# agInnovation Fall Business Meeting

Wednesday, September 25, 2024
9:30 am to 12 noon (Note: All times listed are ET)
Oak Forest Ballroom, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, Raleigh, NC
For Zoom, contact chamilton@wisc.edu

**AGENDA**

| Time | Item # | Topic | Presenter | Action Requested |
|------|--------|-------|-----------|------------------|
| 9:30 am | 1.0 | Chair's Welcome | George Smith, FFY24 agInnovation Chair | None |
| 9:35 am | 2.0 | Approval of agInnovation Summer Leadership Meeting Notes | George Smith | Approval by Acclamation |
| 9:40 am | 3.0 | Lewis-Burke and Associates (LBA) Hill Update | Elizabeth Stulberg, LBA | For information |
| 9:50 am | 4.0 | FANR Update, including Capacity Campaign and Decadal Vision Overview | Doug Steele, APLU | For information |
| 10:00 am | 5.0 | agInnovation Research Roadmap Update | George Smith | For information |
| 10:15 am | 6.0 | agInnovation Standing Committee and agInnovation 501(c)(3) Updates<br>• Finance Committee<br>  o Investment account: Matt Wilson, 5 min<br>• BLC: Anton Bekkerman, 5 min<br>• DCC: Brian Raison, 5 min<br>• NRSP-RC: Steve Lommel, 10 min<br>• STC: Nathan Slaton, 5 min<br>• agInnovation 501(c)(3): Bret Hess, 5 min | Committee Chairs or as listed | For information and NRSP-RC vote needed |
| 10:50 am | *Break - 15 min* | | | |
| 11:05 am | 7.0 | agEngine Update | Elaine Turner, UF/IFAS Dean | For information |
| 11:15 am | 8.0 | CY2025 Budget Recommendations | Matt Wilson | For information |
| 11:25 am | 9.0 | Chair Reflections | George Smith | For information |
| 11:35 am | 10.0 | Honoring agInnovation Colleagues - Retirements and New Positions | George Smith | For recognition, celebration |

| 11:40 am | 11.0 | Welcoming New agInnovation Leadership: Steve Lommel, FFY25 agInnovation Chair | George Smith | For information |
|----------|------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 11:45 am | 12.0 | Incoming Chair's Initiatives | Steve Lommel | For information |
| 11:55 am | 13.0 | Other Business, as needed | TBD | TBD |
| *12 noon - Adjourn for Lunch* | | | | |

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- APLU Annual Meeting, November 10-12, 2024, Orlando, FL.
- 2025 CARET/BAA Washington Conference, February 23-26, 2025, Washington, DC. More details to come.

**Consent Briefs:**

- ACE Workshops
- Policy Board of Directors (PBD)
- NRSP1 Management Committee

**Agenda Brief: ACE Workshops**
**September 25, 2024**
**Presenters: Jeanette Thurston and Gary Thompson**
**Action: For Information**

On Monday, June 24, at the 2024 Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) annual meeting in Salt Lake City, UT, agInnovation sponsored two consecutive workshops titled "Creating a National Voice from Many Voices." The primary objective of these workshops was to generate ideas and gather input for developing a unified national voice for agricultural research within the framework of the agInnovation Research Roadmap. Building on the 2023 ACE regional workshops, this session engaged regional communicators who shared insights on how regional voices have evolved over the past year. Facilitated discussion groups, composed of professional communicators at the meeting, then provided input on two key questions: (1) What action steps are needed to create a national research message? (2) What resources or structures are required to establish a national voice for research? The individual and group responses are summarized below.

## What action steps are needed to create a national message?

**Key Themes:**

1. **Strategy and Planning:**
   - Conducting strategy workshops and creating a clear roadmap.
   - Determining the best spokespeople per institution and region.
   - Ensuring administrative buy-in and securing necessary resources.

2. **Communication and Messaging:**
   - Developing clear, unified messages that resonate at both state and national levels.
   - Creating templates and guidelines for consistent communication.
   - Training and media preparation for spokespeople.

3. **Collaboration and Coordination:**
   - Facilitating regional and national conversations.
   - Ensuring coordination between land-grant institutions and other stakeholders.
   - Building structured opportunities for communicators to connect and collaborate.

4. **Audience Engagement:**
   - Clearly defining and understanding the target audiences.
   - Analyzing audience beliefs, perceptions, and needs.
   - Using feedback from field practitioners to shape the messaging strategy.

5. **Measurement and Accountability:**
   - Establishing clear goals, priorities, and deadlines.
   - Conducting audits of current messages and outcomes.
   - Ensuring accountability and transparency in the communication process.

**Recommendations:**

1. **Develop a National Messaging Strategy:**
   - Organize strategy workshops to create a comprehensive communication plan.
   - Identify key spokespeople at both institutional and regional levels.

      o  Secure buy-in from deans, directors, and other stakeholders.

2. **Create Consistent and Clear Messages:**
   - Develop shared talking points and specifics for each institution.
   - Use templates to ensure uniformity in message submission and dissemination.
   - Train spokespeople to deliver these messages effectively.

3. **Enhance Collaboration and Coordination:**
   - Facilitate regular regional and national conversations to align efforts.
   - Build structured opportunities for communicators to share resources and strategies.
   - Ensure clear roles and responsibilities for all involved parties.

4. **Engage and Understand the Audience:**
   - Conduct audience research to understand beliefs, perceptions, and needs.
   - Use feedback from field practitioners to inform the messaging strategy.
   - Clearly define and segment the target audiences.

5. **Measure and Report Outcomes:**
   - Set clear goals, priorities, and deadlines for communication efforts.
   - Conduct regular audits to assess the effectiveness of messages.
   - Ensure transparency and accountability in reporting outcomes.

## What Resources Needed to Implement the Action Steps?

**1. Financial and Staff Resources:**

- **Funding**:
  - Support for strategic message distribution, travel, benchmarking research, staff expansion, communication initiatives, and media/science communication.
- **Additional Staff**:
  - Hiring more staff at regional and national levels, including dedicated roles in the APLU office.
- **Institutional Commitment**:
  - Securing buy-in and alignment from deans, directors, and other key stakeholders.

**2. Training and Professional Development:**

- **Training Programs**:
  - Regular professional development tied to messaging pillars, focused training for communication professionals, including train-the-trainer programs.
- **Cultural Competency**:
  - Resources to tailor messaging for different states and communities.

**3. Technology and Tools:**

- **Virtual Workspaces**:
  - Platforms for material collection, editing, and sharing.
- **Communication Templates**:
  - Standardized templates for uniform messaging.

**4. Audience Engagement and Inclusion:**

- **Local Voices and Audience Research**:
  - Mechanisms to gather input from local voices, analyzing audience beliefs and needs to tailor messaging.

## 5. Coordination and Collaboration:

- **Structured Opportunities**:
  - Facilitating discussions and collaboration among communicators to build efficiencies.
- **Clear Goals and Communication**:
  - Clarity on end goals, priorities, and required contributions.

## 6. Measurement and Accountability:

- **Audits and Reporting**:
  - Conducting message audits, establishing clear goals and deadlines, and reporting progress.

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**Agenda Brief: Policy Board of Directors**
**September 25, 2024**
**PBD Representatives: Mark McGuire and Shibu Jose (alternate)**

The BAA Policy Board of Directors (PBD) convened two meetings held on November 14, 2023, and July 17, 2024. The following are highlights of the discussions and decisions of the PBD at those meetings.

<u>**November 14, 2023 – Seattle, WA**</u>
**Section updates:** specifics are included in the minutes are available upon request
**Policy Board Update Items**
*Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC): FY24 Appropriations Recommendations*
- Review of BAA planning worksheet budget: Advocating for 15 accounts
- No longer "needs-based" approach to request; need funding justifications
- Outside of Evans-Allen and 1890 Extension every other line same for FY25 as for FY24
- Question (agInnovation): Why does AFRI funding count against research?
    - Leadership did not feel lines individual lines were summed within research, extension, etc. and that each line was viewed separately

*Communications and Marketing Committee*
- April 2022 CMC is a standing committee: incoming chair is Shelley Nichols Richardson
- National Impact Database under CMC supported by Extension Foundation

*Committee on Legislation and Policy Farm Bill Recommendations*
- Handout as was used by CARET in March discussed sections of Farm Bill
- Fewer items allow focus and greater chance of support
- In the future, the focus on developing capacity messaging is critical

**Contract and Program Updates**
*Lewis Burke Associates contract*
- Conferences: request travel funds and complimentary registrations
- No increase this year except add travel/registrations; 3% next year
- Half advocacy, half consultant/marketing

*BAA Assessment Recommendations*
- Goal: fair, transparent, consistent, easy to implement, easy data collection
- Useable program lines
    - Capacity (60%) – from RFAs
    - Competitive (40%) - from NIFA Data Gateway
- 2-4 years prior to calendar year of billing (3 years)
- Cap: no institution pays more than 4% of total BAA budget
    - No increase more than 15% year over year
- If implemented: increase of 15% is max for 23 schools - biggest decrease is 48%

*BAA budget*
- 3% increase in salaries (capped by APLU) - little change elsewhere

*CARET budget*
- From AHS, needs PBD approval - reduced $50,000
- Travel of executive committee added to CARET budget not BAA budget

**Contract and Program Updates**

- LEAD21 and FSLI no fiduciary responsibility just extending contracts

**Vote of consensus on budget suggestions – approved without any discussion**

**July 17, 2024 – Providence, RI**

**Section updates:** specifics are included in the minutes are available upon request

**Advocacy Updates: Lewis Burke Associates**
- Research Facilities Act Staff on the Hill compelling and supportive and Farm Bill is encouraging
- Putting together one-pager about small lines even though some programs were cut
- With transition a good time to reintroduce and present with more interactive approaches
- How to personalize for your delegation
- Wide range of House & Senate on RFA (competing priorities Title I & IV, SNAP, conservation, crop insurance)
- House $3.7B mandatory funding to build up Title VII (RFA big ticket item) - $10B with SNAP

**Overview of Contracts Management**
- Lewis-Burke - breakdown of advocacy and consulting contracts and increases up to 3 years and used savings to support CMC (greatest investments without increasing assessments)

**Review BAA Leadership Recommendations from AHS**
- 2025 Policy Board of Directors (PBD) Chair-Elect: Indrajeet Chaubey, College of Health & Human Resources, University of Connecticut
- 2025 Administrative Heads Section (AHS) Chair-Elect: Christopher R. Daubert, University of Missouri-Columbia
- 2025 BAA Budget & Advocacy (BAC) Chair-Elect: Keith Coble, Mississippi State University
- 2025 BAA Committee on Legislation & Policy Chair-Elect (CLP): Stacie Lynn Simonich, Oregon State University

**BAA Assessments Update**

[Policy Board of Directors Presentation.pdf](#)
- Go back 2 years for reliable NIFA numbers
- No increase in assessments
- 60% capacity & 40% competitive Funding
- Implementing new model moving forward

**BAA "Rules of Operation" Proposed Changes**
- lack of clarity 2/3 majority of the voting (eligible) representatives (high threshold)
- Discussion on interpretation of 2/3 majority of people who vote not 2/3 majority eligible
- Need total rewrite doesn't reflect what we do (rules written in 1992)
- If you don't vote means "yes" vote
- Consensus is quorum of voting eligible 51% and 2/3 voters

**Status of BAA Initiatives: Decadal Visioning**
- Overview of the decadal vision and capacity building initiative were presented
- Decadal Vision is still in draft form
- Rural to urban (urban may not be as compelling
- Workforce development for a safe food system
- Vision approach is a means to an end

**Next meeting will take place at APLU Annual Meeting (date and time will be announced)**

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**Written Brief: NRSP1 Management Committee Update for Fall 2024 agInnovation Business Meeting**
**September 25, 2024**
**Prepared by: Chris Hamilton, NRSP1 Chair, effective 8/21/2024**

| NRSP1 Management Committee Members – New, as of 8/21/2024 |
|---|
| Chris Hamilton (Chair, NIMSS lead), NCRA |
| Jeanette Thurston (lead AA), NCRA |
| Cindy Morley (AA), SAAESD |
| Bret Hess (AA), WAAESD |
| David Leibovitz (AA), NERA |
| |
| Rick Rhodes, NERA |
| Gary Thompson, SAAESD |
| Jennifer Tippetts, WAAESD |
| Alton Thompson, ARD |
| Julie Estrada (NIMSS User), Purdue University |
| Robin Williams (NIMSS User), Clemson University |
| Sara Delheimer (ESS Program Coordinator), Ex-officio |
| Faith Peppers (NIFA Director of Communications), NIFA Liaison |
| Alexis Nazario-Negron (NIFA PARS Director), NIFA Liaison |
| |
| Email list: nrsp1@escop.info |
| Committee Page: http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/ |

The NRSP-1 management committee oversees the activities of the NRSP1 project, which includes NIMSS, led by Chris Hamilton and the Clemson Youth Learning Institute (YLI) NIMSS development team, and the Impact Writing program (https://www.mrfimpacts.org/), led by Sara Delheimer. The current incarnation of NRSP1 was approved for renewal at the Fall ESS meeting in September 2022 and officially started on 10/1/2022 and will expire on 9/30/2027. The current NRSP1 proposal and budget can be found at https://www.nimss.org/projects/18866.

The Committee meets quarterly to discuss any updates or issues with NIMSS, presented by NIMSS lead and new chair Chris Hamilton, as provided by the Clemson University development team. Occasionally, the Clemson YLI developers join the calls, as well. Sara Delheimer presents the quarterly Impact Writing Program update and Alexis Nazario-Negron and Faith Peppers provide NIFA reporting and communications updates.

Most recently, the NRSP1 Management Team worked together to draft and approve (on 8/21/2024) formal Rules of Operation. These are included below and have been uploaded to the NRSP1 page on the ESCOP.info site. 11 of the 12 voting members participated and all provided votes were to approve the Rules as presented.

Call notes, quarterly reports, and all other materials are posted in NIMSS and at http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-1-management-committee/. Meetings are well-attended by committee membership. Our next call is scheduled for October 17, 2024, at 10 am CT.

# agInnovation NRSP1 Management Committee

## Rules of Operation

### Last update: 8/7/2024

**Purpose**

The agInnovation NRSP1 Management Committee (henceforth referred to in this document as NRSP1 for simplicity) serves two critical functions for the State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES) System. First, it supports the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS). NIMSS was designed to facilitate the management of multistate research and Extension activities supported by the Hatch Multistate Research Fund (MRF), from conception of the proposal to project termination. NIMSS is a web-based application allowing: (1) online submission of proposals, peer reviews and progress reports, and (2) ready access to this information. The second important function that NRSP1 serves is oversight of the communication of impacts from multistate research and Extension activities to decision-makers and stakeholders. The communications component of NRSP1 enhances the visibility of Land-grant institutions and the success of multistate research projects. Impact statements are prepared by a communications specialist. NRSP1 efforts are funded based on an off-the-top mechanism tied to the latest five-year project.

A NRSP1 Management Committee with representation from each regional association, SAES director's office staff from across regions, NIFA and four Administrative Advisors (regional representation) serve as stakeholder representatives from agInnovation charged to continuously provide oversight to and evaluate the effectiveness of NIMSS and multistate research and Extension impacts communication efforts. The representatives are responsible for collecting information from the institutions in their respective regions to provide recommendations to improve NIMSS (function and content) and information on the multistate research and Extension impact communications efforts and programs in meeting their needs and objectives.

The NRSP1 Management Committee is also responsible for conducting the annual performance review of the agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator and providing it to the Coordinator's host institution in the required manner.

The latest version of the NRSP1 proposal and all meeting notes/reports can be found here: https://www.nimss.org/projects/18866. Current NRSP1 Management membership is here: https://escop.info/committee/NRSP1-management-committee/. NRSP1 Management Committee member email list is nrsp1@escop.info.

**Membership**

- NRSP1 Chair: The NIMSS lead RSA (regional system administrator) serves as NRSP1 chair. Term is indefinite, provided the lead RSA wishes to continue in the role and is approved by the NRSP1 membership.
- Administrative Advisors (AAs): One from each of the 1862 regions (NC, NE, S, and W,) and the 1890s. The position of lead AA will be revisited with each 5-year cycle and rotate as needed.
  - One of the AAs must be the director at the host institution of the agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator or an individual appointed by said director.

- One of the AAs must be the director from the institution hosting the NIMSS development team, if NIMSS remains with a Land-grant University, or an individual appointed by said director.
- Executive Directors (EDs) may serve as AAs, if appointed by their regional directors.
- Executive Directors from ARD, NC, NE, S, and W
- Assistant Directors/Coordinators from NC, NE, S, and W (one of which serves as NIMSS lead and NRSP1 chair).
- NIMSS User Representatives:
  - At least two NIMSS users with Station Director responsibilities from two separate 1862 regions and represent the interests of NIMSS users.
  - User representatives serve no terms and may be reappointed indefinitely by their regional associations for as long as they wish to serve.
- Non-voting representatives from the following organizations:
  - NIFA PARS Director
  - NIFA Communications Director
  - agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator
  - Director or appointee of the director at the host institution of the Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator

**Roles and Responsibilities of NRSP1 Members**

- NRSP1 Chair: Sets meetings and agendas, leads meeting discussion, serves as the technical lead for the preparation of the NRSP1 renewal proposal, and other activities that emerge and the committee feels appropriate for the chair role.
- Administrative Advisors (AAs): Facilitate NRSP1 proposal renewal and midterm review processes, identify peer reviewers, and conduct the annual performance review of the agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator with input from the other NRSP1 members. The AA housed within the impact writer's host region is responsible for submitting the impact writer's performance reviews as dictated by the policies of that institution.
- Executive Directors from ARD, NC, NE, S, and W: Provide general high-level leadership and oversight to NRSP1, identify regional directors to serve as NRSP1 AAs or serve as regional AAs themselves if their regional associations approve, assist the NRSP1 management committee with NRSP1 reviews and other activities, as needed.
- Assistant Directors/Coordinators from NC, NE, S, and W: Serve as regional NIMSS RSAs to provide regional administration of NIMSS, regular interfacing with the NIMSS technical team, NIMSS testing as needed, and all other aspects of support to NIMSS and NIMSS users.
- NIMSS User Representatives: Provide NIMSS user-level feedback to NRSP1, participate in NIMSS testing and NRSP1 reviews, share updates from NRSP1 to their regional associations, administrative officers, and other regional NIMSS users with help from the regional Assistant Directors/Coordinators and EDs.
- Non-voting representatives from the following organizations: Provide regular programmatic updates and recommendations to NRSP1 membership. The agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts Program Coordinator is expected to provide quarterly updates to NRSP1.

**Organization and Function**

The NRSP1 Management committee meets virtually four times a year, during which reports on quarterly NIMSS updates and issues are presented, along with an agInnovation Multistate Research Impacts quarterly report. The NIFA PARS and Communications Directors also provide updates, as needed.

It is expected that programmatic and policy decisions are to be made by consensus. If necessary, formal decisions are to be determined by a simple majority of a quorum of NRSP1 members. The NRSP1 Committee may create ad hoc work groups to assist with special tasks or problem solving, as needs are addressed by agInnovation members. The work groups will be responsible to the NRSP1 Management Committee.

**Quorum**

For purposes of doing business, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the duly constituted voting members at any officially called meeting for which written notice is sent in advance of the meeting. A simple majority of the quorum resolves all issues.

**Parliamentary Authority**

The emphasis in all NRSP1 Management Committee meetings shall be on orderly process to achieve an objective decision by those present and voting, if necessary. Should there be a parliamentary challenge, it shall be answered by referring to the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

**Amendments**

These operating guidelines may be amended at any business meeting of the NRSP1 Management Committee provided the proposed amendment has been sent to all members 1 week in advance of the meeting, and the question is passed by a simple majority of a quorum of the voting members present at that meeting.

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**Agenda Brief:** agInnovation Finance Committee
**Date:** September 25, 2024
**Chair:** Matt Wilson (West Virginia University)

1.) Committee Membership (September 25, 2024): see ESCOP Finance Committee webpage – https://escop.info/committee/finance-committee/

2.) Meetings (since July 16): The Finance Committee has not met since the agInnovation meeting of July 16.

3.) Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:
- Upon the approval of a Budget and Investment strategy by agInnovation directors, the Finance Committee instructed TD Wealth to prepare a Statement of Investment Selection (SIS). The SIS is a document that establishes the risk objective / investment strategy for an account. agInnovation approved moving from a moderately conservative risk objective (35% stocks and 65% bonds) to a moderate risk strategy (50% stocks and 50% bonds). This strategy would allow the Section to withdraw approximately 4% from the account on an annual basis and leave the principal intact. The SIS was executed on August 27, 2024.
- The current balance in the newly allocated TD Wealth account (as of September 9, 2024) is $663,756.
- The Finance Committee has received CY 2024 carry forward estimate from the APLU. The carry forward is $206,744, approximately $100,000 more than expected. The cash position of agInnovation is sufficient to carry out the CY 2024 budget and have a healthy cash reserve for CY 2025.
- Administration of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) at $1,750 was approved by the committee electronically. The IDI is an assessment tool that measures intercultural competence and will be undertaken by agInnovation Directors in the upcoming year. agInnovation Chair George Smith was supportive of this request.

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**Agenda Brief: Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC)**
**September 25, 2024**
**BLC Chair: Anton Bekkerman**
**Action: For Information**

<u>**Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC,** http://escop.info/committee/blc/**)**</u>

BLC meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 4:00-5:00 ET. The committee alternates its meetings: one month the meeting is for voting members only to foster open discussion, and the alternating month includes more structured discussion and liaison reports. One of the outcomes of this revised structure is more time for in-depth discussions by the voting members that is valuable in reflecting on broader questions that the BLC needs to address, while still receiving timely input from the liaisons. Lewis-Burke Associates (LBA) regularly participates in our meetings with Dr. Elizabeth Stulberg serving as the liaison.

The BLC chair is a two-year rotating appointment that will transition from Anton Bekkerman (NC) to Steve Lommel (S) at this meeting. The BLC chair is a multifaceted leadership position given the multiple committee assignments (BAA-Budget and Advocacy Committee [BAC] voting member, BAA-Committee on Legislation and Policy [CLP] voting member, ECOP BLC liaison). Due to the BLC chair's involvement in many other parts of the BAA where liaisons provide updates, the chair can bring back information to the BLC in a timely manner even with liaisons joining the BLC meetings less frequently.

The predominant focus of the BLC is to create, adapt, monitor, and change agInnovation's input into the BAC, CLP, and infrastructure budget and legislative activities. The BAA Unified FY 2025 Appropriations Request was approved by the BAC and the BAA Policy Board of Directors and is summarized here (FY25 Approps). The BAA Farm Bill Request is summarized here (BAA Farm Bill). The BLC also presented information to CARET representatives for Hatch, AFRI, and RFA during the "All About the Request" webinar (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SahCRJlVGA). The FY 2026 Appropriations Request is currently being drafted. A BLC subcommittee was formed to provide implementation guidance to NIFA for the Research Facilities Act in anticipation of funding through the Farm Bill.

The BAC and CLP are jointly developing a "Decadal Visioning and Advocacy Strategy" to guide both advocacy and authorization activities over the next five-year period. Throughout the past year, BLC and agInnovation leadership participated in discussions that informed the development of the three themes for the decadal plan.

- The United States maintains a safe, abundant, and secure domestic food supply for the benefit of food safety and national security.
- Rural communities are economically and environmentally healthy places to live.
- Americans have better, more satisfying diets and longer, healthier lives.

This document continues to evolve and most recently, the BLC provided impact statements relevant to each of the themes.

The 10-year agInnovation Research Roadmap focusing on the three pillars of water resilience, climate solutions, and sustainable food systems with the cross-cutting themes of national security and workforce development will be completed in early 2025. During the implementation phase the BLC is charged with developing a funding strategy aligned with the roadmap priorities. BLC will provide input on securing appropriations and legislative support, justifying increased funding, targeting budget lines, aligning with agency priorities, and liaising with LBA, BAC and CLP.

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**Agenda Brief:**       agInnovation Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC)
**Date:**               September 25, 2024
**Chair:**              Brian Raison (Ohio State)

1.) Committee Membership (as of August 27, 2024): see ESCOP Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) webpage – http://escop.info/committee/dcc/

2.) Meetings (one since July 16, 2024):  On July 25, 2024, the DCC met to review the award nominations for the 2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards (group and individual).

3.) Accomplishments / Upcoming Plans:
   - 2024 National agInnovation Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards have been named.  The following awardees will be recognized at the agInnovation Meeting in Raleigh.
     - Group winner:  Dr. Tracy Dougher and the Indigenous Pathways to Agriculture Team (Montana State University)
     - Individual winner:  Dr. Elias Quiñonez (Colorado State University)
   - Further webinars arranged by the Diversity Catalyst Committee are anticipated to be held in 2024.
   - The Diversity Catalyst Committee is planning on asking the agInnovation directors, to complete the Intercultural Development Inventory to assist directors and the Section in gauging the orientation toward cultural differences.  The DCC has also reached out to an agInnovation DEI award winner to do the "after-instrument" debrief.

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**Agenda Brief: National Research Support Project (NRSP) Review Committee (RC)**
**Date: September 25, 2024**
**Presenter: Steven Lommel**
**Action Requested: Vote by 1862 SAES Directors**

**Committee Members:** http://escop.info/committee/nrsp-rc/

| |
|---|
| **Chair:** Steve Lommel (SAAESD) |
| **Executive Vice Chair:** Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) |
| **Members:** |
| Mark McGuire (WAAESD)      Robert Mattive (CARET) |
| Blair Siegfried (NERA)       Tom Bewick (NIFA) |
| John Blanton (NCRA)       Mike Schmitt (ECOP) |
| Erdogan Memili (ARD)       Rick Rhodes (NE ED, incoming executive vice chair) |
| |
| **Ex-officio:** |
| Cindy Morley (SAAESD, Recording Secretary) |

**Meeting:** A virtual business meeting of the NRSP RC was held on July 24, 2024

**Meeting Attendance:** Steve Lommel, Gary Thompson, Mark McGuire, Blair Siegfried, John Blanton, Erdogan Memili, Robert Mattive, Tom Bewick, Mike Schmitt, Rick Rhodes, and Cindy Morley (recording secretary). Guests: David Gay presented on NRSP3, Alex Thomasson presented on NRSP temp13, and Chris Hamilton.

**Accomplishments:**

1. Funding commitments from 2021 through 2029 indicate that funding is available to support the existing NRSPs and consider new proposals. A new project proposal NRSP_temp12 is expected in the upcoming year. NRSP4 and NRSP9 have submitted intents to renew as capacity projects in the upcoming year.

2. The NRSP RC unanimously voted to recommend approving the proposal and associated budget to renew NRSP_temp3: The National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP). NRSP3 is a capacity project requesting $50,000 per year for five years, which leverages a total of $2.9M with funds from the EPA, USGS, ARS, USFS, US Park Service, BLM, NOAA, and other sources. The project provides important curated data sets on deposition of pollutants in precipitation at more than 350 monitoring locations.

3. The NRSP RC unanimously voted to approve the request to write for NRSP_temp13: Artificial Intelligence for Agricultural Autonomy. A previously submitted request to write was updated to address concerns expressed by some members of the NRSP RC. A new project proposal is expected in the upcoming year.

4. The NRSP submission, review, and evaluations timeline was discussed to determine if the process can be streamlined to increase the interval between final approval and project start dates. Currently, the NRSP RC makes recommendations to the full body of agInnovation directors at the annual meeting in late September and projects are scheduled to begin October 1. Decisions on recommendations are made in early-to-mid summer by the NRSP RC. Conducting virtual votes of the membership to respond to the NRSP RC recommendations could provide additional time (months in some cases) to notify NIFA and the sponsoring institutions.

**Update Guidelines for National Research Support Projects (NRSPs)**
*Pages 4-5*
**Original language**
**B. NRSP Review Committee Operations**

3.  The committee reports at the annual ESS meeting on Capacity or Emerging Innovation NRSP proposals, five-year budgets, and any subsequent budget revisions, allied actions, and then makes a "seconded" recommendation(s) for approval or rejection.

4.  In Year 3, the committee evaluates the midterm review results and the first three year's annual reports of active NRSPs, and then makes a recommendation for approval, modification, or disapproval of the remaining two years' budgets at the annual ESS meeting

**Revised language**

3. The committee reports to SAES Directors at the BAA Leadership Meeting in July ~~at the annual ESS meeting~~ on Capacity or Emerging Innovation NRSP proposals, five-year budgets, and any subsequent budget revisions, and allied actions.~~, and then makes a "seconded" recommendation(s) for approval or rejection.~~

4. In Year 3, the committee evaluates the midterm review results and the first three year's annual reports of active NRSPs, and then makes a recommendation for approval, modification, or disapproval of the remaining two years' budgets to SAES Directors at the BAA Leadership Meeting in July. ~~at the annual ESS meeting.~~

5. SAES Directors make a "seconded" recommendation for approval or rejection at the BAA Leadership Meeting in July. An electronic vote may be conducted of SAES Directors from 1862 institutions vote (one vote per institution contributing OTT MRF) on approval of the project and five-year budget; a simple majority vote is required to carry the motion.

*Page 11 (similar language on pages 12 and 13)*

**May/June/~~July~~**. The NRSP RC meets and prepares recommendations on the project proposal and shares those recommendations with the NRSP development committee and the Executive Directors who distribute the information to their regional associations. The NRSP development committee responds to the recommendations made by the NRSP RC and makes any needed revisions to the proposal in NIMSS. ~~The NRSP RC also reports preliminary recommendations to ESCOP, ideally at the Joint COPs meeting in late July.~~

**July/August**. NRSP RC finalizes recommendations that will be presented at the BAA Leadership ~~annual agInnovation~~ meeting. An electronic vote may be conducted of SAES Directors from 1862 institutions vote (one vote per institution contributing OTT MRF) on approval of the project and five-year budget; a simple majority vote is required to carry the motion. The outcome of an affirmative vote will be shared with NIFA and the university administering the NRSP.

**~~September~~**. ~~The NRSP RC reports at the annual agInnovation meeting on final project proposals with projected budgets and provide a recommendation. SAES Directors from 1862 institutions vote (one vote per institution contributing OTT MRF) on approval of the project and five-year budget; a simple majority vote is required to carry the motion.~~

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**Science & Technology Committee (STC):** http://escop.info/committee/scitech/

**Committee Members:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Chair:** Nathan Slaton (SAAESD)<br>**Past Chair:** Bernie Engel (NCRA)<br><br>**Delegates:**<br>Alton Thompson (ARD)<br>John Yang (ARD)<br>Frank Casey (NCRA)<br>Shibu Jose (NCRA)<br>George Criner (NERA)<br>Jason Hubbart (NERA)<br>Tom Zimmerman (SAAESD)<br>David Monk (SAAESD)<br>Gene Kelly (WAAESD)<br>Greg Cuomo (WAAESD)<br><br>**Executive Vice Chair:**<br>Bret Hess (WAAESD ED)<br>Jennifer Horton (WAAESD Recording Secretary) | **Liaisons:**<br>Tara McHugh (ARS)<br>Kevin Kephart (NIFA)<br>Roger Magarey (NIPMCC)<br>Tim Killian (SSCC) |

**Meetings:** Virtual meetings are scheduled 1-2 pm PT/2-3 pm MT/3-4 pm CT/4-5 pm ET the first Monday of the month. Zoom connection information is:
https://unr.zoom.us/j/81036274718?pwd=OHlHYXhkWlEyekI3NjcwREZ1dDJpZz09
Meeting ID: 810 3627 4718 Passcode: STC

**Activities Since the Report to the agInnovation on July 16, 2024**

The committee welcomed Tom Zimmerman from the University of the Virgin Islands to fill the vacant position for SAAESD.

The following voting members represent STC on the agInnovation Chair's Research Strategy Roadmap working group: Nathan Slaton, John Yang, Shibu Jose, George Criner, and Gene Kelly.

**Open Access**

Work on development of guidelines to recognize the use of capacity funds in publications and making data publicly available via Data Commons continued with a presentation by Michal McCullough, USDA-ARS Librarian, Knowledge Services Division. The presentation by Michal was essentially a repeat of the one delivered by Dr. Cynthia (Cyndy) Parr, USDA REE Assistant Chief Data Officer and Senior Research Data Policy Analyst at the National Agriculture Library and her colleagues. The committee requested to have the presentation posted as a reference for agInnonvation members. The presentation is available as the last link on the STC webpage.

The following details from the presentation are repeated to highlight STC's efforts to help educate fellow directors about open access policies and requirements. One future deliverable might be the development of guidelines for data management, especially for long-term experiments.

The progression of public access policies in the U.S. has been marked by significant memos and regulations. The Holdren Memo of 2013 initiated a movement towards increased public access to federally funded research. This was further advanced by the 2022 memo, which introduced additional requirements for federal science agencies. These policies align with the Open Government Data Act of 2018, emphasizing transparency and accessibility of government data. The Departmental Regulation 1020-006, which is currently being revised, will incorporate these new mandates. The implementation of these policies is a coordinated effort across federal agencies, with full implementation of the revised regulations expected by 2025. This ongoing process reflects a commitment to open science and the equitable dissemination of research findings to the public.

The plan for implementing changes based on the 2022 memo is accessible online, detailing compliance with the Office of Science and Technology Policy's requirements. The approach is to affirmatively respond to the White House's directives, providing a framework for how these will be executed. The scope of the departmental regulation extends to USDA employees, awardees, and contractors involved in scientific research, applicable to projects funded from fiscal year 2023 onwards, starting October 1, 2022. The regulation does not retroactively apply to historical data but focuses on current and future research activities.

The policy requirements for scholarly publications mandate that peer-reviewed journal articles must be freely available to the public upon acceptance. Previously, a 12-month embargo was permitted, but this will be eliminated in 2025. Authors can submit the final published version to PubAg if they have the rights to it, often associated with gold open access fees. Otherwise, the final version of the accepted manuscript post-peer review, which is not under the journal's copyright, should be uploaded to PubAg. Data associated with publications must be publicly available when a manuscript is published. Published data is required to be in a machine-readable format in a recognized repository that offers public access, a persistent identifier, and ensures data preservation.

Data preservation is a critical aspect of research, ensuring that valuable data remains accessible and usable over time. Best practices for data preservation include documenting ownership and responsibility, restricting access to sensitive data, and following the 3-2-1 rule for backups. Data should be stored in non-proprietary formats with adequate metadata for future use.

The current 12-month embargo policy for data release is set to change, with new policies aiming for immediate and equitable access to federally funded research data, eliminating the embargo period. This shift is intended to prevent data from being withheld indefinitely, particularly data with negative results or long-term datasets that may not produce research papers for years. Not all data is required to be publicly accessible; exceptions include concerns over national security, endangered species, or data irrelevant to research validation. These measures balance the need for open science with the protection of sensitive information.

The Ag Data Commons serves as a research data catalog and repository for public access to data produced during research funded or co-funded by the USDA. This ensures that USDA-funded research data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable, aligning with the FAIR principles of Open Science.

Additionally, researchers are required to create and adhere to data management plans that align with the policies of their agency or the USDA's departmental guidance. This framework aims to maximize the practical accessibility of research data while maintaining necessary protections and standards for its use.

Creating a Data Management Plan (DMP) is a critical first step in managing research data effectively. A DMP outlines how data will be handled both during the research process and after the project is completed, ensuring that data is stored, archived, and accessible for future use. Funding agencies like NIFA require a DMP as part of the project proposal, with specific requirements detailed in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants must adhere to these guidelines, which often include selecting a suitable data repository to store and share their research data. This ensures that data is preserved in a way that facilitates scientific inquiry and advances further research.

Selecting the right data repository is crucial for the preservation and dissemination of research data. It's important to consider domain-specific repositories as they often have the infrastructure and expertise to maximize the data's discoverability and reuse. Generalist repositories are also an option, especially for data that doesn't fit into a specific category. These repositories should provide a stable, unique identifier like a DOI to enhance the data's visibility and citation. The Ag Data Commons, supported by the USDA, exemplifies a generalist repository that also acts as a catalog for USDA-funded research, ensuring data is FAIR—findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. Submissions to Ag Data Commons are meticulously reviewed by data curators to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data before it becomes publicly available.

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**agInnovation Experiment Station Directors Who Retired or Changed Positions in FFY2024:**

North Central:
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill, Iowa State University
Alex Winter-Nelson, University of Illinois
Dana Infante, Michigan State University

Northeast:
Calvin Keeler, University of Delaware
Matt Wilson, West Virginia University
Darrell Donahue, West Virginia University
Rick Roush, Pennsylvania State University

Southern:
Leland "Sandy" Pierson, Texas A&M
Nathan McKinney, University of Arkansas
Bob Stougaard, University of Georgia

Western:
Chris Davies, Utah State University
Adrian Ares, University of Guam
James Pritchett, Colorado State University
Mark McGuire- University of Idaho
Barbara Rasco- University of Wyoming

ARD:
Robert Taylor, Florida A&M University
Kirk Pomper, Kentucky State University

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**2024-2025 agInnovation Priorities**

**Enhance Funding for Agricultural Research:**
- Advocate for increased appropriations for USDA-NIFA to boost capacity program funding.
- Engage relevant federal funding agencies and organizations to diversify and expand the competitive research funding portfolio.

**Address Critical Infrastructure Needs:**
- Identify and implement both short- and long-term funding strategies.
- Provide guidance on the Research Facilities Act implementation to meet the infrastructure needs of colleges of agriculture at Land-grant universities.

**Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**
- Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental components of all agInnovation activities and programs.

**Lead in Environmental and Sustainability Solutions:**
- Emphasize agInnovation's role in discovering solutions to climate change, water resilience, and sustainable food systems through continuous research and activities.

**Strengthen Collaborative Partnerships:**
- Enhance partnerships and engagement within the Land-grant University community and with federal agencies, industry, and foundations to support collaborative initiatives.

**Increase Organizational Visibility and Impact:**
- Strategically enhance external communications, marketing, brand recognition, and public relations efforts to elevate the visibility and impact of the organization.

**2024-2025 Chair's Initiatives**

1. Finalize and implement the stakeholder-informed agInnovation Research Roadmap.
   - Complete the agInnovation Research Roadmap document and deploy Research Roadmap implementation strategies.
   - Strengthen strategic partnerships with federal agencies, foundations, NGOs, and corporate partners by building on previous efforts to engage traditional and non-traditional entities.

2. Create a formal framework to facilitate research collaborations among 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land-grant universities.
   - Use the multistate project portfolio as a tool to facilitate research collaborations across the Land-grant system, institutionalizing relationships among all LGUs.
   - Develop topic areas that would bring researchers together to form multistate projects that incorporate indigenous knowledge with scale-appropriate technologies to serve small, resource-limited farms.

3. Massively accelerate the development and release of important food crops.
   - Agriculture is a solution to address climate change, sustainability, and global food security. Rapid environmental changes demand accelerated genetic enhancement of plants and animals using existing and emerging technologies to strengthen food security, nutritional quality, and sustainability by adapting to local environments.
   - The goal is to develop a unified national initiative to integrate, automate, and multiplex current and emerging technologies into platforms and pipelines for deployment across important agricultural commodities.

**2024-2025 Chair's Initiative #1**

Finalize and implement the stakeholder-informed agInnovation Research Roadmap.
- Complete the agInnovation Research Roadmap document and deploy Research Roadmap implementation strategies.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with federal agencies, foundations, NGOs, and corporate partners by building on previous efforts to engage traditional and non-traditional entities.

**Roadmap Document Completion.** Feedback from key internal (within BAA) and external partners and stakeholders on the draft roadmap will continue to be collected and analyzed by the agInnovation Research Roadmap Working Group through November to further refine the three roadmap pillars and to contribute to the implementation plan. The roadmap document will be completed in early 2025. The implementation plan with the following elements is intended to ensure oversight, transparency, and accountability as we achieve our goals.

**Continued Partnership Engagement.** Strategic engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders has been essential in developing the agInnovation Research Roadmap. Stakeholder input will continue to shape the roadmap as we move toward its completion. During the implementation phase, we will have a continued focus on building partnerships, particularly with federal agencies, foundations, NGOs, corporate partners, and other key entities. Building on our past and current engagement efforts, we will bring together potential partners and advocates through action-oriented agInnovation sponsored events like roundtables and small forums.

**Strategic Communications.** To effectively communicate the research roadmap, a communications strategist will be engaged to lead the development and execution of a communication plan. This strategist will coordinate strategy workshops, secure stakeholder buy-in, and identify key spokespeople. Their responsibilities could include crafting and distributing press releases and op-eds, conducting focus groups to refine messaging, and establishing a standardized communication approach for consistent and impactful messaging across all platforms.

The strategist will also facilitate collaboration among LGU communicators from different institutions to ensure alignment. A clear process and timeline for communication efforts will be developed, with specific milestones for message development and audience engagement. Additionally, the effectiveness of these strategies will be regularly measured, ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting outcomes. This approach will ensure all communication efforts are well-coordinated and effectively support the research roadmap.

**agInnovation Standing Committees.** The standing committees of agInnovation will play important roles during the implementation phase. The Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) is charged with developing a funding strategy aligned with the roadmap priorities. BLC will provide input on securing appropriations and legislative support, justifying increased funding, targeting budget lines, aligning with agency priorities, and liaising with LBA, BAC and CLP. The Science and Technology Committee (STC) is charged with developing metrics for roadmap activities and action plans to focus research initiatives for each pillar area. STC will provide input to requests from federal and other funding organizations on national science direction and priorities that align with the roadmap.

As roadmap priorities are funded, agInnovation will engage an external evaluator to comprehensively assess our progress, communicate it effectively, and evaluate further funding needs. The evaluator will collaborate with

BLC and STC to, for example, establish measurement plans, monitor success, validate outcomes with baseline data, and determine reporting frequency.

**2024-2025 Chair's Initiative #2**

Create a formal framework to facilitate research collaborations among 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land-grant universities.
- Use the multistate project portfolio as a tool to facilitate research collaborations across the Land-grant system, institutionalizing relationships among all LGUs.
- Develop topic areas that would bring researchers together to form multistate projects that would incorporate indigenous knowledge with scale-appropriate technologies to serve small, resource-limited farms.

The Land-grant University system, encompassing 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions, addresses diverse stakeholder issues. These universities uniquely integrate education, research, and Extension, fostering innovation in agriculture, natural resources, sustainability, and socio-economic development. By collaborating with a broad range of communities and stakeholders, they provide tailored solutions to urban and rural challenges. Their diverse approaches are designed to ensure inclusive, impactful outcomes, reinforcing the pivotal role of the Land-grant universities in advancing societal progress.

However, developing collaborations among our Land-grant institutions presents challenges. Our institutions differ in historical missions, funding structures, and stakeholder priorities. Coordination requires overcoming disparities in resources, expertise, and regional focus. Ensuring equitable participation and addressing unique community needs can be complex. Fostering collaboration while respecting each institution's distinct identity demands careful navigation of institutional cultures and bureaucratic hurdles. Despite these challenges, unified efforts can yield innovative solutions and robust, inclusive outcomes.

The goal of this initiative is to create a formal framework to facilitate research collaborations among 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land-grant universities. The initiative builds on previous work within our system.  In 2016, leaders met in Jackson Hole, Wyoming to explore opportunities for 1994/1862 collaborations, including piloting a multistate research platform. In 2023, a meeting of the Association for 1890 Research Directors (ARD) and the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors resulted in four key take-aways: 1. create positive interactions, 2. establish joint collaborations, 3. develop joint outreach and communications programs, and 4. ensure administrative structures support research collaboration. This work will be further informed by an ongoing study of "*Research Collaborations that Work*" among 1862 and 1890 colleges of agriculture. The initiative expands this ongoing work to fully engage the 1994 universities, representing the entire Land-grant university system.

The initiative proposes to use the multistate project portfolio as a tool to facilitate research collaborations across the Land-grant system, institutionalizing research relationships among all Land-grant universities. To do this we propose to develop (10) topic areas that would bring researchers together to form viable multistate projects, incorporating indigenous knowledge with scale-appropriate technologies to serve small, resource-limited farms. We will engage USDA NIFA, as the capacity programs funding agency, to determine appropriate structures for the collaborative (multistate) projects in this novel context, pursue conference grants to engage the system broadly in developing projects, and advocate for fellows and mentorship programs to build human capacity throughout the system.

**2024-2025 Chair's Initiative #3**

Massively accelerate the development and release of important food crops.
- Agriculture is a solution to address climate change, sustainability, and global food security. Rapid environmental changes demand accelerated genetic enhancement of plants and animals using existing and emerging technologies to strengthen food security, nutritional quality, and sustainability by adapting to local environments.
- The goal is to develop a unified national initiative to integrate, automate, and multiplex current and emerging technologies into platforms and pipelines for deployment across important agricultural commodities.

Agriculture is at the nexus of climate change, sustainability, human nutrition (including protein, both animal and non-animal), feeding the world population, geopolitics, drought, soil fertility, yield, efficiency, chemical residue, and more. With the accelerating rate of environmental degradation and climate change effects, particularly in the major agricultural regions of the world, a transformative approach to accelerating genetic enhancement is imperative. The good news is that this is an achievable goal that will substantially mitigate negative trends. Additionally, the technologies required to meet multiple goals for food security, human nutrition and health, environmental impact, and sustainability, all exist today.

Even with the incorporation of improved breeding technologies, genetic improvement for the world's most critical crops is currently too slow given the urgent needs. For any individual crop breeding program, perhaps 2-4 traits are being simultaneously selected, with new varieties being released every 5-10 years. The traits being bred for primarily focus on yield, disease resistance, and drought tolerance. However, many other vital traits, including nutrition, flavor, low inputs, sustainability, carbon capture and reduced release, microbial and pollinator associations, and traits that significantly impact human health beyond nutrition remain aspirational due to the complexity of juggling multiple traits in a single breeding program. All the necessary technologies exist to accelerate improved variety development while vastly increasing the number of traits incorporated simultaneously. To achieve this, a concerted national effort to integrate, automate, and multiplex all technologies is required, alongside the development and integration of new and emerging technologies.

Precision farming on the best land with the most well-adapted genetics is a key tenet guiding this initiative. Developing platform technologies for multiplexing complex traits and reducing the generation time for new cultivar development will incorporate the full range of plant breeding/improvement methods, combined with analytics, sensing, and autonomous technologies. Technology platforms and pipelines will be deployed across a wide range of important food crops with multiple societal benefits.

This initiative is envisioned as a national, multiagency collaboration. Potential partners include USDA NIFA, NSF, NIH, EPA, DARPA, DOE, and DOD, and others such as ARS and NRCS. Given the broad scope of this effort and its potential to enhance agriculture globally, it is likely to attract significant interest from major philanthropic funders such as Novo Nordisk Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bezos Earth Fund, among others.

This initiative aligns with the core pillars and cross-cutting goals of the 'outcomes-driven' AgInnovation Research Roadmap and the BAC Decadal Vision by crafting an action plan that fosters strategic partnerships and focuses on targeted investments to shape the future of agriculture.

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