

ESCOP Science & Technology: <http://escop.info/committee/scitech/>

10/05/2020

4 pm ET, via Zoom

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83605080050?pwd=TmZDNEtXL3pVMymNDhDT1JXdEEwZz09>) or
1 669 900 9128 Meeting ID: 836 0508 0050 Passcode: 319119)

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Jody Jellison (NERA) Past Chair: Laura Lavine (WAAESD)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) John Yang (ARD) Joe Colletti (NCRA) Bill Barker (NCRA) Indrajeet Chaubey (NERA) Mark Hutton (NERA) Susan Duncan (SAAESD) Nathan McKinney (SAAESD) Gene Kelly (WAAESD) Chris Davies (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice Chair: Bret Hess (WAAESD ED) Saige Zespy (WAAESD Recorder)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Robert Matteri (ARS) Wendy Powers (ECOP) Tim Conner (NIFA) Danesha Carley (NIPMCC) Tim Killian (SSCC)</p>
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Agenda:

1. **Welcome**– Jellison
2. **Roll Call**– Hess
3. **Approval of meeting notes from 06/01/2020 and 08/24/2020** – Jellison
4. **Review AIA Comments (see attached)**
Does the summary capture everything?
Suggestions for improvement
5. **Review the Call for Multistate Research Award Nominations (see attached)**
Suggestions for improvement to the Nomination Format and Review Criteria
6. **Liaison Updates, as needed**
ARS
ECOP
NIFA
NIPMCC
SSSC
7. **Establishing 2021 Priorities**
Are the two items below our highest priorities?
Are there other areas we might be able to provide greater impact?
Breakthroughs 2030 –might alignment of the system’s multistate portfolio be part of the AIA effort?

Capacity Projects on Infectious Diseases – APLU request that will feed into the Capacity Funding Workgroup's efforts

8. Agenda items and suggestions from the group

9. Next Scheduled Meeting(s)

4-5 pm ET November 2

4-5 pm ET December 7

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 - a. [ARS](#)
 - b. [ECOP](#)
 - c. [NIFA](#)
 - d. [NIPMCC](#)
 - e. [SSSC \(no report\)](#)
7. [Establishing 2021 Priorities](#)
8. [Agenda items and suggestions from the group](#)
9. [Next Scheduled Meeting\(s\)](#)
10. [Action Items](#)

Minutes

1. **Welcome** – Jellison
 - a. Jody welcomed attendees to the meeting, thanking everyone for participating.
2. **Roll Call** – Hess
 - a. Bret noted the five committee members were present at the start of the meeting, but more are likely to join over the next few minutes. A quorum was not present initially to conduct official business.
 - b. By mid-meeting, enough members had joined to approve the meeting minutes.
3. **Approval of meeting notes from 06/01/2020 and 08/24/2020** – Jellison
 - a. Indrajeet moved to approve the minutes from 06/01/2020. Alton seconded the motion, which passed on a hand-raise vote from the committee.
 - b. Mark moved to accept the minutes from 08/24/2020. Joe seconded the motion, which also passed on a hand-raise vote from the committee.
4. **Review AIA Comments (see attached)**

Does the summary capture everything?

Suggestions for improvement

- Jody thanked Bret for compiling the AIA comments and noted that she hoped committee members had the chance to look over the comment summary. Ultimately, she hopes to discuss whether or not the committee's comments should be shared with APLU and USDA NIFA for incorporation into the agency's planning processes.
 - Indrajeet noted he felt the notes captured the major points from the discussion held at the previous meeting. After some fine tuning, he feels it should be forwarded to APLU.
 - Bill also said he felt like the comments reflected the committee's conversation, and emphasizes the major important points that are important.
- Moving forward, Jody asked whether the document was ready to forward to APLU.
 - Bret suggested moving the document through ESCOP's channels, starting with the Chair's Advisory Committee.
 - Jody asked that committee members share their feedback by Wednesday, Oct. 7 with Bret. At that point, anyone who was interested in helping Bret and Jody finalized and consolidate the last edits should also reach out.
 - Jody, Alton, Rick and Bret agreed that the document could be moved up through the Chair's Advisory Committee, after comments from the Science and Technology Committee.
- In a side note, Alton asked about the interaction between AIA and the USDA Science Blueprint. Jody explained they are synergistic efforts, with one informing the work of the other. The comments prepared by the committee was responsive to input from specific regions of ESCOP.

- Alton noted that ESCOP has prioritized helping USDA to address the Science Blueprint, and comments on AIA would help to address the ESCOP priority.
- Jody noted that the conversation is one that will be important moving forward, and the committee's priorities must be determined.

5. Review the Call for Multistate Research Award Nominations (see attached) Suggestions for improvement to the Nomination Format and Review Criteria

- Bret asked the committee to reflect and provide suggestions to improve the process, criteria, etc. A group of members spent significant time revising the awards last year, but there may be a need for additional changes.
 - Joe was curious if anyone submitting nominations expressed any concerns.
 - Jody and Bret noted they have not heard any concerns with the application or criteria.
 - Jody suggested that any modifications or suggestions be submitted to herself or Bret by close of business on Wednesday, October 7 for review and incorporation into the document.
 - Nathan noted that impact is highlighted as a criterion, but no outside impacts are specifically sought. He said it may be helpful that letters from impacted associations/groups may enhance the committee's ability to accurately assess impacts.
 - Nathan's concern is that measurable, quantified stakeholder impacts are rarely seen. A letter would be one way to demonstrate impacts concretely. Further, he isn't sure that, if some groups disappeared, whether anyone outside of academia would even know. Development of an impact statement or impact metric may help to assess impacts outside of academics.
 - Joe suggested that such a letter would have to have guidelines so that outside groups and associations understand what is helpful in terms of establishing quantifiable impact statements.
 - Bret noted that, for example, W4001 did a nice job of identifying policies that were changed as an example of impacts, and Nathan agreed, noting that there is a difference between *impacts* and *outputs*.
 - Jody further suggested a notation that letters are allowable but not required. Because of the varied nature of multi-states, not all may have direct impacts in the same way.

- Sue further suggested several types of stakeholder input, with the goal of avoiding multi-state groups drafting letters from stakeholders to submission.
- Bill didn't see much value in external support letters, particularly if impacts are specifically quantified in a re-structured proposal. He noted that many letters would be written by multi-state groups, then sent to stakeholders to tweak, sign and submit. Mark agreed.
- Joe noted that scientific impact is also very important, and that is often adequately quantified. He noted that striving for a balance between external and internal impacts is most desirable.
- Mark noted that perhaps the 40 percent weight to outcome, output and impact should be divided between the three sub-categories, rather than broadly applied.
 - Jody also considered that the group should also look at judging for impact inflation.
 - Joe suggested separating accomplishments of outputs from accomplishments of outcomes and impacts, with a higher weight on outcomes and impacts.
- Sue suggested possibly including a self-written portion of the application justifying impacts to an outside group (such as a legislator) who is not as concerned about publications and technical writing.
 - Bret suggested providing variable information that measures impact. Bill noted, however, that it is important not to discount the more intangible benefits.
- Wendy asked whether the focus is on the impacts, or the impacts that happened because the group came together as a multi-state project.
 - Joe agreed and suggested a notation be made to emphasize what the committee did together that would not have been accomplished with individual work.
- Jody also noted it will be important to make sure that nominations should not be so difficult as to really significantly limit submissions.
 - Ultimately, Jody also noted that the group must move forward to ensure the call can go out on time. Bret noted that the call went out in November last year, but it has gone out in October in previous years. Bret noted

that recommendations for final approval could be brought forward to the next month's meeting.

- Alton and Rick echoed Bret, noting that there is nothing special about the arbitrary October call.
- Jody asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to work on language that could be shared at the November meeting.
 - Joe volunteered to serve on that group, along with Mark, Nathan, and Wendy. Bret will compile the changes from the meeting minutes and distribute them to the subcommittee to compile for draft changes to be considered at the next meeting.

6. Liaison Updates, as needed

ARS

- Bob Matteri began by addressing the Ag Innovation Agenda, noting John Dyer is working closely with Scott Hutchins to put the research part together. He noted John is recently hired by ARS as one of his associates, and John could be available to update the committee when necessary.
- Regarding operations, Bob noted that ARS is still mostly only engaged in essential activities that protect people, property and facilities. They have expanded slightly to include essential research that could have costly impacts if a year has missed.
 - A three-phase approach has been established to re-open. Only 10 labs nationwide are eligible to be opened in any capacity. The remainder are staffed in a very limited manner for essential-only operations.
 - Many people are co-located with universities, so ARS is working closely to ensure all parties are working at the same level.
 - Some areas of the country look better than others, but changes are coming frequently and quickly. They are managing on a site-by-site basis.
- On the budget, Bob noted a recommended \$46 million decrease to ARS in the President's budget. The request is not unusual, but there are a number of projects that are also specifically indicated.
 - Approximately \$35 million is also noted to project re-direction.
 - The remainder of the cut is covered through project terminations.
 - The only congressional action was mark-up from the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, with a \$37 million increase.
 - One-third of that goes to address cost-of-living increase, and additional funds go to retirement benefits.
 - The House accepted all of the project redirections, but rejected all of the terminations.

- There has been no activity on the Senate side.
 - The Senate and House worked together to pass a Continuing Resolution through December 11. This CR is expected to go through its 11th hour.
- Election results will be released by then, so ARS is standing by to see what happens moving forward.
- Jody asked about what rules apply to folks who are ARS but co-located at a university facility.
 - Bob noted that each ARS site has a pandemic coordinator to help address those sorts of questions, and at the core is a dialogue about where differences exist and how they can be addressed. For any major discrepancies, he suggested batting proposals up to a higher level to see what can be done or worked out.
 - Bob further noted that there is a consistent fluctuation of data prescribing opening and closing spaces. Local data sets from HHA are consulted to make some of those decisions.

ECOP

- ECOP held its meeting two weeks ago. A common theme was heard about committing to work together, between states, more efficiently.
 - Working together to share and use resources more effectively also helps to alleviate budget concerns.
 - ECOP and ESCOP could work together to share resources.
 - Additionally, many faculty have both Extension and Experiment Station appointments, which would also be enhanced by working more closely together.
- Chris Watkins from Cornell came into his role, sharing his plan and priorities for the year.
 - One priority is urban programming, with the idea of reaching more people and doing a better job reaching people who are marginalized with programs that are historically viewed as ag programs.
 - The other priority is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, both as employers and in outreach across the U.S. There will also be a focus on this area for professional development for directors and administrators in Cooperative Extension, as well as personnel throughout the system.
 - Wendy Powers is the chair-elect for ECOP.
- ECOP has engaged with NIFA related to the AIA work. Working with Bill Hoffman, they will survey Extension directors to understand methods, context and content to help facilitate rapid adoptions of technologies by farm communities, as well as how to measure successes for those efforts.
 - The survey should be going to directors in early November.

- A follow-up conversation to overview the survey may be insightful.
- ECOP has also made a commitment to partner with broadband connectivity issues in both urban and rural areas.
 - A partnership with Land O' Lakes has been established to achieve this goal.
- WEDA will be searching for an Executive Director in the near future, and Wendy encouraged folks to look for and share an announcement.

NIFA

- Tim Conner wished everyone a happy (fiscal) new year.
- NIFA has been in Kansas City for over a year, and they continue to get their feet underneath them.
 - 70 staffers relocated with NIFA (with about 20 staying in D.C.). Current staff numbers have hit around 200.
 - Hiring has continued, and programming has continued in the meantime, which is an accomplishment in itself.
- The budget and Continuing Resolution is a concern moving forward. NIFA is in a good place currently, but there are concerns about any potential changes. There is also concern that the December 11 deadline is approaching very quickly.
 - NIFA worked diligently to get 99% of all available funds for Fiscal Year 2020 out the door, accomplishing Mission One of the agency, despite any challenges posed by COVID-19 and relocation.
- Several new programs and processes have been implemented recently.
 - SPIRA (Scheduled Process Implementation from RFA to Awards) will create a more efficient, streamlined and even flow of RFAs throughout the year to avoid as many conflicts related to federal shut-downs, etc.
 - NIFA will publish a list of which RFAs are going out when to give the applicant community a better idea of what to plan for. This action comes as a result of Project Café feedback.
 - Project Café feedback also asked NIFA look at its legal obligations for Hatch and multi-state grants. Specifically, NIFA is beginning a review about what they have to do to meet legislative requirements for Hatch and multi-state awards, as well as what things they can work more closely with their partners to improve processes.
- As it relates to COVID-19, NIFA is moving forward into Phase 2 in Washington, D.C., but is still in work-from home in Kansas-City. However, restrictions haven't affected daily operations. They have impacted interactions with partners, but they are able to work-from-home efficiently.

NIPMCC

- Jim Farrar (NIPMCC chair-elect from California) reported on behalf of Danesha Carley, who had a scheduling conflict.
- The National IPM Coordinating Committee meeting will be held on October 21. Because of COVID, the meeting will be virtual. It will be held in two 2-hour blocks, rather than 1.5 days.
- The focus for NIPMCC will be on one main issues, which is the development of brief white papers to highlight big issues in integrated pest management.
 - To date, drafts for three of those have been developed.
 - They will break into teams and work to finalized those three documents.
- They will also hear updates from Marty Draper, AFRI tactical sciences, the Food and Farming Narrative project, and a discussion with pesticide safety education on the certification of pesticide applications during COVID, since many tests and continuing education units have been in-person historically.

SSSC

- Tim Killian experienced some connectivity issues and was unable to connect to the entirety of the meeting.

7. Establishing 2021 Priorities

Are the two items below our highest priorities?

Are there other areas we might be able to provide greater impact?

Breakthroughs 2030 –might alignment of the system's multistate portfolio be part of the AIA effort?

Capacity Projects on Infectious Diseases – APLU request that will feed into the Capacity Funding Workgroup's efforts

- Jody noted that the primary agenda item for the next meeting will be establishing the 2021 priorities. Jody asked committee members to come prepared to discuss whether these items are actually the top two priorities of the group or if there are more meaningful ways to make an impact.

8. Agenda items and suggestions from the group

- Any committee members with potential agenda items are encouraged to contact Bret and/or Jody to add them to the agenda.

9. Next Scheduled Meeting(s)

4-5pm ET November 2

4-5 pm ET December 7

Action Items

- Reply to Bret with edits and additions to the AIA comments by Wednesday, October 7.

- Anyone interested in compiling final edits to the AIA comments should also reach out to Bret and/or Jody to engage in that process by Wednesday, October 7.
- Joe, Nathan, and Wendy will draft changes for the Call for Multistate Research Award Nominations to be considered at the next meeting.
 - Bret will provide a compilation of discussion points from the October 2 meeting as a starting point for draft changes.
- Contact Bob Matteri if the committee is interested in an Ag Innovation Agenda update from John Dyer at ARS.
- Follow-up in December with Wendy Powers-Schilling on Extension survey related to understanding methods, context and content to help facilitate rapid adoption of technologies by farm communities.
- Add the Research and Extension Awards Ceremony to your calendar on October 28 from 3-5:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

DRAFT

ESCOP STC Exploration of the USDA Agriculture Innovation Agenda

Background

ESCOP STC has initiated an effort to identify how STC can provide value or specific deliverables in working with USDA-REE to prepare for the next phase of the Agriculture Innovation Agenda (AIA). This effort was borne out of recognition that USDA-REE will be utilizing the National Academies' report "*Science Breakthroughs to Advance Food and Agricultural Research by 2030*" as critical framework to set the stage for a stakeholder-driven research agenda. The [USDA AIA](#) was presented to STC by [Dr. John Dyer](#), who indicated there would be an opportunity for STC to be involved after stakeholder input has been compiled by USDA. Subsequently, STC reviewed and discussed stakeholder input submitted to the Federal Register from listening sessions hosted by [APLU, NERA, and WAAESD](#). The following outlines two main areas emphasized by STC during the discussion of input submitted by representatives of the national and regional system.

Salient Points

- Responses to AIA are very diverse across the regions.
- There was consistent focus on resilience and reduction of the environmental cost of agriculture.
- The input identified the importance of agriculture scale.
 - As the scale of agriculture changes, the scale of economy changes, which is challenging for small- and medium-scale farmers.
 - Research on commodities of smaller scale is essential for resilience of the agriculture community nationwide.
 - Ensure technology is available to all scales of farmers, not just very large operations.
- Technologies must be affordable and accessible across the agricultural system to be truly impactful on the industry.
- Technical solutions are not possible for all issues, social sciences must be integrated.
- Land-grant universities must identify and harness where they can be most helpful.
 - Private sectors are going to be very important in moving forward, and university systems may have to think differently about working with the private sector to accomplish the goals of the AIA.
 - There was a strong desire to integrate research and outreach.

Gaps in Input

- Biodiversity and ecosystems services should be highlighted as an important issue.
 - The AIA input did not put any emphasis on habitat or biodiversity, to include pollinators.
 - There should be more focus on larger challenges, like loss of habitat or destruction of the insect and bird biosphere, which is harder to combat than environmental challenges like water quality.
 - Ecosystems services should be identified in a more prominent manner.

- Farmers are attempting to do positive work for ecosystems, but the bigger challenge is finding out how to monetize that work and allow it to support farmers financially.
 - Monetary incentives for ecosystems services should probably be a part of each of the four categories in the AIA.
-
- The influence of the urban-rural interface and population densities.
 - Closing the gap between food production and food consumption can play a big role in reducing the footprint of agriculture.
 - There was an apparent lack of focus on safety or security of the agriculture and food systems.
 - It might be wise to focus on ensuring American agriculture has the capacity to produce and deliver food.
 - The importance of food security beyond just urban areas. Rural areas also experience food insecurity.
 - Organic agriculture may be another opportunity to reduce environmental impact.

2020 Experiment Station Section Award for Excellence in Multistate Research (September 2019)

Purpose

The fundamental mandate of the Multistate Research authority compels State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) to *interdependently* collaborate in projects that two or more states share as a priority, but for which no one state station could address singularly. Demonstration of interdependence is a high standard and has become a hallmark of the Multistate Research Program's management objectives.

The purpose of the Experiment Station Section Excellence in Multistate Research Award program is to annually recognize those station scientists who are conducting exemplary multistate activities and enhance the visibility of the multistate program. A recipient Multistate Project will be selected from the pool of nominees submitted by the five regional research associations (NCRA, NERA, SAAESD, WAAESD, and ARD), and judged by the ESCOP Science and Technology Committee (STC) to exhibit sustained, meritorious and exceptional multistate research activities. The ESCOP Executive Committee will provide final approval.

Award

The Experiment Station Directors have approved a monetary recognition of \$15,000 from the Hatch Multistate Research Fund (MRF) for the Excellence in Multistate Research Award winner. Up to \$5,000 has been available to cover travel for up to two members of the recipient project (the Administrative Advisor and Chair or their designees) to attend the awards ceremony at the APLU Annual Meeting. The remaining \$10,000, and any unused travel funds, has been available to support activities which enhance and contribute to the research and/or outreach objectives of that multistate project, consistent with the appropriate use of Hatch MRF. Use of these funds is a project committee decision made in conjunction with its Administrative Advisor.

Eligibility

Any current regional Multistate Project (research, ERA, CC) listed in NIMSS (www.nimss.org) is eligible for consideration for an Excellence in Multistate Research Award. **The nomination is predominantly based upon the five-year project period.**

The Multistate Research authority allows other non-SAES partners to join in these project-based collaborations. Thus, many multistate projects include extension specialists as members, as well as Agricultural Research Service or Forest Service research scientists. In addition, many projects have private sector and non-Land-grant participants. Moreover, the majority of multistate projects have participants from more than a single region, with many having representation from all regions such that they are national in scope.

Basis for Nomination

Each of the five regional research associations may nominate one Multistate Project chosen from the entire national portfolio of active projects. An individual project can document collaborative activities with one or more different multistate projects, if applicable, within the appropriate nomination criteria. Nominations shall be made to the Chair of the respective regional Multistate Research Committee (MRC) or Multistate Activities Committee (MAC) via the regional Executive Director's office. The documentation for this type of nomination should be sufficient to allow the review committee members to evaluate the Project according to the criteria listed below.

Criteria and Evaluation

Successful selections from regional nominations and advanced to the national competition for the ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award will demonstrate high standards of scientific quality, research relevance to a regional priority, multistate collaboration on the problem's solution, and professional leadership in the conduct of the project.

All nominated projects, in the required 4-page format, shall be evaluated using the same criteria (with weights shown) based on the Project's:

- Issue, problem or situation addressed (5%)
- Objectives (5%)
- Accomplishments as outputs, outcomes and impacts predominantly based upon the past five-year project period (40%)
- Added-value and synergistic activities across mission areas (30%)
- Evidence of multi-institutional and leveraged funding with examples of sources (15%)
- Summary of participating institutions and units (5%)

Selection Process

The ESCOP STC will serve as the review panel. The review panel will select from the annual group of regional nominees a national winner in time for public announcement and award presentation at the APLU Annual Meeting each year. All nominated projects will be evaluated using the same criteria.

Award and Presentation

The national winning project will be recognized by the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Chair and USDA NIFA Administrator during the Awards Program held at the APLU Annual Meeting. Each of the regional award winning projects will be included in the APLU Awards Program by project number and title, technical committee chair, administrative advisor and participating institutions. This National Awardee narrative will be created by the Impact Writer and submitted to STC Executive Vice-Chair. The title of the national winning project will be added to a plaque located at the USDA NIFA Headquarters.

Timeline

- October – Announcement sent to Directors and Administrators, Administrative Advisors and NIMSS participants by ESCOP Chair
- February 28 – Nominations due at Offices of the Executive Directors
- March – Nominations reviewed by regional Multistate Research or Multistate Activities Committees and recommendations submitted to regional associations
- March/April – Regional associations approve regional nominations at Spring meetings
- April/May - Regional associations review, edit and finalize their nomination prior to the final submission
- May 15 – Associations submit final regional nominations to ESCOP STC Committee via the regional association supporting STC (**pdf and word document**)
- June – ESCOP STC Committee reviews regional nominations in early June and submits recommendation for national winner to ESCOP Executive Committee
- June/July – ESCOP Executive Committee selects national winner
- July – National winner submitted to APLU and ESCOP Chair announces at Joint COPs
- July– STC Executive Vice-chair collects information from regional associations, secures project pictures, and submits materials to APLU for booklet and program script; NIFA notified for USDA NIFA Headquarters plaque inscription
- September – National winner announced at ESS meeting
- November – National award presentation at APLU Meeting

Nomination Format

(The nomination should be a very concise summary and must be in this format.)

Nominating Region: _____

Nominator: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Project or Committee Number and Title: _____

Technical Committee Chair: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Administrative Advisor: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Project Summary (noting the following):

- Issue, problem or situation addressed (5%)
- Objectives (5%)
- Accomplishments (40%)
 - Outputs
 - Outcomes
 - Impacts (actual or anticipated)
- Added-value and synergistic activities across mission areas (30%)
 - Multi-disciplinary activities
 - Multi-functional integrated activities
 - Additional partnerships, associations or collaborations
- Evidence of multi-institutional and leveraged funding with examples of sources (15%)
- Participating institutions and units (5%) (**page 4 only**)

Nominations will be **no more than 3 single spaced pages** (Times Roman 12 point and one inch margins) plus a 1-page summary of Participating institutions and units (alphabetized) for a **total of 4 pages**. Regions may utilize other information in selecting their nominee. The final regional nomination should be submitted by email to the Offices of the regional Executive Directors, by **c.o.b. February 28, 2020**:

Chris Hamilton, North Central <christina.hamilton@wisc.edu>

David Leibovitz, Northeast <david_leibovitz@uri.edu>

Donna Pearce, South <donna_pearce@ncsu.edu>

Bret Hess, West <brethess@level5ag.com>

Dr. Alton Thompson, ARD <athompson1@ncat.edu>