

Meeting 3 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee

Location:	SARDI offices, Plant Research Centre, Hartley Grove, Urrbrae SA.
Date:	Thursday 27th August 2015
Attendees:	
Iain Young	University of New England, Armidale, NSW (Chair)
Georgina Kelly (Deputy)	New South Wales Department of Primary Industries (Deputy Chair)
TBC	Grains Research and Development Corporation
Neil McKenzie	CSIRO Agriculture, Canberra
Hamish Cresswell	CSIRO Agriculture, Canberra
Jennifer Alexander	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, Bendigo
Hayley Achurch	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Canberra (for Michele Barson),
Alex McBratney	The University of Sydney
Damien Field	The University of Sydney
Ian Anderson	University of Western Sydney, Richmond, NSW
Warwick Dougherty	New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, Camden
Michael Crawford	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources, Bendigo
Paul Lawrence	Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Brisbane
Pauline Mooney	South Australian Research and Development Institute, Adelaide
Karen Holmes	Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, Perth (for Noel Schoknecht)
Peter Voller	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Launceston
Allan Williams	Cotton Research and Development Corporation, Narrabri
Vicki Woodburn	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra
Cameron Allan	Meat and Livestock Australia, North Sydney
Adrian Loschiavo	Wine Australia (Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation), Adelaide
Guest:	Major General the Hon. Michael Jeffery National Advocate for Soil Health
Apologies:	Michele Barson (Department of Agriculture), Felice Driver (Sugar Research Australia), Cathy Phelps (Dairy Australia), Brenda Kranz (Horticulture Innovation Australia), Jason Hill (Department of Land Resource Management, Palmerston, NT), Noel Schoknecht (Department Agriculture and Food, Western Australia)

Agenda

- 9:00 Coffee and tea available on arrival
- 9:30 Welcome**
- 9:35 ITEM 3.1: Minutes of last meeting and correspondence
Purpose: update on progress with actions
- 10:00 ITEM 3.2: Member updates (2-3 minutes on key developments)
Purpose: raise emerging issues, key challenges and new initiatives
- 10:45 ITEM 3.3: Round 2 of Rural R&D for Profit
Purpose: Update from the RDCs on the process for preparing bids

11:00 Morning Tea

11:20 ITEM 3.4: Update from the Advocate for Soil Health

Purpose: Outline of recent developments

11:40 ITEM 3.5: The Fixing the Paddock Program – 100 selected case studies

Purpose: Seeking support and coordination from the Implementation Committee

12:00 ITEM 3.6: Outline of the proposed Soil RDE website

Purpose: Review of the proposed website design

12:10 ITEM 3.7: R&I committee update

Purpose: Verbal update on the meeting held on the 26th of August 2015

12:20 Lunch

12:50 ITEM 3.8: Options for implementing the Australian Soil Assessment Program

Purpose: Decide on the strategy for business development and institutional design

13:20 ITEM 3.9: New activities

Purpose: Seek nominations to lead activities

Preparation of the Soil RDE communication plan

Plain English version of the Soil RDE Priorities

Innovation competition and a big data Hack-a-thon

Pilot study into the value of knowledge exchange

Register of existing field sites

Update on trends in capability, capacity and investment in soil RD&E

13:50 ITEM 3.10: Provisional summary of the NANORP and NSCP R&D programs

Purpose: Summary of key achievements and future directions

14:10 ITEM 3.11: Annual Forum

Purpose: Proposal for an intensive workshop and subsequent presentation at Outlook 2016

14:30 ITEM 3.12: Budget

Purpose: Summary of income and expenditure

14:40 Other business and next meeting

15:00 Meeting Close

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.1
Minutes of last meeting and correspondence	
<p>Background</p> <p>The minutes of Meeting 2 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee are presented for review and endorsement (Attachment 1).</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>None identified.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <p>For review and endorsement.</p>	
<p>Resource implications</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <p>Soil RD&E Secretariat.</p>	
<p>Attachments</p> <p>Minutes of Meeting 2 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee (separate document).</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.2
Member updates	
<p>Background</p> <p>It was agreed at Meeting 1 that members of the Implementation Committee would provide written updates that highlight key developments, challenges and emerging issues for their organization. A brief 3-5 minute verbal summary of these would be provided at the meeting.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>The intent is to provide all members with a clearer understanding of soil RD&E matters across all jurisdictions and organizations. With time, members should develop a more collegiate and integrated understanding of soil management across Australia.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <p>Members are requested to provide a brief 3-5 minute verbal summary at the meeting.</p> <p>Members are also requested to provide written updates for inclusion in agenda papers for each meeting of the Implementation Committee. The written updates received prior to the meeting will be distributed by the 26th of August.</p>	
<p>Resource implications</p> <p>Minor. Members will normally draw on existing review and reporting materials from their organization.</p>	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <p>Soil RD&E Secretariat with input from members of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee.</p>	
<p>Attachments</p> <p>None</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.3
Round 2 of Rural R&D for Profit	
<p>Background</p> <p>The \$100 million Rural R&D for Profit program will provide grants to RDCs for collaborative research that enhances farm-gate profitability and supports continuing innovation in Australia's primary industries. The program implements the Australian Government's 2013 election commitment to provide additional funding to the RDCs. The research is to focus on delivering cutting-edge technologies and making research findings more accessible for primary producers. It must also improve coordination and cooperation between stakeholders.</p> <p>The second round of the Rural R&D for Profit program should open in September or October for a 10-12 week application process. Members of the Implementation Committee have previously expressed strong interest in developing a coordinated bid for Round 2 that reflects the priorities of the Soil RD&E Strategy. RIRDC is coordinating the initial process through the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDCs have reviewed the soil priorities put forward from the RD&E strategy and agree that they align with areas that interest their industries and farmers. • RIRDC developed a process to call for research ideas. The call for ideas includes information on other considerations (outside the actual research projects) that will be considered by RDCs. • The call for research ideas was emailed to Implementation Committee members on the 19th of August. Members are to distribute information about the call through their networks. Ideas for projects are to be submitted to RIRDC by Friday, 11 September. • RDCs will shortlist projects according to their priorities in late September. • Shortlisted project proponents will be invited to provide a verbal pitch in mid-October at a meeting in Canberra or Sydney. This will be followed by an RDC workshop to refine the scope of the best bids and confirm the most appropriate RDC lead for the project(s) that are to be submitted. • Applications will then be submitted to the Australian Government. 	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>The role of the Implementation Committee is to do all it can to ensure an open, effective and inclusive process. The Implementation Committee needs to discuss this role and the steps that need to be taken over the next two months. Starting points for discussion include mechanisms for alerting potential applicants and offering support for the evaluation process.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <p>For discussion</p>	

Resource implications

Minor

Preparation and consultation

Soil RD&E Secretariat.

Attachments

None

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.4
Update from the Advocate for Soil Health:	
<p>Background</p> <p>The mission of the Advocate for Soil Health, General Michael Jeffery, is to ‘provide strong leadership and advocacy on the importance of healthy soil, water and vegetation and the benefits thereof for all Australians.’</p> <p>A specified task in the terms of reference for the Soil Advocate is to ‘work towards ensuring that existing and new soils research meets the needs of Australia’s farmers and other soil managers.’ The related implied task outlined in the terms of reference is to ‘engage with the National Implementation Committee for the National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy through regular meetings and correspondence.’</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Soil Advocate has been actively engaged in setting the agenda for soil research, development and extension in Australia and has undertaken an exhaustive consultation process in recent months and presented proposals and options to key decision makers and stakeholders. • The Soil RDE Implementation Committee needs to understand the opportunities and also current attitudes amongst decision makers so that it can contribute in the most effective way, including in establishing the 100 agricultural case-study research program. • Most of the proposed activities are directly relevant to the existing programs of member organizations. 	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For information and consideration. 	
<p>Resource implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yet to be determined. 	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Jeffery has provided a general indication of his proposed program in various public forums over the last year. • Specific discussions have been held in recent weeks with some members of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee. 	
<p>Attachments</p> <p>None</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.5
The Fixing the Paddock Program – 100 selected case studies	
<p>Background</p> <p>The Advocate for Soil Health, General Michael Jeffery, has proposed that a ‘Fixing the Paddock Program’ be established. This program would build the long-term knowledge base on approaches to land management that protect and regenerate soils in order to increase agricultural production, meet national and global food security needs and ensure sustainable industries and economies in rural Australia. It would focus on the active management of soil biology, water, carbon sequestration and fertility in order to ensure productive, healthy and sustainable land use.</p> <p>The central activity in the Fixing the Paddock Program will be 100 case studies. These will be the focus for experimentation, research, development and extension efforts. An outline of the proposed program is presented in Attachment One.</p> <p>In developing the proposed program, General Jeffery has sought assistance and input from CSIRO and other member agencies of the Soil RD&E Strategy Implementation Committee.</p> <p>CSIRO is alerting committee members to the Program and is seeking engagement and collaboration to achieve the best collective outcome for Australia.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSIRO seeks to align its R&D activities with the Soil RD&E Strategy and also explore ways to ensure that maximum benefit is generated through the 100 case studies and the Fixing the Paddock Program • Before this can be achieved, the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee needs to understand the scope of the proposed program, take steps to ensure strategic coordination and, if agreed, accept implementation responsibilities. 	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written brief on the Fixing the Paddock Program is attached and a verbal briefing will be provided by General Jeffery. • Members are asked to consider how their interests and activities can be aligned with the proposed program (Attachment One). • This briefing is for information and consideration by members. 	
<p>Resource implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yet to be determined. 	

Preparation and consultation

- General Jeffery has provided a general indication of his proposed program in a variety of forums over the last year.
- More detailed discussions have been undertaken with government ministers, industry leaders and other stakeholders.
- Specific discussions have been held with CSIRO.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Fixing the Paddock - 100 Selected Research Case Studies

Attachment 1: Summary

***Fixing the Paddock* - 100 Selected Research Case Studies**

Aim

The aim of the *Fixing the Paddock* Program is to build a long term knowledge and data base on approaches, methods and practices that protect and regenerate soils in order to increase agricultural production, meet national and global food security needs and ensure sustainable industries and economies in rural Australia. To achieve this and to address falling productivity there is a need to better understand how to actively manage soil biology, water, carbon sequestration and fertility in order to ensure more productive, healthy and sustainable land use.

The aim of the *Fixing the Paddock* 100 research case study program aligns with the goals of the RD&E Strategy¹ which include:

- Improved co-investment
- Improved access to quality soil data and information
- Improved communication and sharing of soil knowledge
- Adopting a national approach to building future skills and capacity
- Collaboration on the development and use of physical infrastructure such as laboratories, equipment, long-term field sites and soil archives

Similarly, the *Fixing the Paddock* 100 research case study program aligns with the published set of soil research and development strategic directions considering

- How to improve soil management to increase productivity and profitability
- How to improve the mapping, modelling, monitoring and forecasting of soil-related issues
- Finding ways to manage soil and sub-soil constraints
- Improving our understanding of soil's role in delivering ecosystem services

¹ Department of Agriculture National Soil RD&E Strategy

http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/natural-resources/soils/national_soil_rd_and_e_strategy?wasRedirectedByModule=true

- Determining how soil can be better managed across the landscape to deliver outcomes for farmers and the broader community

Strategies

The strategies used to achieve this by *Fixing the Paddock* are:

- To increase appropriate and practical research that will provide a growing and enduring knowledge base on soil health using agricultural productivity as the focus.
- To provide a continuing scientific, environmental and economic test-bed that builds understanding of soil health and sustainable land management approaches which improves productivity.
- To develop processes and systems which effectively measure soil health and productivity and enable the evaluation of practices and approaches and their effects on agriculture and economic, environmental and social systems.
- To provide information and professional development that assists primary producers (the custodians and stewards of the nation's land and water resources and agents of its productivity) to integrate regenerative and conserving activities in farming and land management that protect and builds soil health and productivity.
- To contribute to the nation's and the world's food security needs by developing and sharing best practice in soil health, agricultural productivity and land management.

Method

The *Fixing the Paddock* research case studies will be key, national ongoing research programs which will provide the scientific, environmental and economic test bed to drive land management approaches and develop data collection methods that will enhance and measure soil health in order to improve agricultural productivity. The method used for this 100 case study program may build on the processes used for the Soils for Life² program. The Soils for Life organisation has run a series of 21 case studies which look at different farming practices designed to improve productivity and regenerate the landscape. These case studies were designed with 3 elements – first to find the best practice farming in a particular landscape environment, secondly to inform the wider agricultural audience of the best

² <http://www.soilsforlife.org.au/>

practice management and finally a mentoring stage where the best practice is put into action by farmers with help and support from the case study site and other external experts.

The *Fixing the Paddock* case studies program will:

- Undertake, document and evaluate around 100 case studies selected and implemented, desirably over a three year period which will provide the test-bed to explore the wholistic management of soil, water, plants and microbiology in differing soil types, agricultural production systems, landscapes and environmental contexts
- Trial and assess soil regeneration practices including elements such as: balancing soil structure; improving soil humus levels; managing water use, run-off and erosion; cropping approaches; carbon sequestration; recycling nutrients; the use (or non-use) of chemicals etc.
- Provide the test-bed to experiment with and develop better ways of measuring soil health and the long term impacts associated with particular techniques using existing and innovative technologies that:
 - measure changes in soil health;
 - evaluate the efficacy of various approaches including economic benefits and productivity shifts;
 - and assess social, environmental and cultural outcomes
- Address the impacts of climate variations and associated changes on soil health and productivity and research approaches and practices that ameliorate their impact
- Provide an information exchange process and share results to enable producers to integrate proven practices into their production, management and conservation activities.

Implementation

A proposal will be presented to the Department of Agriculture as soon as the next round of R&D grants are announced in late August with the aim of tapping into the \$100 Million budgeted. A key criterion for applications for these grants is to demonstrate a collaborative approach with strong partnerships. This is what the 100 case study research project is aiming to do.

- *Fixing the Paddock* will be a partnership program bringing together all bodies that can contribute to its success and efficacy including primary producers, government bodies

and instrumentalities, the scientific and academic sector, agribusiness, commodity peak sector bodies, Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land use groups; mining interests etc.

- An Advisory Council will be established, which will report directly to the relevant Ministers and will include key stakeholders such as CSIRO, the National Soils Advocate, universities (UNE, Melbourne and others), peak sector bodies (e.g. National Farmers Federation, peak agricultural sector bodies) RDCs, RDEs and an appropriate indigenous group (perhaps NAILSMA). This group will provide advice and input to ensure the success and progression of the *Fixing the Paddock* program.
- One of the collaborating partners (eg RD&E) will be selected to have managerial carriage of the program over the initial 3 year period and with agreement, in an ongoing capacity. The program manager will report to the Advisory Committee who will in turn report to the Minister.
- A tranche of case studies will be selected each year over a three year period using an agreed selection framework which may include suitability of site, capacity, longevity in situ and so on.
- The *Fixing the Paddock* Program will provide grants (an amount per study to be determined) to support each selected case study as well as enabling resources, guidance, information and support.
- Each case study site will be expected to hold one or two Open Days (Field Days) per year to encourage the sharing of information. The attendees will be followed up after 12 months to determine what, if any practices they have been able to incorporate into their farm. The aim is to encourage a ‘train the trainer’ approach to better land management.
- Discussions and agreement on the set of basic measurements for a site including elements such as soil carbon, soil texture, land management regime (past and present), moisture capacity measurement (including evaporation measurement for each different area within each site), yield, soil respiration.
- An overall 70:30 stakeholder to researcher split of case study site farms may assist in enrolling and selecting the desired 100 sites.
- An overall site coordination staff person will be required to ensure that:

- All sites are organised and operating under the agreed study conditions,
- all sites are measured in a standardised manner,
- agreed analysis is carried out, and
- appropriate archiving, promoting and publishing is achieved

Recommendations

1. Agreement on the concept of the *Fixing the Paddock*, 100 case study research base program.
2. Agreement on the organisations to be involved – RD&E, CSIRO, National Soil Advocate, Universities, NFF etc
3. Agreement on the particular organisation to have carriage of the management of the program (eg RD&E)
4. Agreement on the process of development and writing of the proposal. The National Soil Advocate's office will assist.
5. Agreement on the timeframe to ensure that the application for the grant is on time, is a winning bid and enables a 2016 start.

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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.6

Outline of the proposed Soil RDE website

Background

The development of a website is required by the Soil RD&E strategy (section 6.3). The purpose of the website is to provide information on implementation activities and related outputs.

The content of the website will include the priorities for soil RD&E, activities of the Implementation Committee, updates from the working groups and a news function. Links to sector-specific projects will provide a snapshot of existing soil RD&E activities along with connections to the other RD&E strategies. A key feature of the website will be the emphasis on links to other soil websites that provide access to data and information resources (for example, the healthy soil knowledge bank, soilquality.org.au, ASRIS, ACLEP, the Australian Soil and Landscape Grid and Soil Science Australia).

Green Graphics have been engaged to develop the overall look and structure of the new website using WordPress. The art work from the soil strategy has been used as the basis for the design.

Key issues

An initial layout has been provided for discussion regarding the design, review of main menu headings and hierarchy of content (Attachment 2). Appropriate images still need to be supplied to the designers for the background. The content will be populated by the Executive Officer once the site is built. The following sub-menu headings are proposed:

Home	Strategy	Resources	News and Events	Member login	Contact
	Soil RDE Strategy	Key Soil RDE priorities	Communiqués	Terms of Reference	
	Implementation Committee	Soil RDE stocktake	Annual Forum	Agenda papers and meeting minutes	
	Working groups	Australian Soil Assessment Program			
		Related sites			

The strategy recommends that a news function be included on the website. Keeping the news up-to-date is important to maintain a professional image. However, if the approvals process for posting news is onerous then this will become a time consuming task and the website will be difficult to maintain.

A domain name for the website needs to be chosen. Many options are available with the following

suggested as a starting point for discussion:

- soilstrategy.net.au
- soilstrategy.org
- soilrde.net.au
- soil-rde.net.au
- soil-rde-strategy.net.au

More information can be associated with the selected name and this will appear in the results of an internet search. The designers have advised it is preferable to avoid acronyms in the domain name.

Required action

- Review the attached layout of the website for comment or endorsement
- Choose a domain name
- Discuss the inclusion of a news function on the website

Resource implications

The website design by Green Graphics will cost \$1900. Population of the content will be done by the Executive Officer.

Preparation and consultation

- Soil RD&E Secretariat.

Attachments

- Proposed website design (separate document)

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.7
R&I committee update	
<p>Background</p> <p>The Research and Innovation (R&I) Committee, formerly known as the Research, Development and Extension Committee, is responsible for the oversight of the development and implementation of the National Primary Industries RD&E Framework. The Soil RD&E Implementation Committee is required to report to the R&I Committee biannually with the first report submitted by 30 June 2015. The R&I Committee meets quarterly, with four Strategies invited to report on their progress directly to the Committee at these meetings. Iain Young is a member of the R&I Committee.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>The R&I Committee is meeting on 26th August 2015. Iain Young will provide a verbal update on the agenda, discussions and decisions.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>Resource implications</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <p>Soil RD&E Secretariat.</p>	
<p>Attachments</p> <p>None</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.8
Options for implementing the Australian Soil Assessment Program	
<p>Background</p> <p>At Meeting 1 (Item 1.6), the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee received a briefing from the Chair of the National Committee on Soil Terrain (NCST) on the proposed Australian Soil Assessment Program (ASAP) (Attachments 1 and 2).</p> <p>The proposal was discussed including the need for national soil data infrastructure, the need for soil information at sub-paddock scale, and the need for the monitoring and forecasting of soil condition. The RDC representatives on the Implementation Committee questioned the grower benefits from the activity proposed with ASAP. It was acknowledged that some of the benefits from ASAP would be public as well as private but that there is a lack of investment opportunities (and institutional model) for public-good soil RD&E.</p> <p>It was agreed that the NCST should be given direction by this Soil RD&E Implementation Committee and it should report back through the IC. However, no specific direction was provided except for endorsement to allow publication of the ASAP proposal (Attachment 1).</p> <p>The ASAP proposal provides a comprehensive plan for reengineering the national soil information infrastructure so that it can provide the required data and information to regularly assess the condition of soils and their responses to land management across Australia. More significantly, it provides the basis for achieving the five national priorities recently endorsed by the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee. Several core components of ASAP are also essential if Australia is to take full advantage of the Big Data revolution in agriculture.</p> <p>There was insufficient time at Meeting 1 to fully consider the proposal and some members balked at the size of the proposed budget. Full implementation of ASAP was estimated to require an ongoing annual investment of \$99.7m to support seven streams of nationally coordinated and regionally delivered activities. While this investment has the potential to generate large benefits (estimated to be at least \$2 billion per annum by 2020), the Implementation Committee did not reach any agreement on how to proceed.</p> <p>Likewise, the Implementation Committee did not resolve the following two institutional issues identified by the NCST.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A formal and enduring mandate for soil resource assessment has to be developed. One mechanism to achieve this could be the incorporation, by legislation, of soil resource assessment activities into one or more agencies. This mandate is essential because of the long timeframes required to build the soil resource information base and to monitor soil change over several decades. 2. The second key institutional issue relates to the organizational and business model for ASAP. Four broad institutional options are identified by the NSCT but the list is not exhaustive. The new investment and institutional model has to focus on both public and private sector needs. 	

The NCST expressed the view that these two issues had to be resolved before proceeding with any of the seven streams of activity.

While some of the required investment may come from better coordination of current soil research and development expenditure, a significant new investment is required to revitalise and upgrade the current national soil information infrastructure.

Key issues

The ASAP proposal seeks to establish a missing piece of national infrastructure but current institutional settings have to be adjusted if it is to proceed. Member agencies of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee can address some of these but a more significant intervention is required if ASAP is to succeed. Options may include:

1. Seeking consideration through COAG
2. Requesting the Productivity Commission to review the proposal and make recommendations on appropriate institutional reform
3. Socializing ASAP through a wide range of forums with a view triggering a response through new policy proposals.

Required action

Committee members are asked to:

- Identify the most appropriate mechanisms for developing a formal and enduring mandate for ASAP.
- Consider whether a more modular approach to funding is feasible (e.g. separate sources of funding for each of the seven streams and a staged approach to implementation)
- Consider the options for implementation and agree on a strategy.

Resource implications

The proposed Australian Soil Assessment Program is a relatively large investment and there are implications for the reallocation of existing resources and acquisition of new funds.

Preparation and consultation

Soil RD&E Secretariat.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Establishing the Australian Soil Assessment Program (separate document)

Attachment 2: PowerPoint Presentation to Meeting 1 by the Chair of the NCST (separate document)

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.9
New initiatives	
<p>Background</p> <p>The Committee has discussed a range of initiatives at previous meetings to implement the strategy. The activities below have been raised as areas to focus on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the Soil RDE communication plan • Plain English version of the Soil RDE Priorities • Innovation competition and a big data Hack-a-thon • Pilot study into the value of knowledge exchange • Register of existing field sites • Update on trends in capability, capacity and investment in soil RD&E 	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>In order to progress these activities workable pathways to completion need to be identified.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <p>Identify committee members or working group chairs to lead each of these activities and set timelines</p>	
<p>Resource implications</p> <p>The actions identified and their resourcing requirements will contribute to planning the expenditure of the budget for the Implementation Committee.</p>	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <p>Soil RD&E Secretariat.</p>	
<p>Attachments</p> <p>DRAFT Soil RD&E overview of activities for 2015/16</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.10
Embargoed: Provisional summary of the NANORP and NSCP R&D programs	
<p>Background</p> <p>The National Soil Carbon Program (NSCP) and the National Agricultural Nitrous Oxide Research Program (NANORP) are winding-up after five years of operation. These two large soil research programs were part of <i>Carbon Farming Futures: Filling the Research Gap</i>. The programs were funded by primarily by the Australian Government through the Department of Agriculture. A significant contribution was made by the Grains Research and Development Corporation, CSIRO and other partner organisations.</p> <p>The NSCP focussed on the sequestration and measurement of organic carbon in soil. NANORP focussed on effective and practical strategies for improved nitrogen management to increase productivity and profitability in agricultural systems.</p> <p>A provisional summary of both programs is provided to members of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee. The three embargoed documents are attached.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>NSCP and NANORP provide farmers, industries, scientists and policy makers with a much improved understanding of how the carbon and nitrogen cycles operate across the agricultural landscapes of Australia. As a result, there is now better guidance on how to achieve improvements in agricultural productivity and climate mitigation.</p> <p>A large number of soil scientists have contributed to NSCP and NANORP and their collective knowledge needs to be maintained and developed to ensure long-term research impact is maximized.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For information and discussion • Members are encouraged to consider the findings of NSCP and NANORP and incorporate this understanding into future soil research, development and extension activities. 	
<p>Resource implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this stage 	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil RD&E Secretariat, NSW DPI and leaders of NANORP and NSCP. 	

Embargoed attachments – Not for Distribution

Attachment One: NANORP Program Summary (separate document)

Attachment Two: NSCP Program Overview (separate document)

Attachment Three: NSCP Key findings (separate document)

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.11
Annual Forum	
<p>Background</p> <p>The Soil RD&E Strategy requires the Implementation Committee to organize an annual forum. At Meeting 1, the committee discussed options for the 2015 Annual Forum. It was agreed that to maximise the opportunity for investment and collaboration, the forum for 2015 should focus on investment propositions to connect and align our effort.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>Several options for the Forum were considered after Meeting 1 including a suggestion that it could focus on facilitating a bid for the Rural R&D for Profit funding call. However, subsequent discussions (Meeting 2 and the teleconference on the 21st of July) reached agreement that it was inappropriate for the committee to coordinate the call and this function should be led by the RDCs (see Item 3.3).</p> <p>Given the increasing policy interest in soil matters internationally (e.g. OECD, Global Soil Partnership, Soil and Big Data, Soil Security) and in Australia (e.g. issues raised in Items 3.4 and 3.8), it is essential for the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee to have a clear strategic intent and program of action. It is also essential for strong engagement with industry, government and other stakeholders. The following is therefore proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Forum be held in the first week of December with Soil RD&E funds being used to support travel and accommodation for participants and facilitation • The Forum will be an intensive 2-3 day workshop and it will produce a position paper on the key strategic issues that need to be addressed to ensure our five national priorities are achieved • The position paper would then be presented in a session on soils and natural resource management at Outlook 2016. • The organizers of Outlook 2016 have indicated that this is an attractive proposition although they would soon require confirmation of the speakers for the 90 minute session. • Securing this session would require sponsorship by the Soil RD&E Strategy. • The cost of sponsorship is \$9,000 and for this we would have one or two speaking slots (out of four), chair the session and participate in the planning with the organizers of Outlook 2016. 	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the proposal for the December workshop and related session at Outlook 2016 • Decide on whether to sponsor the session at Outlook 2016 	

Resource implications

- \$25,000 has been allocated to the annual forum. This should be sufficient although a detailed costing of the event is required.
- The sponsorship and participation in Outlook 2016 would require between \$9,000 and \$15,000 depending on the arrangements for speakers.

Preparation and consultation

- Soil RD&E Secretariat.

Attachments

- None

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 3
	Location: Adelaide
	Date: 27 th August 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 3.12

Budget update

The strategy requires an operating budget of approximately \$150,000 a year. Funding was initially sought from members of the implementation committee. Table 1 provides a summary of the initial cash contributions. The following tables provide an update to the initial budget which was tabled at Meeting Two. Table 2 is an updated report on expenditure for 2014/15. A summary of committed cash contributions for 2015/16 is provided in Table 3. Expenditure to date for 2015/16 is shown in Table 4. The proposed but incomplete budget for 2015/16 is presented in Table 5 – activities such as meetings for subcommittees are yet to be finalized.

Table 1: Cash contributions for 2014-15 paid by member agencies

Organisation	Cash contribution
Department Agriculture	15,000
NT DLRM	5,000
DAFWA	15,000
GRDC	35,000
Dairy Australia	15,000
MLA	10,000
GWRDC	10,000
SRA	15,000
CRDC	15,000
CSIRO	20,000
UNE	9,092
Rollover from strategy development budget	\$35,616
Total paid for 2014-15	\$239,708
Total funds available*	\$224,708

* Includes forward payment of \$40 000 from CSIRO (\$20 000 p.a. for years 2 and 3).

Table 2: Report on expenditure (as at 30/06/2015)

Item	Expenditure (\$)
Domestic travel fares and expenses	3,277
General operating (meeting catering and room hire)	1,333
Subtotal	4,610
Salary liability (executive officer (0.4FTE) 23 February to 30 June 2015)	20,769
Remaining funds balance	\$214,329

Table 3: Cash contributions received for 2015-16 by member agencies (NB: CSIRO contributions of 20,000 for 2015-16 were prepaid in 2014-15 and the Department of Agriculture has committed 15,000 but is yet to be invoiced).

Organisation	Cash contribution (\$)
GRDC	35,000
Dairy Australia	15,000
MLA	10,000
SRA	15,000
CRDC	15,000
RIRDC	15,000
Carry forward from 2014-15	214,329
Total funds available	\$319,329

Table 4: Report on expenditure (as at 21/08/2015)

Item	Expenditure (\$)
Domestic travel fares and expenses	482
Salary liability (executive officer) -(0.4FTE; 1 July to 21 August 2015)	8,571
Initial website design	1,900
Catering Meeting 3	470
Subtotal	11,423
Remaining funds balance	\$307,906

Table 5: Proposed budget 2015/16 (incomplete)

Activity	Cost (\$)
Executive Officer	60,000
Publications metrics/ updating capacity audit	TBC
Annual forum	25,000
Outlook 2016 (TBC)	9,000
Meeting costs (committee and executive)	5,000
Reprint of strategy	1,500
Website development	10,000
ASAP implementation	TBC
Total	110,500

Key issues

- Note the significant discrepancy between funds available and the proposed budget for 2015/2016.
- Significant activities for 2015/2016 are yet to be finalized (e.g. subcommittee activities).
- An ongoing action and resourcing plan is required.

Required action

- Note the current budget and expenditure.
- Activities (e.g. subcommittee meetings) need to be finalized as soon as possible to enable finalization of the 2015/16 budget.
- Members are to advise on reporting requirements and preferred format for future budget updates.

Resource implications

- As shown above

Preparation and consultation

- Secretariat and members.

Attachments

- None