Rainforest Aboriginal peoples work with partners to manage their traditional estates across multiple tenures in the wet tropics according to their own law and culture. A three and a half year co-research project involving Traditional Owners, social scientists, spatial analysts, government and non-government organizations assessed and mapped perceptions of interaction with country through these partnerships.

**Key findings**

- Cultural ecosystem services are an important part of the way Rainforest Aboriginal people perceive their interactions with wet tropics country.
- Ecosystems and biodiversity provide supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural services to people and societies.
- For Rainforest Aboriginal people, culture and cultural ecosystem services include dynamic processes, relationships and practices linked to biocultural diversity and governance.
- Culture includes the set of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and ... encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.
- Cultural services have intangible aspects that make them difficult to map and quantify, therefore most attention has been on tourism and recreational activities that can be commoditized.
- New categories for cultural services related more to biocultural diversity and governance are required to map Rainforest Aboriginal peoples’ perceptions of cultural ecosystem services (Table 2 and Figure 3).
- These new categories will be useful for others interested in understanding cultural ecosystem services, particularly in partnerships with Indigenous peoples.
- Participatory processes are required to assess and measure such categories for cultural ecosystem services.

**Figure 1 and 2** Examples of maps showing categories for cultural ecosystem services developed through participatory evaluation with Rainforest Aboriginal people.
Table 2 and Figure 3. Categories of interdependence between biological and cultural diversity

1. Language and linguistic diversity
   - Language (e.g. terms, concepts and categories relating to nature)
   - Linguistic diversity (the relation to biological diversity)

2. Material culture
   - Material culture (e.g. objects created from and/or representing biodiversity, including those reflecting spiritual and religious beliefs and aspirations, and the arts)

3. Knowledge and technology
   - Technology and techniques related to natural resources
   - Traditional and local knowledge about natural resources, ecological relationships
   - Transmission of knowledge between generations
   - Mechanisms for traditional knowledge revitalisation
   - Mechanisms for the adoption of new knowledge

4. Modes of subsistence
   - Natural resource livelihoods
   - Land/sea use and management
   - Plant/animal domestication and selective breeding
   - Supplemeting economies through sustainable harvesting

5. Economic relations
   - Economic relations through partnerships based on natural resources
   - Management of common property resources

6. Social relations
   - Attachment to place
   - Social relations with natural resources
   - Gender relations with natural resources
   - Political relations with natural resources
   - Legal-institutional e.g. customary law regarding resource use, access

Further reading


