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Natural capital accounting for the rangelands

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Abstract:

The 'Natural Capital Accounting for the Rangelands' project seeks to demonstrate how integrated ecological and financial accounts can provide guidance to rangeland's beef producers in improving productivity through sustainable grazing. The beef cattle industry extends over much of Australia's northern rangelands, significantly underpinning economic and social life across the north. Indigenous Australians have a considerable stake in the industry, including collaboration with the Indigenous Land Corporation to graze 90,000 head of cattle over 2 million hectares. One of the great challenges facing the industry is limiting grazing pressure to sustainable levels, as trends for many ecological indicators remain adverse. Degraded rangelands are less able to provide useful pastoral fodder, to regulate environmental processes, or to provide habitat for indigenous flora and fauna species. The project will develop a case study of an actual Northern Territory pastoral property, based upon a property management plan incorporating Grazing Land Management principles. Net ecological impact values derived from land type and rangeland condition data will inform ecological accounts consistent with the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), adopted as an international standard by the United Nations in 2013. Project results will be communicated in a format suitable for practical rangelands users.