

Meeting 2 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee

Location: CSIRO Land and Water, Christian Lab Conference Room, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain ACT.

Date: Thursday 28th May 2015

Attendees: Georgina Kelly (Chair), Neil McKenzie, Martin Blumenthal, Hamish Cresswell, Greg Murdoch (for Brenda Kranz), Michael Crawford, Damien Field, Michele Barson (afternoon), Allan Williams, Jennifer Alexander, Vicki Woodburn, Noel Schoknecht, Felice Driver, Paul Lawrence, Cathy Phelps, Cameron Allan, Adrian Loschiavo, Peter Voller, Jason Hill, Ian Anderson, Nigel Wilhelm (via teleconference for Pauline Mooney), Warwick Dougherty (for Georgina Kelly)

Apologies: Iain Young, Alex McBratney, Pauline Mooney, Brenda Kranz

Guest: Major General John Hartley

Agenda

9.00am Coffee and tea available on arrival

9.30am Welcome

9.35 ITEM 2.1: Report from Advocate for Soil Health from Major General John Hartley
Purpose: understand opportunities to reduce duplication and improve collaboration

10.05 ITEM 2.2: Minutes of last meeting and correspondence
Purpose: update on progress with actions

10.20 ITEM 2.3: Member updates
Purpose: raise emerging issues, key challenges and new initiatives

11.20 *Morning Tea*

11.30 ITEM 2.4: Membership
Purpose: reset the Implementation Committee membership

12.00 ITEM 2.5: Terms of Reference
Purpose: reach agreement on the scope of the Implementation Committee

12.30 ITEM 2.6: Soil RD&E priorities
Purpose: consensus regarding strategic intent, scope and broadness of RD&E priorities

1.00 *Lunch*

1.30 ITEM 2.7: Implementation plan
Purpose: identify and commit to actions to progress the delivery of soil RD&E

2.30 ITEM 2.8: Budget
Purpose: update members

3.00 ITEM 2.9: Annual forum
Purpose: decision on the focus, location and scale of the 2015 Annual Forum

3.15pm *Other business*

3.30pm *Meeting close*

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.1
Update on the activities of 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>General Jeffery recently briefed the Prime Minister on his proposed strategic directions for future national work in soil and landscape management. He was subsequently requested to prepare a more detailed proposal for the Prime Minister that outlines the program of activities.</p> <p>General Jeffery is currently in the United States and he requested that his colleague, Major General John Hartley, provide an update to the Implementation Committee on the content and status of the Soil Advocate’s proposals. Major General Hartley is the CEO of Future Directions International.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Soil Advocate’s proposal to the Prime Minister is setting the agenda for soil research, development and extension in Australia. • The Soil RDE Implementation Committee needs to understand the opportunities and risks associated with the proposed activities so that it can contribute in the most effective way. • 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 members of his Expert Advisory Committee (Iain Young, Neil McKenzie), the Chair of the National Committee on Soil and Terrain (Noel Schoknecht) and the Department of Agriculture (Michele Barson).

Attachments

- No attachments.

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.2
Minutes of Meeting 1	
<p>Background</p> <p>The minutes of Meeting 1 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 1 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee (separate document).</p>	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.3
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 written updates for inclusion in agenda papers for each meeting of the Implementation Committee. The written updates received by 22nd May are attached.</p> <p>Members are requested to provide a brief 3-5 minute verbal summary at the meeting.</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>Secretariat. Based on discussions and decisions at Meeting 1 of the Implementation Committee.</p>	

Attachment 1: Member updates

Department of Agriculture

Michele Barson

Soil Advocate

The Department of Agriculture provides Secretariat support for the National Advocate for Soil Health, Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffery. The Prime Minister has extended General Jeffery's appointment as the National Advocate until the end of 2015. He will report to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Agriculture during the 2015 International Year of Soils, outlining recommendations for the future direction of soil management and policy.

General Jeffery met with the Prime Minister in April to discuss his plans for soil. The Prime Minister asked him to submit a five page proposal outlining key requirements for these plans, which include establishment of an Office of the Soil Advocate, new research case studies, a soil health measurement system and school garden programs. General Jeffery will represent the Australian Government at the Global Soil Security Symposium in Texas, USA in May, and open the Agriculture Research Symposium at the University of Sydney on 14 July.

Investments

National Landcare Programme (www.nrm.gov.au)

The Australian Government National Landcare Programme will invest \$1 billion over the next four years to help drive sustainable agriculture and to support the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of our natural environment. This builds on our previous investments in natural resource management, including more than \$750 million provided during 2008–14 to improve on-farm soil and biodiversity management practices across Australia.

Carbon Farming Futures programmes (until June 2017) (www.agriculture.gov.au/CFF)

The Department of Agriculture is funding this program (\$139.59 million) to deliver research, on-farm trials and communication activities that support on-farm emissions reduction. The program is focussed on ensuring that advances in land management technologies, emissions reduction and climate adaptation will lead to enhanced productivity and sustainable land use under a changing climate. These advances will help farmers and land managers benefit from the economic opportunities under Australia's [Emissions Reduction Fund](#), while assisting Australia to achieve its long term emission reduction targets.

Australian Collaborative Land Evaluation Program (www.clw.csiro.au/aclep/)

This jointly funded program led by CSIRO in collaboration with state and territory agencies aims to improve the availability of national soil information. Current projects include digitally capturing legacy soil data and support for a Digital Soil Mapping training course. Work is also underway with several state agencies to develop a demonstration virtual soil archive (see Strategy 4.3.5 p35). This work will be the basis of an international interoperability trial led by CSIRO through the Open Geospatial Consortium agriculture domain working group. Other participants include NZ, USA, Canada and the World Soil Information Centre.

Ground Cover Monitoring for Australia

The Department is funding development of a nationally-agreed, reliable basis for reporting trends in ground cover status using satellite imagery by CSIRO. The work has contributed to improved estimates of soil losses to the Great Barrier Reef from water erosion, and the data help monitor wind erosion via Community DustWatch www.dustwatch.edu.au. Research is underway to develop a tool to provide early warning of deteriorating pasture conditions at the district level for use in developing policy responses to drought.

New South Wales DPI

Georgina Kelly

- NSW DPI has been working with the US Study Centre and the Soils Unit has sponsored the *Soils Big Data and Agriculture Conference* in Canberra on June 25. Digital technologies in combination with soil informatics will enable agronomy and farm management to optimise soil function, enabling sustainable intensification of agricultural production and soil security. As a provider of agricultural innovation, particularly as it relates to soil productivity, NSW DPI will contribute to the discussion on soil policy in a global context.
- NSW DPI is partnering with the Crawford Fund to develop a Master-Class on Soils Productivity. The nature and scope of the masterclass is still under discussion and is likely to take place in the last quarter of 2015. It may include Regional R&D Tours.
- There has been a reshaping of the Cluster in which NSW DPI sits. As of July 1 NSW DPI will be within 'Industry Skills and Regional Development' but will still maintain a distinct entity as NSW DPI. The Agricultural Resources Branch (Climate Water and Soils) will be dispersed and embedded in industry facing Branches. The Soils Unit will be joining the Livestock System Branch, but as a cross sectoral program, we will continue to work across a range of agro ecosystems and industries – on a Program basis.

Victoria, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Michael Crawford

1. Following the state election (29th November 2014) there has been a realignment of Victorian Government Departments. All staff involved in soil RD&E in the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) have been placed in the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has no soil RD&E capability but is involved in the governance and oversight of the Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs).
2. The Agriculture Division Leadership Team has commissioned a review of DEDJTR's Soil RD&E program to determine the future role and focus of investment in RD&E in delivering improved soil productivity and management outcomes for the agriculture sector. The key evaluation questions for the review are to:
 - a. To what extent is the current portfolio of investments aligned and focused on the priorities in the 4-year investment plans, Agriculture Group objectives, Victorian Government and industry priorities and national RD&E strategies? To what extent is the investment consistent with the role of government?
 - b. What is the nature of the benefits expected from the investment? Who are the expected beneficiaries and users of the current portfolio of investment? What should be the expected level of funding contribution of the beneficiaries and on

- what basis, and how does that align with the current level of investment?
- c. What is the current available evidence that the outputs (completed approximately in last 3-5 years) are being utilised and contributing to outcomes?
 - d. What should be the future role, outcomes and priorities of the Agriculture Group program given responsibilities of other Departments and agencies in Victoria as well as other providers? What is the nature of the expected benefits that it will deliver? What are the criteria and framework to inform future portfolio of investment? What should be any targets for external co-investment?
 - e. What are any gaps or misalignment between current investment and future priorities?
3. Aither Pty Ltd (project team of Chris Olszak, Catherine Botta and Jane Branson) has been engaged to conduct the review on behalf of the Department.
 4. Through the DEDJTR 'Systems for Enhanced Farming Services' (SEFS) program, DEDJTR, an end-to-end analysis and review of soil sampling and soil data management is currently being undertaken. This approach coordinates activities in several existing projects and lines of investment. It includes the survey and analysis of the needs of soil data users to establish a benchmark for the assessment of gaps in soil data delivery, existing system integration and the requirements and support for soil data products. Specific core activities include a review of current practices and the design and delivery of a mobile (in-field) soil data collection solution and a broad comprehensive review of users and user requirements, supplemented by a more internally focused intensive user requirements study targeting the Victorian Soil Information System (VSIS).
 5. The SEFS initiative also has a core objective to improve knowledge exchange and associated services to better support the farming sector. One sub-program aims to improve understanding of user needs for spatial soil data and information, subsequently leading to better utilisation of products and data (Jennifer Alexander and Richard MacEwan). A 'Soil Data Matters' stand and questionnaire at the National Soils Conference in November at the MCG was used to gather information from delegates on awareness and use of national and Victorian soil data sources. The next-user needs for soil data sub-project received 70 returned questionnaires from soil scientists at the National Soils Conference. Preliminary assessment shows a high level of satisfaction for users of Victorian Resources Online (VRO) website. Focus groups are currently being conducted with other stakeholders in NW and SW Victoria.
 6. A project focusing on state-wide soil mapping harmonisation is also being funded through the SEFS initiative. David Rees and Mark Imhof are currently preparing a harmonised soil map of Victoria – using 'best-available' soil/landscape mapping and site data.
 7. DEDJTR have commenced work on a short term scoping study with GRDC to review past research and identify future opportunities and options for soil related RD&E for the grains high rainfall zone of south eastern Australia.

Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia

Noel Schoknecht

Summary

The difficult financial situation of the state has seen widespread cuts to government activities. DAFWA has taken its fair share of the cuts, losing about 30% of its staff over the last two years. State-funded soil-related activities have been curtailed, and an emphasis of projects funded from other sources. This is likely to affect engagement with, and funding of, the national Soil R, D and E strategy.

Key soil activities

- A number of GRDC funded projects looking at managing soil-related constraints to agricultural production are underway. Focus areas are soil acidity, sodic-magnesian soils, subsoil constraints, compaction, non-wetting, nutrient management, soil carbon and soil-water characterisation.
- A whole farm nutrient mapping program focusing on better management on nutrients the higher rainfall areas of the state is in its final year of activity
- A number of projects looking at irrigated agricultural opportunities throughout the north of the state are underway. Focus areas include the Ord expansion in the East Kimberley, La Grange in the West Kimberly, Fitzroy River valley in the Central/West Kimberley, mine water for agriculture in the Pilbara and expansion of the Carnarvon irrigation scheme.
- The development of a soil archive at Northam or Wongan Hills is proposed, although funding uncertain.
- An interactive web service (MySoil) has been developed to identify the key soils of the agricultural areas of the south-west and their uses and limitations for agricultural production.
- High quality agricultural land mapping based on the soil and water resource mapping continues across priority areas of the south-west of the state
- Soil database development is underway to capture the soil knowledge gained through soil activities – most notably the GRDC funded soil constraints research.
- The Report card on the condition and trend in the natural resources in the south-west of the state continues to attract interest, and a new Report Card on the rangelands will be published later this year.

Other activities

- WA Branch of the Soil Science Society to host the state soils conference in September at Mandurah south of Perth. Details at www.soilscienceaustralia.com.au. Of note is that WA now has the Federal President and Secretary of the Australian Soil Science Society!

Note: This report does not cover soil-related activities conducted by the universities, although many activities are linked through funding – especially the GRDC funded activities

Cotton Research & Development Corporation

Soil related research projects:

- Professor of soil biology / Soil System Research – physical, chemical and biological processes for plant growth and nutrient cycling down the whole soil profile
- Closing the soil carbon balance in cotton-farming systems / Resilient cotton-farming systems in irrigated Vertosols: soil quality, carbon and nutrient losses, cotton growth & yield in long-term studies
- Developing soil testing and fertilizer response guidelines to manage P K and S fertility for irrigated and dryland cotton cropping systems
- Improving cotton productivity with crop nutrition
- Optimising water and nitrogen fertiliser management in cotton
- Phosphorus availability in rain-grown cotton
- PhD: The impact of irrigation methods and management strategies on nitrogen fertiliser recovery in cotton
- Ph.D Image Processing Method to Estimate Cotton Requirements for nitrogen Fertiliser
- Increasing profitability through improved NUE and reducing gaseous losses of N
- Optimising management of manure in Southern NSW Cotton Production

- PhD: Effects of climatic fluctuation and land-use change on soil condition in the Lower Lachlan
- Cotton Industry adaptation to extreme weather and climate change

CSIRO

CSIRO underwent a major internal reorganisation in 2014. The previous matrix management structure has been discarded and CSIRO Divisions no longer exist. The soil research capability is now primarily located in two business units – the Agriculture Flagship (Director Dr John Manners; Deputy Director Dr Michael Robertson) and the Land and Water Flagship (Director Dr Paul Hardisty; Deputy Director Dr Paul Bertsch). Actions to maintain and facilitate soil research linkages between Flagships are ongoing, including a recent internal cross-Flagship soil research workshop held in Canberra.

Last year CSIRO announced the closure of our research laboratories in Griffith NSW as a cost saving measure. Some staff have since transferred to Deakin University who are now operating out of the same buildings (owned by Murrumbidgee Irrigation) at Griffith co-located with remaining CSIRO staff.

CSIRO continues to support the Global Soil Partnership and the forthcoming Status of the World's Soil Resources Report includes a regional assessment of the Southwest Pacific with a strong focus on Australia. The Summary for Policy Makers from the report will be considered for endorsement at the Third Plenary Session of the Global Soil Partnership at FAO Headquarters from the 22nd to the 24th of June.

CSIRO will also be contributing the 2016 Australian State of the Environment Report. An update on trends in the condition of Australia's soil resources will be required and CSIRO has indicated that it is willing to coordinate this section. State and territory agencies and universities have played a key role in this activity for previous reports and it is anticipated that this will happen again. However, the pool of experts has been depleted since the 2011 report.

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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.4
Membership of the Implementation Committee	
<p>Background</p> <p>At Meeting 1, the Implementation Committee considered matters relating to its governance and membership. The Implementation Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare criteria for membership. It was noted that the current committee membership is a hybrid that has come about through different processes and is open-ended.</p> <p>The PISC national RD&E strategy process provided a framework where the members of the strategy teams were the State jurisdictions, the Department of Agriculture, CSIRO, the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture, and an RDC. A lead RDC was nominated to co-lead the strategy and represent all other RDCs, and a PISC agency was selected as the other co-leader of the strategy. The leadership of each strategy was selected by the PISC RD&E subcommittee.</p> <p>The Soil RD&E Implementation Committee has changed from this original model. The criteria initially proposed or agreed for the strategy committee was that each member needed to represent a major national funder or provider of soil related research. Subsequently a decision was taken that agencies or institutions (or individuals?) that made a commitment to provide either cash or (unspecified) in-kind resources to implementation of the strategy were welcomed as members, without necessarily having to meet the major national funder or provider criteria. <i>Ad hoc</i> invitations to participate as a committee member have also been made at different times. Currently, any group prepared to commit cash or in-kind resources might argue precedent for participation as a member of the national Soil RD&E strategy implementation committee.</p>	
<p>Proposal</p> <p>The following proposed criteria for membership of the Implementation Committee are presented for discussion and agreement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In keeping with the overall national RD&E strategy process and intent, voting members of the Implementation Committee are required to represent a State jurisdiction, the Department of Agriculture, CSIRO, the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture, or an RDC. 2. Voting members of the Implementation Committee are required to represent a major national funder or provider of soil related research. This criterion can be assessed using evidence of contributions such as quantum of RD&E investment, major project roles, publication analysis, etc. 3. Voting members of the Implementation Committee are required to provide either cash (annual contribution) or in-kind (with commitment of at least 0.25FTE of staff time per year) resources to the strategy. 4. Where organisations are fragmented in relation to the requirement to be a ‘major national funder or provider of soil related research’ then a representative model is applied. For example, the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture could be represented by 4 voting university members, the Rural Research and Development Corporations could 	

be represented by the lead RDC (GRDC) and 3 other voting RDC members. Selection of the sector representatives should be agreed within the relevant sector and not by the Implementation Committee. The number of voting representatives for the Universities and RDCs should be determined in proportion to the scale of soil research funding or delivery.

5. Organisations that are not voting members of the Implementation Committee may contribute as affiliates or observers and may participate in Implementation Committee working groups when invited.
6. State agencies have the responsibility to represent all relevant Primary Industries related soil RD&E in their State.
7. The lead RDC has the responsibility to represent other RDCs who are not voting members of the Implementation Committee.
8. The lead PISC agency (CSIRO) has the responsibility to represent other national agencies that are not otherwise represented on the Implementation Committee (e.g. including Geoscience Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, ACIAR).
9. Smaller organisations or jurisdictions (relative to the major national funder or provider of soil related research criterion) or those who are unable to meet the other criterion are encouraged to consider an affiliate (non-voting) role and/or working group participation.
10. Additional agencies/institutions that wish to seek membership of the Implementation Committee should do so by:
 - a) Applying to the Implementation Committee
 - b) Outlining how they meet the membership criteria (above), why they are seeking to join, the value that they can add, the specific skills/knowledge the membership can bring to the strategy implementation process, and who the proposed representative is to be (the Secretariat could construct a short form for this purpose).

Key issues

A decision needs to be taken on the number of voting Implementation Committee members who represent the University sector (ACDA) and the number of Rural Research and Development Corporations. The University and RDC participants are asked to propose the number of voting representatives that they feel are appropriate given the function of the committee and the scale of soil research funding or delivery for which their sector is responsible.

Some organizations (e.g. Soil Science Australia) do not qualify as voting members in the above proposal but they will be able to contribute as affiliates.

Each current member/participant is asked to consider the agreed criterion for Implementation Committee membership and re-nominate specifying whether they would like to be a voting member or non-voting affiliate.

Required action

- Endorse or amend the proposal for Implementation Committee membership
- Endorse the proposal to 'reset' the national Soil RD&E strategy implementation committee membership

Resource implications

No specific implications identified at this stage.

Preparation and consultation

Prepared by the Secretariat.

Attachments

None

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.5
Terms of Reference	
<p>Background</p> <p>At Meeting 1, the Implementation Committee considered matters relating to its governance and membership. The Implementation Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft Terms of Reference for consideration at Meeting 2. The draft is presented below.</p>	
<p>Proposed Terms of Reference</p> <p>Purpose of the committee</p> <p>The Implementation Committee (IC) will facilitate implementation of the National Soil Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) strategy. The committee will provide leadership and achieve increased effectiveness of Australian soil RD&E, being mindful that Soil RD&E is always set within a broader systems view. More specifically, the role of the National Implementation Committee is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oversee and govern strategy implementation • implement the strategy to achieve its objectives in a timely manner • drive increased collaboration and coordination between organisations involved in the national soil RD&E effort • help determine strategic national soil RD&E priorities • help facilitate coordinated investment to address national soil R&D priorities and emerging issues • help sustain high levels of benefit from the national investment in soil RD&E • strengthen Australia's national soil research capability • help facilitate knowledge exchange between users and providers of soil information ensuring ongoing innovation, adoption of new technologies and productivity benefits • proactively communicate, including to promote the necessary public and government awareness of soils, using mechanisms such as an annual soil RD&E forum, soil RD&E strategy website and electronic newsletters • liaise with relevant national committees, including but not limited to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – AgSOC Research and Innovation Committee – National Committee on Soil and Terrain (NCST) – National Committee on Land Use and Management Information – Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network – National Plan for Environmental Information – National Committee on Acid Sulfate Soils • undertake monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement activities to ensure the strategy is being implemented <p>Leadership</p>	

Implementation of the national soil RD&E strategy is led by CSIRO (the jurisdictional lead organisation) and the Grains Research and Development Corporation (the lead RDC). CSIRO manages the executive support for strategy implementation.

In partnership, these two lead organisations will drive and provide leadership for strategy implementation, including promoting and representing the strategy at high-level forums. The lead organisations will work closely with the Implementation Committee and the Committee Chair. The Strategy Executive will consist of representatives from CSIRO as lead agency, GRDC as lead RDC, the Chair and the Deputy Chair. The Strategy Executive will make 'out of session' decisions (if required) in consultation with Implementation Committee members.

The Strategy Secretariat, consisting the strategy Executive Officer and CSIRO Executive Officer, will support the meetings and activities of the Implementation Committee and Strategy Executive.

Membership

The arrangements for membership are considered in Item 2.4. The agreed arrangements will be included here in the endorsed terms of reference.

Appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair will facilitate the operation of the committee and advance the implementation of the national strategy. As such, the role will be impartial and not represent a particular jurisdiction, organisation or sector. The Chair may wish to nominate another person to contribute to the committee to represent their jurisdiction, organisation or sector. The Chair will be expected to work closely with CSIRO (lead agency) and GRDC (lead RDC), and facilitate the operation of the implementation committee to fulfil its stated role.

If there is more than one nominee, the Chair will be elected by a process of elimination. Each round of voting will be by secret ballot. In each round, the nominee with the least votes will be eliminated. As two nominations were received in 2015 it was agreed to appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair. The Deputy Chair will fulfil the Chair's role when the Chair is absent. The Chair and Deputy Chair will be elected for a two-year term starting from February 2015.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet quarterly. A quorum at each meeting shall be 70% of members. The Strategy Executive will meet monthly or more frequently if required. An annual national soil RD&E forum will be held to assess cross-sector and regional soil RD&E priorities, consider opportunities for soil RD&E and report on achievements – or with other objectives as determined by the Implementation Committee.

Working groups

Working groups will be formed to support the Implementation Committee and deliver outcomes against strategy goals. These groups will be convened as required to work on specific activities as requested by the Implementation Committee. Working Group members do not have to be drawn solely from the Implementation Committee or from Implementation Committee member organisations. Each Working Group will have a leader appointed and will report back to the Implementation Committee.

Reporting arrangements

The Implementation Committee will report to AgSOC Research and Innovation (R&I) Committee.

The R&I Committee is responsible for the oversight of the development and implementation of the National Primary Industries RD&E Framework. The Framework is one of the Priority Issues of National Significance as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Agriculture Ministers' Forum. The R&I Committee also provides advice on the overall performance of the primary industries research innovation system and emerging technologies including biotechnology to AgSOC, and works with the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations.

The NCST is a national coordinating committee reporting directly to the R&I Committee on issues outside the scope of the strategy. Issues directly relating to the soil strategy will be reported through the National Implementation Committee.

Financial considerations

Members will attend Implementation Committee meetings paying their own airfares, accommodation and other travel costs. Strategy funds will be used by the lead agency (CSIRO) to meet the costs of meeting venues, meeting catering, and secretariat support for the Implementation Committee. The Implementation Committee will be asked to approve proposed expenditure of strategy funds and will be provided with regular financial reports.

Required action

- That members endorse or amend the Terms of Reference
- That Working Group Chairs use this document to develop Terms of Reference for each working group

Resource implications

- No specific changes in resourcing identified at this stage.

Preparation and consultation

- Prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of discussions at Meeting 1 and out-of-session discussions with members.

Attachment 1: Current membership (February 2015)

Name	Agency	Jurisdiction	Email
Neil McKenzie	CSIRO (lead agency)	National	neil.mckenzie@csiro.au
Martin Blumenthal	Grains Research and Development Corporation (lead RDC)	National	martin.blumenthal@grdc.com.au
Iain Young	Chair	N/A	iyoung4@une.edu.au , ers@une.edu.au
Georgina Kelly	Department of Primary Industries Deputy Chair	NSW	georgina.kelly@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Hamish Cresswell	CSIRO Executive Officer (non-voting)	N/A	Hamish.Cresswell@csiro.au
Jennifer Alexander	Strategy Executive Officer (non-voting)	N/A	jennifer.alexander@ecodev.vic.gov.au
Ian Anderson	University of Western Sydney	National	i.anderson@uws.edu.au
Cameron Allan	Meat and Livestock Australia	National	callan@mla.com.au
Michele Barson	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Australian Government	michele.barson@agriculture.gov.au
Michael Crawford	Dept of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources	VIC	michael.crawford@ecodev.vic.gov.au
Felice Driver	Sugar Research and Development Corporation	National	FDriver@sugarresearch.com.au
Jason Hill	Dept. of Land Resource Management	NT	jasonv.hill@nt.gov.au
Brenda Kranz	Horticulture Innovation Australia	National	Brenda.Kranz@horticulture.com.au
Paul Lawrence	Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts	QLD	paul.lawrence@dsitia.qld.gov.au
Adrian Loschiavo	Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation	National	adrian.loschiavo@agwa.net.au
Alex McBratney	University of Sydney	National	alex.mcbratney@sydney.edu.au (damien.field@sydney.edu.au)
Pauline Mooney	South Australian Research and Development Institute	SA	Pauline.Mooney@sa.gov.au
Cathy Phelps	Dairy Australia	National	cphelps@dairyaustralia.com.au
Noel	Department of	WA	noel.schoknecht@agric.wa.gov.au

Schoknecht	Agriculture and Food		
Peter Voller	Dept of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment	TAS	peter.voller@dpiwve.tas.gov.au
Allan Williams	Cotton Research and Development Research and Development Corporation	National	allan.williams@crdc.com.au
Vicki Woodburn	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation	National	vicki.woodburn@rirdc.gov.au
TBC	Australian Council of the Deans of Agriculture	National	
TBC	Soil Science Australia	National	
TBC	University of New England/University of Adelaide	National	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
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AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.6
Soil RD&E Priorities	
<p>Background</p> <p>Goal 4.3.1 of the National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy is to improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge. One implementation action is to identify and circulate the first set of national strategic directions provided to all organisations with interests in soil RD&E. There has also been a demand for soil RD&E priorities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement of the Chief Scientist and Commonwealth Science Council to establish formal priorities in relation to soil and water research and development • A request to the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee to provide its top five priorities as input to a strategic planning session by the CEOs of the Rural Industry Research and Development Corporations (RIRDCs) • The need to articulate priorities to support the work of the Advocate for Soil Health. <p>A draft set of priorities was circulated at the end of April and most members provided feedback. The revised set of priorities (see attached) was submitted to the CEOs of the RIRDCs on the 22nd of May with the proviso that they were in draft form and yet to be endorsed by the Implementation Committee.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five priorities for Soil RD&E must provide an enduring summary of strategic intent for the Soil RD&E Strategy • While all feedback was reconciled and incorporated into the draft document, it was clear that member agencies tended to identify with only a subset of priorities and considered others as not being relevant. While understandable, the success of the Soil RD&E Strategy will depend on all members of the Implementation Committee taking an integrated national overview. • The five priorities will form the basis for a plain English document 	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the final draft of the five priorities • For endorsement 	
<p>Resource implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources will need to be allocated for preparation of the plain English version. 	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial draft was based on the directions outlined in Section 4.4 of the Strategy 	

Attachment 1

Top priorities for Australian soil research, development and extension

No.	SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY	DESIRED OUTCOME
1	<p>Find solutions to soil-based constraints to agricultural productivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our understanding of soil function, soil formation, and degradation rates and processes so we can design ways to achieve sustainable soil management. • Develop rapid diagnostic systems for detection and response to soil-based constraints to root growth in crop and pasture systems. • Improve the rhizosphere (the soil-plant-interface) to enhance plant productivity and soil function, including by improving soil structure, supporting breeding programs for plants with improved root systems, storing carbon and learning to manipulate microbial diversity. • Develop economically viable biological, chemical and/or physical methods to ameliorate unfavourable subsoil rooting conditions (e.g. compacted and dense soils, lack of macroporosity, acidified layers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers are diagnosing when soil function is sub-optimal and is reducing plant production. • Farmers have cost-effective options to ameliorate soil-based constraints (e.g. compaction) in locations where plant production is below the intrinsic potential. • The condition (health) and productivity of managed soils is improved using practical, well-verified, system-based strategies incorporating biological, chemical and physical process understanding. • Rates of soil loss are reduced as a result of improved soil condition, greater levels of plant cover, and appropriate land use.
2	<p>Improve nutrient and water-use efficiency to increase productivity and prevent negative environmental impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new ways to improve nutrient-use efficiency, especially of nitrogen and phosphorus, in managed landscapes (e.g. improved fertiliser management that addresses the amount, form, placement, timing and potential for bio-enhancement). • Find new ways to optimize soil water-use in managed landscapes and improve the integrated management of water and nutrients in irrigation systems. • Determine current rates of soil acidification and identify feasible remedies. • Rebuild the stocks of organic carbon in Australian soils. • Develop efficient strategies for reducing soil greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased total factor productivity in crop, pasture and livestock industries. • Reduction in agricultural nutrients entering the environment. • Greater ability of agricultural industries to adapt to variable and reduced rainfall and water availability. • Soil acidification is ameliorated, avoiding environmental impacts and widespread loss of agricultural productivity. • Increased carbon is stored in agricultural soils resulting in improved soil structure and plant productivity as well as significant carbon offsets. • Landholders are implementing efficient strategies for reducing emissions of GHG from agriculture.
3	<p>Develop better information systems for soil-related knowledge exchange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver easy-to-use spatial soil information at the scale of the farm and small catchment that enables farmers to benefit from precision, zone and mosaic management approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective knowledge exchange and improved soil management. • Reduced risks and uncertainties for farmers in deciding between alternative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design practical and effective methods for monitoring soil function to underpin local management of water, nutrients, and carbon, and prevent degradation processes such as compaction, acidification, eutrophication and salinization. • Apply new technologies for forecasting soil condition with an emphasis on functional attributes related to land management and plant productivity. • Support the development of Australia's soil-data infrastructure (including computing, laboratory and archiving facilities) and provide web-based delivery of information services that unlock step changes in productivity through sustainable soil management. 	<p>management strategies with the aim of achieving greater agricultural productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better matching of land use to land capability particularly in areas of new agricultural development. • An ability to monitor and forecast changes in soil condition under current and future systems of land management from local through to national scales. • The 'Big Data' revolution improves soil management and provides direct benefits to farmers.
4	<p>Capture, verify and communicate innovation in soil management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more effective ways to engage and exchange knowledge with farmers and land managers so that soil related R&D is applied and the potential benefits realised. • Capture the learnings from farmers and land managers as they test thousands of ideas every year in their day-to-day operations. • Test and verify the innovations using sound science to understand the likely effectiveness in different industries, locations and soil types. • Communicate innovations in soil management and work with farmers and land managers within a co-learning paradigm to maximise adoption of useful new technologies and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk and uncertainty for land managers as to the likely effectiveness on their farm of practices designed to improve and maintain soil function. • New soil management ideas and innovations being evaluated, shared and applied more widely. • Address the lack of public recognition of the fundamental linkage between the soil and agricultural productivity, and between soil and major environmental challenges (e.g. climate change).
5	<p>Develop more effective soil and land-use policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support policy research to find more effective ways of protecting good quality agricultural land (e.g. better management of trade-offs with urban expansion, mining and energy developments, forestry and biodiversity). • Develop complementary policies in the national interest that address climate, agricultural and environmental objectives. • Support education policies and programs that lead to a better understanding of soils in rural and urban communities • Find policy solutions that address market failure in relation to the collection, management and provision of soil information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More efficient and equitable use of Australia's soil and land resources. • Reduced conflict over land use and management and the impact of agriculture (e.g. on water quality). • Lessening of the urban-rural divide in Australia with citizens having a better understanding of agricultural production systems. • Creation of a sustainable business model for soil data collection and management that recognizes that soils are both a public and private good.

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.7
Implementation Plan	
<p>Background</p> <p>Table 8 (p53-56) of the Soil RD&E strategy provides a work plan and timetable. The list of implementation actions needs to be reviewed, checked for omissions, prioritised and rescheduled.</p> <p>The work plan was briefly discussed at Meeting 1 and the Secretariat was asked to prioritise the proposed actions in the strategy. The Secretariat has completed some re-formatting and re-organisation of the actions list and has proposed revised delivery dates (see attachment).</p> <p>A more in-depth review of the proposed actions is needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check they are sufficient to meet the objectives of the strategy • consider if the proposed actions represent the areas where the committee can make the greatest positive difference to soil RD&E (as integrated with other disciplines) • identify other actions/activities that would be of significant national value • identify the actions on which the committee wishes to focus (and has the commitment and energy to lead to completion) • identify workable pathways to completion (e.g. via working groups) 	
<p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it that we want to achieve together as a committee? • Actions for enhancing progress towards increasing cooperation between agencies/institutions, research specialisation, shared funding and utilisation of infrastructure, partnerships to achieve national objectives, coordination in capability development and retention etc. • Facilitate coordinated national responses to major cross-sector soil RD&E priorities. • Facilitate (and advocate for) the integration of soil RD&E with other related disciplines in addressing major national issues such as ensuring food security, mitigation of climate change, adaptation to climate change, enhancement of biodiversity, development of northern Australia, protecting the Great Barrier Reef etc. • Provide an innovative package of soil science teaching resources for use in the national high school curriculum. 	
<p>Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include new action in 4.3.2: <i>‘Provide interpreted soil information that is location specific and useful for management’</i> • Under goal 4.3.4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>‘conduct an analysis of soil related publication data (source/origin, topic areas,</i> 	

collaborations, journals, citation rates, etc.)

- *conduct survey of advisors to supplement stock-take*
- *update trends in capability, capacity and investment in soil RD&E'*

Required action

- Discuss, identify and commit to actions to progress the delivery of soil RD&E in Australia (as a component of the full primary industries RD&E strategy).

Resource implications

- The actions identified and their resourcing requirements will contribute to planning the expenditure of the budget for the Implementation Committee.

Preparation and consultation

- Prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of discussions within the Implementation Committee.

Attachment: Table 8 Implementation of National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy, 2014 and 2015

Goals and reporting requirements	Implementation actions	Organisations responsible	Dates	Measures of success	Comment
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Establish National Implementation Committee	Executive officer	April 2014	Committee has met and executive support is in place.	Complete
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Establish functional-specific working groups to identify national priorities	National Implementation Committee	June 2015	At least three subgroups established and activated.	
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Hold first annual soil RD&E forum	National Implementation Committee working groups	November 2014	Forum held, outputs provided to all organisations with interests in soil RD&E.	Forum held, summary yet to be distributed
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Identify and circulate first set of national strategic directions for soil RD&E to funders and providers	National Implementation Committee working groups	January 2015	First set of national soil RD&E priorities identified following forum and provided to all organisations with interests in soil RD&E.	Complete
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Facilitate development of national program ideas	National Implementation Committee working groups	October 2015	At least two program ideas developed, support committed by at least five co-investors.	ASAP proposal developed
Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge Goal 4.3.1	Communicate strategy activities, facilitate soil RD&E networks (communication plan)	National Implementation Committee working groups	Ongoing	Regular electronic newsletter about strategy progress distributed via email and website, with a portal available for use by RD&E networks.	Communique distributed
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Undertake market research of user needs for soil data and preferred sources of soil information	National Implementation Committee, NCST, Knowledge Exchange Working Group	June 2015	User needs collated and results published.	User needs report for Vitoria due June 2015

Goals and reporting requirements	Implementation actions	Organisations responsible	Dates	Measures of success	Comment
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Agree on national standards for soil data and data collection, sharing, monitoring and analysis	NCST, other organisations	October 2014	Agreed set of national standards published and in use by organisations.	Agenda paper at next meeting? Frame request to NCST
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Develop integrated national soil information system (priority number 1)	CSIRO Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network other organisations	October 2014	Structure of an integrated system that meets identified user needs established and being populated with data.	ASAP
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Establish cooperative national approach for collection, sharing, monitoring and analysis of soil data	NCST, other organisations	October 2014	National cooperative program established with long-term funding commitments.	ASAP presented to RDE IC
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Engage public and private sectors to better capture and make available soil information	NCST, other organisations	January 2015	Protocols for access to and storage of public and private soil information under active discussion.	ASAP
Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information Goal 4.3.2	Provide interpreted soil information that is location specific and useful for management				
Improve communication and exchange of soil knowledge Goal 4.3.3	Establish and update soil RD&E website	National Implementation Committee, Knowledge Exchange Working Group	September 2015	Website established and funding secured for its continued management and maintenance.	To be hosted by CSIRO on a .org url
Improve communication and exchange of soil knowledge Goal 4.3.3	Develop national system for knowledge exchange	National Implementation Committee, Knowledge Exchange Working Group	January 2016	Proposals discussed at annual soil RD&E forum, establishment of national system commenced based on agreed action plan and funding.	
Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity Goal 4.3.4	Conduct an analysis of publication data and survey of advisors to supplement stocktake and map trends in capability, capacity and investment in soil RD&E against what is needed	National Implementation Committee Skills and Capacity Working Group Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture/Environment, agribusiness, other organisations	October 2015	Audit published, results considered by tertiary education and other training bodies, commitments to additional training courses and places made public.	

Goals and reporting requirements	Implementation actions	Organisations responsible	Dates	Measures of success	Comment
Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity Goal 4.3.4	Develop professional masters and short course programs in soil science	National Implementation Committee Skills and Capacity Working Group, education and training organisations RD&E and providers agribusinesses	June 2016	Up-to-date and expanded vocational education and training programs of study available.	GRDC has provided funding to University of Sydney
Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity Goal 4.3.4	Develop plan to improve employment opportunities, career pathways and funding sources for soil RD&E staff	National Implementation Committee Skills and Capacity Working Group RD&E funders and providers agribusiness	June 2015	RD&E funders and providers and other employers have considered age profile of soil RD&E staff and need for succession planning Improved career pathways established.	
Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity Goal 4.3.4	Complete national soil science curriculum that meets employer and land manager needs	National Implementation Committee Skills and Capacity Working Group education and training organisations RD&E funders and providers agribusiness	June 2015	Integrated and accredited soil science curriculum available nationally at different levels—for example, degree, award, vocational and refresher—and by different modes of study.	
Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity Goal 4.3.4	Review vocational education and training programs relevant to soil science and soil management and expand if required	National Implementation Committee Skills and Capacity Working Group, education and training organisations RD&E funders and providers agribusiness	June 2015	Up-to-date and expanded vocational education and training programs of study available.	
Collaborate on development and use of physical infrastructure Goal 4.3.5	Expand inter-laboratory soil testing proficiency programs and consistent regional interpretations for test results	National Implementation Committee Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council agribusiness	December 2015	Expanded program of proficiency testing established by Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council, regional panels have developed standards for interpretation of soil test results.	
Collaborate on development and use of physical infrastructure Goal 4.3.5	Establish national standards for collection, analysis, interpretation and communication of soil tests	National Implementation Committee Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council agribusiness	January 2017	Agreed protocols and testing manual developed and being implemented by soil-testing organisations.	Exec officer to contact ASPAC to discuss

Goals and reporting requirements	Implementation actions	Organisations responsible	Dates	Measures of success	Comment
Collaborate on development and use of physical infrastructure Goal 4.3.5	Establish a dispersed national soil archive	National Implementation Committee Physical Infrastructure Working Group	November 2015	Focus sites for the dispersed national soil archive agreed and long-term funding secured.	Funded through ACLEP
Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement program	Establish benchmarks against which progress in implementing the strategy and achievement of its goals can be assessed	National Implementation Committee	August 2015	Proposed key performance indicators identified and benchmark data collected. Indicators and benchmarks presented to the 2014 annual forum and amended as required; further data presented at subsequent forums and made publicly available.	

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.8

Budget

Background

It was estimated that the strategy would require an operating budget of \$150,000 a year to consider goals and deliver activities such as the annual soil RD&E forum, executive officer and the website. Funding to support this work was sought from implementation committee member organisations (see table below) and other interested parties. Additional funding will be sought for specific activities and projects. The current funds have been transferred to CSIRO as the lead agency.

The Strategy Reference Group determined that a co-investment model (see model 2, table 7 p48 of the strategy) will be implemented where several organisations commit to work together and commit their resources case by case.

Organisation	Cash contributions paid for 2014-15
Department Agriculture	\$5,000
NT DLRM	\$15,000
DAFWA	<i>In-kind support</i>
Vic Economic Development	<i>In-kind support</i>
Tas DPIPWE	<i>In-kind support</i>
Qld DSITIA	<i>In-kind support</i>
NSW DPI	<i>In-kind support</i>
SARDI	<i>In-kind support</i>
Dept Agriculture	\$15 000
GRDC	\$35,000
Dairy Australia	\$15,000
MLA	\$10,000
GWRDC	\$10,000
SRA	\$15,000
CRDC	\$15,000
CSIRO	\$20,000
USYD	<i>In-kind support</i>

UNE	\$9,092
UWS	<i>In-kind support</i>
Soil Science Australia	<i>In-kind support</i>
Rollover from strategy development budget	\$35,616
Total paid for 2014-15	\$184,708
Total committed for 2014-15 *	\$199,708
Total funds available**	\$224,708

* Includes Department of Agriculture contribution of \$15 000, to be paid as a grant to CSIRO as the strategy lead.

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

Report on expenditure (as at 22/05/2015)

Domestic travel fares and expenses	\$2,977.31
General operating (meeting catering and room hire)	\$684.72
Subtotal	\$3,662.03
Salary liability (executive officer) – TBC (0.4FTE; 23 February to 30 June 2015)	\$20,769.00
Remaining funds balance	\$200, 276.97

Proposed budget 2015/16 (incomplete)

Activity	Cost (\$)
Plain English version of the priorities document	10,000
Publications metrics/ updating capacity audit	TBC
Annual forum	25,000
TBC: Executive Officer (salary and operating)	45,000
Meeting costs (committee and executive)	5,000
Reprint of strategy	1,500
Website development	10,000
ASAP implementation?	TBC
Total costs	96,500
Available budget 2014/15	200,277

Key issues

- A draft Action Plan with resource considerations is required in order to prepare a robust budget.
The Secretariat will draft a proposed agreement (MOU) outlining (i) the proposed

commitments for members (nature and duration of commitment), (ii) a process for managing these funds ensuring good governance, and (ii) how the budget will be spent (an expenditure plan). This will provide a formal agreement for Implementation Committee members. It will provide a basis for the invoicing of members before the end of the financial year. The proposal will be circulated for endorsement by Implementation Committee members out of session (as soon as possible, to clarify commitments before the end of June 2015).

Required action

- Note the current budget and expenditure
- Note the indicative 2015/16 budget plan
- Secretariat to draft proposed financial agreement

Resource implications

- As shown above

Preparation and consultation

- Secretariat and members.

Attachments

- None

Soil RD&E Implementation Committee	Meeting Number: 2
	Location: Canberra
	Date: 28 th May 2015
AGENDA Paper	ITEM 2.9
Annual Forum	
<p>Background</p> <p>The Soil RD&E Strategy requires the Implementation Committee to organize an annual forum.</p>	
<p>Key issues</p> <p>The focus, location and scale of the 2015 Annual Forum has not been set.</p> <p>It is logical to set the 2015 Annual Forum within the context of the International Year of Soils and World Soils Day (December 5th). Given this context, the Forum could operate as an interactive networking event that seeks to link the various activities planned for December 5th by our partner agencies. The Forum itself could consist of a relatively small meeting of key leaders and stakeholders. Video links, a coordinated web-presence and linked communication activities would ensure that soil-related issues achieve the public prominence that they deserve.</p> <p>The Status of the World's Soil Resources Report will be released on December 5th and it includes a regional assessment for the Southwest Pacific with a significant focus on Australia. The launch of this publication (the first global assessment of soil resources) will be hosted by the Global Soil Partnership.</p>	
<p>Required action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members should review activities that could form part of the 'networked' Annual Forum. • Other options for the Annual Forum should be considered. • A decision on the focus, location and scale of the 2015 Annual Forum is required. 	
<p>Resource implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgetary support is required but it depends on the decision taken by the Implementation Committee. 	
<p>Preparation and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat. 	
<p>Attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attachments. 	