

The APSIM Initiative Guiding Principles

Background:

The APSIM Initiative (AI) is an agreement between the parties (CSIRO, The State of Queensland and The University of Queensland) to promote the development and use of APSIM. The AI is managed by a Steering Committee with a Reference Panel providing advice to the Steering Committee on matters relating to APSIM development. New parties are encouraged to join the AI. Access to APSIM source code will be through an *APSIM Community Source Framework*. The Reference Panel has been set up to encourage collaboration and innovation on both science and software development within APSIM, and to oversee and manage all APSIM change and development activities.

Guiding Principles:

Access to APSIM

1. The AI will provide regular official releases of APSIM free of charge for non-commercial use to those who agree to the license terms.
2. Use of APSIM in a commercial setting can only proceed after negotiation and approval of a commercial licence agreement by the AI. This includes use and deployment of APSIM or parts of APSIM by agribusiness, consultants and other commercial parties.

Development of APSIM

3. Modifying existing source code: Licensed users may access and modify all source code. All modifications to APSIM must be submitted to the AI and be subject to the Reference Panel evaluation process before inclusion into the official APSIM release (point 4).
4. Reference Panel evaluation process: All proposed science and source code changes to existing modules in APSIM and proposed new modules will be evaluated by the Reference Panel in terms of science and software quality.
 - a) Existing modules: Where science and software changes are proposed, a rationale and validation tests must be submitted along with the revised source code. The Reference Panel will consider the modifications based on merit. If proposed changes are accepted, the modifications will be committed to version control, examined for system-wide impact, and will become available in a subsequent release. The preferred approach is not to have multiple versions of the same module but to merge alternative approaches.
 - b) New modules: In cases where a module does not currently exist in APSIM, licensed users are encouraged to submit new modules to the AI for inclusion into the official APSIM release after Reference Panel evaluation. New modules will become the property of the AI unless the submitting individual or organisation negotiates an ownership arrangement with the AI.