

## Minutes of meeting 2 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee

CSIRO Land and Water, Christian Lab Conference Room, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain ACT.  
Thursday 28th May 2015

Attendees: Georgina Kelly (Chair), Neil McKenzie, Martin Blumenthal, Hamish Cresswell, Greg Murdoch (for Brenda Kranz), Michael Crawford, Michele Barson, Allan Williams, Jennifer Alexander, Noel Schoknecht, Cathy Phelps, Cameron Allan, Ian Anderson, Warwick Dougherty (for Georgina Kelly), Dan Brough (for Paul Lawrence)

Apologies: Iain Young, Alex McBratney, Pauline Mooney, Damien Field, Felice Driver, Paul Lawrence, Adrian Loschiavo, Vicki Woodburn, Brenda Kranz, Peter Voller, Jason Hill

Guest: Major General John Hartley

No	Agenda Item	Discussion / comment	Decision /Action	Who	Due Date
2.1	Report from Advocate for Soil Health from Major General John Hartley	<p>Agenda paper 2.1 provided background and a summary of the Advocate's recommendations was distributed.</p> <p>Major General John Hartley gave a brief update on the activities of the Advocate for Soil Health. It was noted that the Advocate has been tasked with addressing all matters of soil health by the Prime Minister. A proposal to implement this task will be presented to the Prime Minister next month and will include 100 case study sites. General Jeffery recognises the need to educate the public regarding the importance of soil as this will lead to policy development for maintaining healthy soil. The Advocate for Soil Health is supportive of our work and would like to be involved with the Committee. Major General's Jeffery and Hartley would like to be invited to future meetings.</p>	The Implementation Committee offered to continue to liaise with the Advocate (in line with the Advocate TORs)		

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		<p>Discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A suggestion to widen and reactivate the technical and reference groups supporting the Advocate for Soil Health’s activities.</li> <li>• An offer by Major General Hartley for the Advocate for Soil Health proposal to be provided to the Soil RD&amp;E Implementation Committee for input.</li> </ul> <p>To support the Advocate’s proposal for 100 case study sites and a collaborative approach to site selection the Committee will develop a field site register.</p>	Distribute a brief questionnaire to establish a register of existing field sites that are well characterised and significant R&D investment has already been made	Secretariat	
2.2	Minutes of last meeting and correspondence	<p>Refer to agenda paper 2.2 and the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were endorsed.</p> <p>Most actions from last meeting have been completed or progressed and many appear as agenda items for this meeting. An update on progress with the website was provided outlining that the Soil RD&amp;E website can be hosted by CSIRO on a .org url. A draft structure has been developed and a test site address will be circulated for comment. Terms of Reference from NCST were tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Correspondence was received from the Research and Innovation Committee outlining reporting requirements and from Soil Science Australia offering involvement in the committee and requesting consideration by funding research bodies that project initiators be CPSS accredited.</p>	<p>Circulate draft website structure.</p> <p>Report to R&amp;I Committee as required</p> <p>Respond to Soil Science Australia offering affiliate membership on the committee (once that status is properly defined).</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Executive Officer</p>	

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2.3	Member updates	<p>Refer to agenda paper 2.3.</p> <p>The purpose of the updates is to provide insight into innovation, emerging issues and key challenges to promote a collaborative culture across organisations.</p> <p>Written and verbal updates were provided by members to the committee.</p> <p>State of the environment reporting was briefly discussed and identified as an area where coordination was beneficial.</p>			
2.4	Membership	<p>Agenda paper 2.4 provided as background.</p> <p>The proposed criteria for membership of the Implementation Committee was supported with the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That a commitment of 'significant' annual resources is made in the case of in-kind contributions,</li> <li>- Any RDCs with a significant interest in soil RD&amp;E can be voting members</li> <li>- That the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture is represented by 4 university members with consideration of geographic spread, and significant soil research expertise, and those representatives should be determined by the sector. Selection of the ACDA representatives should be agreed within the relevant sector and not by the Implementation Committee. The ACDA should consult with the</li> </ul>	<p>Update the membership guidelines as agreed and incorporate these in the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Confirmation of membership and status (voting or affiliate), along with an active commitment to implement the Strategy will be sought from organisations.</p> <p>Letter to be sent to the ACDA outlining the membership protocols for the committee and requesting renomination and liaison with ACDE.</p> <p>The final membership list will be circulated to</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p>	

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		<p>university sector, including the Australian Council of Deans of Environment and report back to this committee on their representation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Membership is also based on an intent of active commitment to the committee and to implementation of the strategy.</li> <li>- Members are responsible to canvas their key stakeholders and report on views and issues.</li> <li>- The TOR are to reflect the Department of Agriculture as representing the whole of Australian Government.</li> </ul> <p>Representation of NRM groups was raised. In a number of states they are agencies of government and therefore represented through the state and federal government. Opportunities for involvement and engagement will be considered through the communication plan and working groups. Affiliate or observer status membership was not viewed as required or appropriate.</p> <p>It was noted that the Soil Advocate may be invited to attend some future meetings.</p>	the committee.		
2.5	Terms of Reference	<p>Agenda paper 2.5 provided as background.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference were supported with the following amendment to the NCST reporting arrangements: The NCST, along with other working groups, will report to the Implementation Committee.</p>	Insert agreed wording for membership as per item 2.4 and amend wording regarding NCST reporting arrangements.	Executive Officer	

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2.6	Soil RD&E priorities	<p>Background to this item was given in agenda paper 2.6.</p> <p>A verbal summary of the feedback from committee members on the soil RD&amp;E priorities was provided.</p> <p>Comments on the priorities included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that the fifth priority will provide a bigger natural resources context for what we are doing,</li> <li>- suggestion to include mention of 'erosion' in two places.</li> </ul>	<p>Distribute a summary of feedback describing how the feedback was addressed.</p> <p>Add a short preface to the priorities document.</p> <p>Develop a plain English version of the priorities</p>	<p>Executive Officer</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat to arrange</p>	
2.7	Implementation plan	<p>Agenda paper 2.7 provided as background.</p> <p>The committee discussed the implementation plan and agreed that the priority area for implementation is knowledge exchange. A business case could be developed in order to obtain investment in this area. This could be based on a pilot project with supporting evidence of the difference good knowledge exchange makes for the farmer.</p> <p>A better investment structure with a mechanism to pool and administer joint funding was discussed. This could be enabled through an annual forum where researchers pitch ideas to funders (discussed further in 2.9).</p> <p>The stocktake of field sites raised in item 2.1 was further supported.</p>	<p>Develop a project scope for a pilot study into the value of knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Circulate PowerPoint slides presented in this session to the committee.</p> <p>Develop a project scope for the field site stocktake and circulate to the committee for comment.</p>	<p>Interested members – volunteers sought.</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Secretariat</p>	

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2.8	Budget	<p>Agenda paper 2.8 provided as background.</p> <p>The current budget and expenditure was noted. A request was made for a forward budget to be sent to members along with an agreement and invoice.</p> <p>Payment to DEDJTR for Executive Officer support was raised. Initially the budget was for \$50,000 annually. A recommendation was made by CSIRO to increase this to \$60,000 to cover costs.</p>	<p>Draft agreement to be sent to members with the forward budget and invoice.</p> <p>The committee supported the proposal to increase the allocation for the Executive Officer to \$60,000. Martin Blumenthal asked for it to be noted that he accepted the consensus decision but was disappointed with the process.</p>	Secretariat	
2.9	Annual forum	<p>Agenda paper 2.9 provided as background.</p> <p>The committee discussed options for the Annual Forum. It was agreed that to maximise the opportunity for investment and collaboration, the forum for 2015 will focus on investment propositions to connect and align our effort.</p> <p>An investor forum to coordinate collaborative planning prior to the Research for profit call (August 2015) was discussed. Mechanisms for joint funding coordination were proposed such as 'speed dating' type processes between organisations.</p> <p>A suggestion was made to hold an investment forum straight after the National soil Carbon workshop 14-15 July.</p>	<p>A concept note is to be developed for a research/investment forum covering: 3-5 themes to focus on, who will be involved and when and where it will be held. A working group to organise the forum is to be established.</p>	Nominees urgently sought for forum working group	
2.10	Other business	<p>The NCST has established the Data and Information Working Group. The question of working group resourcing was raised; this is covered within the TOR and is part of in-</p>			

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		<p>kind member contributions to the operation of the Committee.</p> <p>World Soil Day presents an opportunity to increase visibility of soil. The Global Soil report will be launched.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities for an innovation competition and a big data Hack-a-thon.</p>	<p>Members to advise the Executive Officer of items to be included on a register of activities.</p> <p>The Secretariat will consider opportunities for co-ordinated media activity.</p> <p>Concept note to be developed.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Secretariat</p> <p>Nominees sought from interested members</p>	
	Next Meeting	27 <sup>th</sup> August in Adelaide			