

Your Vote Matters

ASABE Proposes a Strategic Initiatives Council

Angela Green-Miller



Editor's note: Following a successful petition presented at the Society's annual business meeting, held at last year's annual meeting in Nebraska, a proposal with significant implications for the Society will be included with this year's leadership ballot.

The proposal emerged from work conducted by a task force that recognized a need for the Society to have a structure in which emerging initiatives with potential for providing strategic growth and increased impact for ASABE. Read on to learn more about the proposal.

What will I be voting for?

You will be voting for the creation of a new ASABE council, the Strategic Initiatives Council, which will add a fifth council to ASABE's four existing councils (Membership, Publications, Standards, and Meetings). The full membership must vote on the establishment of a new council. To learn more about the ASABE councils, you can review the ASABE Constitution and Bylaws at <https://asabe.org/Portals/0/AboutUs/Constitution-Bylaws.pdf>.



The annual business meeting was well attended at AIM 2023. The proposal was discussed, and a motion was passed to place the constitutional change to facilitate the formation of a fifth council on the 2024 ballot. Voting runs from January 11 to March 1, 2024.

When will voting happen?

Voting for the proposed council will take place during the annual voting period from January 11 to March 1, alongside the Society elections. ASABE members will need to log into their ASABE member account to cast their vote.

Why has the new council been proposed?

The need for the new council was identified in the process of developing new strategic initiatives over the past several years. Initiatives that cross the boundaries of different ASABE communities need support that is not available within ASABE's current structure. This gap in ASABE's structure is an opportunity to increase the reach and recognition of ASABE as a leader in addressing global challenges.

What is the goal of the new council?

The goal of the Strategic Initiatives Council is to elevate ASABE as a leader in bringing together different disciplines to solve complex problems in environmental, food, and agricultural systems. This new council will support conceptual and early-stage initiatives that integrate the expertise of ASABE members across multiple ASABE communities and with organizations outside ASABE. The council will support opportunities to propose new creative ideas that advance our profession and that expand the reach and impact of ASABE.

Possible outcomes of the Strategic Initiatives Council include addressing pressing challenges that require efforts across different disciplines, leveraging funding to address complex problems, increasing the membership of ASABE, and increasing the engagement of ASABE with external partners and organizations.



January 11 to March 1

Do strategic initiatives already exist within ASABE?

Yes. Recent initiatives include the Circular Bioeconomy Systems Institute (CBSI) and the Alliance for Modernizing African Agrifood Systems (AMAA). Both the CBSI and AMAA have been approved by the Board of Trustees as entities within ASABE. Both the CBSI and AMAA meet the criteria for support by the new council.

More importantly, both of these initiatives could have been accelerated if the Strategic Initiatives Council had existed when they were in their early stages. The need for the Strategic Initiatives Council was identified by the taskforce that led to the creation of the CBSI. New initiatives may emerge from a variety of sources, including existing communities, individual members, and council idea sessions. Many other areas have potential to generate Society-led initiatives, and the new council will support the early stages of these future initiatives.

What will the Strategic Initiatives Council do?

The Strategic Initiatives Council will facilitate the formation of initiatives that create opportunities for ASABE to address pressing challenges. The council will discover, advise, and support interested individuals and groups in navigating opportunities within ASABE. It will establish a mechanism

and best practices for working across the different communities within ASABE and, where appropriate, advise on strategic collaborations and partnerships with organizations outside of ASABE and/or outside the U.S. The Strategic Initiatives Council will support new ideas by providing a place to house, incubate, and incorporate them into the Society.

Why can't this be done within ASABE's current structure?

There is no mechanism in ASABE's current structure to facilitate work across ASABE communities. Previous grass-roots efforts emerged within existing committees, or as special communities, or with no home in the existing structure. Currently, the CBSI does not have a home in ASABE. The AMAA exists within ASABE's Global Engagement Committee.

What happens to an initiative after its early stage?

This is a question that we will address in the process, and we expect to learn a lot along the way. The longevity and permanent needs of initiatives will vary. Some initiatives may need a permanent home, while others may conclude after achieving a specific objective. The proposed council will assist initiatives in the process of finding a home within ASABE.

What has already been accomplished?

In 2022, a taskforce was appointed to explore the challenges within ASABE's current structure, evaluate the need for a Strategic Initiatives Council, and draft changes to the bylaws. The Board of Trustees accepted the proposal, and members attending the 2023 AIM Business Meeting voted to approve the proposed council and send it to the full membership for approval. Because voting by the full membership is required for amendment of ASABE's Constitution, the full membership will vote on the proposed council on the 2024 member ballot.

Where can I learn more?

Join us for an ASABE Member Hour on January 10 from 1:00 to 2:00 EST (www.asabe.org/Event-Detail/strategic-initiatives-council-qa). We will have an open discussion and Q&A session to respond to questions from ASABE members. You can submit questions prior to the discussion here: <https://asabe.org/About-Us/Strategic-Initiatives>. A recording will be available on the ASABE Member Hour YouTube channel after the event:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtUzQeuteqCp18Rs0nnYhRCTNnz6hGBFn

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