

Land Cover Data Base Project Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Background

The New Zealand Land Cover Database (LCDB) is a digital map of the surface of New Zealand created using satellite imagery. Two editions of this data base (LCDB1 and LCDB2) were produced under contract to the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). The Ministry for Science and Innovation (MSI), with the backing of MfE and other government agencies, has awarded a four year contract to Landcare Research for the production of two further editions of the LCDB and for associated research.

The LCDB Governance Group was formed by MSI and Landcare Research in October 2011 to guide the future development of the project.

These terms of reference were discussed at the inaugural Governance Group Meeting and endorsed on “date to be determined”. Subsequent discussions, at the first two meetings of the group, led to it being retitled as the project “Steering Group” to better reflect it’s function. A governance role over performance on the contract falls to MSI.

Definitions

Collaborator: An agency directly contributing to the production of the LCDB by providing funding, data, checking results or other services.

Stakeholder: A person or group with an interest in the LCDB. This will include data providers, users and funders.

Purpose of the Steering Group

The LCDB Steering Group has been established with the purpose of

- ensuring that the LCDB development meets stakeholder and wider New Zealand needs for land cover mapping, providing a forum where users can identify their individual and collective needs, and identify where the specific needs of different agencies align and where they do not align
- ensuring that key agencies are supportive and engaged with the LCDB development, identifying collaborators who can provide funding or resources for the LCDB project
- identifying the ongoing New Zealand land cover/use requirements beyond this project and how they can best be addressed.

Functions

To oversee the implementation and ongoing development of the LCDB by:

- ensuring robust project management methodologies are implemented, including:
 - agreeing on project plans and communication plans providing advice to the project manager
- assisting MSI in its governance role as required
 - ensuring reporting to funding agencies

- providing guidance on the base LCDB product
- helping set the high level direction of the LCDB research programme
- deciding priorities for developing supporting infrastructure such as delivery systems or online user updating
- identifying contributing collaborators and coordinating their needs
- ensuring the Intellectual Property and copyrights rights of all parties are not compromised by the development or operation of the database
- deciding policy on release of data, timing etc
- ensuring developments of the LCDB are synergistic with activities of the Geospatial Office and other government initiatives to develop integrated geospatial data
- facilitating information flow and communication about the project into, and beyond, the LCDB.

Comment [e1]: The one issue that this might give rise to is a concern that this might limit Landcare's future commercial activities around other uses of the LCDB or data stored therein. I don't think the term "synergistic" limits this, but members might need to think carefully about this.

Membership

The initial members of the Steering Group will be appointed by MSI from organisations collaborating in this project, along with any other person(s) co-opted as a temporary non-voting member of the Group to provide expertise. The Group may appoint further members as required to represent the collaborating agencies.

The Chair of the Steering Group will be chosen by consensus from the members. Initially, and for the first year, MSI will chair the Group.

Workings of group

The Steering Group will:

- work through email, teleconference, videoconference or meetings.
- meet as required through the life of the contract, initially it is anticipated this will be 2 monthly. The frequency of the meetings is likely to vary over time, depending on the stage of the land cover research programme and the delivery cycle.
- work by majority agreement. In the event of a tied vote the Chair will prevail.
- alternates to cover absent members are allowed

Meetings of the Group will be hosted by MSI at their Wellington offices unless otherwise agreed by the Group. Administration will be provided by Landcare Research. Minutes from Group meetings will be posted in the Steering Group members section of the LCDB website.

The Steering Group will report to Landcare Research, who are ultimately responsible for delivery of the project.

Comment [e2]: This directs responsibility back to Landcare Research given their contractual obligations and allows MSI to maintain an objective role in administering and reviewing/auditing the contract.

Interaction with Stakeholder Advisory Group

The wider Stakeholder Advisory Group will be formed by Landcare Research to provide technical input into the LCDB development, including advice on technical options or changes that would improve the delivery of the LCDB project. This group will provide guidance and an assurance that the information and quality of data provided by the LCDB is assessed, documented and meets expectations.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group will report to Landcare Research and, in the case of any significant decisions, recommend actions to the next Steering Group meeting that follows their own.