

ADVISORY BOARD INTERVIEW REPORT

APRIL 2023

This document provides an overview of the results of the AFRI SAS Soil to Society Advisory Board Interviews. OEIE received responses from four out of six Advisory Board members, with three respondents agreeing to interviews and one response by email, for a **66.7% response rate**.

Project Benefits

- Strong leadership
- Benefits a wide range of stakeholders
- Transdisciplinary nature of the project

"Its greatest strength is addressing the many dimensions of a biofortification project—from crop science to human health to stakeholder education—and bringing many perspectives to the project, which enhances its effectiveness."

Expectations of Project Progress

Project success will be evidenced by:

- Involving stakeholders across the spectrum of agriculture.
- Benefitting stakeholders (researchers, consumers, industry, culture).
- Student instruction and teacher professional development.

"Farmers and consumers will be the stakeholders who could benefit the most from this project. Farmers may benefit financially from adopting new varieties developed from this project and consumers may derive health benefits from consuming the biofortified varieties developed from this project."

Engagement

Advisory Board members contribute specific expertise in:

- Nutrition
- Healthcare
- Crop genetics

The project can improve advisory board utilization by:

- Obtaining Advisory Board perspectives on research updates.
- Soliciting Advisory Board feedback more frequently.

Barriers to Implementation

Advisory Board members identified the complex transdisciplinary nature and wide variety of stakeholders involved in Soil to Society as a potential complication and suggested mitigation strategies:

- Emphasize and plan for consumer and health-related end goals early in the project.

"Putting some focus on that more distal end of the societal benefit or the patient benefit. I think that's an area that probably needs a little bit of impetus and support and connectivity."

Suggestions

Advisory Board members contributed the following suggestions for project success:

- Emphasize and allocate more room for connections with stakeholders at the annual meeting.
- Hold regular meetings for postdocs and students without leadership present to give updates, troubleshoot, and practice presentations.
- Emphasize federal delegate outreach for funding advocacy and awareness.
- Utilize the Advisory Board (if needed).



CONCERNS



Lack of Advisory Board engagement

"When providing research updates, team leaders could solicit comments/feedback from the Advisory Board."



Connecting to end-goal stakeholders

"Putting that end stage up front in the presentations... would catalyze a lot more thinking across that whole trajectory, from soil on up."

"To be looking for additional funding sources to continue the work and expand the work...it would be nice to have some symposia...not just at the university, but more broadly to highlight some of the work."



Lack of funding

"I think there should be more federal-delegate outreach... More outreach to the various federal-delegations of the teams involved to advocate for this type of funding as well as to highlight the work and reveal what potential it has."



SOLUTIONS



- Solicit Advisory Board for opinions and recommendations on research results.



- Prioritize Advisory Board in team meetings and annual meetings (i.e. solicit feedback on items for discussion, move allocated time for the Advisory Board to the beginning of meetings).



- Ensure and emphasize end-goal stakeholders and their needs (i.e. health/medical care) in annual meetings, lab design, testing, etc.
- Organize and direct publication topics to better meet goals.
- Use additional funds for public symposia and solicit federal-delegates for finances (see below) and increase awareness.
- More federal-delegate outreach for funding advocacy and awareness.
- Search/acquire additional funding (i.e. grants).