

Actions from GISERA Research Advisory Committee Meeting 9 August 2012

Key

Action Open
Action Due/overdue
Action complete/in train

	Item	Action	Owner	Due	Status
1.	09-08-12 Item 5	Action 1 : The GISERA Director will collate the RAC meeting minutes and will prepare a paper advising the Management Committee of the RAC's recommendations.	GISERA Director	10 August 2012	
2.	09-08-12 Item 5	Action 2 : These documents will be forwarded to the RAC, so that the RAC members can be mutually satisfied we have captured all views and that the instructions to research proponents are correct and clear.	Secretariat	10 August 2012	
3.	09-08-12 Item 5	Action 3 : The research proponents will revise the proposal based on advice from the RAC.	Research Proponent	20 August 2012	
4.	09-08-12 Item 5	Action 4 : The GISERA Director will forward the updated Portfolio Plan to the RAC members for noting.	GISERA Director	21 August 2012	

Minutes
GISERA Research Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3
Thursday, 9 August 2012
CSIRO Offices, Room GC547, 41 Boggo Road, Dutton Park

OPENING

The meeting of the GISERA Research Advisory Committee was called to order at 9.30 am on Thursday, 9 August 2012 in the CSIRO offices, Room GC547, 41 Boggo Road Dutton Park by the GISERA Director.

PARTICIPANTS

Peter Stone: GISERA Director (CSIRO)

Jo Flint: HSE Manager (*Australia Pacific LNG*)

Graeme Bartrim: Chief Environmental Scientist (Origin)

Dan Walker: Deputy Chief, Ecosystem Sciences (*CSIRO*)

Ian Prosser: Deputy Director - Water for a Healthy Country National Research Flagship (*CSIRO*)

Wayne Newton: Grains President (*AgForce*)

Steven Raine: Deputy Dean & Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Engineering and Surveying (*USQ*)

David Freudenberger: Chief Scientist (*Greening Australia*)

Apologies:

Jim Grayson: Chief Executive Officer (*Gladstone Area Water Board*)

Anne Bridle: Vice-Chair (*Basin Sustainability Alliance*)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1 Background

- The original Biodiversity Research Portfolio was endorsed by the GISERA Research Advisory Committee (RAC) in March 2012.
- There were however, significant concerns raised by a member of the RAC at that time.
- The GISERA Management Committee (MC) considered all the RAC's comments and decided that the Biodiversity Research Portfolio would be improved by restructuring.
- The MC wanted the research to develop and apply a more coherent approach to biodiversity risk assessment.

2 Research Proponent

- The GISERA Director introduced the Biodiversity Research Proponent to the RAC members.
- The Research Proponent was asked to attend the RAC meeting for 15 minutes to address any questions by the RAC.

3 Revised Projects for Biodiversity Research Portfolio

- Project 1: Priority threat identification, management and appraisal
- Project 2: Fire ecology of grassy woodlands
- Project 3: Threatened species ecology

4 Major changes to Biodiversity Research Portfolio

- Initially the Biodiversity Research Portfolio comprised 4 projects.
- Project 1 of the original Portfolio (A biodiversity knowledge hub for Queensland) has been deleted because of substantial overlap with outputs provided by the Atlas of Living Australia.
- Project 4 of the original Portfolio (Landscape planning for priority threat management) no longer exists and has been incorporated into Project 1 of the revised Portfolio, to improve the coherence of its risk assessment and management approach.

5 Comments raised by RAC members

Research Proponent

- The revised Portfolio focuses on identifying the risks, how threats can be managed and addressed and determining areas of uncertainty.
- The identification and prioritisation of biodiversity risks is now much more transparent.

Member 5

- All projects feed into the risk analysis, which is a significant improvement on the previous proposed research.
- The adoption of a cost-effectiveness approach to mitigation of risk is a significant addition to the Program that adds a lot of strength. It will enable the impact of the research to be maximised.

Member 8

- In Project 2, it was unclear what the 'natural' or historical fire regime was.

Research Proponent

- Will ensure historical and current fire regime is included.

Member 10

- The proposed Program does not distinguish threats arising from CSG development from other 'background' threatening processes.

Research Proponent

- Keen to take whole-of-landscape approach. It is difficult to ascribe threats to biodiversity to a single factor, such as gas development, given the high and varied level of background pressures. Nevertheless, the Program will seek to separate threatening processes where this is possible.

Member 5

- In Project 1, it is not clear that interactions between habitat area and habitat quality are being adequately addressed as part of the research approach. This may affect habitats and species differentially. How do you plan to address this?

Research Proponent

- There are several means by which we plan to do this. Looking at the impact of soil fertility on species relationships is an important one. Have non-random pattern of clearance. Will try to integrate the two points together.

Member 2

- Have been involved in the revision of Biodiversity Research Portfolio. Origin supports these projects and is keen to get started.

Member 5

- Project 1 is about quantifying risk, based on assessments occurring in project 1 and subsequent projects. It is important that Project 1 explicitly makes provision for iterative analysis based on improved information, to ensure that risk priorities and actions reflect updated understanding, from other GISERA projects and beyond.

Member 4

- Agree it would be positive that project 1 provides the framework for guiding research and management.
- OK for impact and mitigation measures to be changed as we go, as we learn more.

Member 1

- Pleased to see involvement of former DERM in project 2. Really positive.

Member 9

- In the original Portfolio linkages, there were statements about PhD students located at regional Universities; that doesn't seem to receive the same emphasis in the revised Portfolio.
- It is important that the regional University emphasis is maintained.
- It is positive message to industry that students are involved.

Member 1

- Will provide advice to proponents there is a strong preference for PhD students from regional Universities.

Member 5

- It should be noted although project 1 in original Portfolio is not proceeding, that these projects will contribute to the Atlas Living of Australia. This linkage should be made explicit.

- In project 3, students should look at spatial and temporal distribution of tree hollow for cockatoos, not just spatial.

Member 1

- There appears to be a high degree of comfort with proposed Portfolio.
- Asked if there were comments that the RAC would like to make for the advice of the research proponents?

Member 5

- Much more logical framework in the revised Portfolio.
- Project 1 is significantly better way to address the issues than previously. Good work.

Member 10

- Endorsed the Biodiversity Research Portfolio.

Member 4

- Endorsed the Biodiversity Research Portfolio.

Outcome: No particular research gaps were identified.

Outcome: It was recommended that all projects in the revised Biodiversity Research Portfolio proceed subject to consideration by the research proponent of the following items:

Project 1:

- Make explicit the intention to examine interactions between habitat area and habitat quality with respect to habitat risk and risk management.
- Make explicit the intention to iteratively revise risk priorities as understanding of risks and risk measures improves, both through the GISERA Program and through other work.

Project 2:

- Make explicit the fact that the Project will identify the historical and current fire regime, to provide context for investigation of potential future fire regimes.

Project 3:

- Direct research to examine both the spatial and temporal distribution of tree hollows for cockatoos.

General:

- Make explicit the contribution of the program to the Atlas of Living Australia.
- Clarify the preferred location of PhD studentships, recognising the desirability of high quality students located in regional Universities

Following the above discussion, it was resolved that:

Action 1: The GISERA Director will collate the RAC meeting minutes and will prepare a paper advising the MC of the RAC's recommendations.

Action 2: These documents will be forwarded to the RAC, so that the RAC members can be mutually satisfied we have captured all views and that the instructions to research proponents are correct and clear.

Action 3: The research proponents will revise the proposal based on advice from the RAC.

Action 4: The GISERA Director will forward the updated Portfolio Plan to the RAC members for noting.

5 Other Business

5.1 Future role of the RAC

- Member 2 asked what role the RAC play once biodiversity projects are underway.
- The GISERA Director advised that:
 - Project milestones to be forwarded to the RAC for consideration.
 - The RAC will review progress and the shape of the Portfolio annually.
 - Changes of priority need to be determined by the RAC. They cannot be determined by the MC. That is one of the features of GISERA; only the RAC can change the shape of the research portfolio.
 - It is likely that GISERA will grow, which will require ongoing input from RAC.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Research Advisory Committee is yet to be scheduled. It is anticipated that a meeting will occur to review progress as required.

ADJOURNMENT

The GISERA Director adjourned the meeting at 10.05 am.

Minutes submitted by: **Secretariat**

Minutes approved by: **GISERA Director**