

Pilot Application of Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Tool to Council Road Maintenance Programs

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

How sustainable is your Council's road maintenance program?

What are the sustainability strengths and weaknesses of your road maintenance?

How could your Council's road maintenance program be made more sustainable?

How does your Council's road maintenance program rate on sustainability with those of other councils?

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA), the Australian Green Infrastructure Council (AGIC) and the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) invite Australian local councils to nominate to participate in the pilot application of AGIC's Infrastructure Sustainability (IS) Rating Tool to council road maintenance programs.

BACKGROUND

AGIC has developed and launched the IS rating tool, which is now being used to assess new infrastructure projects. The rating tool can also be used to assess the sustainability of infrastructure operations and maintenance, but this has not yet been fully piloted.

AGIC and IPWEA have partnered to identify how the IS rating tool can be used for operation and maintenance programs. The first stage of this work is to explore the tool applicability for road operations and maintenance programs.

For many local councils roads are their largest asset class, and road maintenance is their largest operational activity. 84% of all roads by length are maintained by Australia's 560 local councils. Their total value exceeds \$300 Billion. So, cumulatively, even small improvements in the sustainability of council road maintenance programs can result in enormous benefits.

WHAT IS PROPOSED

This project aims to apply the IS rating tool to the road maintenance programs of two or three local councils, identifying how the tool could be adapted as necessary, to develop and demonstrate a tool that allows local councils to make their road maintenance more sustainable.

It is hoped that the local councils participating might include a:

- large metropolitan or regional council with little new development and a well-established road network
- metropolitan or regional council with considerable new development - 'growth area'
- small rural council with little new development but an extensive sealed and unsealed road network.

IPWEA and the participating councils will meet their own costs. ACELG is providing financial support to help cover AGIC's inputs and project travel costs.

SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS TO BE ASSESSED

The IS rating tool currently allows the following sustainability themes and categories to be assessed:

Management & Governance –

- Management systems
- Decision making
- Procurement & purchasing
- Climate change adaptation

Using Resources –

- Energy & carbon
- Water
- Materials

Emissions, Pollution & Waste –

- Discharges to air, land & water
- Land
- Waste

Ecosystems and Biodiversity –

- Ecosystems & biodiversity

Peoples and Place –

- Community health, well-being & safety
- Natural & cultural heritage
- Urban & landscape design
- Community participation

Innovation -

- Innovation

AGIC intends in the future to add to the rating tool two extra sustainability themes of Economics and Workforce, each with their own categories.

During the assessment iterations in the pilot application, we intend to propose modifications to the current rating tool to facilitate its use for infrastructure operations and maintenance. This could involve 'scoping out' themes or categories, amending threshold descriptions, revising category weights etc.

BENEFITS TO LOCAL COUNCILS PARTICIPATING

- opportunity to self-assess the sustainability of its road maintenance program
- identify areas of sustainability strengths and weaknesses in its road maintenance program and what it can do to rectify weaknesses
- demonstrate leadership in sustainability
- build staff capacity and interest.
- contribute to the further development of this important industry rating tool

WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF THE LOCAL COUNCILS PARTICIPATING

- nominate an experienced engineer or technical staff to undertake the pilot application with close IPWEA support
- allow IPWEA's National Director Sustainability (Dr Stephen Lees) to work in Council's office alongside Council's engineer or technical staff member during the pilot application
- about five person day's work in the council offices is anticipated, spread over four to six weeks
- facilitate access to the relevant Council data needed to evidence the assessment ratings.

WHAT IPWEA WILL CONTRIBUTE

- project management
- facilitate meetings
- invite nominations and select the pilot councils
- ensure its own staff have the necessary training
- work alongside council staff to apply the rating tool
- liaise with AGIC to resolve issues arising from the pilot application
- draft the project reports.

WHAT AGIC WILL CONTRIBUTE

- work with IPWEA to resolve issues arising from the rating tool's application
 - consider proposed modifications to the rating tool to make it more suitable for assessing asset operations.
- PROJECT TIMING
- select councils – Dec 2012
 - three iterations of assessment and resolution of issues – Jan - Mar 2013
 - analysis, discussion and documentation – Apr 2013
 - interim report – May 2013
 - draft and final reports – Jul – Sep 2013.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- project reports to all stakeholders (AGIC, IPWEA, ACELG and participating councils) addressing the following:
 - the process followed
 - key insights and learnings
 - recommendations to AGIC for discussion and decision on how the rating tool should be modified to facilitate its application to infrastructure operations and maintenance
 - self-assessment of the council road maintenance programs (if rating tool allows this)
 - discussion on how the council road maintenance programs rated on the various sustainability categories, areas of strengths and weakness and suggestions on what they could do to improve their program's sustainability weakness
 - recommendations to AGIC on principles to apply when setting fees for rating local council operational programs

SELECTION CRITERIA

- demonstrated interest in sustainability
- high level support
- nomination of a suitable engineer
- good records and record keeping system - to facilitate locating documentary evidence.

HOW TO APPLY

Apply by email to the IPWEA's National Director Sustainability at stephen.lees@ipwea.org.au briefly addressing each of the above four selection criteria. Applications should be received by Monday 19 November 2012.

INQUIRIES

Inquiries by phone to 0412 264 187 or by email to Dr Stephen Lees at stephen.lees@ipwea.org.au.