

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Forest and Wood Products RD&E Forum

VISION:

A research, development and extension (RD&E) system that supports, and is supported by, an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable forest and wood products industry.

MISSION:

To foster increased collaboration between research providers, governments and industry to ensure that RD&E in the sector is undertaken in a strategic and coordinated manner, and is scientifically rigorous, cost effective and focussed on delivering the desired outcomes.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Enhanced competitiveness of forest products compared to other materials based on performance and environmental footprint.
- Sustainability measures that are scientifically robust, operationally feasible, easily understood and relevant to the community and broader user groups.
- Capacity and capability for resource expansion and the utilisation of new wood resources.
- Development and adoption of improved forest management practices through a culture of continuous improvement.
- A biosecure forest industry.
- Increased accessibility of information through a variety of mechanisms.

PROPOSED FORUM ACTIONS

1. Develop a portal for the Australian forest and wood products research community that assists in national and international collaboration.
Completion date: 30th June 2012 Budget: \$15K
2. Establish an agreed set of national RD&E priorities (see attachment 1) for adoption by government, research providers and industry.
Completion date: 30th June 2012 Budget: nil
3. Undertake a comprehensive analysis of RD&E in the sector by organisation and/or individual capacity and plans for the next 5-years.
Completion date: 30th Sept 2012 Budget: \$25K
4. Undertake a gap analysis of the national RD&E priorities versus research provider and funders' investment plans.
Completion date: 31st March 2013 Budget: \$15K
5. For identified gaps in the delivery of national RD&E priorities, develop a business case for the funding and delivery of these priorities.
Completion date: 30th Sept 2013 Budget: \$25K

6. Consolidate and review material available across agencies (including but not restricted to cost–benefit analyses) that can demonstrate the triple bottom line benefits from investment in RD&E in the sector.
Completion date: 31st Dec 2013 Budget: \$30K
7. Identify RD&E capability gaps and a business case to help address these gaps over the 10-20 year time horizon.
Completion date: 30th June 2014 Budget: \$30K
8. Develop more strategic approaches to international science collaboration and the rapid introduction of new technology that can assist the competitiveness of the sector by focusing on key areas of sector interest through cooperation between providers and funders.
Completion date: 30th June 2014 Budget: \$25K
9. Assess options for, and the feasibility of, improving the storage, analysis and sharing of nationally relevant R&D data.
Completion date: 30th Sept 2014 Budget: \$25K
10. Review the availability of and access to research infrastructure to support the agreed RD&E priorities and consider initiatives to focus investment in key nodes.
Completion date: 30th Sept 2014 Budget: \$30K
11. Encourage any organisations to minimise changes that are likely to significantly impact national capability and capacity in forest and wood products RD&E.
Completion date: ongoing Budget: nil
12. Provide in-principle support for the continuity of existing collaborative research bodies and the development of potential new collaborative opportunities through state or federal government funding, such as Australian Research Council centres of excellence.
Completion date: ongoing Budget: nil
13. Encourage research providers and industry to regularly assess opportunities/broker coordinated participation in broader research funding initiatives that, while not necessarily sector-specific, can deliver benefits to the sector in terms of the agreed RD&E priorities.
Completion date: ongoing Budget: nil
14. Explore options for voluntary contributions to FWPA for special programs to receive matching funding from the federal government.
Completion date: ongoing Budget: Nil

ATTACHMENT 1 - NATIONAL RD&E PRIORITIES:

(As identified within the RD&E strategy – page 35-36)

Forest and landscape management

- Improve plantation and native forest productivity and product quality.
- Improve technology adoption and efficiency in harvesting and transport.
- Improve the protection of forest assets from fire.
- Improve the biosecurity of forest assets.
- Expand the ability to predict and manage forest water use and carbon stocks and dynamics.
- Assist the design of robust and resilient mixed-use landscapes, from socioeconomic and conservation perspectives.
- Improve the capacity to respond to climate change, for both mitigation and adaptation.

Product development and use

- Increase the value recovered from available forest resources.
- Adopt/adapt best-available technology to optimise production and profitability.
- Improve recovery rates and wood use from the by-product and secondary product streams and the post-consumer and urban green waste streams, including as biofuel.
- Identify new and emerging market opportunities.
- Understand the life-cycle impacts of wood use and opportunities for improvement in sustainable construction.
- Demonstrate the capability of wood products to meet the performance requirements of building construction.

Industry adaptation and responsibility

- Improve investment models for industry development, resource security and sustainability
- Enhance sustainability accountability and freedom to operate
- Sustain current and future employment opportunities
- Enhance foresight on and adaptation to emerging issues and market opportunities, including the response to climate uncertainty and changes in construction demand
- Assist the development of robust and sustainable built environments
- Improve the role of forest management and forest products in mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Demonstrate the competitive environmental advantages of using forests and wood products