

R-SR 3: Regional food branding

Develop a region-wide brand and local trade strategy focusing on sustainable production, low carbon footprint and high quality produce.

This strategy delivers on these Regional Themes	Biodiversity	Biosecurity	Coastal Systems	Sustainable Industries	Water
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
This strategy delivers on these Strategic Outcomes	Supportive, policies, plans and regulations	Collaborative, adaptive planning and action	Traditional Owner Benefits	Sustained and diverse resourcing	Community stewardship, values and action
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Outcome	<p>An exciting, regional food brand, focusing on the sustainability of production will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of the market for local, sustainable, low carbon footprint produce. Improved, more resilient farming practices, driven by market forces. A sense of community pride in the farming enterprises of this region, leading to loyalty in purchasing decisions.
Justification	<p>Establishing a business brand for the region linked to natural assets, sustainability and proactive tackling of climate change challenges can help in promoting the unique products of the region and building recognition of the quality of the products as well as the farming processes. When done well, the outcome can be a more secure farming future for the region and building recognition of the quality of the products as well as the farming processes. It can also result in enhanced community pride in regional produce and greater loyalty when making purchasing decisions, as well as a better price. However, this will not come without effort in defining the brand and then marketing it within the region and beyond. This is not an area that farmers are naturally talented in, and will require support and investment to arrive at a brand that farmers relate to and that is broadly saleable.</p>
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish a cross-industry, multi-agency task force to oversee a regional food branding process. 2) Undertake a future market opportunities analysis, identifying likely future consumer trends, and where the Wet Tropics has a unique value proposition to promote, including creating niche labelling/branding and product differentiation. 3) Investigate models of food trading systems internationally eg. Wyoming, USA, Food Freedom Act that allows 'unregulated, unlicensed and uninspected' production and trade between willing and informed participants, locally. 4) Develop an assurance system for quality and consistency as well as sustainable farming systems (this needs to be simple enough that farmers can comply, but rigorous enough to ensure product credibility). 5) Work collectively to focus on smaller niche markets to gain influence on price and markets – building on the existing regional trademarks (eg. Taste Paradise registered trademark, which identifies local, but could be adapted to include sustainability / ecosystem services components).

- ✓ The Wet Tropics as a region has many internationally recognised icons that can be used in industry branding.
- ✓ The local, national and international community care about the icons of this region, making a quadruple bottom line sustainable production case even more powerful as a marketing tool.
- ✓ There are already some highly successful examples of food produce labelling in the region that can be built upon and lessons drawn from. The region already has some reputation for good quality, diverse food products.
- ✓ There are highly innovative, productive farming enterprises achieving gains for the environment and making a contribution to climate mitigation and the story is now getting out there.
- ✓ There is increased interest from the community in more sustainable food (farm gate, food miles, organic).
- ✗ Bringing the wide range of industries and players together for a regional branding process will be complex, with different interests, agendas, ideas, perceptions. It will require careful facilitation.
- ✗ Branding is expensive, and until there is a return on this branding, it is difficult to convince industry to invest in it.
- ✗ The market for sustainably branded food products is already quite contested (no longer a niche) and finding the unique value proposition, and the product differentiation will be difficult.
- ✗ There are psychological impacts associated with the increasing pressures on primary producers whose identity is linked with the land – there is a tendency to turn off to the enormity of the problem rather than put additional effort into some of the more innovative solutions.