

ADDRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES IN RESEARCH AGENDA ON SOIL & LAND

■ Annette Gatchett (U.S. EPA)



Health
Societal Demands
Cities
Jobs
Soil
Ecosystem Services
Spatial Planning
Farming
Natural Capital
Resources
Land-Use
Water

World Soil Day
European Commission

Addressing societal challenges in a research agenda on soil & land

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INSPIRATION impressions



Berlin April 2015



Talking Points



- Thank you to: Conf. Organizers for the invitation to speak
- We heard earlier about the Why we need to talk about Soil and Land and the why we need a strategic plan for research. Now we will talk about how we take the next step in determining the what are the important research areas and how did we come up with the highest priorities.
- I will talk specifically about the how we gathered the information on the research areas of interest.
- Paul will then finish with the final product or Strategic Research Agenda.



Talking Points



- The INSPIRATION project addresses societal needs for a research agenda. Identifying research priorities within a country let alone across countries presents a challenge. There are many similarities but also differences. INSPIRATION was designed to answer the question: How do we identify relevant research needs across 18 (with more than 20 participating) countries? more than 20 countries involved
- While the Project focused on 18 Countries across Europe..... Sustainable Soil and Land use is a Global issue!!!! Many are struggling with how best to address this issue.



Talking Points



- INSPIRATION used a unique way of determining research priorities or way to gather knowledge. It Used Stakeholders to set the priorities rather than:
 1. scientific based literature reviews from an Agencies perspective with a set of scientific disciplines. This may introduce bias.
 2. Or rather than letting political priority or regulatory processes influence the priorities (like the US). EXAMPLE: the US would gather information from our program offices (regulatory) and the Regions that work with the States to implement. Public comment is a part of this process but near the end of the process.
- In these 2 approaches priorities are introduced and then commented on by the general public. Public is asked to verify, comment or suggest additions but the Agenda is set!



Talking Points



- INSPIRATION used a novel Bottom up approach to gather the information. This included the identification of Stakeholders in all sectors at the beginning of the development of the Research Agenda framework and then a constant interaction and communication throughout the process. Truly a Bottom up Approach! This included a layered approach of small groups with Key Stakeholders and then larger attended workshops in each country. More than 500 involved overall.
- This process is interactive.
- Co-development



Talking Points



- **ADVANTAGES**

- Buy in and trust results because they are relevant and because there is ownership. Constant interaction with Stakeholders.
- Integration of different disciplines and expertise. Workshops were used for discussion and debate. This allowed for interaction among individuals who wouldn't normally meet and interact. In addition, the workshops were conducted in 2 languages: native and English
- Clear structured stakeholder engagement and networking.

- **Potential weaknesses**

- By using 1st key stakeholder (smaller group) in each country one could introduce bias by their particular expertise or experiences. However, A counter balance was the checkpoint conferences as a ground truthing or check point.
- Also, working across 18 countries, with varying disciplines and languages you run the risk of losing clarity. Workshops were conducted in the native language and English to help counter balance this weakness.
- The bottom up approach attracted stakeholders differently. Funders while a very important group were not as active participants as the project would have liked.



Talking Points



- As you can see the project was a very Challenging endeavor. At first it may even seem impossible. However great strides have been made and I would say a big success in identifying needed research to balance our demand and supply of land resources so that we can protect and provide proper management.
- The final step to ensure this plan moves to implementation is to focus on common areas of interest and the uptake from outside stakeholders. The matchmaking between funders and the researchers is key. This conference is an opportunity to move this forward. I would hope the participants take advantage of this opportunity.
- **THANK YOU!!!!**