

RD1.1.4 O6.1 – KE4 Engage with stakeholders and raise awareness of the app. Following discussions review the app and collate changes needed for it to meet requirements.

Summary

The purpose of this document is to summarise the responses received from a consultation on the draft soil erosion reporting tool and to collate the changes which are needed for it to meet requirements.

Versions

Version	Changes	Who
0.1	Draft of consultation and response.	DD
1.0	Made available for download	DD

Contents

Summary	1
1. Background	3
Soil Erosion Application	3
Deliverable	3
Stakeholder Engagement	3
2. Consultation	3
Responses	3
Availability and usability	3
Terms and conditions.....	4
Privacy and moderation	4
3. Response to consultation.....	4
Availability and usability	4
Terms and conditions.....	4
Privacy and moderation	4
4. Summary	5
Consultation	5
Next steps	5

1. Background

Soil Erosion Application

Under the RESAS project RD114 an app for the public to submit observations of soil erosion is being developed. The submission includes a photo of the erosion and a series of observations such as type and cause of erosion and vegetation cover with options selected from menus. This app will also allow users to view existing records from other users which, following moderation by an administrator, will appear as clickable icons on an interactive map. This app will closely follow the design and approach of a now deleted web application formerly hosted by SEPA.

Deliverable

This document is a part of the task “RD114 O6.1 – KE4”. The description of this task is as follows: Engage with co-ordinators of ELPEG/ELSEG and SEG to establish best means to facilitate discussion of the App, and to raise awareness, at stakeholder meetings (May 19). From stakeholder discussions, review the test version of the App and collate changes needed for it to meet requirements (Jul 19).

Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure that the app will properly meet the requirements of a cross-section of users a consultation with stakeholders was programmed into the development.

The Soil Engagement Group (SEG) was selected as the most appropriate organisation with which to consult on the draft app and from which the most informed feedback could be expected. An initial request was made in May for the app to be an item in a forthcoming meeting. Due to pressures of a full agenda at the next meeting on 15th August it was not possible for the presentation made in advance of the meeting to be included. However, the app was mentioned briefly to the attendees and the presentation of seven images of screens was subsequently distributed to attendees on 13th September.

2. Consultation

Responses

Responses were received from SEPA and SNH. There was broad support for the creation of an app for non-specialist use in recording instances of soil erosion. A number of observations and some concerns were expressed and these are summarised below.

Availability and usability

The app should be for all users, not just specialists. Instructions should be in plain English and free of jargon and should include example image and text descriptions of existing erosion. Submissions should be by menu options, not text.

It would be helpful if some parts of the submitted information could be optional for inexperienced users, with a request that the moderator could submit the information by inspecting the photo.

If the app is popular it is possible that the interactive map will become cluttered, how will this be handled?

It should be clear that the app is not only for intensively managed agricultural land but also for upland and peatlands too.

Terms and conditions

It is important that the user knows what the app can be used for and what will happen with their submission before they start to use the app. The app should also tell users why they are being asked to collect soil erosion information, why it is useful.

Privacy and moderation

Concern was expressed over the rights of land owners to privacy and of the possibility of users inappropriately accessing private land to use the app. One respondent was concerned that an individual field would be readily identifiable in the app. Several respondents emphasised a requirement for all submissions to be moderated by a responsible person.

3. Response to consultation

Availability and usability

The original content from the web application hosted by SEPA has been obtained and will be used as the basis for the guidance to be included in the new app. To ensure that inexperienced users are not prevented from using the app all of the requested information includes a “do not know” answer among the menu options.

However, the possibility of a switch in the app to allow a user to submit an incomplete record with a request for a moderator to complete the data will be evaluated with the project team. This would require more input from the moderators.

At present when the map is clicked at a location where several records are to be found all the records will be returned in a menu and the user is able to click through them, one at a time. Clustering records, perhaps with a counter, will be evaluated, but it would be more efficient to delay including this until the popularity of the published version of the app is assessed.

Samples of existing erosion will be selected to ensure that a range of land covers and erosion types, including peat, are used.

Terms and conditions

The terms and conditions will appear as a pop-up in the app the first time it is used and will remain available in a separate section for future reference. Discussion is required with stakeholders to produce guidance on text to be included in the app on use of the data and why it is being requested. Following this discussion this information will be included in the app and also in the supporting information that will be included in the app store listing.

Privacy and moderation

Guidance for the use of the app will clearly state that the providers of the app do not encourage users to access private land to report erosion. It would not be possible to have an app with photos of soil erosion which obscures the particular field with erosion. The structure of the app includes a moderation phase in which an administrator uses a password protected website to view each

submission and chooses to authorise or block a record and its photo from appearing in users mobile devices. To further address concerns on privacy which were made during the consultation we propose to add a button in the app by which a user can report a record to the moderators so that it can be reviewed or removed if it is inappropriate. This was not part of the draft app presented to the Soil Engagement Group.

4. Summary

Consultation

Useful feedback was provided by SEPA and SNH staff that will help guide development of the soil erosion app. Further feedback is welcome and can be addressed during the software development. Concerns over the right to privacy of land owners were expressed and these warrant further discussion with the project funders and other stakeholders.

Next steps

A published version of the app is scheduled to be complete by the end of February 2020.