

Progress Report SP 2020-008

Priority social science research needs to support DBCA Corporate Strategic Directions

Ecosystem Science

Project Core Team

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Project status as of July 14, 2020, 2:27 p.m.

Pending project plan approval

Document endorsements and approvals as of July 14, 2020, 2:27 p.m.

Project Team	granted
Program Leader	required
Directorate	required

Priority social science research needs to support DBCA Corporate Strategic Directions

AT Knight

Context

DBCA has a very broad scope of responsibilities and many business processes within DBCA occur at the intersection of ecological, economic and social systems. Identifying current and future social science research priorities is an important activity because this ensures that useful science provides timely information upon which DBCA decisions can be based and defended, and enhances the return-on-investment of DBCA funding and resources for core business activities as articulated within 'DBCA Strategic Directions 2018-21'. Systematic strategic planning of social science promotes delivery of transdisciplinary research that is collaborative, innovative, ethical and outcome driven. Structured expert elicitation methods can be used to harness expertise within DBCA to identify and action priority social science research needs that can generate information that enhances evidence-based decision-making, program cost-efficiency, targeted conservation actions, and, ultimately, a positive perception of DBCA by the public.

Aims

- Provide a defensible process for identifying priority social science research needs that can support delivery of 'DBCA Strategic Directions 2018-21' and 'BCS Science Strategic Plan 2018-21'.
- Identify priority social science research questions that can be used for developing a small number of applied research projects that provide direct input to the policies and actions of targeted groups within DBCA.
- Provide a platform for supporting groups within DBCA with responsibility for developing and implementing conservation policy and actions with robust social science

Progress

- Interviews have been conducted with 27 purposively-sampled managers from Branches, Programs Regions and Units across DBCA.
- A thematic analysis has been conducted to identify priority social science research questions.
- Final analysis of the priority social science research topics is near completion.
- A manuscript is under preparation that will outline the process undertake for identifying social science research priorities for DBCA, describe the scope of the topics addressed, and discuss the findings in the context of current and future conservation management.

Management implications

- Findings can be used to inform, support and defend the design, implementation and evaluation of conservation activities and policies.
- Findings can contribute to securing outcomes linked with DBCA business processes, including securing social licence for activities undertaken by DBCA; ensuring more effective community compliance with laws, regulations and policies administered by DBCA; transparency of stakeholder values; and ensuring more effective, cost-efficient and equitable practices by DBCA and its partners.
- Information outputs will provide explicit and defensible direction for future social science research conducted by BCS.
- Guides and targets future partnerships with internal DBCA groups and external partners.
- Guides and targets future donors and funding applications.
- This research process promotes a conscious, explicit reflection on social science research needs by DBCA staff responsible for policy and action, which provides a foundation for the design and implementation of evidence-based conservation activities.

- This research also assists with promoting a broader understanding across DBCA of the scope, methods and approaches of conservation social science and its

Future directions

- A small subset of two or three social science priorities will be developed as future research projects with Biodiversity and Conservation Science staff, with other appropriate groups within DBCA, and with external partners.
- Information on the findings of this research will be returned to project participants, and more broadly to DBCA staff, through a briefing and a short summary document.
- Development and submission of funding applications to support social science research projects.
- An evaluation of the utility of the approach for assisting DBCA to deliver upon the 'Strategic Directions 2018-21' and the contribution of the research to the 'Science Strategic Plan 2018-21' will be conducted.
- The approach can be compared and contrasted with other similar studies to identify an approach that delivers most effectively to the requirements of DBCA.