



PO Box 2583, Brisbane, 4001

Email: Eva.Plaganyi-lloyd@csiro.au

Tel. (07) 38335955

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Claire Wallis, Executive Officer, TSSAC
Dean Pease, Senior Management Officer Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery, AFMA
Cc Mariana Nahas, TSRA and TRLRAG member

Dear Claire and Dean,

Re EOI Development and opportunities for the Torres Strait lobster TIB sector
Total Funding Request and Split:

	TOTAL	AFMA/External Contribution	CSIRO Contribution
Original Proposal	\$165,262	\$99,157	\$66,105
January 2016 revised version	\$128,161	\$76,897	\$51,264

In response to the current call for research proposals 2016, I am taking the liberty of re-submitting our research proposal focused on development and opportunities for the TIB sector of the TRL fishery. The above research proposal was favourably received in 2015, but we appreciate also that it has been challenging to secure co-funding, further to the letter dated 21 May 2015 from TSSAC which noted the following:

"I am pleased to inform you that the TSSAC has supported your full proposal on the basis it receives funding from Industry and Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA). The TSSAC provided the following recommendations:

- The Committee noted the importance of the project as there is a possibility the fishery will move to quota this year and the proposed project will support this decision however the project relies heavily on co-funding;*
- The Committee agreed that the project addresses the Management Strategy Evaluation project completed on 2012.*

The TSSAC would like to thank you for submitting a full proposal. A letter will be sent out to Industry bodies and the TSRA seeking commitment of co-funding of the proposed research. I will be in contact with you regarding the outcomes of the final decision regarding co-funding."

We have started some work on this project, including preliminary discussions regarding grow-out opportunities and holding a workshop in Brisbane in November 2015 as part of capacity building. Assuming there is continued support and interest in developing this proposal, we would like to again seek support and engage in discussions as to ways to possibly fund the entire proposal or components of the proposal.

As discussed in 2015, we investigated whether there might be ways to reduce the project cost, and have accordingly prepared a revised option which has a slightly reduced scope, but also includes a recently appointed CSIRO staff member Kinam Salee. Kinam is a Torres Strait Islander with extensive knowledge of the TiB and processing sector and she has also worked on lobster aquaculture. The main difference between the Original proposal and the Optional revised version is that the latter has less focus on increasing participation and exploring fishing opportunities in eastern Torres Strait, but maintains a strong focus on capability development and grow-out opportunities and business case development, as summarised in the attached EOI herewith.

I am including again for your reference the responses we returned in our response letter dated 12 March 2015, as Appendix A herewith, in case helpful in making a final decision.

Thank you for again considering our proposal. Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely



Dr Éva Plagányi-Lloyd

Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO

Eva.Plaganyi-lloyd@csiro.au

APPENDIX A

Responses to feedback from TSSAC to Pre-Proposal:

- ② *The priority & timing of the project, is the timing of the project relevant as the fishery is potentially poised to implement a change in management regime to one based on output controls (noting the continued delays in implementing this change);*
Response: We believe the project is relevant irrespective of whether there is a change in management regime, as it isn't focused on the way in which the stock is managed, but rather the way in which fishers target, process and market the stock. Moreover, the proposed support for lobster grow-out ventures is relevant under both input or output controls, as an underlying motivation is to enhance profitability and better align the supply of lobsters with peak market demand and prices.
- ② *Previously associated project was funded partly on the basis that traditional and non-traditional divers would be involved in the surveys. The TSSAC seeks explanation to the budget and project deliverables as some of these deliverables are also objectives of a separate project;*
Response: We acknowledge that we were unsuccessful in involving traditional or non-traditional divers in the November 2014 pre-season survey, and will separately document the reasons for this as well as suggestions for advancing this initiative in future. This project focuses not so much on involving divers in the pre-season survey per se, but rather in improving understanding of participation barriers and obstacles in general, in all areas of the fishery—for example, drawing on our previous MSE study, undertaking a more in-depth look at obstacles to TIB participation in the fishery, as well as related ventures such as processing, marketing and grow out. This information will be compiled as part of an investment analysis/model. Moreover by conducting workshops and involving TIB fishers in important aspects of the research, such as vetting the data and discussing the possibility of having them conduct local surveys around selected reefs, we hope to boost participation more generally.
- ② *Noting the point above, the TSSAC questioned the scope for overlap between the two pre-proposal applications submitted by the CSIRO. Would there be potential efficiency gains by coming the two applications;*
Response: We have discussed this with the AFMA manager, and it seems that unfortunately some of the confusion that has arisen is because the second pre-proposal that the TSSAC reviewed was not in fact a CSIRO proposal, but rather a template that we prepared in response to a request to assist in drafting a pre-proposal for use by industry to apply for research funding to fund industry participation in a survey. The second pre-proposal application submitted by the CSIRO was not reviewed (to our knowledge) at the last TSSAC meeting, but was part of a three-year proposal (on a 2+1 basis) to conduct research surveys and annual stock assessments, and is currently being presented for review, taking into account that industry were unable to participate in the last survey, as well as the potential change in management regime. There is a small amount of overlap only between our survey/assessment proposal and this proposal, in the sense that they will be using some of the same data, but the objectives and methods are different.
- ② *The inclusion of marketing and business expertise should be considered in the development of the project team;*

Response: We have revised our proposal to include Simon Irvin who is the CSIRO project leader responsible for diet development in an international ACIAR project on the sustainable production of farmed lobsters. In this role, he is responsible for strategic planning, risk analysis, experimental design, project delivery and reporting. Simon is also responsible for training Indonesian scientists and setting up demonstration lobster farms in Indonesia. Over the last 3 years Simon has provided training for 50 plus scientists and students on feed manufacture, experimental design, protocol development and data collection. Simon will be visiting the Torres Straits as part of this project, and assisting with developing an investment model for the fishery, drawing on his extensive expertise.

- ☐ *The Committee acknowledged the current challenges in data collection, primarily from the traditional sector. This raised questions as to if the current data environment may impact on the projects deliverables;*

Response: it would certainly be desirable to have accurate data, but it is still possible to conduct our planned analyses using the extensive historical data sets that are available and have previously been used in our CSIRO projects. Naturally with more and better data, we are able to provide better and stronger recommendations. This project will also include workshops that interactions with stakeholders, which will hopefully be useful to help fill in data gaps.

- ☐ *The TSSAC would like you to attend the next TSSAC meeting on the 27th March (in Brisbane) to discuss this project proposal with respect to CSIRO's other TRL research proposal and the TRL Stock Assessment and Survey project currently being funded.*

Response: Thank you for the opportunity to attend the next TSSAC meeting. As the project principal investigator, Eva Plaganyi, will be overseas at the time, Darren Dennis will be attending as the project/s representative.

- ☐ *It is important that there is adequate evidence provided to the TSSAC outlining discussions with relevant stake holders (including native title bodies) regarding research proposals. The TSSAC requests that you refer to the report by Dr Martin Nakata "A guide to Fisheries Researchers working in the Torres Strait". Please include in your cover letter how you have addressed how you have addressed the above mentioned points.*

Response: We agree that it is critical to discuss research proposals with relevant stakeholders, and believe we have a long and ongoing history of communicating with stakeholders via a number of forums, including the TRL RAG, TRL working group meetings, our own project workshops (e.g. as part of the MSE project) as well as communication trips, data meetings, as well as interactions during the annual surveys.