

1. What was happening in your team/organization that made you apply for a pause or renewal grant? How did it feel to carry out your work amidst the covid-19 pandemic? How did you have to innovate to come together?

When applied for grant-did not know we were on cusp of another world. Inspiration was a unique idea of Soil Health-as a solution of climate change and risk mitigation (WRT to flooding and drought). So risk mitigation was a useful and underused framework for policy levers-opportunity to look at other incentives for Soil Health across US- especially those pricing risks-lenders and insurers have opportunity, but don't know how to evaluate risk. Now building across sectors to build a framework for risk. Focus was how to build model, what data, how to build out.

Partners (not sure about individual names\_-Colorado State (researcher behind COMET tool), UCB agroecologist, Bill Salas (company called DEGEN - thinking you can see from space), Vehens chair of Mich State, C-Roe Technologies, Metta (Open Reverse consulting-facilitator), Jessica PhD UC Davis (also Women in Soils ITP recipients), David Crevit-independent risk analysis (formerly Black Rock Financial), initially included USDA-but couldn't do NDA.

Virtual has actually allowed us to go further-in terms of both duration and depth-and have a series of meetings with facilitators. So missed CO trip. Three deep facilitated. Respect for people's time-not traveling left more time to do the project. Especially child care.

2. What made the Pause (or project) feel special or unique? Please share some aspects of what you did together.

Made a special commitment between events to get to know each other and spend additional time between events - to make up for not having that unstructured time at an in person event. Ease of having a national gathering made up for that.

Used IDEA FLIP-a group whiteboarding tool-that would not have happened in person-trying new platforms and tech was a benefit. Its a space each person can add sticky notes, texts, etc-great visual platform for design of model itself.

3. What are a few key moments/highlights that stuck with you?

Convenings defined key questions and goals for model-enables us to clarify a focus-as simple and elegant as possible. Identified all relevant data sets to use. Over summer applied for AFAR Federal grant-did not get it BUT, raised

matching funds to get going. So have 1/4 of resources needed - so can get going.

Hiring data manager, lead analyst at MSU (grad student)-Big Update-have been developing MOU with a lending partner (cannot disclose who it is presently) - major crop insurer. Building on pioneering efforts to build new tools, in Ag finance. Great that this partner is interested in this work - from Carbon Market, with risk assessment being able to get investors on board. By having producers investing soil health practices - (savings) lead to inspiring--so crunching #s and actuarial science, but also seeing value of engaging producers and risk mitigation.

4. What were some innovations or collaborations that resulted from the pause?

Keys to opening door is starting with Private lending-5, 10, 30 yr loans provide opportunity. Next step will be getting to insurers especially Federal insurers. In terms of building trust, there is interest in this movement - not just sustainable ag, TEK--now industry and politicians from both sides of aisle-are moving into Carbon and Soil Health space-clearing way. (Getting away from Soil Health samples to move to modeling as surrogate).

Expertise of working group formed by ITP was key to building trust. Treat it as BIG DATA issue-decades of data coupled with yield and combining that with soils data. We are also adamant we want industry to provide input on what works-so they can be open to using it. Industry partners input key to get buy in.

5. How do you feel the ITP-funded work has impacted your team/group relationships and communication? What are changes you have noticed in the aftermath?

Great appreciation to ITP-can't imagine pitching this after COVID-19 and having this be a priority during the "emergency response" phase of pandemic, since this is a longer-term effort. Especially sustaining the finance was key. So it's been a privilege. One clear and surprising example-halo of assumptions about working groups focus and availability-enabled full participation and engagement in all sessions-we recognized our shared histories and motivations-participants in high-demand expressed that this "was their most important project" - and VIPs started to realize that other folks of that caliber also were bought in and engagement.

Commitment and buy-in snowballed into a more successful project, esp pre-fundraising.

Some very high-profiled academics-started with deference to their process-but ITP convenings-able to recognize genius and contributions of lower profile participants-so raised their profile, and created a better, more elegant, cleaner process and model building methodology. Distributed leadership - created more fun and effective project in end, breaking out of silos-example crop rotational diversity-bringing innovative elements to traditional set of concerns.

Small grants to think outside box--ITP investment leverage to approximately 10x...additional matching funds. "We simply could not have done the project design and fundraising without ITP support to get us there.." Was an added benefit to have fun in the process.

Amazing that Harley and myself-as marketing people-have been able to make this progress. New forms of collaborative leadership, women's leadership. Need to clarify clear economic incentives to get board.

6. Where are you hoping to go from here? What comes next?

Tomorrow-meeting with individual to help move platform forward-in last stages of technical details-the planned framework. A draft of model available this year - prototype reports for lending partner we have in mind-for this climate, this region, this crop type-here is risk reduction benefits (expressed as a % reduction in risk)-modelers can take that and express as reductions in yield-so it can be expressed as a savings. Pilot - currently a bioregion (3 states).

Assuming models bear out hypotheses, we can go back to funders and expand to other states. Adding Stanford crop-yield model to other agriculture (additional crop types and regions), other lenders already interested.

Main point-gratitude and appreciation of funding process. Climate and Agriculture space-its process work, and very needed. Inexpensive work to move projects forward via relationship building and collaboration building. Helping funders and grant partners participation. Specifically coalition building for Farm Bill 2023-real work to take seriously.

New pet project-how do we leverage consensus-around things like infrastructure to rural areas-and then adding the things that require more consensus building-like climate change.