

Chair Report on ISP Meeting 27 21st of May 2018

Projects

Almost all of the teams required to complete the 2018 report card have been contracted or are close to contracted, with the following exceptions:

- The contract for the Indigenous Cultural Heritage project is being finalised.
- A contract with CSIRO for the Gladstone Harbour Model and Connectivity, which are not included in the Report Card, is currently being finalised.
- Stewardship is still to be arranged.

Project work is progressing well and is largely on schedule.

	Project ID	Notes
1	ISP005-2018: SCE indicators	The project is contracted and underway. The MC approved the following 3 ISP recommendations: -Remove 'line fishing' as measure from commercial fishing indicator. -Include 'water-based (non-recreation)' measure in Economic Value indicator. -Include 'aesthetic vale' measure in Liveability and wellbeing indicator.
2	ISP006-2017: Gladstone Harbour Model maintenance	The MC agreed to the ISP recommendation that move to a 'maintenance' stage where the models will be kept updated and available for use but without an active project. CSIRO will conduct a workshop on the GHM for GHHP Partners and the MC in July as a component of the existing contract.
3	ISP007-2018: Connectivity indicators	The MC agreed to the ISP recommendation to: Keep the hydrodynamic model (required for the GHM) and the CONNIE module operational but discontinue the calculation of annual connectivity scores. A combined Gladstone Harbour Models project proposal which reflects the above changes is currently being drafted.
4	ISP009-2018: DIMS maintenance	This project will be completed soon.
5	ISP011-2018: Seagrass Indicators	A draft report including seagrass scores and grades is due on 20 July 2018.
6	ISP012-2018: Indigenous Cultural Heritage Indicators	The MC has agreed to proceed with the new revised indicator framework proposed by the ISP. The Science Team and the Chair are now working with the project team to finalise the contract and work plan.
7	ISP013-2017: Fish Recruitment Indicators	The project team is finalising the draft report and this will be circulated to the ISP soon.
8	ISP014-2018: Coral Indicators	A draft report including report card grades and scores is due on 9 July.
9	ISP015-2018: Mud Crab Indicators	A draft report including report card grades and scores is due on 13.
10	ISP016c: Fish Health-CQU	The project team completed wet season sampling and the laboratory analysis successfully. There will be a workshop in August with the ISP to determine the thresholds and indicators. We will get a draft report by 30 August including only wet season sampling results, proposed report card indicators and scores.
11	ISP016c: Fish Health-InfoFish	This project is on track and the team is now collecting data collection for this project.

12	ISP018: Development of Mangrove Indicators	This project is currently being contracted with JCU/TropWater
13	ISP019: Coral coring	The Science Team is yet to receive a draft report which was due on the 3 rd April
14	ISP020-2017: Scripts for cultural heritage indicators	We are awaiting the final invoice from CSIRO to close the project.
15	ISP020-2018: Scripts for cultural heritage indicators	The Chair and the Science Team is preparing terms of reference for this work.
16	Stewardship 2018	In development.
17	PCIMP Data	The data request for 2018 report card has been sent to the PCIMP.

Water Quality Issues – Guideline values

The ISP discussed whether the guideline values for nutrients and phys-chem properties of water quality should be upgraded.

In the Port Curtis Water Quality Objectives 2014 set by the government the guidelines vary slightly between zones if the waterbodies are categorized as either ‘slightly to moderately disturbed zones (MD)’ or ‘high ecological value (HEV)’ zones. In Gladstone Harbour, The Narrows and Colosseum Inlet are categorized as HEV zones. All other zones have MD status.

The GHHP is currently using the 50th percentile guideline value for Nutrient and Phys-Chem measures across all the zones, consistent with initial email advice from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (at the time).

Verbal advice in 2017 and 2018 from the Department of Environment and Science (DES) was that

- the water quality guidelines were set extremely low with the intention that they would compared to median values. By using mean values, the GHHP system is ‘failing’ more than it should.
- It would be more appropriate to use the 80th percentile as the benchmark values in the MD zones
- GHHP can choose to apply any benchmark in the zones and is not bound to the guidelines.

The ISP recommended that a score comparison of 50th and 80th percentile guideline values to be completed before making a final decision, and that AIMS be asked to provide this comparison.

Water Quality Issues – Ammonia

The ISP recommended that Ammonia be removed as a measure from Water Quality. Key reasons for this decision include:

- Total nitrogen is already included as a measure of water quality, so reporting ammonia, which is a component of total nitrogen, as an additional measure leads to some duplication.
- Ammonia is not very stable in water bodies, so it is difficult to interpret this measure with a high level of confidence.
- The scoring is unduly sensitive because the guideline values are very close to the limit of detection value,

Seagrass

The ISP discussed the problem of where a seagrass meadow could be scored owing to a zero score for species composition even when seagrass is present. This can occur in Seagrass because the lowest score across the three indicators is selected to be the score for Seagrass – as distinct from other components of the report card where indicators are averaged.

The ISP agreed to recommend the solution proposed by JCU/TropWATER.

- Where the lowest of the 3 indicator scores is driven by area or biomass, use the lowest score (existing method)
- BUT, where species composition is the lowest of the 3 indicator scores, species composition contributes 50% of the overall meadow score, and the next lowest indicator score (biomass or area) contributes the other 50%.

Mangroves

The ISP discussed the Mangrove project which has been contracted to JCU/TropWATER. Four indicators are proposed (Mangrove Cover, Canopy Density, Shoreline Condition and Plant Health) inclusion in the 2018 report card. The ISP noted that high quality historic baseline data is not available, and that it was proposed to use 2016 as a baseline. The ISP noted that it would be beneficial to compare the 2016 baseline data with available historic data, and to review the use of baseline data in September when the draft report was completed.

Research Highlights for Report Card

Discussion was held about what topics should be selected to be the Research Highlights in the 2018 Report Card. It was suggested that: coral coring, fish health, fish safe to eat and mangroves could be of community interest. However, there was reluctance to have a topic on whether it was safe to eat fish or not, as the report card does not measure contaminants in fish. It was decided to make a final selection from a broader group of topics at the September meeting.

Fish Health Workshop

Plans to hold a half-day workshop on fish health with the CQU research team were progressed.