

Regional Councils
“Getting more out of science”
Current science issues and opportunities for greater involvement
Science Managers/Special Interest Group Science Strategy Workshop
16-17 October 2018

Invitation to: Convenors of regional council special interest groups (SIGs), Science Managers, the Resource Managers Group (RMG), CEO’s and invited guests

Workshop Purpose: The New Zealand science landscape continues to evolve. National Science Challenges are about to enter a second phase of funding, responding to strategic needs to meet their various missions; MBIE Science has launched a new policy for their Endeavour Fund; and there is a sense that NZ science is not delivering to councils as much as it could. This workshop will address these challenges and identify opportunities with the objective to produce a roadmap on how we can get more from science.

Approach: At last year’s science strategy workshop Special Interest Groups identified their top science priorities, and these, along with SIG strategies, have been used to guide NSC strategy development and also to influence MBIE contestable bidding. This year, SIGS and others are being asked to present what they see as their top opportunities to benefit from science and the challenges that need to be addressed.

Simon Upton, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, will provide an opening presentation and set the scene for the workshop. Several Directors from National Science Challenges will present their latest strategic thinking and intentions for Tranche 2 projects. Professor Juliet Gerrard, the new Chief Science Advisor to the Prime Minister will attend the workshop and will present her views on science as the Guest Dinner Speaker on Day 1.

Programme: The workshop will provide an opportunity for SIG convenors and Regional Council science managers to share their current thinking on key science issues and opportunities that could provide collective benefit. Workshop sessions will explore how to respond to the opportunities identified and get the most out of science in the next 12 months and beyond.

Presentations available on the EnviroLink website:

<https://envirolink.govt.nz/research-strategy/oct-2018/>

Key action identified from workshop:

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

Key Actions from the Workshop – not yet prioritised – comments welcome:

1. Collate “SIG science opportunities and challenges” into a document and use to update Regional Council RS&T Strategy.
2. Identify opportunities and mechanisms for better linkages with and involvement in key National Science Challenges. This will require buy in from CE level to free up resources. The CEOs (three) that sit on NSC governance boards are key to this initiative.
3. Pursue opportunities for more joined-up science across SIGS, councils, government departments, and perhaps industry (e.g., biosecurity). Eg secondments, joint SIG meetings and joint SIG projects, CRI and govt ministry guest participation in SIG meetings,
4. Push CEs for greater cross-council science resource such as a Chief Scientist position. Ideally provide paid resource to assist SIGS as well.
5. Collaborate and cooperate with DOC on key issues such as staffing in freshwater and marine, shared monitoring and databases, and also the developing of biodiversity monitoring indicators (Tier 1 Monitoring).
6. Develop a more formal mechanism for Regional Councils to interact with MBIE to ensure better consultation on important science funding and prioritisation issues. Consider a delegation to Local Govt and also Science Minister.
7. Develop a case, or resurrect the old MBIE case, to develop IwiLink, HazardLink, and invest greater funding into Envirolink. Consider other mechanisms to provide science funding to benefit Regional Councils.
8. Follow up on potential collaborative and joined-up science opportunities using Health Research Council funding. The first step is to ensure council priorities are known to HRC.
9. Tell our story to the public better. Don't shy away from science complexity but use this as a way to draw people in.
10. Enhance website portals to improve science communication across SIGS and across councils.
11. Provide more information in portals as to where existing collaboration occurs, e.g., with NSCs, and the research being conducted that is most relevant to councils.
12. Catalogue where science expertise is across councils and quantify science funding effort across councils by category – e.g., applied science, monitoring, etc.
13. Update SIG science strategies together with associated implementation action plans that are more than three years old. Update RC RS&T Strategy, which is now just over two years old.
14. Develop a SIG convenors manual.
15. Push big data warehousing and management as an initiative for councils and probably central government to tackle.
16. Develop a strategy to evaluate and report on new technologies collaboratively.
17. Engage with the SiFTI NSC to identify collaborative opportunities with engineers. Initial target being biosecurity network sensors as per SiFTI priorities for 2018/19.