Indigenous co-management of biodiversity

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SUMMARY

Australia’s wet tropics region encompasses 20 traditional estates of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples. They have been actively working for 20 years at various levels in asserting Traditional Owner (TO) relationships and rights to manage their country. Land management arrangements in the wet tropics are multi-tiered, involving lease and freehold owners and several state, local and federal government authorities. The National Heritage List (2012) recognised the outstanding significance of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples’ cultural values for management of the wet tropics.

Our project (a co-research team of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples, scientists and managers) has identified different pathways that connect culture and knowledge for co-management.

We identified five components that foster equitable engagement:

1. Principles (e.g. self-determined level of involvement);
2. Relationships (e.g. good ones enable Indigenous roles);
3. Mechanisms (e.g. plans);
4. Power (e.g. right to exercise native title);
5. Regimes for joint governance (e.g. legislation, policy).

Our institutional analysis shows significant barriers to equitable engagement. Queensland human rights institutions do not protect Indigenous cultural, social and economic rights equal to some international standards. Making human rights standards is important to support equitable engagement of culture and knowledge through co-management.

REFERENCES


Find this project at: http://www.nrp.org.au/project/indigenous-strategic-land-use-and-protected-areas

Theme 3: Managing for Resilient Tropical Systems

Program 12: Managing for resilience in rainforests; Project 12.1 Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection

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