

# **THE SUSTAINABLE REGION: SEARCHING FOR ASTERIX'S MAGIC POTION**

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*"All the Gaul is occupied by the Romans... All of it? No! A village populated by irreducible Gauls still and always resist the invader"*

It is well known that the economy and the environment are in continuous conflict. The economy doesn't have the appropriate internal mechanisms to sustainably manage the nature. It seems logical, taking into account that the economic model current was created with the premise of continuous growth. Without incentives that hit the right keys, our economic machinery is unlikely to steer the course towards social and environmental sustainability.

Human beings, although many times it may not seem like it, depend on forests, oceans, rivers and an endless number of ecosystems to survive. However, we live in a system that is not capable of maintaining natural resources in adequate quantity and quality. The [Tragedy of the Commons](#), by Garrett Hardin (1968), clearly exemplifies this dilemma, where the personal interest of individuals usually ends up destroying a limited share.

At this point, The following question arises: **Is there some combination of factors that enables a system or social group to sustainably manage a resource natural?**

The answer to this question is usually "no" or "it depends". "It depends", because of exist, these factors would vary from one place to another, since each city, region or country has its own socio-economic and political context. And not", because the economy is stronger and has more power than the conservation of the nature, so it seems difficult to find factors that change a trend so integrated into the current economic system. Using the areas tropics as an example, the expansion of agriculture through deforestation – driven by economic growth – almost always wins out over the forest conservation.

**However, if the Asterix the Gaul comics taught us anything, it is that there are villages that successfully resist the invader. And this is precisely the case in the Wet Tropics of Queensland, a region in northeastern Australia.**

The [Wet Tropics of Queensland](#), by its name in English, is an atypical region and different from the rest of tropical territories . This terrestrial area constitutes one of the few sustainable tropical regions of the planet – without considering the Great Barrier Reef, which is located in the same area and it does suffer great negative anthropic impacts.

She is considered a "sustainable" region because, under the same capitalist system and with the same economic pressure to deforest forests as in other regions

tropical, the Queensland Wet Tropics have been able to reconcile the production and economic demand with the conservation of the environment and the climate change mitigation.

These are precisely the results of a [scientific study](#) published in 2019 in the Journal of Environmental Management. The article shows that, apparently, this region has its own "Asterix formula" for sustainability, a **series of factors** that have allowed it to successfully combat economic depredation and preserve the environment. Here is a summary of those factors:

- **Social:** The environmental awareness of the population, originated in the social movements of the 1970s, is very high compared to the other tropical developing countries.
- **Scientists:** It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988, a biodiversity hotspot. Its conservation is easier justifiable to economic powers.
- **Political:** There is unusual political support for conservation of the forests. The political parties of the 80s and 90s found in the prohibition of the felling of forests a winning message for the attraction of the population's vote.
- **Governance:** National indicators regarding corruption and poor governance show considerably low results for Australia, compared to other tropical developing countries.
- **Legislative:** Forest management is the responsibility of the State of Queensland, which defended the felling of trees in the region in the 1970s and 1980s. However, under the country's constitution, the Government of Australia was able to take the reins and take charge of the (sustainable) management of the forests.
- **Geographic:** Australia, being an island, has no geographic conflicts with neighboring countries, so the Queensland Government can manage its forests without having to deal with external economic pressures.

In short, the region enjoys governance and legislation that protects the environment, an economy with little capacity to impose its interests, a government and society committed to the environment, and a respected science that demonstrates the environmental importance of the region.

Due to this combination of factors, the Wet Tropics region of Queensland, in Australia, is one of the few that can be considered sustainable from a point of view of economic production (mainly agricultural), the biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. By Of course, this scenario is only possible under a cultural context, specific political, environmental and socioeconomic, which is difficult to replicate elsewhere.

However, it thus demonstrates that there are still villages that firmly resist the enemy occupation. It would be well worth taking them as an example and inspiration

to study their secret potions, which might be of further use.  
sooner rather than later.

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**There are no comments yet.**