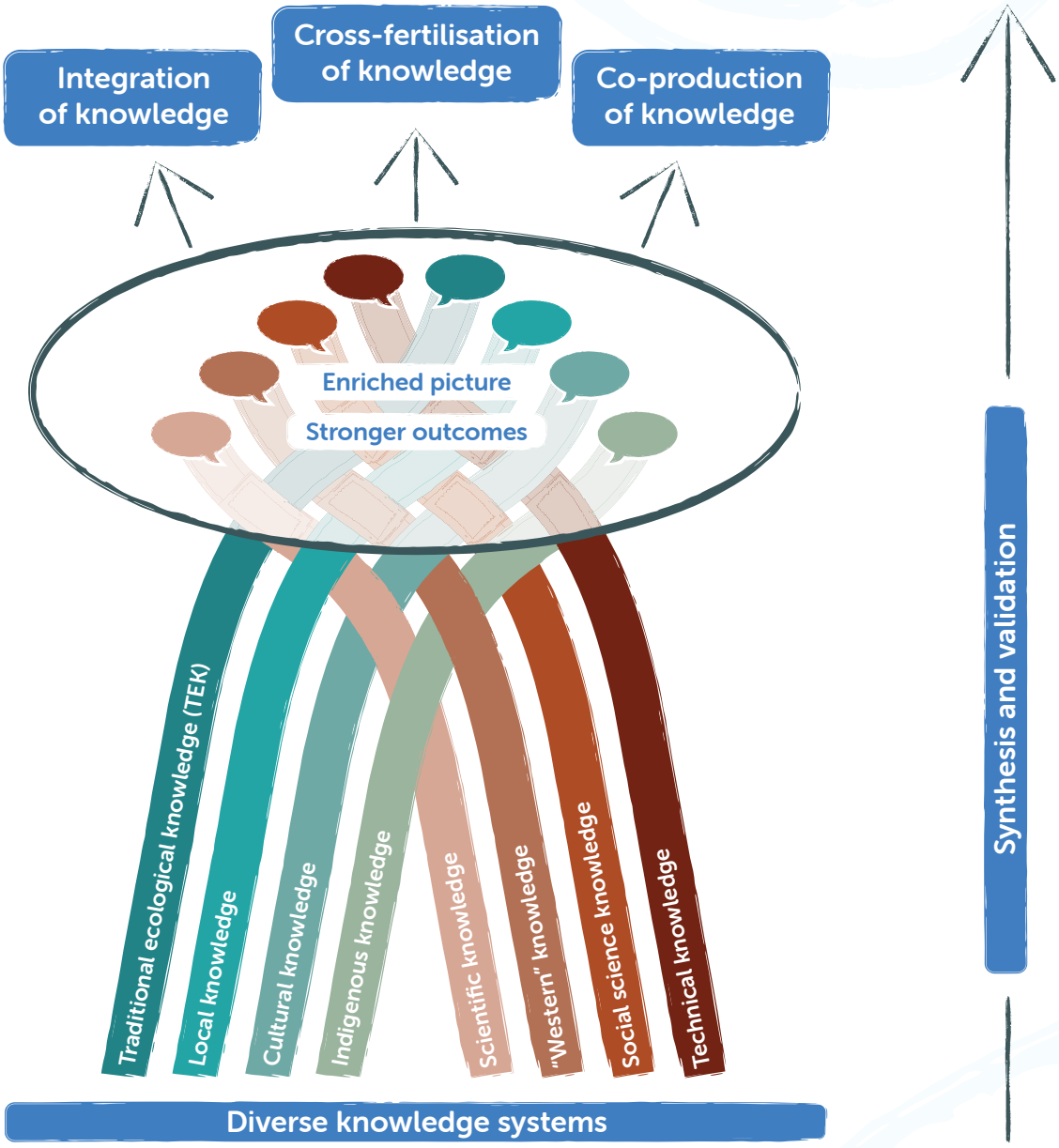
Dean Mathews,
ISWAG Co-Chair, 2026

Key	Status	What process applies?
	ISWAG Member (independent)	This guide applies
	ISWAG Member (also KLC supported)	This guide applies. Also check KLC processes

Key Principles of Collaborative Research

Collaborative research is also called **Two-Way** or **Right Way** research. Keep these principles in mind throughout every stage of your project.

Principle	What this means in practice
Indigenous-led	Projects address Traditional Owners' priorities in Healthy Country Plans. Traditional Owners are central decision makers at all stages.
Multiple evidence base approach	Connect diverse Indigenous and scientific knowledge systems to enhance outcomes. Respect that all knowledge systems have equal standing. Multiple knowledge systems should be woven together rather than assimilated.
Mutual benefits	Ensure Kimberley Aboriginal people benefit from research on their Country. Share work, funds, authorship and outputs fairly
Consent	Practice Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) - including acknowledging that consent can be withdrawn at any time.
Data sovereignty	Uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance in accordance with the **CARE** principles (Collective Benefit; Authority to Control; Responsibility and Ethics), including ownership of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and control over Project IP.
Co-design	Develop the project together from the outset. Work to find shared priorities. Agree on methods that maximise Ranger and TO participation. Be prepared to change your project in response to community needs.
Build relationships and trust	Spend time on Country. Listen carefully. Engage the right people, the right way, at the right time. Deliver what you promise; or explain shortfalls.
Respect Kimberley Aboriginal people	Respect local knowledge, culture, values, law, protocols and safety. Respect Aboriginal rights to manage natural and cultural resources and lead projects on their Country.



"

Our knowledge helps the science work because we know, for example, when we are doing our turtle transects, we already know if it is too windy or too choppy or if the water is too murky to see. If the tides are too big. Even when we look from on top, we can see which sex [the turtle] is without catching it. We can tell by the way they swim. Hawksbill swim different to green and flatback. Using that knowledge makes it easier to record the data

Indigenous Ranger
2016

"

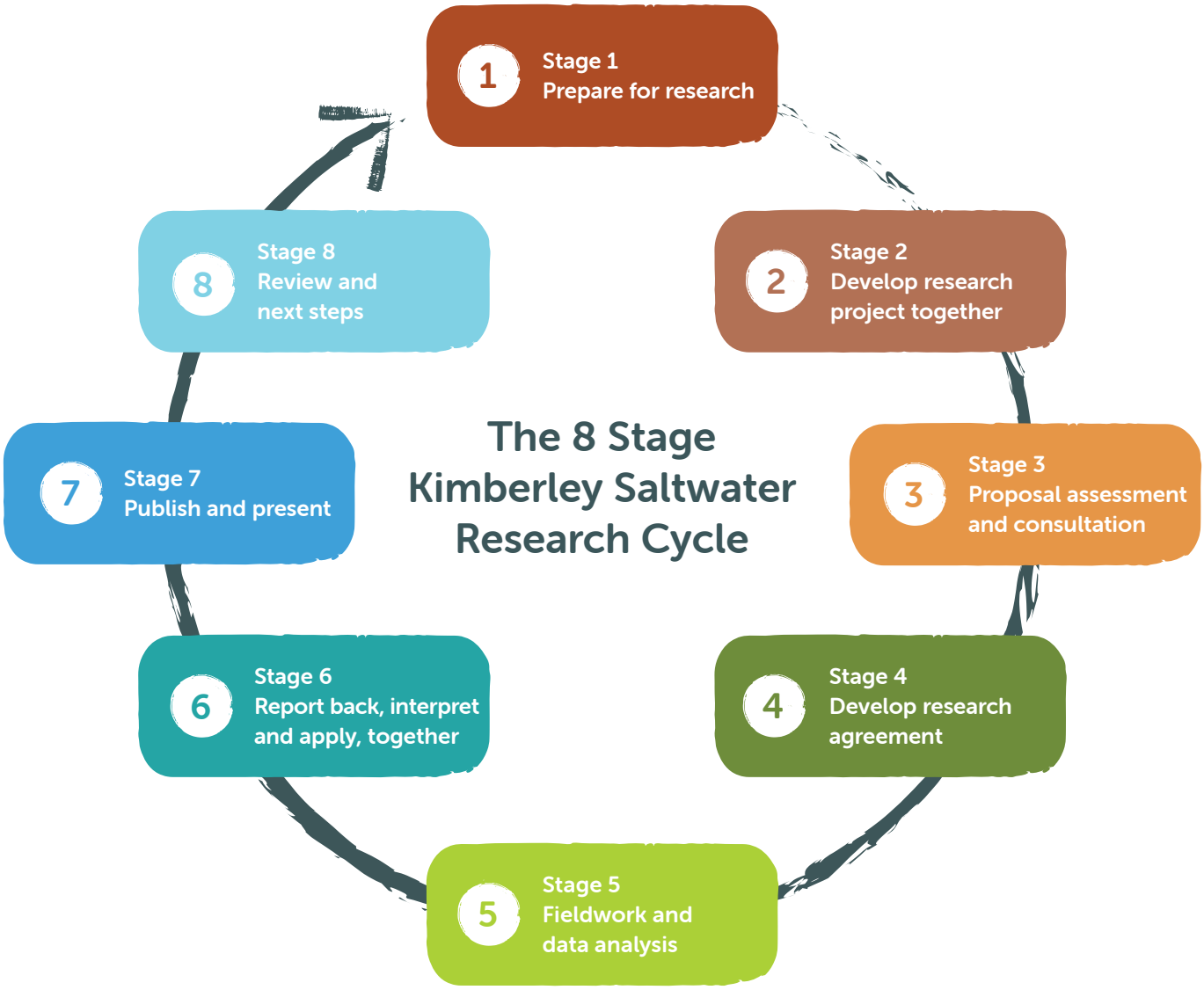
From an analytical perspective we are working with cutting edge methods, but we relied heavily on traditional knowledge to find the species we were working on. For some of the species we also relied on traditional knowledge to gain a better understanding of reproductive ecology - which is relevant to how we interpret results

Kimberley Researcher,
2016

Diagram: Tengo, M. et al (2014). Connecting Diverse Knowledge Systems for Enhanced Ecosystem Governance: The Multiple Evidence Base Approach.

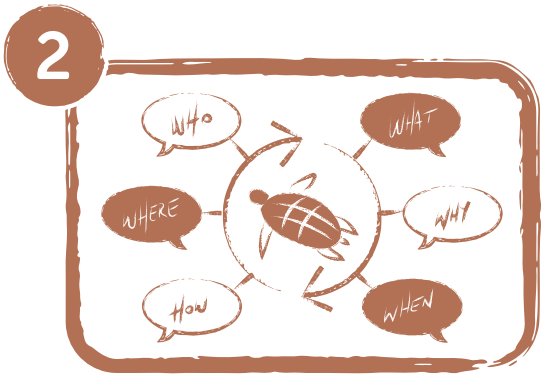
The 8-Stage Research Cycle

The diagram below shows the full process at a glance.
Each stage is described in detail in the following sections.



Intertidal reef monitoring on Mayala islands.
Credit: Kimberley Land Council

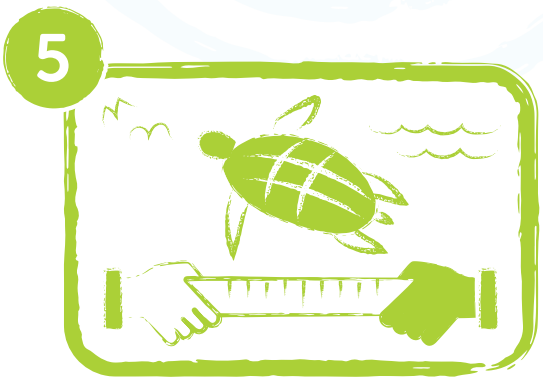
Stage 1 Prepare – do your background research



Stage 2 Co-design the project and submit your application

Stage 3 Application assessment and consultation

Stage 4 Develop and sign a Research Agreement



Stage 5 Fieldwork and data analysis

Stage 6 Report back, interpret and apply results together

Stage 7 Publish and present

Stage 8 Review, maintain relationships and plan next steps

Karajarri Ranger Janelle Munroe measuring a mud crab.
Credit: Karajarri Traditional Lands Association

Other Approvals

This guide may not be the only approval process you need to follow. Identify other requirements early and start those processes in parallel.

Situation	What to do
Project in a state marine park or conservation area	Contact the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions WA (DBCA) for relevant permits or licences (flora, fauna, commercial, research). www.dbca.wa.gov.au
Project in an Australian Marine Park (managed by the Commonwealth Government)	Contact Australian Marine Parks for information about permits and licences. www.australianmarineparks.gov.au
Group supported by the Kimberley Land Council	Contact the KLC for advice and any additional steps required: www.klc.org.au/
Large project involving multiple Ranger groups or disciplines	Contact all groups early. Consider funding regional workshops or roadshows. Set up a steering committee or working groups. Allow funding for a local coordination role to support consultation with all parties. Seek advice from ISWAG via ISWAG or KLC: www.iswag.org.au www.klc.org.au/
Group-specific processes	Ask each group if they have their own additional requirements or templates.
Animal or human ethics	Obtain ethics approval from your research institution. For animal use, contact DPIRD for scientific purposes permits.

TIP

Following this guide or applying is not "approval" to go ahead. A ***Research Agreement*** with Traditional Owners is critical. You may also need other approvals.

1

Prepare

Do your background research before reaching out

Wunambal Gaambera doing *junba* for visitors at Ngula, Jar Island.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC

Before contacting any Traditional Owner group or PBC, take time to understand the region, the people and the priorities.

Stage 1

1.1 Check if this guide applies

Re-read the ***Does this guide apply to my project?*** section above. If yes, work through the steps below.

1.2 Learn about Country and the Traditional Owners

- Read this guide in full, including the key principles and the research cycle.
- Identify whose Country you plan to work on - it may be more than one group. See the map.
- Find the relevant Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) and their contact details, and any associated ranger teams. [Link to Resources]
- Talk to other researchers with experience working collaboratively in the Kimberley.
- Review past research in the area - what local place and species names are used, what were the findings?
- Get familiar with the Kimberley climate, remoteness, risks and services.
- Contact local and regional support organisations for advice [weblink to Resources page]

1.3 Align your project with Traditional Owner priorities

- Read the relevant Healthy Country Plans, IPA Plans or other management plans. These already outline local Traditional Owners' conservation and management priorities and often research needs for your target area(s) so are the best starting point. [Link to Resources]
- Consider: how does your proposal align with and address local priorities? How will it improve Indigenous Sea Country management outcomes? How could the results be applied?
- Consider how your project relates to other research (past, present, proposed) and to management activities.

1.4 Identify mutual benefits and opportunities for co-design

- Identify how local Aboriginal people will benefit from research on their Country.
- Review case studies to see how others have embedded collaborative elements.
- Think about how Rangers and TOs could be involved in planning, fieldwork, project delivery, data analysis and communication.
- Map out a fully costed budget including fair rates for Ranger and Traditional Owner involvement, and any in-kind support you can offer.

TIPS

- **Start early:** i.e. at least 6 months before you intend to begin fieldwork. Relationships take time to build.
- **Be patient:** many Ranger groups and PBCs are under-resourced and have busy work plans and full agendas already.
- **Be flexible:** be prepared to adapt your project design to better fit the needs and capacity of the group.

1.5 Make initial contact

Reach out to the Key Contact for your target area(s). In your first conversation:

- Introduce yourself, your skills and the theme of your research.
- Communicate clearly - use simple language and share a short visual summary and map in advance.
- Demonstrate you have done your background research.
- Share ideas for co-design and how your project might align with local priorities – and invite feedback.
- Be upfront about any binding timeframes or funding conditions.
- Ask about any group-specific templates, forms or processes to follow early (e.g. research agreement templates).
- Gauge interest, capacity and any constraints to collaborating within your timelines.

Bardi Jawi Oorany Ranger Natasha George.
Credit: Kimberley Land Council

Bardi Jawi Rangers Azton Howard and Kevin George reviewing sea country projects. Credit: ISWAG

TIPS for Traditional Owner Groups, PBCs and Coordinators

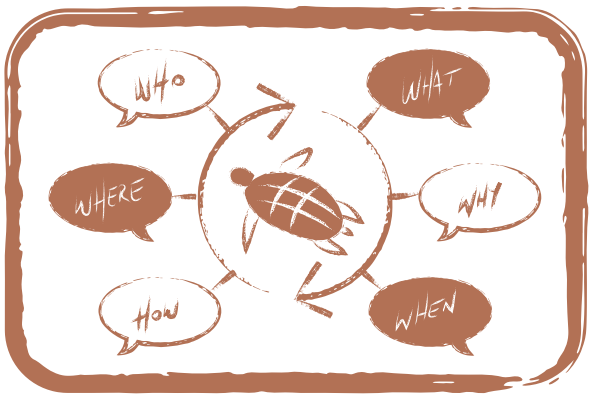
- **Stage 1:** Respond early, even if only briefly and directing them to this process.
- **Stage 1:** Check before you commit:
  - Does the project address priorities in your Healthy Country Plan (or other plan)?
  - What questions will it answer or management issues will it help you address?
  - How can we maximise the benefits for Traditional Owners?
  - How will it build capacity? What lasting impact or tools might it provide?
- **Stage 1 & 2:** Be realistic and honest about timeframes, expectations, capacity, concerns or challenges.
- **Stage 2:** Don't over-commit your team. Do you really have the capacity? How much time do you want to commit to the project?
- **Ongoing:** Communicate regularly, respond to queries and follow ups, explain delays and changes
- **Stage 4:** Insist on a Research Agreement. Provide a template if you have one. If not, ask the Researcher to do the drafting legwork.
- **Stage 6:** Follow up if you don't hear back about results, data, publication or next steps. Insist on what is in your Research Agreement.
- **Ongoing:** Raise concerns and provide honest feedback (respectfully) at any time. Ask for feedback in return.

2

Co-design and apply

Develop the project together and submit your application

Nyangumarta Rangers and DPIRD doing sawfish research on 80 Mile Beach.
Credit: Nyangumarta Rangers



Once you have the group's initial agreement to proceed, co-design the project together and complete a Kimberley Saltwater Research Application.

Stage 2

2.1 Start early, be patient and allow plenty of time

- Allow plenty of time — at minimum three months. Some groups will need longer:
  - Group 1: 4 weeks for an initial response to the application and 3 months for a decision on whether to proceed with the project and develop an agreement.
  - Group 2: 2 months for an initial response to the Application and 6 to 12 months for a decision on whether to proceed with the project and develop an agreement.
- Be prepared for delays due to unplanned weather, sorry business, cultural protocols, staff turnover or other priorities.
- Ask about the group's governance structure, decision making processes and expected timeframes.

2.2 Co-design and communicate clearly

- Develop a plain English, visual communication aid to explain who, what, where, how, when and why.
- Clearly explain how the project meets local Sea Country management or Healthy Country Plan priorities, and how Rangers or TOs can be involved at all stages.
- Invite feedback and co-design early. Putting effort in early can save you time later.
- Key Contacts are often a good source of advice. Work closely with them through many conversations back and forth.
- Be available for video calls and in-person meetings where possible.
- Be prepared to revise your proposal in response to feedback.

2.3 Submit your application

- Complete the Kimberley ***Saltwater Research Application Form*** which will be sent to the Key Contact for the groups you select in the form. A copy may also be sent to ISWAG.
- Use this form if you have:
  - **A.** Already contacted a group and have been directed to follow this guide and process.
  - **B.** Not yet made contact and are using this process to submit an initial proposal.
- Use plain English – fewer words, no technical jargon, easy to read.
- Send a draft to your Key Contact for feedback before final submission. They can often provide valuable advice that saves you time later.
- Attach key supporting documents – keep attachments to a minimum. For example:
  - A short (3–5 page) plain-English project summary, including outlining different engagement, resourcing or benefits for different groups in the Kimberley.
  - Your organisation's ICIP Protocols, Data Sovereignty Policy, and/or Reconciliation Action Plan, demonstrating its strategic commitments.
  - A clear map of your proposed project areas/sites.

2.4 Checklist for a co-designed project plan

Ensure your application addresses all of the following checklist items:

Checklist item	Ensure you talk about and cover	Y / n/a	Link
Mutual benefits	Project addresses local Indigenous Sea Country research, monitoring or management priorities		Resources
	Benefits for Rangers & Traditional Owners are clearly identified		Stage 1
Fully-costed budget	Ensure budget is fully costed		Budget and Resourcing Advice
	Fair rates for Traditional Owners and Rangers' time contributing to all stages of the project, including fieldwork, knowledge, meetings, hire of equipment or services.		
	Presentation opportunities are shared fairly		
	In-kind contributions expected from all parties are defined		
Governance	Project governance structure, consider 'working or advisory groups' culturally-appropriate way that aligns with TO governance structures and decision processes.		
Training and Capacity Building	Basic training plan to support local Indigenous Rangers and build capacity – what skills will you leave behind?		
Approvals	What needs to be approved? By whom? At what stages? How long will they have?		Appendix 2 Appendix 4
Consent, Data Access and Sharing	Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance		Resources
	Free, Prior and Informed Consent		
	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property		
Research Agreement essential clauses	Indigenous ownership and control of Project IP (not just ICIP or TEK)		Appendix 2
	All ICIP, culturally sensitive and confidential information is protected		
	Co-authorship, co-presentation & branding		
	Approvals required are clearly defined		
	Benefit sharing		

Checklist item	Ensure you talk about and cover	Y / n/a	Link
Project Plan	Longer timeframes that allow time and flexibility to: • Develop relationships with Indigenous research partners • Support two-way learning and knowledge exchange while in the field • Spend time in the local community immediately after the field work has been completed • Support local governance and decision-making processes • Account for unforeseen events such as weather, cultural obligations, staff changes • Return the research findings to the community (preferably in person) • Allow Indigenous research partners to review all publications before publishing.		Appendix 3
	All parties have agreed clear milestones, with responsibility and timeframes		
	All parties' time and in-kind contribution are clearly defined and understood		
Sharing and Outputs	A range of outputs will be produced to share the results with different audiences, particularly Rangers and community members for example: videos, workshops, posters.		Stage 6 and 7 Appendix 6

TIPS

- **Submit your application early;** ask the Key Contact when the next PBC Directors' meeting is.
- **Be patient.** This stage can take several months. Many groups are under-resourced and have busy work plans and full agendas.
- For large projects involving multiple groups:
  - A separate assessment, consultation and approval process is required with each PBC/group.
  - Clearly differentiate the levels of engagement, resourcing and benefit per group. This could be explained in your project summary attached to the form submission.

3

Assessment and consultation

Your application is reviewed by the PBC and Traditional Owners

Nyangumarta Rangers Jacob Loughridge, Vallerina Aspro, Elliot Hunter and Ishmael Hunter.
Credit: Nyangumarta Rangers

Once submitted, your application goes to the relevant PBCs (or other similar corporation) for assessment and consultation with Traditional Owners.

Stage 3

3.1 How the process works

Step		What happens
1.	**Application sent to PBC (or equivalent)**	Your application will be sent to the Key Contacts for the groups you select in the form. A copy will also be sent to ISWAG who may facilitate or support the process. Note that ISWAG simply supports the process and cannot approve research. Final approval sits with the relevant PBC and Traditional Owners.
2.	**Assessment by PBC or Traditional Owners**	Governance, decision making processes and capacity vary widely between groups and assessment may include one or more of the following: • Project is tabled on the next PBC board meeting agenda • Referral to a sub-committee such as a Healthy Country Advisory Committee • Assessment by staff including CEO, General Manager, Health Country Manager or IPA Coordinator as aligned with strategic priorities and within their delegation to approve • Consultation with Traditional Owners or families who have rights and interests in the specific area to ensure they consent You may be invited to attend meetings in person or online to present or answer questions. Note that the PBC has the discretion to pause, reject or require redesign of projects at any stage.
3.	**Feedback and revisions**	The PBC may request more information, impose conditions or ask for changes. Address these quickly and clearly, update the proposal, and resubmit. A proposal may go back and forth several times.
4.	**Approval, not yet ready, or rejection**	If approved, move to **Stage 4.** If not approved, ask for feedback and look for ways to better align with local needs and priorities. If not ready, it may require further relationship building or co-design. Take heed, most projects require some back and forth to refine the project together before being formally approved.

TIPS

- Ask about the group's governance, decision making process and expected timeframes.
- Be patient: many PBCs are under-resourced, meet infrequently and have other priorities.
- Follow up 2-3 weeks after a scheduled meeting to check progress.
- Be open to revising your proposal. Some proposals go back and forth several times before approval.
- Be aware you will still need to negotiate a Research Agreement (see ***Stage 4***). **"Approval" of your application form is only the first step.**

4

Research agreement

Formalise the partnership in writing

Flatback turtle nest exhumation on Dambimangari Country.
Credit: Dambimangari AC

If your project is approved, the next step is to work with staff and lawyers to develop and sign a Research Agreement. This is required, not just recommended.

Stage 4

The Research Agreement is a legally binding document that sets out what has been agreed and the standards required for research to proceed fairly and respectfully.

4.1 What a Research Agreement should include

- Legal standard items eg insurance
- Essential clauses including: [see ***Appendix 2: Essential Clauses***]
  - Data ownership, control, sharing and management
  - Project IP, ICIP, culturally sensitive and confidential information
  - Permissions and approvals eg to publish or share results
  - Benefits sharing
  - Co-authorship
  - Access and accompaniment
- A project schedule and plan: who does what, when and how
- A budget and payment schedule

Some groups have a standard agreement template that can be adapted to your project. For multi-group projects, separate agreements are generally required with each group.

4.2 Data ownership and sharing results is important

Many groups will be keen to understand upfront what your intent or plan for data ownership, handling, sharing and use will be before investing too much time in the project.

Refer to ***Appendix 6*** for a comprehensive list of the type of data to be collected and/or produced and consider it while co-designing a project and for Research Agreement negotiations.

With the growth of Indigenous-led land and sea management, it is increasingly common practice that Indigenous groups will want to have control over all project outputs and results, not just ICIP and Traditional Knowledge.

TIPS

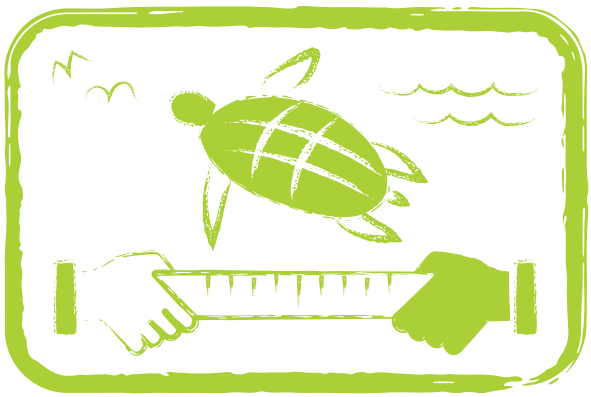
- **Always request the PBC's research agreement template**; it makes the process much smoother and reduces the burden on the PBC.
- Encourage your institution's lawyer to use the PBC's template, not the other way around. **Refusing to do so can delay or derail the project entirely.**
- Ask your lawyer to use **plain language wherever possible.**
- Respect Indigenous groups' rights to protect their ICIP and confidential information, and to control how all results are shared and used.
- For tripartite projects (researcher + PBC + supporting organisation like KLC), the agreement may involve all three parties.

5

Fieldwork and data analysis

Working on Country together

Kiehana Carter & Romaniah Hunter researching mud crabs on Yawuru Sea Country.
Credit: Nyamba Buru Yawuru



Once the Research Agreement is signed, you can move onto fieldwork. The following tips will help ensure fieldwork goes smoothly and respectfully.

Stage 5

5.1 Before you arrive

- **Several months in advance:** confirm the project plan and schedule fieldwork. Most Ranger groups plan a year ahead. Their work schedules may also change at the last minute for priority/emergency activities like fire. They will endeavour to give as much notice as possible, but things can also change at short notice.
- **A least one month prior:** ask about any required permissions to enter communities and access Country. The earlier the better as this may inform your logistics.
- **One week before:** check in with the Key Contact on local conditions, any preparations you can assist with, and unforeseen changes.
- **Media Consents:** Arrange forms if you plan to take photos, film or recordings of people or Country.
- **Payments: confirm who should be paid,** what rate, by who. It is generally expected that Elders and other Traditional Owners should be paid for their time and contributions.
- **Cultural induction** - Ask (and budget) for the local cultural induction or request an informal briefing from Rangers or Traditional Owners if not available.
- **Cultural Protocols & Code of Conduct:** Ask for a copy of the local Code of Conduct, if available, and ask about any 'no-go' areas, avoidance relationships, gender protocols.

Bardi Jawi and Mayala Rangers on country.
Credit: Kimberley Land Council

Dambimangari Rangers monitoring remote turtle nesting beaches.
Credit: Dambimangari AC

5.2 Conduct on Country

- **Always behave respectfully** and follow cultural protocols as explained to you.
- Familiarise yourself with the common Kimberley Cultural Protocols detailed in ***Appendix 1***, and ask for specific advice from the group you are working with.
- **Leave alcohol at home – most ranger groups and communities are dry.**
- Stay with your cultural advisor, Traditional Owner or Indigenous Ranger as agreed at all times.
- Support opportunities for families to join and visit Country to facilitate intergenerational knowledge exchange.

5.3 During fieldwork

- **Involve Rangers, Elders and young people in all stages of planning,** project management and review meetings.
- **Invite feedback** and adapt the plan as needed.
- **Provide any agreed training** and in-kind contributions, including on-the-job training.
- **Involve Indigenous partners in data input, analysis and interpretation** where possible. Undertake data analysis or write-up in the community alongside Rangers where possible.
- **Use templates and tools that Rangers can use**, and display data in ways that Rangers can learn and replicate for their communities.
- **Provide copies of all data** in an accessible form as soon as practicable.

5.4 At the end of each trip

- **Run a fieldwork debrief** with the team, ideally in person. For example what went well? What could we do better? What did we learn?
- **Share preliminary results** and discuss as a group.
- **Organise payments** as agreed.
- **Agree next steps and timelines** for:
  - next fieldwork
  - data analysis
  - reporting back
  - community workshops
  - target dates for publications or media
  - potential conferences.

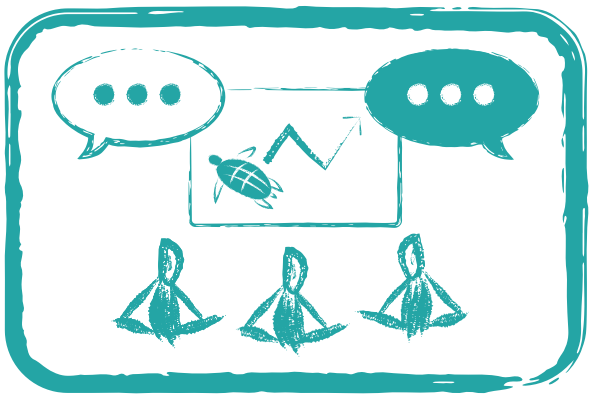
TIPS

- See Common ***Kimberley Cultural Protocols*** for general advice. These can have a big impact on project planning.
- Always ask for specific advice from the group you are working with.

6

Report back, interpret and apply

Share and use the results together



Before preparing any project outputs, work through these steps to ensure findings are accessible, relevant and useful to Traditional Owners, Rangers, their communities and other users and can be applied to inform management.

Stage 6

6.1 Report back promptly

- Check in soon after you return home.
- Report back preliminary results as quickly as possible - aim for a rapid field snapshot report within two to four weeks.
- Use simple language and visuals e.g. histograms, bar charts, scatter-graphs, trend lines and meaningful colours.
- Ideally return in person to discuss results, or use teams if needed (most groups are proficient).
- Don't just present academic results, develop accessible results and involve Rangers in how to review or assess data in excel or other software that enables them to present results back to community.

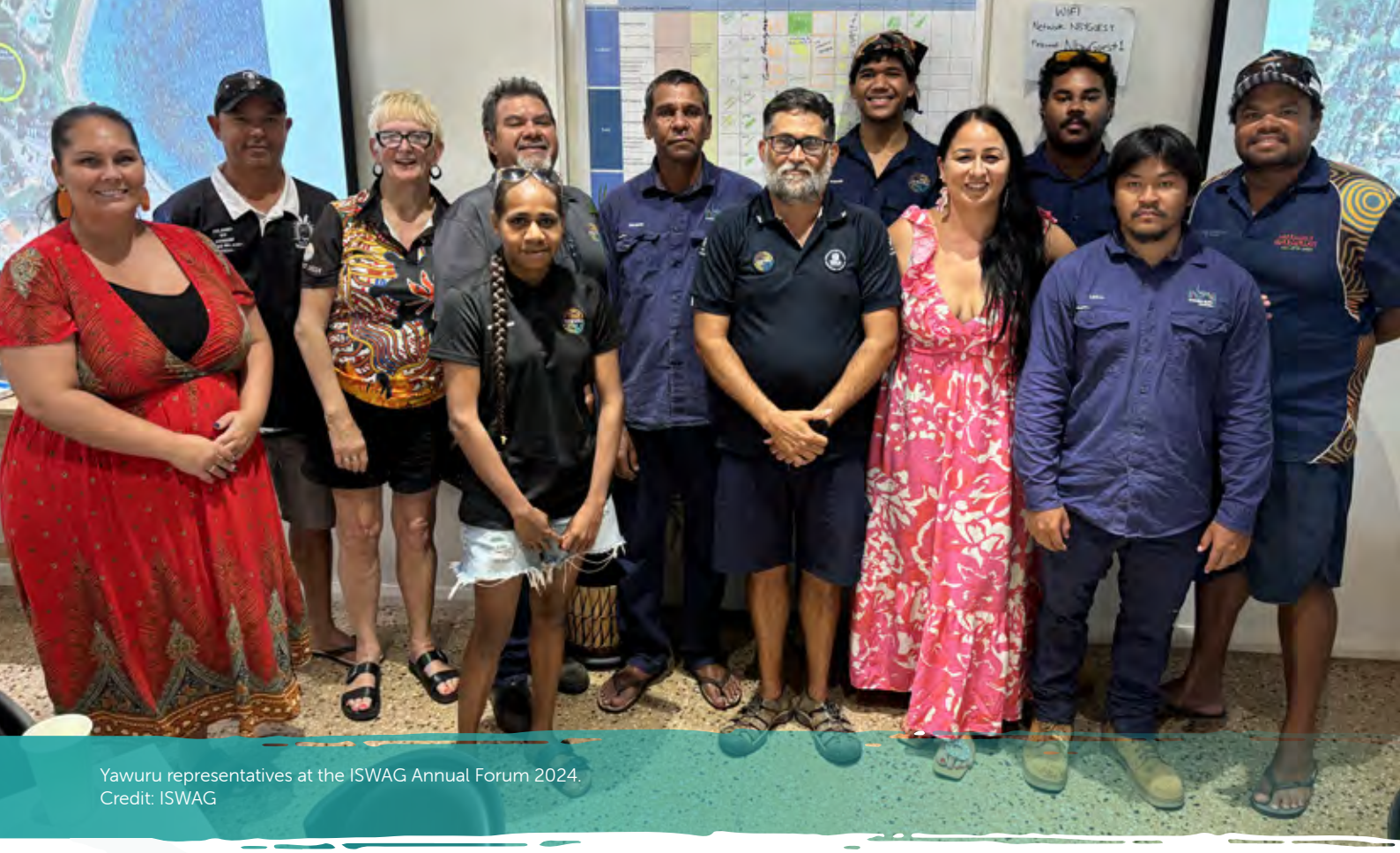
6.2 Interpret results together

- Involve Traditional Owners in interpreting results.
- Hold a workshop with Rangers, Elders and young people, preferably in person.
- Present results in simple language with graphs, images and maps.
- Allow time for people to ask questions and reflect – provide information in advance if possible. Importantly, slow down and allow TOs/Rangers to take their time to speak.
- Allow break out time and space for TOs/Rangers to reflect and discuss privately.
- Value all knowledge systems - different perspectives produce more comprehensive results.

Consider using these questions to guide discussion:

- What did we learn? What questions have we answered? What gaps remain?
- How does this further the goals of our Healthy Country Plan or other local plans?
- How could we apply these results? How should we adapt future research and management?

ISWAG Annual Forum 2025. Credit: ISWAG



Yawuru representatives at the ISWAG Annual Forum 2024.
Credit: ISWAG

6.3 Make results accessible

Think beyond academic papers. Discuss together:

- Who should we share the results with and how? For example Elders, youth, neighbouring pastoralists, government agencies, Rangers or the general public.
- What format/s could we present information in? Consider:
  - Community newsletters, social media posts, short videos or reels
  - Fact sheets, reports, posters or ranger toolkits/apps
  - School activities, community info sessions or conference presentations
  - Preparing a case study of the project, including how you followed or implemented the principles of this guide, to share with other Ranger groups or researchers. This is a very valuable output for groups to showcase good projects with other project proponents and potential funders.

6.4 Apply results to real world sea country management

Sit down together and talk about how the outcomes could inform management for example:

- Adaptive management: recommend changing or developing new management strategies e.g. exclude access, change fire regime, monitor every two years.
- Support ongoing Ranger-led monitoring or future research.
- Develop toolkits, protocols or apps that Rangers and TOs can use to continue monitoring in future.
- Support policy or legal changes e.g. zoning, fishing limits, new conservation areas.
- Provide training in new skills.
- Develop ongoing or new research projects, including elevating these opportunities and needs to laboratory heads and academic leaders.

6.5 Return all collected data, specimens and media and share those produced

- Return all data and media (not just final PDF reports) in digital and hard copy.
- Return all samples and specimens to Country and their Traditional Custodians where possible, or to appropriate storage space as agreed. This should be discussed and agreed upfront and included in the Research Agreement.
- Agree on secure storage arrangements with appropriate cultural restrictions and permissions.
- Use sensible, culturally appropriate naming conventions for all files.
- Offer training and support in data management and consider funding for on-Country data storage e.g. develop a simple database.
- Ensure that arrangements for data management, storage, ownership, protection and access are clearly outlined and agreed in advance in your Research Agreement.

> "Science needs to come back and inform management in the real world. Researchers should think about how results can help answer Traditional Owners' concerns, not just build their own academic portfolio
>
> Dean Mathews,
> ISWAG Co-Chair, 2026

TIP

Remember, types of Project data vary widely – see the list at ***Appendix 6*** and ensure data storage and management arrangements cover all types.

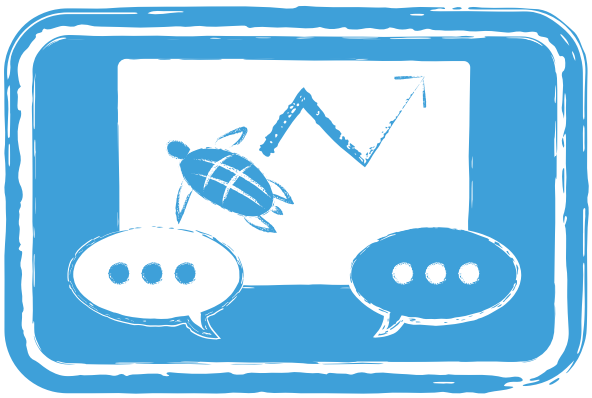
Reef monitoring on Mayala islands.
Credit: Kimberley Land Council

7

Publish and present

Share findings the right way

James Downie, Tom Andrews, Chase Pigram and Quentin Turner at the ISWAG Annual Forum 2025.
Credit: ISWAG



Check your Research Agreement carefully before preparing to publish.

Stage 7

It is important Indigenous partners have an opportunity to review any outputs to check they are appropriate for the public to see, hear or read.

Remember: publishing and presenting data includes all outputs. This includes papers, media, presentations, newsletters, fact sheets, recordings, social media posts and images.

All outputs must be approved by Traditional Owners, as agreed in your Research Agreement.

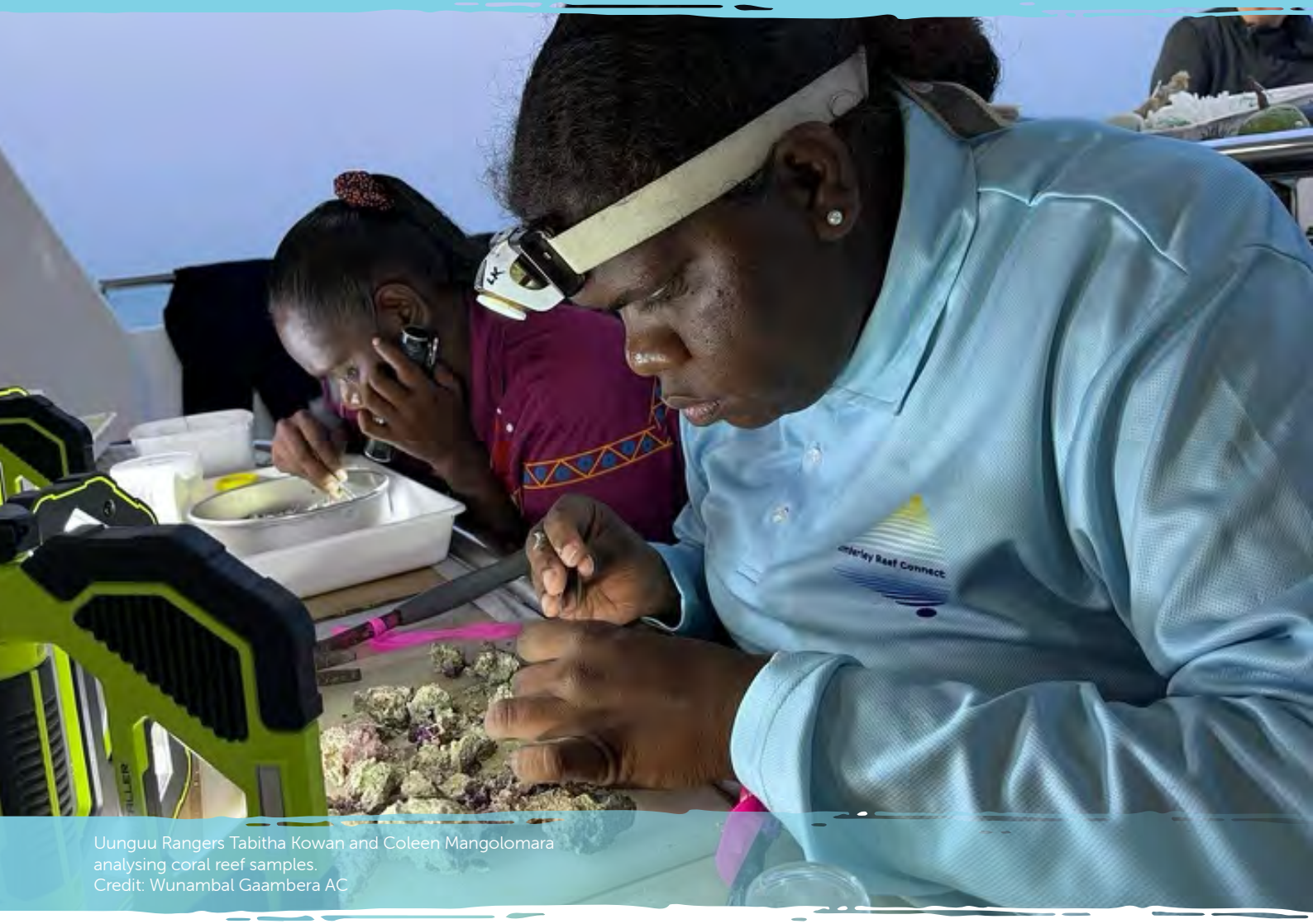
7.1 Before you publish

☐	**Seek consent** Research should only be used for purposes Traditional Owners have consented to in your Research Agreement. Any other use requires specific written approval. Consent is ongoing and can be withdrawn at any time.
☐	**All outputs** All outputs - papers, media, social media posts, talks, newsletters, recordings and images – must be approved by Traditional Owners as agreed in your Research Agreement.
☐	**Involve Traditional Owners and Rangers** Invite input from Traditional Owners and Rangers and try to develop outputs together, rather than just seeking final approval.
☐	**Protect confidential information** Ensure Indigenous research partners review all outputs to check: no confidential information is published; names and places are correct; images are appropriate; cultural information is accurate; men's or women's business is appropriately separated.
☐	**Allow time for review** Allow approximately 4 to 8 weeks for outputs to be reviewed and approved by the PBC Board, Traditional Owners or Elders.
☐	**Co-authorship** List the Indigenous people involved as co-authors, this may be individuals or an entity or group e.g. the Rangers. Acknowledge all Traditional Owners, Rangers, Elders and Aboriginal Corporations appropriately in all publications. This may be as co-authors or in the acknowledgements, and as individuals or a group/entity.
☐	**Co-present and co-brand** Invite Traditional Owners or Rangers to co-present findings at conferences (ideally more than one person, for support). Try to plan the budget to include their travel costs and conference fees. Co-brand presentations with your Indigenous research partner.

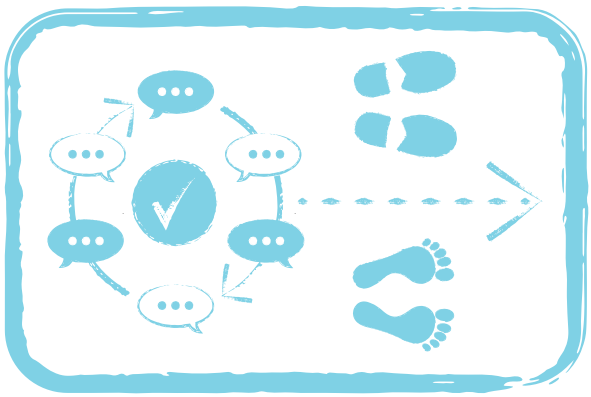
8

Review and next steps

Reflect, maintain relationships and build future collaborations



Uunguu Rangers Tabitha Kowan and Coleen Mangolomara analysing coral reef samples.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC



A successful two-way project should result in lasting relationships and ongoing collaboration.

Stage 8

Consider how your project can kick start future work.

8.1 Review and reflect together

- Facilitate formal feedback or review session with input from all parties.
- Discuss and record successes, challenges, learnings and opportunities for improvement.
- Provide documents at least two weeks in advance to allow time for considered input.
- Allow space for Traditional Owners to reflect and discuss amongst themselves.

8.2 Maintain relationships

- Stay connected with Rangers, PBCs and Traditional Owners after fieldwork concludes.
- Share publications, related research and future work back to the group.
- Offer future training, capacity building and opportunities such as conferences and networking.

8.3 Support ongoing monitoring and management

- Check in regularly on any ongoing work or outcomes from the project.
- Return to provide refresher training if training was originally delivered.
- Support the group to incorporate research findings into Healthy Country Plans, IPAs and apply them to future management actions.
- Help connect the group with government bodies to discuss relevant policy changes.
- Help groups develop transition plans and funding sources for ongoing monitoring.
- Consider what the group wants to do ongoing and how can you support that.

8.4 Build future collaborations

- Return to community to discuss results, follow-up research and future partnership opportunities.
- Look for funding opportunities that address local sea country priorities.
- Promote the Indigenous Ranger group and advocate for the work of Indigenous Rangers within your networks.
- Build on your partnership and return for a new or extended project.
- Support the group to develop new projects and collaborations.

TIP

The research cycle is a full circle – a completed project should lead you to plan the next steps together.

Azton Howard and Kamahl Bangu assessing conditions for dugong drone monitoring on Karajarri Country. Credit: ISWAG

Other information

Budget and Resourcing Advice

Resource Indigenous research partners' participation in your project the same way you resource western science partners. Do not assume Rangers or TOs can participate in kind.

Capacity, resourcing needs and expectations vary between groups. Ask your Key Contact about their rates and seek advice from your networks. Many groups can often provide equipment on a fee for service hire basis.

Your budget and Research Agreement should include:

Budget item	Notes
Rangers, Cultural Advisors, Elders and community members	People's time contributing to workshops, fieldwork, data analysis or presentations. Traditional Owners should generally be paid wages (not vouchers or purchase orders), usually facilitated via the PBC or Corporation. Remember people often need to take time off work or other responsibilities to be involved and should be compensated for their time.
Vehicle and vessel hire or running costs	Per day / km rate Consider hiring from the Corporation before externally
Meeting venue hire	
Cultural induction	
Welcome to Country	
Fuel for travel (e.g. meetings, fieldwork, dissemination, conferences)	Could be managed via purchase orders, fuel vouchers or, potentially by reimbursements if the initial cost can be covered.
Food for Rangers and community members on trips	Check with Rangers who is organising food and consumables.
Consumables (tools, equipment, devices, food for fieldwork)	If possible, leave some tools and equipment with the Rangers at end of project that will assist in ongoing monitoring or operations.

In-Kind support

You can also support Indigenous research partners through in-kind contributions, for example:

- Train and upskill Rangers
- Contribute to local school science programs
- Mentor a Ranger in their area of interest; offer opportunities to join other projects or visit your research institution
- Provide tools and equipment
- Develop toolkits, databases or monitoring resources and provide ongoing training in their use
- Provide in-kind expert advice on other projects

Ask your Key Contact and the Rangers what is most useful.

Yawuru Country Manager Supervisor Vaughn Lee monitoring dugongs via drone on Yawuru Sea Country.
Credit: Nyamba Buru Yawuru

Definitions

Term / Role	Definition / Description
Background IP	IP held by any party before the research started. It remains the property of whoever brought it to the project.
Collaborative Research	Is jointly owned and run by Indigenous people and other partners (for example research institutions) in a way that values the contributions of both groups and builds knowledge together. It takes into account both parties' aspirations and shares work and funding fairly. It is also known as "two way" research.
Confidential Information	Culturally sensitive, personal or commercially sensitive information encountered during the project that should not be shared further without permission from Traditional Owners.
Cultural advisor	A Cultural Advisor is often a knowledge holder or elder who has been taught by senior leaders to hold, manage, and protect traditional knowledge, laws, and teachings and may provide advice about projects.
Data	Data in this context is very broad, and may include a huge range of facts, measurements or observations in different formats that can be analysed to create meaningful information. See Appendix XX for a full list of potential types of data.
Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	The principle that Traditional Owners must be fully informed about and freely consent to research before it commences. Consent is ongoing and can be withdrawn at any time.
Government Agencies	Local, state and Commonwealth agencies with legal responsibilities to manage activities on land and water, issue permits, and may also be research partners.
Healthy Country Plans	Plans developed by Traditional Owner groups setting out their values, concerns and management priorities for land, sea and culture. These comprehensive plans are a key starting point for understanding local priorities.

Term / Role	Definition / Description
Indigenous	The term 'Indigenous' has been used throughout based on the group's title of *Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group*. However, we note that this is not always the preferred term for groups or individuals across the Kimberley and Australia, so this definition should be considered synonymous with 'Aboriginal', 'First Nations', 'First Peoples', or 'Traditional Owners'.
Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)	IP of many forms of Indigenous traditional culture and expression, including art, songs, dance, ceremony, language, ceremonial grounds and documentation of heritage.
Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance	The rights of Indigenous peoples to govern the collection, ownership and application of data about their communities, territories and resources. Read more about the CARE principles: www.gida-global.org/
Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs)	Areas where Indigenous peoples have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to manage their Country according to their traditional knowledge and values.
Indigenous Rangers	Rangers may guide fieldwork, collect data, share Traditional Ecological Knowledge and local expertise, support community engagement, enable knowledge transfer, conduct data analysis, and co-present results.
Intellectual Property (IP)	Refers to the legal rights to control knowledge held or produced by individuals or groups including data, reports, maps, photos, software, designs, trademarks, stories, patents, songs, methods or plans. It includes Background IP, ICIP and Project IP. Also see ***Appendix 6*** for data types.
Joint management	Official partnerships between the State or Commonwealth Government and Traditional Owners for management of parks and reserves. Many Indigenous groups jointly manage marine parks in the Kimberley.
Joint management Body (JMB)	A body with representation from government and Traditional Owners that makes decisions on joint management plans and advises on use and management of conservation areas.
Key Contact	The most appropriate first point of contact within each Indigenous group - their title may be Coordinator, Manager or Project Officer. The Key Contact provides guidance on Country, research priorities, governance and local decision-making processes, and acts as a conduit between you and the PBC, Rangers and Traditional Owners. **Note**: the Key Contact cannot approve a research proposal.

Term / Role	Definition / Description
Native Title	The recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have rights and interests to land and waters according to their traditional law and customs, as set out in the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. Native Title has been determined across all Sea Country of the Kimberley.
Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) or similar	A legal entity that manages and protects the Native Title rights and interests of an Indigenous group. PBCs assess and approve research proposals, determine consultation requirements, enter agreements, and review outputs and publications. They vary widely in size and capacity. There are several governance variations to the PBC for groups throughout the Kimberley, and they may be referred to as an Aboriginal Corporation, sub-corporation, Recognised Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) or a Lands Association.
Project IP	New IP created by the research project, built upon the background IP each party brings.
Research	Where the term research is used in this context, we are referring to a range of desktop or field-based activities that include monitoring and management activities. Many may benefit from a regional approach, such as weed and pest control programs, or research and management that is focused on migratory species.
Research Institutions	Universities and institutions that host projects, manage grants, employ researchers, provide ethics approvals and insurance, and negotiate research agreements.
Saltwater Country / Sea Country	The term 'Country' is powerful and complex for Indigenous people. It encompasses not just biophysical features but all parts of the landscape as a living, spiritual, interconnected whole. Saltwater Country includes: the sea, reefs, seagrass, sand, mudflats, rocks, beaches, islands, estuaries, creeks, mangroves, freshwater springs and saltmarsh, as well as stories, ceremonies and significant sites.
Supporting/Partner Organisations	PBCs may have partner organisations providing business, legal, governance and administrative services. KLC provides regional advocacy and support for many groups.
Traditional Owners (TOs)	People who hold cultural connection and obligations for an area of Country. Different TOs may hold different knowledge, and some hold specific responsibilities for certain places.

Uunguu Rangers securing satellite tags to green turtles.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AC	Aboriginal Corporation
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (WA)
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HCP	Healthy Country Plan
ICIP	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property
IP	Intellectual Property
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
ISWAG	Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group
JMB	Joint Management Body
KISSP	Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
LSMU	Land and Sea Management Unit (KLC)
NTBC	Native Title Body Corporate
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
REAC	KLC Research Ethics and Access Committee
RNTBC	Registered Native Title Body Corporate
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TO	Traditional Owner
WAMSI	Western Australian Marine Science Institute

ISWAG Annual Forum 2024. Credit: ISWAG

Resources and More Information

Start your application

Begin the Kimberley Saltwater Science Project Application here: ***Application form***

Key organisations

- Indigenous Saltwater Advisory Group (ISWAG): **www.iswag.org.au**
- Kimberley Land Council (KLC): **www.klc.org.au**
- Western Australian Marine Science Institute (WAMSI): **www.wamsi.org.au**
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA): **www.dbca.wa.gov.au**
- Environs Kimberley: **www.environskimberley.org.au/**
- Indigenous Desert Alliance (IDA): **www.indigenousdesertalliance.com/**
- Nulungu Research Institute **www.notredame.edu.au/research/institutes-and-initiatives/nulungu**

Collaborative research guidelines and legal concepts

- AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020): **www.aiatsis.gov.au**
- NAILSMA Our Knowledge Our Way Guidelines (2020): **www.nailsma.org.au**
- KLC Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge Policy **www.klc.org.au**
- Guidance Note: Acknowledgement of Indigenous Contributors (NESP Landscapes) **www.nesplandscapes.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Guidance-Note-Acknowledgement-of-Indigenous-Contributors_v1.0.pdf**
- Conservation Standards (global principles guiding Healthy Country Planning): **www.conservationstandards.org**
- CARE principles of Indigenous data sovereignty **www.gida-global.org/**
- Terri Janke and Company - guides and videos about ICIP, co-authorship and related concepts: **www.terrijanke.com.au**

Original Kimberley Indigenous Saltwater Science Project resources

- WA Marine Science Institute KISSP Project Website: **www.wamsi.org.au/research_themes/kimberley-indigenous-saltwater-science-kissp/**

(Note these documents have been superseded by this Guide, however they may be a useful, more detailed reference point.)

Appendices and Templates

The following documents and templates are available as appendices or as downloadable documents in the resources section of the website.

- **Appendix 1:** Common Cultural Protocols
- **Appendix 2:** Essential Clauses for Research Agreements
- **Appendix 3:** Template Project Plan and planning tools (e.g. registers and logs)
- **Appendix 4:** Template Consultation & Approvals Register
- **Appendix 5:** Template Media Consent Form
- **Appendix 6**: Types of Project Data

Templates in development:

- **Research Agreement** - in development.
- **Participant Information Sheet** - templates are available online via research institutions.

Gaydar Lawford and Ronald Wade doing salmon research on Yawuru Country.
Credit: Nyamba Buru Yawuru

Wunambal Gaambera Traditional Owners welcome visitors on country.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC

Appendix 1: Common Kimberley Cultural Protocols

This section provides general advice for the Kimberley region. Practices vary widely. Consult the group/s you are working with for specific advice and a cultural induction.

Culture is alive and actively practiced throughout the Kimberley. Respecting local cultural protocols is critical to building trust and respectful relationships.

- **Welcome to Country:** groups in the Kimberley have different ways of welcoming or introducing you to Country, ask in advance and ensure you are welcomed properly to stay culturally safe.
- **Cultural Inductions:** ask for a cultural induction and be aware that these should be accompanied by payment.
- **Sorry Business and mourning:** when a relative or local person passes away, families or entire communities may be affected by 'sorry business', particularly if they were a senior Elder. This may mean avoiding saying certain names, holding meetings or visiting places, and may result in cancelling or rescheduling planned work.
- **Law Business and ceremony time:** many Kimberley groups still practice traditional law and ceremony. This may mean certain individuals are busy or entire communities "shut down" for several weeks or months. In the Kimberley, this is often (but not only) during the wet season (Nov-Feb). Practices and impacts vary widely.

- **No Go Areas and restricted access:** access to some areas may be restricted to certain people, at certain times or completely off bounds. This may include access tracks through areas or into communities, photography or drone use. Do not visit areas you are not permitted to go and have not asked permission to see, visit or talk about.
- **Knowledge holders, authority and restrictions:** certain families or people may be the only ones who can "speak for" a certain area, song or story, or there may be other restrictions on speaking about certain knowledge. There may be restrictions on recording certain stories or knowledge.
- **Sacred sites or objects:** some places or objects may hold special cultural value and require extra sensitivity.
- **Photography, video and drones:** it may not be appropriate to photograph certain places or people, including video and particularly drones. Always ask for consent.
- **Leave Country as it is:** do not collect, move or take any natural objects or materials while on Country, unless explicitly permitted to by the group and in an agreement.
- **Accompaniment:** stay with your cultural advisor, Traditional Owner or Indigenous Ranger as agreed, at all times.
- **Modesty:** cover your shoulders and midriff, and wear loose fitting, shorts to the knees.
- **Dry communities:** leave alcohol at home, most Ranger groups and many communities are dry.
- **Kinship systems:** are deeply embedded systems of social, spiritual, and reciprocal duties that define how people relate to one another, that may involve certain responsibilities, duty of care, sharing and reciprocity.
- **Gender protocols:** check if mixed teams are acceptable, if not adjust teams or tasks.
- **Avoidance relationships:** some people cannot be in the same room or vehicle, or make eye contact or direct conversation due to their relationship or skin, for example a man's mother-in-law. Consider this when planning fieldwork and workshops. Groups observe this differently across the region.
- **Seniority and respect:** certain people may be respected to speak up and above others due to seniority or relationships.
- **Speaking up:** some people may not have the confidence or authority to speak up.
- **Eye contact:** direct eye contact may be considered inappropriate in some cases.

TIPS

- **Do your research:** get familiar with these protocols and read about Kimberley Aboriginal people and culture.
- **Ask for specific advice** for the area or group you are working with.
- **Don't push for details:** you don't need to know why, just "what is appropriate".
- **Be flexible:** adapt your project to respect cultural protocols.

Version	Date	Description	Author/Reviewer
V1	August 2026	Common Kimberley Cultural Protocols (ISWAG Guide to Kimberley Saltwater Projects 2026)	Phoebe Martin

Appendix 2:
Essential Clauses for Agreements

This section provides suggested text for some of the most important standard clauses in Research Agreements. It should not be considered legal advice and should be adapted to each project.

All parties should seek independent legal advice when negotiating Research Agreements.

Also see the definitions in ***Definitions*** section.

Intellectual Property

Background Intellectual Property

Background Intellectual Property held by any Party before research starts remains the property of that Party.

[Traditional Owners] grant the Researchers a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence license for the term of this agreement to use [TO's] Background Material solely to the extent necessary for the Researcher to perform its obligations under this agreement.

Unless otherwise expressly provided, nothing in this Agreement transfers or grants to any party any right, title or interest in any Intellectual Property in any Background Material

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)

All Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property remains the property of [Traditional Owners].

The Researcher makes no claim and will make no claim to own, or have any claim or interest in, existing Indigenous Intellectual Property, Secret and Sacred Material or any future Indigenous Intellectual Property.

Project Intellectual Property / Project Material:

All Project Material vests on its creation in [Traditional Owners] OR Traditional Owners own all new Project IP produced by the project, and grant [insert other parties] a license to use it only for the following purposes: [XYZ]. (Strongest)

The Researcher and [Traditional Owners] jointly own the new Project IP. Either party may use the material only for the following purposes [insert] without seeking further permission from the other Party. The Parties must not use the material for any other purpose without the other Party's written permission.

The Parties may jointly agree to grant to any person a licence to use, reproduce, adapt and exploit the Project Material on terms to be agreed in writing by the Parties in each case.

Publication and Approvals

Essential clauses

Parties must not publish any information arising from the project without the prior written approval of the other party.

Parties must not publish any document or product which includes their name, their group's name or logo without the party's written permission.

The parties must provide access to final drafts of any outputs or publication for feedback with at least [XX] days notice before the requested release date.

The Researcher must allow [Traditional Owners] at least 15 working days* after the next PBC Director's meeting to review, provide feedback or approve draft outputs.

**Reasonable timeframes should be negotiated and agreed between the parties.*

Negotiable clauses

PhD students can submit their thesis to their university for the purposes of marking, but must address all concerns raised by [Traditional Owners] before being published.

> "When researchers come in using our knowledge to better their thesis, we need to be acknowledged, become joint authors of these papers.
>
> Kimberley Traditional Owner 2016

Acknowledgement & Co-Authorship

Essential clauses

All Indigenous contributors to the research project must be appropriately acknowledged as follows: [insert details]

Variations

[XX Rangers or XX Corporation] must be listed as a co-author on any academic publications.

Key Indigenous collaborators will be considered as co-authors and will be invited to co-present at events with as much notice as possible.

All outputs must be co-branded with both parties' logos, branding and names.

Each Party must acknowledge the other Party's contribution in any output or publications, but will not use the name or logo of another party unless expressly approved in writing by the other Party.

The Researchers agree to involve [Traditional Owners] in activities promoting the Research Project, including attending conferences and co-authorship of reports and papers, wherever possible.

Confidential Information

Essential clauses

No party may pass on any Confidential Information owned by another party without their prior written permission.

The Researcher agrees to keep confidential the Confidential Information and use it only for the purposes of delivering to Project. The Consultant must not disclose the Confidential information except where required to do so by law

Parties may only use Confidential Information for the agreed project purpose.

Parties must return all Confidential Information at the end of the project.

The Researcher must assume that any [TO] information likely to be confidential is in fact confidential even if [TO] have not expressly said that it is confidential.

The Researcher must treat any culturally sensitive information and cultural IP as confidential information.

Insurance and Indemnities

Variations

The [Researcher] must have appropriate personal and public liability insurance.

OR

The [Researcher] shall maintain:

(i) public liability insurance covering legal liability for loss or damage to property or injury or death to persons arising out of or in connection with the Project for an insured amount of $10 million per occurrence and unlimited in the aggregate;

(ii) professional indemnity insurance for a minimum of $10 million per claim;

(iii) worker's compensation insurance as required by law;

(iv) any other insurance reasonably that a prudent person would maintain in the circumstances in connection with delivering the Project.

OR

[The Researcher / Institution] will provide insurance cover for all Indigenous people working on the research project, whether paid or volunteers.

For tripartite agreements supported by a host or umbrella organisation: [host organisation] will provide insurance cover for any Traditional Owners or Rangers who are paid through the [host organisation] to work on the research project. Any other Indigenous community members who work on the research project (whether paid or volunteers) will be covered by the Researcher's insurance.

Indemnities

The [Researcher / Institution] indemnifies [TO Party] and its related bodies corporate from and against all actions, claims, demands, liabilities, losses, expenses, costs, (including the legal costs of defending

or settling any action, claim or demand on an indemnity basis) suffered or incurred by [TO Party] or its related bodies corporate in connection with this Agreement including:

(i) the injury, illness or death to any person (including the Researcher); and

(ii) loss or damage to any property.

Access and Accompaniment

Variations

The Researcher may access the [Determination Area], in accordance with this Agreement, only for the purpose of conducting the Research Project

The Researcher must not visit any cultural exclusion areas at any time.

The Researcher must be accompanied by at least [number] specified Traditional Owner and/or Ranger at all times when on Country, unless approved by the PBC, paid in accordance with the rates agreed in Schedule [XX].

Traditional Owners and Rangers must be paid at the Rates agreed in Schedule [XX] for their time accompanying the Researcher.

**Remember the Researcher will need to arrange appropriate payment for TOs and Rangers for their work and time invested in accompaniment.*

Warranties

The Researcher represents and warrants that:

a) it will carry out the Project with all due skill and diligence and in a good and workmanlike manner and in accordance with industry best practice;

b) its employees and agents have the necessary skills, professional qualifications and experience to deliver the Project in accordance with the Proposal and industry best practice;

c) it has full capacity and authority to enter into this agreement;

d) it has obtained all necessary and required licences, consents and permits to deliver the Project.

Other important clauses may include

- Definitions of key terms including ICIP, Background IP, Project IP, Deliverables, Project Material, Confidential Information
- Force Majeure & Aboriginal Cultural Business
- Payment and Reporting Schedule
- Project Plan (often attached as a Schedule to the Agreement)

Version	Date	Description	Author/Reviewer
V1	August 2026	Essential Clauses for Agreements (ISWAG Guide to Kimberley Saltwater Projects 2026)	Phoebe Martin

Appendix 3:
Template Project Plan and other tools

The Project Plan should be co-designed and agreed by all parties before project starts to ensure all parties agree on what will be done, by who, when. It should be attached to Research Agreement as a Schedule.

Project Title	
Project Start Date	
Project End Date	
Parties	
Other Project Partners	
Background	
Aims	
Links to Healthy Country Plan or other Management Plans	Link to the Targets, Goals and Strategies

Deliverables / Activity / Milestone	**Responsible**	**Date**	**Status**

Proposed Outputs	List all planned outputs. For example: • Scientific Paper • Poster • Fact sheet • Conference Presentation • Video • Community workshop • Monitoring toolkit • Social media posts	Approval needed:

Consultation and Approvals Register

Meeting	Meeting date	Attendees	Decision and conditions

Reporting Schedule

Milestone	Information to be included	Responsible	Due Date
EXAMPLE: Project Plan			
EXAMPLE: Annual Progress Report			
EXAMPLE: Annual Financial Report			
EXAMPLE: Final Project Report			

Payment Schedule

Milestone	Scheduled date	Amount (Excl GST)	GST	Total (inc. GST if applicable)
EXAMPLE: Initial payment on execution				
EXAMPLE: Half yearly payment on submission and acceptance of Work Plan Report and 6 month Expenditure Report				

Deliverables Tracker

Project	Deliverable / Activity / Milestone	Responsible	Date	Status

Wunambal Gaambera Rangers
Damon Bundamurraand Neil Weina.
Credit: Wunambal Gaambera AC

Appendix 4: Template Publication, Output or Media Approval Request

Use this before any public sharing (conference, paper, report, website, social media).

Output Title	
Type (eg paper, report, talk, poster, video, media post)	
Includes (eg results, maps, names, logos, photos, traditional knowledge, locations)	
What will be shared (attach draft)	
Where will it be shared (venue / platform)	
Requested release date	
Approval level required (PBC Board, specific individuals, Manager, Ranger group)	
Decision and conditions	
Date of approval	
Name & role of person confirming approval	

Appendix 5:
Template Media Consent Form

Please note that this generic form is not intended to support commercial or media-focused projects which are out of scope for this guide. This form is intended for projects that use photographs/video as a side product of the main project, for example, in documenting research findings, capturing qualitative data of interviews or photographing sacred sites or field work. All of this is subject to the consent of the Traditional Owners of that Country.

Media Consent Form

Project Title: Insert

Principal Researcher: Insert name

Institution: Insert University / Organisation name

Participant Consent

By signing below, I agree to the following:

1. I have read (or had read to me) the Participant Information Sheet and understand the purpose of recording audio/video/photos for this research.
2. I consent to being recorded by [audio/video/camera] during this research.
3. I understand these recordings will be used for:
    - Research analysis **YES / NO**
    - Academic publications/conferences **YES / NO**
    - Public facing websites/social media **YES / NO**
    - Other: .....
    - I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw consent at any time before ..... without consequence.
4. I understand that I will not receive payment or compensation for the use of these recordings.
5. I understand that [Insert Institution Name] will retain ownership of the recordings.

Please circle your preferences:

- I agree to be identified by name in the media: **YES / NO**
- I agree to be identified by image (face) in the media: **YES / NO**
- I wish for my face to be pixelated/blurred: **YES / NO**

Participant Name: .....

Participant Signature: ..... **Date:** .....

Version	Date	Description	Author/Reviewer
V1	August 2026	Template Media Consent Form (ISWAG Guide to Kimberley Saltwater Projects 2026)	Phoebe Martin

Appendix 6: Types of project data

Consider which of these, or others, that you may be interested in collecting or producing as part of your project. Be prepared to discuss your data ownership and management plans with the groups during the co-design process. Importantly, the ownership, handling, management, use and storage of data and intellectual property will be negotiated when developing a Research Agreement and some groups will be interested in your intent for this upfront.

- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (e.g. hotspots, breeding or hunting grounds, seasons, cultural mapping information).
- Local stories, language or ceremonies.
- Spreadsheets and Datasets: Numerical data, survey results, and measurement tables, often in CSV, Excel (XLSX), or SPSS formats.
- Experimental Data: Readings from laboratory equipment, gene sequences, chromatograms, and magnetic field data.
- Simulation Data: Results from mathematical or climate models.
- Sensor Data: Real-time data captured from environmental sensors or Internet devices.
- Interview Transcripts and Focus Group Notes: Detailed text from qualitative interviews and discussions.
- Field Notes and Diaries: Detailed, observational, and unstructured text collected during research.
- Questionnaire Responses: Open-ended survey responses.
- Documents: Reports, manuscripts, and literature reviews.
- Images: Still photographs, digitised microscope slides, X-rays, or images taken in the field.
- Audio/Video Recordings: Recordings of interviews, focus groups, or behavioural observations.
- 3D Models: Scanned images or digital models of physical objects.
- Algorithms and Scripts: Custom code used to analyse data, run simulations, or create software outputs, often using languages like R, Python, or MATLAB.
- Workflow and Methodologies: Detailed documentation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) or workflows used in the project.
- Biological/Geological Samples: Physical materials such as rock samples, blood samples, specimens, and artifacts that are often analysed to produce digital data
- Metadata: Data that describes other data, such as information about the instrument used, date of collection, or variables measured.

Image: Punturrpunturr (Port Smith) on Karajarri Country. Credit: Annette Ruzicka / Country Needs People