



Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project Communications Plan 2017-2020

1 **PROJECT NAME:** Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project

2 **BACKGROUND**

The Wet Tropics Major Integrated Project (WTMIP) is one of two major integrated projects (MIPs) commissioned by the Queensland Government that aims to reduce nutrient, sediment and pesticide loads into waterways. The project was a recommendation from the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce’s final report.

Both projects, one in the Wet Tropics, the other in the Dry Tropics, take a grass roots design approach. The mix of actions developed in the 6-month design phase were a result of strong community engagement and participation, and ensure a project that suits local conditions and landholder circumstances.

Terrain NRM has been engaged on behalf of a broader consortium of partners to coordinate design of the WTMIP. The Consortium consists of representatives from industry groups, science institutions, local government, and non-government organisations.

This is an overarching communication strategy for the implementation phase of WTMIP, set to run from July 2017 until June 2020. It outlines proposed communications activities for the launch and implementation stages.

Individual projects in the implementation phase may require their own communication plans, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3

COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

Communications will support the delivery of the WTMIP Plan across all areas, but is principally focussing in the *Our Catchment, Our Community* Activity Area to achieve the following outcome: The broader catchment community is aware of WQ problems, solutions, and is actively engaged in improving water quality. Communications goals are:

- The project team are supported with resources and communications products that they can use to promote the project and encourage involvement across all Activity areas.
- The level of landholders and non-landholder participation in a mix of actions over the lifetime of the project is celebrated and shared with the catchment community and a broad/regional audience to encourage local uptake, accelerate participation and build stewardship at a catchment level.
- There is an increase in the understanding and acceptance of water quality science.
- The local community values the project.
- The broader catchment community understands water quality problems, solutions and the outcomes of the project.
- Project partners are satisfied with the reach and effectiveness of stories of positive change.
- Project partners participate in co-generating stories of positive change.
- Landholders are supported to take opportunities to share their stories and experiences with catchment community, and show initiative in telling these
- The level of activity and action on water quality (WQ) improvement is well-reported in the catchment community and increasingly reported beyond the Wet Tropics community.

The following measures will be used as an indication of communications progress. However, measures will be regularly reviewed and revised if necessary, to ensure that focus is on communications activities and products are those most suited to end user needs:

- Continued increase in unique web page views, time spent, and a decrease in bounce rate. Progress to be measured against baseline data collected in first 3-month implementation period.
- Continued increase in total social media engagement until implementation end. Progress to be measured every three months against baseline data collected in design period.
- Continued increase in media coverage. Progress to be measured against baseline data collected in 6-month design period.
- Improvement in landholder sentiment to media. Progress to be measured against unique landholder interviews facilitated (with media, and with MIP Communications Officer), in first 6-month implementation period.
- Increase in consumption of video extension resources and audio-visual 'stories of change'. Progress to be measured against baseline data collected following release of first AV resource and story.
- Increase in attendance at networking and knowledge sharing events. Progress to be measured against theme-specific baseline data collected at first events of implementation.

4

TARGET AUDIENCES

Primary	
Growers	Cane
	Banana
	Other horticulture
Other land users	Traditional Owners
	National Parks
	Regional Councils
	Utilities
	Environmental groups
Government agencies	Local (priority areas)
	State (DEHP, DNRM, DAF)
	Federal
Consortium Partners	(see 2.1 Program Design)
Project Panel	(see 2.2 Program Design)
Cross regional	GBR NRMs

Secondary	
Cross regional	NRMs
	Agriculture & Horticulture
	Other landholders & users
Media	Mainstream local
	State
	Niche
Science & Research institutions	
Consultants	
Broad Wet Tropics community	
Community NRM groups	
Local government (WT region)	
Philanthropic and multinational businesses with a presence in the Wet Tropics	

5

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

Launch phase

- Awareness: Use a multi-channel multi-tool approach to ‘surround’ target audiences and keep the WTMIP in public consciousness
- Excitement: Build excitement about the launch to engage the community
- Messaging: Convey community ownership of the project - this is YOUR project that you helped design for your catchment delivered through your governance model
- Momentum: Maintain profile and momentum achieved through the design phase, leveraging partner/consortium networks
- Explanation: Show people the scope of the project, what’s being done and how it’s going to work. Create ‘champions’ who are able to spread the word and tell *their* neighbours what, why, where, how and who
- Information: “Find my project” – messages about how everyone’s project idea is in the project design*
- Engagement: Promote opportunities for participation and community ongoing input*

* Approach specific to within Tully and Johnstone basins.

Implementation (Promotion):

- Awareness: Continue to keep MIP top-of-mind with the community, government and media
- Engagement: Promote opportunities for participation and community ongoing input. Continue to promote the importance of collaboration in meeting reef water quality targets
- Demonstration: Show the scope (map) of the project and mix of actions being undertaken. This includes bringing other regions in to see it for themselves, not just push information out.
- Support: Equip project staff, consortium members and key regional stakeholders with information and tools to support promotion
- Expectations: Manage stakeholder and community expectations of project outcomes
- Trust: Build trust in Terrain, the Consortium members and the governance approach
- Familiarity: Keep brand identity across all WTMIP related projects – utilise similar look and feel.

Implementation (Supporting involvement):

- Awareness: Keep the community, government and media informed and up-to-date on activities taking place and progress being made
- Support: Continue to provide tools for project staff on the ground
- Showcase: Promote and share success stories with lots of different voices
- Engagement: Promote ongoing engagement opportunities to involve landholders/growers and maintain community buy-in and trust.

- Information: Make information on the project, and science that informs the project, easily accessible both on and offline

6

KEY MESSAGES

General

The Queensland Government is funding a major integrated project in the Wet Tropics to reduce the level of pollutants reaching the GBR. The WTMIP looks beyond just farm practice and integrates water quality solutions across all activities in the basins, with a key focus on reducing nutrient, sediment and pesticide losses from cane and banana farms in the Tully and Johnstone basins.

- One of 2 MIPS, the other being in the Dry Tropics region
- The project, designed locally, by the community, for the community, is a first of its kind for reef water quality projects
- Terrain is coordinating a consortium of over 40 partners, on behalf of the WTSIP, ABGC, local government, community groups, consultants and scientists
- The Johnstone and Tully are identified as hotspot basins because of the intensive horticulture industries that pose a risk to poor water quality
- Within water quality challenges lie opportunities – this is a chance to improve the health of the Reef whilst ensuring profitability and productiveness
- The strategic priority is to deliver enduring sustainable land management that benefits local communities
- Water quality is everybody’s responsibility – the GBR is an asset for all of us.
- While farming practice change is proven as the most cost-effective way of improving WQ, other collaborative actions are necessary to meet WQ targets.
- By integrating catchment-wide we are more likely to achieve outcomes and help protect the Reef for future generations
- Everything we do on the land affects the reef
- Terrain is continuing our great track record of collaborative, innovative and effective project delivery.

Transition / Implementation

- Design phase is complete, and a program design has been submitted/approved by the Queensland Government.
- Program design covers a mix of actions that are based on five Activity Areas: Catchment Repair, Farm Services, Local Monitoring, Our Catchment – Our Community, and Influencing.
- Adaptation process and seeking ongoing input and specific known opportunities, e.g. EOIs for Demo farms, local level water quality monitoring
- Project integrates with, and adds value to, existing activities in Wet Tropics to get bang for buck and reduce the burden on local landholders and stakeholders
- Land practice improvement is nearly always the most cost-effective solution – especially on larger farms

Messaging will be further refined as project progresses, and used in the development and dissemination of communication products. A communications priority for the early stages of implementation is to explore and seek agreement on new messages that unite and motivate change.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

Summary

Our digital strategy aims to develop the WTMIP's online presence, with an initial focus on:

- Continuing to build social media footprint and amplify key messages
- Capitalise on WTMIP's capacity to generate lots of unique content
- Providing an additional channel to reach and interact with stakeholders
- To increase unique traffic to WTMIP webpage
- Capitalise on partner and consortium network – push out updates. Same message, many directions.

To meet communications objective of having information available at any time in any place to suit audience needs, further focus on:

- Emerging digital like podcasting, apps etc.

Content development

Sustained content that is consistent, responsive, engaging, and helpful will help establish a well distributed social media “footprint”. Tactics to assist:

- Shareable content: relevant & timely. Content that answers a question or solves a problem, or is “cute”
- Repurpose/reuse/repost where content has long lifespan and relevance
- Content calendar to establish Facebook / Twitter “rituals”, use of hashtags (#WTMIP, #innovation, #collaboration, #waterquality, #greatbarrierreef, #NRMintheWT)
- Infographics and video – visual shorthand that combines the best of text, images and design to tell a story
- Develop content to suit audience literacy and consumer habits
- Formalise a template library to aid with brand recognition

Key Digital Channels

WTMIP home page: an online “face” of the project

The WTMIP home page sits under Terrain's horizontal navigation 'Projects' item. The WTMIP will stay under the project horizontal navigation item, as well as appear as 1 of 6 key icons on the Terrain homepage, for prominence. Website has been recently migrated to a new platform that enables easy SEO audits and optimisation, to help increase organic traffic. Google Analytics will be used to monitor traffic and bounce rates.

Page structure is designed to allow for growth over time: (bullet point level denotes mapping hierarchy)

❖ About

- Design stage overview (adaptation of content of the 4-page design summary)
 - 4 x existing news stories (linked)
 - Design stage video (embedded)
 - Final Design (download)
 - Design summary brochure (download)

❖ Project themes

- Catchment repair and treatment systems
 - Feasibility study
- Farm services
 - Feasibility study
- Local scale monitoring
 - Feasibility study
- Our catchment – our community
- Influencing

❖ Catchment stories (Terrain/project generated)

- Latest/most important 5 stories (as video, photo-journal or written format) would feature as a 1 paragraph overview with accompanying image, and link through to full article housed in the Terrain 'news' part of the website. Older articles will be listed just as a linked title. This is a way to keep the content relevant, and engaging.

All articles will be categorised under MIP, as well as assigned tags to make collated searches possible. All articles will also be cross-linked to project theme pages.

❖ "In the media" (list of media-generated stories with link out to full article)

❖ Case studies (cross linked to project theme pages)

❖ Consortium information

❖ Project panel

❖ Staff / contacts

Facebook: a virtual community partnership manager – the Facebook site stands alone

Functioning as an 'outpost' to drive traffic to content on the website. Tactics to assist:

- Amplify organic content with boosts of 'best' posts
- Keep on top of algorithm changes and adjust content for maximum visibility/reach

- Clear calls to action
- Develop and use of content calendar and social media dashboard for regular posts.

The WTMIP Facebook page has been running for 6 months. ‘Insights’ reflect learnings similar to Terrain Facebook page: posts with images and videos get the most engagement, posting once-twice a week gets better reach than every day. MIP Facebook audience is small, with minimal farming community, however has proved valuable for updating stakeholders and consortium partners. There is potential to grow this audience to beyond the WT with targeted boosts by: Location: Wet Tropics **OR** Interests: farming, environment, great barrier reef **OR** Behaviour: Connected to your Page

Twitter

Also functioning as an outpost, driving traffic to website and/or other online content:

- Amplify Increase followers, shares and engagement
- Develop and use content calendar
- Another good tool for engaging with stakeholders and consortium partners through tagging.

Emerging socials

- Scope as necessary and as resources permit
- Using a social media dashboard (e.g. Hootsuite) is likely to become necessary with additional channels

8 COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

See Communications Activity Matrix as attached to Detailed 1 Year Plan for detail and timing on communications activities.

Events

Communications support around hosting knowledge sharing and networking events that could include field days, workshops, shed meetings, bus tours, and ‘science in the pub’ forums. Collateral and specific communications actions will be determined as project progresses, however an emphasis on ‘myth busting’ activities and products that tackle some of the long-held differences on science, research and land management practices will be a communications focus.

Digital

Webpage

- Content updates as per digital strategy and Communications Workplan for Year 1 (attached to Detailed Plan for Year 1)

Video

- Continue interviewing landholders, community members and other stakeholders on camera to add to footage library. Comms officer to collect footage and interviews for stand-alone videos, and any packaged videos.

E-news

Regular content in Terrain NRM and WTSIP e-newsletters (via Mailchimp), and regular submissions to Reliable 5, ABGC, OGBR, Landlink, WTMA, and relevant consortium e-newsletters. A content calendar with deadlines has been developed for submission oversight.

Social media

- Publish regularly on dedicated WTMIP Facebook page, cross post from Terrain as appropriate, and boost posts
- Tweet regularly with #WTMIP hashtag
- Continue to use the Terrain social handle & tag list, developed to increase engagement with posts

Print material/print collateral

- Catchment maps pinpointing what activities are taking place where in each basin (make available in key meeting places e.g. Libraries, Sugar Museum)
- Corflute/Signage in key areas e.g. “This project / farm is part of the MIP... funded by Queensland Government” that encourage a “What’s happening over the fence?” community curiosity
- Summary of project design in plain English for landholders and community promotion
- Event specific flyers for field days, workshops and tours
- Event invitations through mill mail-outs
- Case studies
- Stickers (Mip Mip Hooray! I’m so MIPPY, I give a MIP, etc – taglines to be market tested)

Media

- Continue to engage with media outlets (and build relationships with journalists) in target areas across print, radio, online and television platforms, and pursue relationships with niche outlets identified as having suitable readerships
- Localised and state-wide activities will vary (e.g., combined efforts with NQDT for pitches at the Reef Catchment level)
- Pursue regular publishing arrangements with key digital and/or print news
- Pursue a regular monthly column in a local paper/s highlighting what’s taking place this month and directing to website

The following outlets are valuable to pitch to.

Print newspapers

Cairns Post, Innisfail Advocate, Cassowary Coast Independent News, NQ Register, Qld Country Life.

Niche publications

Landcare in Focus, Australian Canegrower, Banana Growers Mag. It's expected that additional outlets may be identified over time.

Radio

ABC Far North, inc Rural, 4KZ, Southern Cross (Sea FM)

TV

ABC, Ch 7, WIN.

Online

News-focused websites or websites that host news component, including ABC Far North, Terrain NRM, OGBR, Fairfax agricultural media sites (NQ Register, Qld Country Life, Stock & Land), Cairns Post, Tropic Now, WTSIP, consortium websites.

Stakeholder engagement and analysis

Stakeholder	Level of involvement	How will they be engaged through communications activities?
Growers	High	Provision of information; invitations to demonstrations, workshops and events; discussion and liaison with communications officer for feedback and; as subjects of case studies, stories, social media posts; contributions to industry news articles; media training.
State Environment Minister	High	Social media engagement; launch event; invitations to other key events throughout duration of project; relationship management between Communications Officer and Media Advisor
Federal Environment Minister	High	Social media engagement
Consortium Partners	High	Social media engagement; launch event; invitations to specific activity events; internal communication; collaboration on content calendar;
Project Panel	High	Social media engagement; launch event; internal communication; co-generation of content; quotes for media releases and news articles; feedback and review of communications products; collaboration on researching a science/policy communication model
Other landholders / users	High	Social media engagement; MIP in the pub and other specific activity events; informal awareness scoping (eg, Comms Officer in conversation at events)

Queensland Government (DEHP/OGBR, DNRM, DAF, DSITI)	Med	Social media engagement; collaboration on or feedback to stories; acknowledgements in collateral
Australian Government	Med	Relationship management between Communications Officer (MIP) and Media Advisor, and Communications Team (Terrain) and Media Advisor.
Local Government	Med	Social media engagement; contributions to stories by Councillors (eg Jeff Baines)
GBR NRM Groups	Med	Social media engagement; Regional Groups Collective & Reef Alliance Meetings; presentations; co-creation of content with NQDT Communication Officer
Local media	Med	Media releases; social media engagement; relationship management
Regional media	Med	Media releases; social media engagement; relationship management
Community NRM groups	Med	Social media engagement; invites to specific activity events; submissions for newsletters or blogs; informal awareness scoping (eg, Comms Officer in conversation at events)
Landholders in other catchments	Low	Relatable case studies; industry news; invitations to Field Days and other demonstrations (to increase cross-catchment uptake / demonstrate transferability)
Wider catchment communities	Low	Social media engagement; informal awareness scoping (eg, via Comms Officer at events - not necessarily MIP-specific)
Research institutions	Low	Scoping of science/policy communications; discussion and feedback on science communication models and channels

9

ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Issues tabled below relate specifically to communications issues. Project issues, including those with potential flow-on to communications are tabled in the Detailed Plan for Year 1, Risk Management section. Communications issues management has been scheduled as a communications activity, to ensure wherever possible it is pre-emptive and not reactive.

Potential communication issues	Mitigation strategy
Consortium partners and/or Project Panel are unable to contribute meaningfully to co-generating content and products due to lack of time	Early work with partners to identify the communication roles that they can play in effective engagement of the broader community, and strong commitments to what is achievable. Ongoing work with partners to refine these roles and commitments throughout life of project.
Poor to modest engagement with communications products, due to missing the mark on user needs or a lack of early results; or inability to engage at all with disengaged stakeholders.	<p>Large focus of the project will be on communication through a wide range of mechanisms, including direct communications, partner communications opportunities (hub and spoke model), events, trialling and testing innovative communication methods and directly through MIP delivery team.</p> <p>Strong and sustained messaging around timeframes, ongoing nature of activities and long term outcomes, and refocusing attention on milestones like engagement, innovation and new technology, and emphasising exciting new voices.</p>
Reliance on Terrain CEO as media spokesperson	Identify, support and train media spokespeople so that pressure on CEO is alleviated, and empowers others to speak for the project. Connect journalists to compelling stories, fresh opinions and authentic voices.
Confusion (internal and external) about where / how MIP fits in to bigger picture, as well as other Terrain projects	Launch of Operation Reef – a Terrain branding exercise that aims to unify projects to tell the whole story more easily, and explain all the different projects being undertaken and how they work together.
Grower hesitancy to engage with media due to instances of ‘finger pointing’	Encourage interest in building story telling capacity by highlighting the benefits of working with media, and clearly showing the links between story-telling and community perception. Effort will be put into acting as a liaison point until growers are comfortable in taking a lead.
Communications value often focused on communications implementation success, rather than impact as it is easier to measure.	<p>Where possible, evaluate causal relationships between communication and social change, particularly in the annual integrated KASA assessment/survey with questions aimed at broader catchment community relating to levels of WQ knowledge and understanding, role and outcomes.</p> <p>Strategic and adaptive implementation of communications activities. For example, building strong relationships with the media could mean that a phone pitch to a trusted journalist who understands the project messaging, will be more efficient and effective than developing a media release independently.</p>
Limitations on channels/ tools available to WTMIP	Despite having a significant budget available for communications as this is considered critical for engaging broader community and building stewardship, frequency and reach across some communications channels (such as commercial television advertising) are likely beyond budget scope. A big focus of communications is to find innovative ways to package messaging, and utilise integration and linkages to get the most impact and most reach.

10

TIMEFRAME

Transition (July 2017) – end of implementation phase (June 2020).

11

CONTENT APPROVAL PROCESS / RESPONSIBILITIES

Agreed key messages will be utilised throughout the life of the WTMIP implementation phase. Should a reason be determined for a change to the key messages, Terrain will seek approval from the Queensland Government prior to publication.

Social media:

1. Communications Officer responsible for content development and publication.

Digital, direct, website, electronic, media releases, and collateral:

1. Communications Officer responsible for content development – collaborations and approvals from partners as required.
2. Project Manager & CEO to sign off prior to publication / distribution.
3. FYI only – Queensland Government, unless any deviation from key messages, which would require approval.

13

EVALUATION

This communication strategy will be evaluated through the following metrics and will be reported through the MIPs 6-monthly MERI report and regular internal quarterly reports.

Process evaluation: measuring implementation

- Types and number of communications materials developed
- Communications material dissemination (published/broadcast articles)
- Target audience reach (video views and reach, social media reach)

Outcome evaluation: measuring effects

- Media enquiries, coverage and content
- Target audience beliefs, attitudes and engagement (enquiries, social media growth and sentiment, attendance at events, content contributions)
- Website traffic, including unique page views, bounce rate and time spent
- Landholder and community awareness of the project (evaluated through the annual KASA survey).
- Landholder sentiment toward media

- Stakeholder relationships and feedback

Impact evaluation: measuring longer term change

- Cultural change – changes in KASA resulting in increased interest and involvement in the WTMIP
- Stewardship – evidence of the legacy of the MIP model in stewardship outcomes (activity without MIP investment) across the range of scales.