

Position description: Integrative Research Officer

Organisation	Soils For Life
Location	Canberra Region
Title	Integrative Research Officer
Reporting to	Program Manager

Soils for Life is a national, registered charity, whose mission is to support Australian farmers in regenerating soils and landscapes: to build natural and social capital and transform food systems.

Soils for Life is located in Canberra, but Soils for Life projects are conducted Australia-wide. Soils for Life is governed by a Board and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

Soil is one of the earth's most important natural resources and is essential for healthy plant growth, food production and ecosystem services such as clean, plentiful water and air. Our soils help regulate the earth's climate and they store more carbon than all the world's forests combined, making soil regeneration a key plank in efforts to combat climate change and increasing extremes of weather. Yet Australian soils are degraded and are continuing to degrade through erosion and loss of soil function. This threatens not just farm productivity and profitability, but also our nation's food security, access to water and ecological health.

Our solution is to support a growing movement of farmers and rural leaders dedicated to farming in ways that improve soil and bring life back to the land.

What we do

- We ensure the opportunities and challenges of regenerative agriculture are widely shared and understood
- We support farmers to bring their soils back to life
- We help farmers, scientists and decision makers find common ground on the benefits of regenerating soils and landscapes

We do this by

- Sharing information to inform and enable soil and landscape regeneration
- Working with farmers to drive the research they need to improve their soils and landscapes and to understand the economic, social and environmental benefits this presents
- Building farmer networks and creating peer support and learning opportunities to share the benefits and practices of improved soil health
- Brokering collaboration between farmers, scientists and decision makers to find common ground to increase regeneration of soils and landscapes

Position Description

The Integrative Research Officer is responsible for input to the co-design, analysis, integration and writeup of Soils for Life's case studies. Working collaboratively and independently, the Integrative Research Officer will work closely with the Case Study Manager and team of specialists/experts (e.g. soil scientists, ecologists, contractors), to, under direction, manage projects and subprojects as required. The Integrative Research Officer position will be required to engage with farmers, local community groups and other stakeholders. The Integrative Research Officer may be required to travel to project sites throughout Australia to achieve project outcomes.

Specific tasks

- Work closely with the Case Study Manager and other case study team members to plan, implement and coordinate research design, field work, data collection and analysis of case study and other project data.
- Write case study reports that integrate narrative, ecological, social and economic aspects of case study based on the above research process.
- Liaise with landholders, stakeholders and contractors to collect data to build case studies and to deliver outputs (including field days, webinars, films and podcasts).
- Under the direction of the Program Manager, manage projects and subprojects as required.
- Provide input to the design and preparation of project-proposals for project grants.
- Liaise with other team members to ensure that the case study outputs complement and inform Soils for Life Community Engagement and communications programs and meet case study project deliverables.
- Work with the Case Study Manager to ensure that all projects not only align with the strategies and objectives of Soils for Life, but also meet donor and grant program requirements.
- Contribute to a healthy and supportive workplace culture and ensure work safety strategies are implemented throughout project activities.
- Other tasks as directed by the General Manager.

Selection criteria

1. Tertiary qualifications and a minimum of five years' experience in applied human ecology, human geography, agroecology, sustainable agriculture, rural development, natural resource management or similar, and experience and strong interest in soil and landscape regeneration in agriculture.
2. Experience with multi-method research and analysis (particularly qualitative methods), and experience with data analysis software packages (e.g. NVIVO, MaxQDA or similar).
3. Demonstrated experience in, and conceptual understanding of, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research design and methodology.

4. Excellent written, oral and interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to prepare research reports, and information products for a range of audiences as well as presenting at seminars, field days etc.
5. Understanding of key issues of soil and landscape regeneration and function in agricultural landscapes, including soil ecology and biology.
6. Experience and proficiency in working with a range of stakeholders including farmers, community groups, industry and government.
7. Proven ability to contribute to an inclusive, safe and healthy workplace.

Employment period

The position is part-time negotiable and fixed term.

To apply

Please provide a cover letter, resume and responses to each selection criteria before 8 August.

Further information

For further information, please contact: Dr. Katie Ross, katie.ross@soilsforlife.org.au