STRATEGY FOR
INDUSTRY LED
ADOPTION
ACTIVITIES
IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY
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Appendix 1 – example of the diverse investment and delivery of adoption services in the sugar industry. 17
1. Summary

This strategy was commissioned by the SRA Board and aims to support increased uptake and implementation of new and existing technologies in the sugar industry. The development of this strategy involved review of successful models in other industries and extensive consultation with stakeholders including regional productivity services boards, millers, canegrower groups, key investors and government. The purpose of this document is to summarise the findings of this review and consultation process and outline plans for improving regional service delivery in this area.

Analysis of extension and adoption programs in Dairy, Grains, Cotton and Banana industries identified four key elements of well-functioning extension and adoption systems:

1) Clear strategy which defines and sets targets for end user change;
2) Consistent processes which link regional priorities and activities on the ground with industry strategies;
3) Resourcing models which enable the capacity to deliver and provide for ongoing industry capability development, and;
4) Systems which enable attribution, accountability, and evaluation of success.

With regards to stakeholder perceptions of the ability of the current sugar adoption ‘system’ to enable these key elements, the following key messages emerged from the consultations:

• The sugar industry has an active but highly fragmented service delivery environment;
• SRA suffers from a lack of visibility on the ground;
• There are limited examples of benefit cost thinking in adoption service delivery;
• Inadequate processes for linking regional investors and stakeholders with the decision-making level of SRA;
• Clear opportunities to drive greater co-ordination and standards in adoption service delivery;
• Scope for greater collaborative investment between SRA, EHP and DAF, and;
• SRA’s research portfolio is a valued resource to industry that needs to be better exploited.

The combination of insights from other industries, investor and stakeholder feedback on the current approach has led to four key action areas being identified which will enable the industry to: a) address findings from the review, and b) build a system which enables greater uptake and implementation of new and existing technologies which leads to targeted and measurable practice change. These four actions are:

1) Collaboratively develop investment strategies focused on practice change needs and outcomes;
2) Establish robust adoption priority setting and investment processes built upon:
   a. Regional adoption advisory groups tasked with identifying priorities and developing regional strategies,
   b. Regional annual operating plans which outline all elements of regional service delivery and identify un-funded activities requiring resources, and;
   c. An industry level adoption advisory committee to replace delegates as the key vehicle for end user engagement and investment decision making
3) Establish 2 streams of investment for adoption service delivery:
   a. Core funding to resource industry and regional coordination based on 6 key cane regions and core resources (staff) within each region to enable effective delivery of the model.
   b. An Industry adoption fund to resource collaborative projects developed in regions and where possible linked across regions, which have been designed to address strategic industry issues.
4) Apply a consistent design and evaluation approach to all core and Industry adoption fund strategies and projects.

To ensure these actions are enacted effectively, a number of key principles have been developed to guide implementation of the strategy, namely:

• SRA will provide coordination in adoption service delivery via a regional adoption model based on 6 industry regions:
  1. Far North Queensland
  2. Herbert
  3. Burdekin
  4. Central - Mackay/Proserpine/Plane Creek
  5. Southern – Maryborough/Isis/ Bundaberg
  6. NSW
• SRA will not compete with existing service providers. The regional coordination model will work to identify the organisations best placed to deliver in regions and oversee the delivery of strategic adoption services via the most effective means (eg: service level agreements with 3rd party providers where appropriate).
• SRA will invest in the core funding component of the model which covers regional coordination based on 6 key cane regions, a farm business management program, a graduate recruitment program to ensure ongoing capacity development, and core resources (staff) within each region to enable effective delivery of the model.
• An Industry Adoption Fund will lever external investment to establish a project fund for regional adoption
projects linked to regional strategies, available to all delivery organisations in a region via an annual investment process.

- SRA will work to establish co-investment models with other investors in areas of shared strategic intent to ensure the sustainability of the approach.

- The development and delivery of regional strategies will be overseen by a regional adoption advisory group. Regional adoption advisory groups will replace delegates as the key vehicle for regional engagement within SRA.

- Regional strategy development will be a collaborative effort between SRA, productivity service boards, mills, growers, and other private sector providers within a region. It will be the vehicle for defining what SRA core funded staff will deliver in a region and identify how priorities may be delivered via third parties.

- Where appropriate SRA will utilise existing regional representative groups for the purposes of regional engagement and strategy formation.

- The regional model will be managed by 6 regional coordinators who are responsible for:
  - The development of the regional strategy and associated stakeholder engagement,
  - Direct management of regional SRA adoption staff
  - Links with research/researchers relevant to the region
  - Ensuring regional strategy feeds into an industry adoption strategy
  - The development of a regional AOP which clearly articulates who is delivering what relative to the strategy
  - Monitoring and evaluation of delivery and impact against the AOP and regional/industry strategies
  - Being the key contact between SRA, growers, millers and other service providers in the regions.

- An Executive Manager – Regional Delivery, will serve as the key conduit for regional co-ordinators and other stakeholders to engage with the ‘centre’ of SRA. They will also serve as the executive officer for the industry adoption advisory group, oversee the development of regional AOP’s, manage SRA staff and facilitate cross regional linkages.

- All elements of the SRA delivery plan will be project based with each project being built using contemporary design and evaluation methods. Benefit cost thinking will be applied to all elements of SRA service delivery.

- SRA will endeavour to co-locate staff within productivity service boards where appropriate.

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**THE DIAGRAM BELOW SUMMARISES THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THIS STRATEGY:**

- **Adoption Fund Investor steering committee**
- **Adoption Fund Applications**
  - Adoption fund applications can be across or within regions. Available to all stakeholders. Process is adoption project focused
- **Industry adoption strategy**
- **Industry adoption advisory group**
  - Regional strategies gathered up into an industry strategy which guides SRA and Adoption Fund strategy
- **SRA strategy**
- **SRA Executive Manager – Regional Delivery**
  - Executive Manager is key conduit for regions to SRA. Overseas AOP’s, manages SRA staff and facilitates key cross regional linkages

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**Burdekin**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

**Far North Queensland**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

**Herbert**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

**Central**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

**Southern**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

**NSW**
- Regional adoption advisory group
- SRA regional coordinators
- Regional service delivery – AOP’s as required
- Growers, Millers, Regional linkages

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2. Context for this Strategy

SRA’s Strategic Plan has identified “Adoption” as one of its Key Focus Areas and has developed an Adoption strategy that aims to improve the uptake and implementation of new and existing technologies. SRA appointed Rural Consulting Group to undertake a review of the industry’s current approach to adoption with the key objective of developing a strategy which would lead to targeted, measurable practice change. Terms of reference for this review covered elements of review of successful approaches in other industries, engagement with key industry stakeholders and recommendations around how to progress an adoption system which benefits all elements of the Sugar industry.

The review has seen 40 groups and representative bodies and over 110 individuals engaged in the process of discussing the current state and future of adoption service delivery in the sugar industry. Along with this, a number of regional productivity services boards and canegrower groups were consulted to gain their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach and any changes that may be required.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the findings of the review and outline key actions for improving regional service delivery in this area.
3. Defining adoption

OVERVIEW

There are three main paradigms which inform adoption services globally – transfer of technology, participatory approaches and innovation systems thinking. Adoption services in the sugar industry need to draw on all three in order to be effective. The key element of an effective adoption system is having the structures in place which ensure the right people are engaged in the process of deciding ‘fit for purpose’ adoption approaches.

Throughout the history of agricultural research and development, there have been three primary schools of thought which have informed the design and delivery of extension and adoption services in agricultural industries. These are summarised below:

Transfer of technology

In the transfer of technology (ToT) paradigm, farmers are seen as recipients of technologies generated at research institutes and disseminated to them via extension agents. ToT is described as a top-down approach, characterised by high centrality of technology and level of Government leadership/direction, and low level of participation by end users and other extension providers. Early examples of this approach are the outreach activities from Oxford and Cambridge universities in England, and from Land Grant universities in the USA, during the last part of the nineteenth century, along with state based extension services in Australia during the latter part of the 20th century.

Role of an adoption officer within this paradigm: Conduit, technical specialist, information package developer.

Key methods: On farm demonstration, best practices workshops, fact sheets, technotes, broad based communication, impact evaluation.

Participatory approaches

It became clear in the 1980s and 1990s that the ToT paradigm had limitations with regards to the complex, diverse and risk-prone nature of agriculture, with a more inclusive approach being needed to stimulate further growth and development. Participatory approaches offered potential for complex agricultural and environmental problems to be understood and resolved by farmers. The new paradigm of participatory extension placed emphasis on people rather than technology, and distributed power to participants. Hence, participatory extension is characterised by reduced (moderate) centrality of technology and Government leadership/direction, with a high level of participation by end users and non-government players.

Participatory extension is based on social learning principles, whereby farmers as part of community groups initiate, organize, and take action to achieve common interests and goals. Understanding of technical attributes of technology is only part of the puzzle and participants are more aware of the broader system within which technology is applied and used. While economic factors are important they are not necessarily the dominant motivational drivers.

Role of an adoption officer within this paradigm: Facilitator, need identifier, problem solver

Key methods: Discussion groups, learning groups, workshops, on-farm demonstration, coaching, mentoring, participatory evaluation.

Agricultural Innovation systems

The decline of centralised extension delivery by Governments, a move away from centralised information packaging and towards localised knowledge generation in participatory approaches towards the end of the 20th century, lead to greater diversity in providing agricultural extension and information sources. In the late 1980s, the concept of Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) was introduced in recognition of the involvement of multiple private, public and not for profit groups in rural development. AKIS integrates farmers, researchers, extension practitioners, private providers and education in one system and acknowledges that extension now has a different mix of methods and services. In order to be effective within such an environment, industries need to engage with the whole system and not just assume their priorities and needs will be achieved through acting alone.

Role of an adoption officer within this paradigm: Broker, co-ordinator, developer, designer, stakeholder engagement.

Key methods: Collaborative project development, coalition building, needs analysis, evaluation based design.
A key question for the sugar industry is – which of these is most appropriate for our context?
The answer lies not in the idea of a ‘best bet’ approach, rather in identifying the approach which is the ‘best fit’ for the problem at hand. This is due to the ever-increasing complexity and diversity within the industry. As such, the approach taken to deliver adoption services needs to be defined on a case by case basis, with the role of SRA being to support the process of deciding what “best fit” looks like.
4. The purpose of SRA adoption services in the sugar industry

Given this understanding of the nature of ‘best fit’ adoption approaches, SRA understands the purpose for adoption services over the coming 10 years is as follows:

To support the profitable and sustainable growth of the Australian Sugar Industry through accelerated application of technologies and practices which lead to targeted and measurable practice change.

Acknowledging the systems nature of service delivery in agricultural industries, SRA is acutely aware of the need to work collaboratively with other organisations and providers to ensure an effective and efficient approach to adoption service delivery. As such we see our role and the role of other stakeholders and service providers as follows:

Role of SRA: To enable and facilitate a system that meets levy payer expectations and drives outcomes around productive, profitable and sustainable Sugar Cane production.

Role of other stakeholders and service providers: To work with SRA in the process of defining, designing, and delivering adoption activities which enable clear and measurable change to be achieved in areas of identified need.

It is clear that the development of a ‘fit for purpose’ adoption system will take time as regions engage in the process of defining and designing a new approach. As will be seen from the remainder of this paper, this journey will require a number of changes to how SRA engages with its regional investors and stakeholders to ensure a ‘user driven’ adoption model which a) ensures more strategic investment in practice change outcomes and b) enables better connection between growers, millers, regional service providers and SRA.
5. Key messages from consultations with industry

OVERVIEW

Feedback from consultations suggests: an active but fragmented service delivery environment; a lack of visibility of SRA on the ground; limited examples of benefit cost thinking in adoption service delivery; inadequate processes for linking regional investors and stakeholders with the decision making level of SRA; an opportunity for SRA to drive greater co-ordination and standards in adoption service delivery; scope for greater collaborative investment between SRA, EHP and DAF; and; that SRA research is a valued resource to industry that needs to be exploited.

During the process of consultation, several key messages came through loud and clear and represent the essence of what SRA need to address through a new model of service delivery. These were:

1. An active but fragmented service delivery environment
   The sugar industry has a range of service offerings funded from a variety of sources and delivered through a range of organisations. The shortcoming of this is that in the rush to secure funds, it is easy for organisations to lose sight of the bigger picture of co-ordinated action to achieve large scale change. An associated impact is a lack of coherence around key messages associated with practice changes of critical industry importance and a fragmentation of the service provision environment (see diagram in appendix 1). Most investors in adoption and extension are aware of these challenges and are looking for leadership and co-ordination at the appropriate scale.

2. SRA suffers from a lack of visibility in the field
   Be it due to nostalgia for the BSES days, a failure to understand the transition that occurred upon the formation of SRA or an accurate assessment of reality, many stakeholders view SRA as being absent in the field. This speaks to a limitation of the current model to effectively engage regional stakeholders in the process of defining needs and delivering to those needs in a co-ordinated fashion.

3. SRA is being looked to for coordination and leadership of investments in strategic adoption service delivery.
   It was clear that whilst some would like SRA to revert to the previous BSES model, most realised that the context for this had fundamentally changed and there was no role for SRA in the tactical adoption space. Tactical adoption (ie: responsive service delivery focused on ‘in season’ needs) is being resourced through the productivity service boards and the private sector. As such, SRA needs to define its role around leadership and co-ordination of strategic adoption investments (ie: projects targeting clearly defined practice change needs) at a regional and industry scale (as opposed to the local mill area scale).

4. The capability to assess return on investment in the Sugar industry is limited
   The review highlighted two key areas where this capability is lacking. First is with regards to return on investment through adoption/extension activities. In the face of significant overall investment in adoption/extension (largely through investments addressing Reef objectives) it is surprising to note the relative lack of evaluation and benefit cost analysis of projects. The capacity to link strategy, objectives and targets with service delivery is critical for evaluation of progress, representation of the important work adoption/extension providers do and building staff morale through linking purpose with activity. The second area relates to farm level benefit cost around the application of technologies and practices. The farm business ‘literacy’ of the Sugar industry is at a relatively low level and this is hampering attempts to link economic benefits of practices with adoption approaches targeting change. It also means there is limited capacity to assess the benefits of investment in adoption project ‘a’ versus adoption project ‘b’ if there is no understanding of the farm level benefits of the practice change proposed by each.
5. There is no ‘line of sight’ within SRA to connect the ‘top’ with investors and stakeholders at the regional level

Whilst there are more than enough opportunities for growers and millers to engage in the decision-making processes of the sugar industry, the current prescribed structures do not clearly link the chain of decision making from local growers and millers, to regions and to industry plans and strategies. The view of the majority of SRA delegates engaged was that the current system of participation through this model was ineffective and only loosely linked to strategy. Several delegates also suggested that a greater contribution to industry could be made through improved engagement at the regional level. As such, investors, delegates and stakeholders at the regional level feel disconnected from the strategic and operational elements of SRA.

6. SRA is well placed to provide industry wide coordination and leadership in adoption

It was clear from consultations and accepted by the majority of stakeholders that SRA is well placed to provide the type of industry scale leadership being looked for in the adoption space to link fragmented service delivery. This is due to it being, well resourced, independent, science based, and industry scale.

7. The time is right for a collaborative investment approach to adoption in the sugarcane industry

A combination of factors including the recent review into education and extension in reef catchments, frustration at the fragmented nature of service delivery, this review of SRA adoption and increasing distance from the traumatic demise of BSES/SRDC and the birth of SRA as an organisation, has meant that a unique opportunity exists for investors in sugarcane adoption to develop a unified and targeted industry scale approach to service delivery. Both EHP and DAF have indicated their preparedness to work closely with SRA to deliver more effective and efficient adoption services.

8. SRA’s research portfolio is valued

The research conducted, and invested in, by SRA is a valued asset to industry. SRA is uniquely placed to deliver strong leverage for levy payers due to its collaborative approach to research investment. This is a core strength that needs to be drawn upon when implementing a new adoption strategy. It also highlights the need to address the challenges associated with adoption to ensure investments in research are delivering value for growers and millers.
6. Key insights from review of other industries

OVERVIEW

Analysis of extension and adoption systems in Dairy, Grains, Cotton and Banana industries identified four key elements of well-functioning extension and adoption systems: Industry level strategies which clearly define and target end user change; investment processes which link regional priorities and activities on the ground with industry scale strategies; resourcing models which enable the capacity to deliver and provide for ongoing capability development, and; appropriate systems for attribution, accountability and evaluation.

The review of extension systems in other industries and associated projects exploring this topic at the national and state level, combined with the consultations with industry, provided rich context for the review of the Sugar Industry’s approach to adoption. From this, four key elements of an effective adoption system were identified. These are discussed below:

1. An industry level extension/adoption strategy targeting end user change

The past 10 years has seen significant change in the adoption landscape within the Sugar Industry. This has been characterised by a shift in primary responsibility from BSES/state based organisations to industry owned organisations. In the process, the focus has been on ensuring continuity of service and delivering activity which meets the immediate needs of growers and millers. Whilst much of this activity has been well received and added value to growers and millers in the short term, it has been fragmented by region and not necessarily addressing root causes of productivity constraints on farms. This is largely due to there not being an overarching strategy, focused on end user change, to guide activity. As such, a key need is for a national level strategy which links broader R&D objectives to the farm level change required to achieve these. Such strategies have some core requirements, namely:

- A clear articulation of the problems and opportunities facing growers and millers in each relevant farm management domain
- A description of the changes required to address these problems and realise these opportunities, along with the benefits of doing so
- A description of the strategies that will be employed, by who to enable these changes
- A description of measures and targets by which progress can be assessed.

2. An investment process which links regional priorities and activities with industry adoption strategies

Whilst slightly different in the specific approach to sign off on agreed activities, there is consistency across industries with how priorities are identified and then delivered on. This process sees:

- Regional engagement at the grassroots with relevant stakeholders, including levy payers, researchers, and delivery groups to identify key areas for action
- A process to refine these into a coherent set of priorities that links with broader strategy
- The development of project and annual operating plans by delivery teams which address these priorities.
- Review and sign off by investors prior to funding

- Monitoring of progress against deliverables through milestones
- Feedback into the refinement of national strategies and regional priorities.

This process places a premium on end user engagement and strategy as a guide to investment decision making. Current systems and processes within the sugar industry don’t allow for this to occur in an effective fashion.

3. A resourcing model which enables the capacity to deliver and ongoing capability development

Both the cotton and dairy industry models have a strong focus on capacity and capability to deliver. This focus necessitates a resourcing model to enable this. A clear message from both the consultations and the review into extension and education by the Queensland state government is that capacity and capability are persistent issues for extension and adoption. Adequate resourcing, on the surface, would seem to be a key element of any model aiming to address this issue. However, what has been observed in the sugar industry is resources being placed into extension through a range of organisations, particularly in reef catchments. Combining all sources of funding provides an estimated spend on extension/adoption in sugar cane...
dominated catchments over the coming four years of up to $20 million approx. per year. Whilst overall resource levels for an industry owned model may be perceived as an issue, total resourcing for industry adoption/extension is not at this time. As such, there needs to be a resourcing model which leverages existing investment in industry adoption and enables appropriate scale to provide career pathways and professional development opportunities for staff, to enable more effective, efficient and coordinated service delivery.

4. Appropriate systems for attribution, accountability, and evaluation

Put simply, any system that is investing millions of dollars of levy and tax payer funds needs to: a) provide credit where credit is due (attribution to investors), b) ensure that funding recipients did what they said they would do (accountability) and c) be able to measure the impact of activities and use this for continuous improvement and innovation (evaluation). Underinvestment in these aspects of an extension/adoption system leads to a vicious cycle where investors are reluctant to spend because they aren’t sure what they are getting for their money, deliverers struggle for impact because they are spending too much time trying to access funds and not delivering, and evaluation does not occur for resourcing reasons which leads to an inability to represent the impact of work back to investors.
7. Actions to drive change

OVERVIEW

Four key action areas have been identified through the review and endorsed by the SRA board to enable SRA to a) address findings from the review and b) enable an adoption system which best serves industry stakeholders. These are:

1) Collaboratively develop regional and industry investment strategies focused on practice change needs and outcomes;

2) Establish robust adoption priority setting and investment processes built upon a) regional adoption advisory groups tasked with identifying priorities and developing regional strategies, b) Regional annual operating plans which outline all elements of regional service delivery and identifies un-funded activities requiring resources, and c) An industry level adoption advisory committee to replace delegates as the key vehicle for end user engagement and investment decision making.

3) Establish 2 streams of investment for adoption service delivery: 1 - Core funding to resource: industry and regional coordination based on 6 key cane regions: a farm business management program to build the economic literacy of the industry; a graduate recruit program to ensure the ongoing capacity development, and; core resources (staff) within each region to enable effective delivery of the model.  2 – An Industry adoption fund: to resource collaborative projects developed in regions and where possible linked across regions, which have been designed to address strategic industry issues.

4) Apply a consistent design and evaluation approach to all core and adoption fund strategies and projects.

To progress these core elements of an effective adoption system and address the key messages which emerged through stakeholder engagement, the following key actions have been proposed. These are described below along with the key challenges and opportunities they are aiming to address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES TO REALISE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. An industry wide adoption strategy specifically targeting end user change | • Strategic direction for adoption delivery is limited.  
• Limited organisational leadership and structure to support adoption service delivery.  
• Limited ability for stakeholders to see where adoption fits in the SRA business.  
• Communications and adoption not being driven by change objectives.  
• Poor morale of SRA adoption staff.  
• No clear articulation of SRA’s role relative to other service providers and groups.  
• Tactical and responsive activities dominating adoption delivery.  
• Lack of co-ordination across, and sometimes within, regions which leads to replication and inefficiency.  
• Fragmented nature of investment in extension and adoption. | • Provide clear direction for SRA staff and build morale.  
• Clarify the role of SRA relative to other service providers – productivity service boards, NRM groups and private sector.  
• Drive standards and provide leadership around adoption service design and delivery.  
• A strategy that is built on industry change objectives, not technical outputs alone.  
• A resource to mobilise industry stakeholders and more effectively align delivery with government to leverage investment.  
• Provide leadership in identifying key strategic interventions required to enhance industry sustainability and profitability. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Recommended Actions for 1.</strong></th>
<th><strong>1. Develop regional and industry investment strategies focused on end user practice change:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1. Using core elements of the adoption investment process (recommendation 2), build collaborative regional investment strategies focused on practice change needs and outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2. Gather all regional strategies into an industry level adoption strategy and use this as a key resource in building SRA’s broader industry strategy.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2. An investment and delivery planning process which links regional priorities and activities with an industry adoption strategy</strong></th>
<th><strong>2. Establish robust adoption priority setting and investment processes built upon:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of clarity around how growers and millers can participate in the adoption development and investment process.</td>
<td>2.1. Regional adoption advisory groups which inform and oversee the development of regional adoption priorities and strategies (recommendation 1.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No clear mechanism for researchers, millers, growers and other industry stakeholders to define the adoption agenda for sugarcane regions.</td>
<td>2.2. A regional annual operating plan which outlines all elements of regional service delivery, describes deliverables for SRA staff relative to other providers, identifies un-funded activities requiring resources and links all delivery to regional and industry strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Significant fragmentation of extension services.</td>
<td>2.3. An industry level adoption advisory committee comprising of representatives of regional advisory groups and chartered with ensuring efficiency of service delivery across regions. This group will replace delegates as the key vehicle for end user engagement and work with SRA and other service providers to sign off on annual investments in adoption service delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Limited collaboration within and across some regions.</td>
<td><strong>3. A resourcing model which enables a) the capacity to deliver the strategy and b) ongoing capability development of adoption staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weak link between SRA research investment and adoption delivery.</td>
<td>• SRA lacks visibility in the regions.</td>
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<td>• Unclear role for SRA delegates.</td>
<td>• 50/50 split of adoption roles means staff are stretched and not effectively building relationships with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Absence of leadership on how best to deliver adoption in sugarcane regions.</td>
<td>• Recruitment of staff challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to investment via the RFP has been difficult as the process is designed primarily for research projects.</td>
<td>• Team not big enough to effectively cultivate skills and career pathways.</td>
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<td>• A sense that SRA is absent ‘on the ground’.</td>
<td>• Lack of whole farm business capability amongst adoption providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A model of investment which is driven by ‘end users’.</td>
<td>• Limited economic analysis of research impacts to define benefits to growers and millers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A clear line of sight between local, regional and industry scale investment in adoption to address the problems being faced by growers and millers.</td>
<td>• Limited project design, evaluation and stakeholder engagement skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The development of clear roles for industry representatives and SRA delegates.</td>
<td>• Limited career pathways and therefore ability to attract and retain staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A collaborative model of needs identification and problem solving.</td>
<td>• Ensure enough resource in regions to build relationships with key growers, millers and service providers taking into account inter regional equity considerations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dedicated resources for adoption projects, linked to strategy (as opposed to research projects).</td>
<td>• More direct communication with growers and millers, linked to relevant problems and opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Moving from a local scale to a regional (horizontal) and industry (vertical) scale to gain efficiency and greater co-ordination of effort.</td>
<td>• A clearly identifiable SRA leader in each region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A model of investment which is driven by ‘end users’.</td>
<td>• Regional resources to manage and facilitate SRA activities such as forums, updates etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A clear line of sight between local, regional and industry scale investment in adoption to address the problems being faced by growers and millers.</td>
<td>• Promote regional innovation through strategic investments in grower/miller led projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The development of clear roles for industry representatives and SRA delegates.</td>
<td>• Provide leadership around whole farm business capability development in the Sugarcane industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A collaborative model of needs identification and problem solving.</td>
<td>• Provide careers/career pathways for adoption personnel.</td>
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### Recommended Actions for 3.

3. Establish 2 streams of investment for adoption service delivery: Core funding for SRA staff and an adoption fund for strategic adoption project delivery:

- **3.1. Core funding to resource:**
  - 3.1.1. Industry and regional coordination based on 6 key cane regions, with regional coordinators reporting to an executive manager of regional delivery within SRA.
  - 3.1.2. A farm business program which oversees an industry farm business monitor project and farm business/economic analysis of SRA research outputs relevant to adoption activities.
  - 3.1.3. An industry wide graduate recruit program which ensures ongoing development of capacity in adoption service provision.
  - 3.1.4. Core resources (staff) within each region to enable effective delivery of the model.

- **3.2. An Industry Adoption fund to resource:**
  - 3.2.1. Collaborative projects developed in regions and where possible linked across regions, which have been designed to address strategic industry issues.
  - 3.2.2. A governance process overseen by key investors (ie: SRA EHP, DAF) which enables agency level coordination in the area of adoption.

### 4. Appropriate systems for attribution, accountability, and evaluation.

- **Limited examples of project and program design which link problems, practice, change areas, benefits and strategies.**
- **Very little evidence of evaluation and systems for data collection and analysis (DAF and EHP excluded).**
- **No strategy based project design.**
- **SRA lacks visibility 'on the ground'.**
- **Current systems of communication struggle for credibility and respect.**
- **Limited benefit: cost thinking evident in project design and communication.**

- **Effective strategy, design and evaluation enables the industry to represent its value to investors.**
- **Good data helps communicate impact from investments.**
- **A greater, targeted presence of SRA in regions will help address perceptions of SRA's absence.**
- **Strong evaluation processes enable SRA to better argue for co-investment in supporting change at the farm level.**

### Recommended Actions for 4.

4. Apply a consistent evaluation and design approaches to all SRA adoption strategies and projects:

- **4.1. All staff associated with adoption project development and delivery to be trained in the application of contemporary design and evaluation techniques.**
- **4.2. Individual project evaluation plans to be collated into an industry scale monitoring and evaluation plan which ensures efficiency of data collection and reporting linked to strategy.**
- **4.3. Expectations for all projects delivered via the innovation fund to meet standards for design and evaluation.**
8. Principles to guide implementation of actions

- SRA will provide coordination in adoption service delivery via a regional adoption model based on 6 industry regions:
  1. Far North Queensland
  2. Herbert
  3. Burdekin
  4. Central - Mackay/Proserpine/Plane Creek
  5. Southern – Maryborough/Isis/Bundaberg
  6. NSW.

- SRA will not compete with existing service providers. The regional coordination model will work to identify the organisations best placed to deliver in regions and oversee the delivery of strategic adoption services via the most effective means (e.g., service level agreements with 3rd party providers).

- SRA will invest in the core funding component of the model which covers regional coordination based on 6 key cane regions, a farm business management program, a graduate recruitment program to ensure ongoing capacity development, and core resources (staff) within each region to enable effective delivery of the model.

- An Industry Adoption fund will lever external investment to establish a project fund for regional adoption projects linked to regional strategies, available to all delivery organisations in a region via an annual investment process.

- SRA will work to establish co-investment models with other investors in areas of shared strategic intent to ensure the sustainability of the approach.

- The development and delivery of regional strategies will be overseen by a regional adoption advisory group. Regional adoption advisory groups will replace delegates as the key vehicle for regional engagement within SRA.

- Regional strategy development will be a collaborative effort between SRA, productivity service boards, mills, growers, and other relevant service providers within a region. It will be the vehicle for defining what SRA core funded staff will deliver in a region and identify how priorities may be delivered via third parties.

- Where appropriate SRA will utilise existing regional representative groups for the purposes of regional engagement and strategy formation.

- The regional model will be managed by 6 regional coordinators who are responsible for:
  o The development of the regional strategy and associated stakeholder engagement,
  o Direct management of regional SRA staff
  o Links with research/researchers relevant to the region
  o Ensuring regional strategy feeds into an industry adoption strategy
  o The development of a regional AOP which clearly articulates who is delivering what relative to the strategy
  o Monitoring and evaluation of delivery and impact against the AOP and regional/industry strategies
  o Being the key contact between SRA, growers, millers and other service providers in the regions.

- An executive manager – regional delivery will serve as the key conduit for regional co-ordinators and other stakeholders to engage with the ‘centre’ of SRA. They will also serve as the executive officer for the industry adoption advisory group, oversee the development of regional AOP’s, manage SRA staff and facilitate cross regional linkages.

- All elements of the SRA delivery plan will be project based with each project being built using contemporary design and evaluation methods. Benefit cost thinking will be applied to all elements of SRA service delivery/investment.

- SRA will endeavour to co-locate staff within productivity service boards where appropriate.
Appendix 1 – example of the diverse investment and delivery of adoption services in the sugar industry.

FUNDERS:
Over $80 million spent in 5 years

- Federal Government - $24.5 million - 21/22
- State Government - $19 million - 19/20
- SRA - $3 million per year
- Prod services boards - $5.5 million per year

PROJECTS:
At least 7 major projects. Numerous smaller projects with extension/development elements

- Project Uplift - $4.5m till 21/22
- Q Canegrowers: Reef Trust IT project $7m till 19/20
- BMP - $8m till 19/20
- MIPs - $3m till 19/20
- Pest disease, varieties - $5.5m/yr
- Project catalyst - $3m till 18/19
- Reef Alliance - $17m till 18/19
- EHP extension - $10m till 18/19
- Adoption program - $3m/yr
- Q Canegrowers - Reef trust IV project $7m till 19/20
- BMP - $6m till 19/20
- MIPs - $3m till 19/20
- Pest disease, varieties - $5.5m/yr
- Project catalyst - $3m till 18/19
- Reef Alliance - $17m till 18/19
- EHP extension - $10m till 18/19
- Adoption program - $3m/yr

DELIVERY PARTNERS:
Over 30 individual organisations engaged in aspects of project delivery

CURRENT PROJECTS
Current projects under the Reef Water Quality Program dedicated to farming communities include:

- RP20C Burdekin Nitrogen Project
- RP105G Spatial arrangement and seasonal dynamics of cover in grazing lands
- RP112G Mapping soil erodibility in the Fitzroy Basin
- RP120C Nitrogen use efficiency program
- RP128G Sources of bioavailable particulate nutrients
- RP129C Alternative pesticides – water quality guideline development (for selected high priority pesticides discharged to the Great Barrier Reef)
- RP132G Accelerating the use of FORAGE and other complementary tools to support sustainable grazing land practices
- RP140B Economic assessment of Banana Best Management Practice (BMP)
- RP143C Qualifying residual soil nitrogen in sugarcane beds in the Burdekin
- RP152P Griffith University cost-effective restoration of wetlands that protect GBR
- RP155C Sub-soil constraints mapping to inform nutrient management in cropping industries
- RP161C Complete nutrient management planning for cane farming
- RP164C Farmers for the future
- RP166C Enhanced efficiency fertiliser deep drainage monitoring for ‘Smart blended use of enhanced efficiency fertilisers to maximise profitability’ - Rural RDD for profit project
- RP167C Sandy Creek – on-farm change for water quality improvement
- RP169C Connecting cane farmers to local wetlands
- P173G Cost-effective management to improve land condition