



Strategic Plan

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Introduction

The Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists (NSIA) has been serving its members for almost sixty years. While unique in many ways, the Institute is confronting challenges common to other member organizations including an evolving regulatory environment, emerging technology and resource constraints. The Institute has chosen to face these challenges and actively guide and influence the future of the organization by developing a three year Strategic Plan – the first in the history of the organization. With a membership base that is stable and relatively young, NSIA is well positioned to implement

this Strategic Plan.

Recognizing the need to be a proactive organization, NSIA identified a number of issues and impending changes that re-enforce the need for long term planning:

- The Institute has been run with a very small staff complement (a part-time Executive Director) and no permanent office. The current Executive Director will be retiring in the short to medium term – it is time to assess and evaluate organ-

izational and human resource needs and determine the best way to address them.

- There has been a lack of clarity and consensus within the membership of what the role and focus of the organization should be.
- The Institute recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with all of the provincial institutes of agrology to work together to harmonize and

1. NSIA Legislation

<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/agrologi.htm>

2. NSIA By-Laws

<http://nsagrologists.ca/bylaws.shtml>

3. NSIA Website

<http://nsagrologists.ca/>



coordinate registration, professional development, disciplinary and credentialing procedures and requirements.

There is a desire to strengthen ties and working relationships with other agricultural groups.

- The national accreditation process for agricultural programs at the post secondary level was discontinued three years ago, and no new program has been implemented to replace it.

This Strategic Plan was developed by the elected Council, with extensive communication and consultation with the membership and stakeholders in the agricultural sector. In addition, comparative research was under-

taken examining how other provincial institutes of agrology and other membership organizations are addressing the issues currently confronting NSIA.

While compliance remains a key role for NSIA (as outlined in the Agrologists Act) and significant effort will go into ensuring needed resources are available to support this function, this Plan also reflects NSIA’s ongoing commitment to professional development, public education and collaboration with stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

This Strategic Plan describes NSIA's mission, vision and the three year goals. Implementation will be achieved through a three year implementation plan, to be reviewed and updated annually. Outcomes and achievements, as measured against the Strategic Plan goals will be reported to the membership annually.

The mission states the purpose and mandate of the organization.

Mission
For the benefit of public safety and the integrity of agricultural science, NSIA ensures the proficiency and competence of Professional Agrologists through licensing, regulatory compliance, professional development, member support and public education.

The vision describes the ideal future or desired state.

Vision
NSIA members are sought for professional advice in agrology

Three year goals

The three year goals articulate the changes required to realize the mission and vision.

Goal #1 - Define in more detail the practice of agrology and supporting areas of practice.

While the Agrologists Act provides a definition of agrology, Council heard from members and stakeholders alike that more detail and specificity is needed for members and the public to understand who must and/or can be a member of NSIA, especially given the changes occurring in the agricultural sector and the emergence of new fields within it. The foundation for work under this goal has been laid with NSIA's participation in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the provincial agrology institutes, which includes working together to identify nationally recognized areas of practice.

Goal #2 - Heighten awareness of the role of NSIA and the profession of agrology.

To ensure that members of the agricultural sector and the public seek guidance from agrologists, it is necessary for them to be aware of what Professional Agrologists (P.Ag.) have to offer: objective provision of information, a voice of reason and credible advice on topics of importance in agriculture. The focus of effort under this goal will be to highlight the "public good" that will result from hiring a P.Ag. Future work related to this goal will be to ensure membership in NSIA is a requirement for employment of agrologists in Nova Scotia.

Goal #3 - Build alliances within the agricultural sector and with provincial agrology institutes and other professional organizations.

By building alliances within the agricultural sector, other agrology institutes and professions who are facing similar challenges, NSIA can share knowledge

and identify potential solutions and options, pursue common interests together and increase the likelihood of success for the benefit of its members. Signing the national MOU is a first step in this direction, but additional work will be undertaken to create relationship with other organizations in the agricultural sector such as the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture, AgraPoint and the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (who provided input in the development of this plan). Furthermore, relationships will need to be with built other professions whose mandate and work overlap with NSIA's, including engineers, veterinarians and foresters.

Goal #4 - Define more clearly the educational requirements of Professional Agrologists (P.Ag).

While the Agrologists Act states that members must possess: "a degree





in agriculture from a university or college recognized by the Council”, members and stakeholders have been clear that this requirement needs more detail behind it (such as course and curriculum requirements) and reconsideration of the requirement for a degree in agriculture. It is possible to obtain a degree in agriculture having taken very few courses in agriculture and at the same time one could have a degree in engineering or economics with a strong focus in agriculture, without possessing a degree in “agriculture”.

Goal #5 - Support the development of a national Accreditation process.

NSIA’s bylaws require that a member: “holds a four year degree from an AIC Accredited Program”. This accreditation program was suspended three years ago and to date no replacement has been established. Preliminary work

in this area will be undertaken as part of the MOU whereby provincial agrology institutes will work to harmonize credential requirements.

Goal #6 - Make professional development mandatory for Professional Agrologists.

Mandatory professional development is the norm in all of the other professions examined, including engineering, nursing and forestry. The majority of provincial agrology institutes in Canada have mandatory professional development, with Alberta and New Brunswick having recently introduced it. Mandatory professional development assures the public that Professional Agrologists are committed to maintaining a current knowledge base to support their practice.

Goal #7 - Establish a regulatory compliance policy and process and ensure supporting resources are in place.

Members have asked for clarity on what would happen if a regulatory compliance complaint were brought forward to NSIA. They want to know that there is a method and process to follow for regulatory compliance issues and they want to know what it is. This is a high risk area for NSIA, for if a complaint were brought forward and there was no process in place or resources to support it, the future of the organization could be jeopardized. Regulatory compliance is a core, legislated responsibility that NSIA must be prepared to fulfill.

Taken together the mission, vision and three year goals provide a challenging, yet achievable strategic direction for NSIA, one that positions the organization for future success and addresses the key issues and opportunities identified by members and stakeholders.