



Regional Councils  
*“Integrated science for the future”*  
Special Interest Group Research Strategy Workshop  
20-21 July 2017  
Royal Society NZ, Wellington  
1000 first day – with dinner at 7pm  
8.30 to 3 pm 2<sup>nd</sup> day

**Introduction:**

**Workshop Purpose:** A fresh chance to prepare for the future together by bringing together the various SIG research strategies and re-examining them collectively, in the presence of the movers and shakers who are already waiting for you to make the first move! We seek to identify and take up opportunities for actions in the research space that will provide the greatest mutual benefit and a basis for engagement with the wider research sector.

**Background:** Most SIGS have a Research Strategy and a list of research priorities. These were used to develop the most recent version of the Regional Councils’ Research, Science & Technology Strategy (June 2016). The Strategy in turn has been used to successfully influence Government science strategies, the direction of several National Science Challenges, and MBIE contestable bidding. It is timely to update and communicate the various SIG strategies and to determine research gaps and to also identify opportunities for greater collaboration and influencing.

**Programme:** The workshop provides an opportunity for SIGs to share their current thinking on key strategic issues and research needs, but also to workshop issues that have been identified as important to SIGs and councils. In particular, the workshop will explore the integration of Mātauranga Maori into council science; ideas for improved science communication to stakeholders; and, the opportunity to identify knowledge gaps and areas where SIGs should be working more closely together.

**Presentations available on the EnviroLink website:**

<http://envirolink.govt.nz/research-strategy/july-2017/>

**Key action identified from workshop:**

The issues and identified action below is open for comment from workshop attendees and will be finalised soon:

## Key Actions from the Workshop – prioritised for comment:

1. Take advantage of the opportunity to influence NSC's as they head into tranche 2 of project funding. This needs a plan/person for each NSC. (Action – SAG to coordinate.)
2. There is a need to make better use of the science power of Regional Councils. Plan another workshop for next year; suggestion to include science managers and SIG convenors. Focus on addressing complex problems. Topic suggestions include: Mātauranga Māori, ecosystem services, communications, big data, problem solving. If “ecosystem services” then perhaps include DOC. (Action – SAG to plan).
3. There is an issue effectively communicating how Mātauranga Māori sits alongside western science. One action is to distribute Landcare Research reports that can be used for guidance (Action – Christine Harper, LCR). Consider application of Envirolink funding to investigate the broader application of Mauri compass (Action – Murry Cave).
4. Ecotoxicology and emerging contaminants is an area that needs greater attention from Regional Councils; both for understanding the issues but also to determine capability needs as well. GSJ informed us that there is a working group on EC's – national (EPA?) involving six councils with international linkages. The suggested action is that we (Regional Councils) need a report as to what is happening; there probably needs to be a strategy developed for New Zealand, sponsored by a ministry. (Action – GSJ to advise the current situation with the national group and the opportunity to receive a report).
5. The lack of knowledge transfer from natural hazards research was once again identified as an issue. The Science Advisory Group has a mandate from this workshop to again raise the issue with MBIE, and perhaps with the Minister, to see if HazardLink can be created. (Action – GB)
6. An issue was raised that there is not enough research prioritisation based on risk, i.e., so issues of greatest risk get rated higher (realising that in some cases research on such issues will be extremely difficult and/or expensive if not impossible to conduct). SAG and others should consider this issue when commenting on MBIE's Impact of Science Document, and also when working with research providers to identify priority research needs. (Action – SAG and others)
7. There is a perpetual issue that knowledge (or at least information) is created but not used, and possibly lost. How do we create a library of knowledge? A big issue is that research reports don't necessarily represent “knowledge” in themselves, but have to be read along with many other reports to build up a knowledge base. Envirolink provides funding and a search tool to tap into a large information/knowledge base but NZ needs much greater effort to capture and make better use of all the information that is created each year. SIGS struggle with their own knowledge base but it was suggested that SIGS could make much better use of the portal to store information and knowledge. (Action – each SIG to consider making better use of the portal as a knowledge library). Should CEO's take the lead and resource SIGS to take action? (Action – GB to consider a message to CEOs?)
8. There is a need for cross-SIG teams on some projects; additionally there are opportunities for NSC projects that could involve several SIGS. How can we achieve a

cross-sig approach? (Action - SIG convenors, and NSC reps (tbd) to identify opportunities and communicate with other SIGS. Megan O – to identify opportunities for C-SIG and for Sustainable Seas NSC.)

9. There is a need to review all the roadmaps and SIG strategies, as was done when the latest RC RS&T Strategy was developed. There have been new developments and opportunities for RC influence need to be identified. (Action – SAG).
10. Need for a RC Chief Scientist(s) to connect to Sir Peter (as per SAG submission to SIG Review); Iain M – this is a live conversation with the Sector’s Virtual Team – about a better organised central body of support; e.g., not enough capacity with Liz Lambert in the Executive Support role on her own; LAWA becoming very big etc. etc. – and to reread subs on SIG review. SIGS need resource to go with this. (Action – SAG to consider; IM to table at next meeting)

### **Actions that didn’t make the top 10:**

11. There is both an opportunity and an issue with applying environmental DNA (eDNA) technology across domains. There is a BioHeritage NSC project looking into the use of eDNA. (Action – BD to report back on the current status with the BioHer project and if it is likely to cover the key issues for councils.)
12. Some workshop attendees were unaware that the Envirolink website contains a Google search engine that limits searches across all Regional Council, Govt Dept, CRI, and University websites. (Action – BD to publicise)
13. With regard to science impact work, Kelvin Berryman informed the workshop that there is non-financial impact work going on. (Action – BD to follow up with Kelvin B).
14. How do we facilitate social and economic science? There is a policy sig connection (Action – Policy SIG to consider)
15. Ecosystem services as a cross – sig need – cross-sig working group? EL tool? RB. Need tools to value natural capital – AMS (no action identified)
16. With regard to knowledge management, Envirolink funding could be used to compile case studies that could be shared with all councils (Action – all SIGS to consider). Note – this is done for the Envirolink tools and case studies are available on the Envirolink Tool website under “DSS”. Also a need to integrate global knowledge into council knowledge base (no action identified).
17. Try to get MBIE to expand EL to cover research as well as knowledge transfer; consider rebranding “for management”. – This won’t happen as it goes against Ministerial Gazette notice that established Envirolink. (no action planned)
18. Suggestion that we need more clearly defined roles of SIG members for delivering on science strategies. However, each SIG has a Terms of Reference and most include developing science strategies. Delivering on these is more of a challenge but action above should go a long way towards that. i.e., influencing Tranche 2 funding for the NSCs.
19. It was considered useful to develop compendia of RC capability in science – by SIG/council. (Action – SIGS to consider taking on this task; or ask science managers in each council.
20. Better coordination of internal and external scientists in response to CEDM-type emergencies – e.g., hazards, disasters (MS idea); set up a model/plan. Need to

deliver to regional level rather than just national level. How to better integrate non-CRI / university experts into the system? MC (Action – Hazard SIG to consider how to make this happen).

21. How do we resource knowledge brokers to assist councils and SIGS to stay abreast of research? Too much on staff plate; (This was suggested during the SIG review but nothing happened).