

R-TO 1: Regional TO Institutional Arrangements

Establish a region-wide legal entity (PBC) that provides coordination, advocacy, advisory and capacity building support and represents the interests of all members PBCs at the regional, State and National levels.

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>The establishment of a permanent, legal entity that represents all PBCs across the region will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional Owner interests fully integrated into mainstream plans and policies at the local, State and National levels, as a result of effective strategic regional representation. ▪ Increased capacity and effectiveness of PBCs/Traditional Owner groups to deliver on their aspirations. ▪ Traditional Owner groups well networked and with access to the lessons and experience of other groups. ▪ Increased access to resourcing for working on country flowing to Traditional Owner groups.
Justification	<p>Long-term and strategic support from a mandated, legal regional organisation will significantly enhance the capacity of Traditional Owner groups to engage in all aspects of NRM through strategic representation and secure access to funding and business opportunities. Having one regional organisation that is active in the policy arena, keeps their finger on the funding pulse, is mandated to negotiate on behalf of PBCs across the region and supports capacity building of all members will be a more efficient and effective means of ensuring Rainforest Aboriginal People gain maximum benefits from NRM.</p>
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Undertake a region-wide review of the sort of model that TO groups across the region would want to see progressed, including potential structure and the services that this organisation would provide them with. 2) Hold “Round Table” with key partners to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of existing arrangements, including agreements between Traditional Owner Groups and Government/NGOs; learnings from this evaluation will inform the development of future representational and partnership arrangements. A key element is to understand the hooks and impediments for agencies to more effectively engage with, and ensure benefits flow to, Rainforest Aboriginal People. 3) Develop a prospectus outlining the results of the review and Round Table, and describing the proposed model (including the legal frameworks), steps for implementation and the ongoing cost-sharing arrangements and fund raising that would be required to ensure sustainability. 4) Source ‘start-up’ investment from government and partners to establish the organisation and develop the first strategic plan for delivery on the organisation’s mandate.

Feasibility considerations

- ✓ Traditional Owner groups across the region have been advocating for a formal regional representative model and have argued that it is necessary to enable improved input into regional processes and enhance the capacity of local groups to actively participate in NRM (including policy development, employment, etc.).
- ✓ Operating under and building on the existing legal arrangements makes sense.
- ✓ There are a lot of good examples in the region and any future arrangements, capacity building support, agreements, etc. should build on the success stories and existing experiences.
- ✓ There are many potential economic opportunities for RAP including provision of cross-cultural services to government and industry, fee for service arrangements, carbon sequestration initiatives and commercial operations.
- ✗ Buy in from all PBCs will be essential. A model that only services half of the region may not achieve its goals.
- ✗ It will take time to do it well, and to ensure that everyone's voice has been heard, and the final arrangements meet at least some of the needs of all involved.