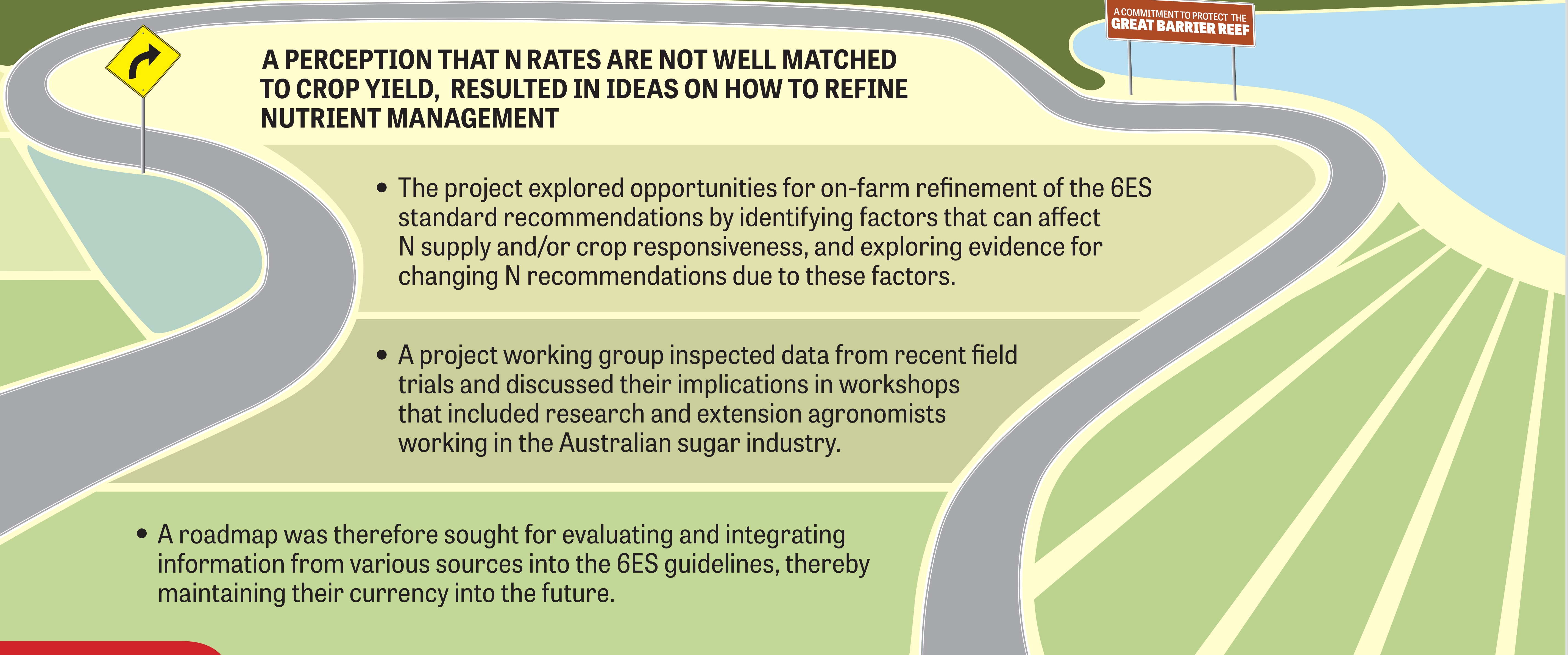
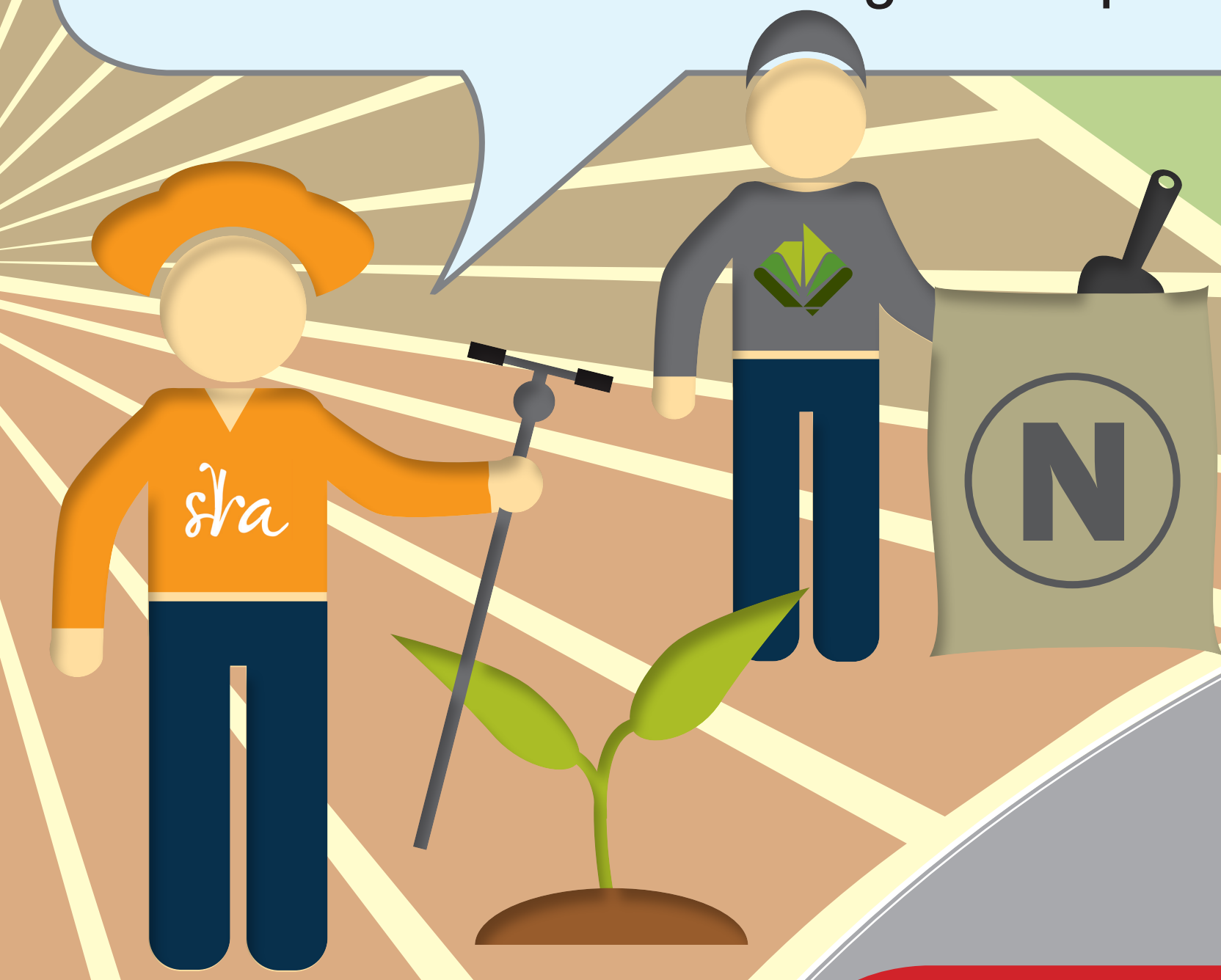


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A NITROGEN ROADMAP
 - BETTER ALIGNMENT OF N INPUTS TO
 CROP REQUIREMENTS

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The **SIX EASY STEPS program (6ES)** is the accepted source of best practice guidelines for the nutritional management of sugarcane in Australia and is the basis of nutrient recommendations provided to growers. The sets of district and soil-specific nutrient guidelines within the 6ES program provide a sound set of starting recommendations for specific blocks of cane but they are not meant to be the end of the nutrient management process.



A PERCEPTION THAT N RATES ARE NOT WELL MATCHED TO CROP YIELD, RESULTED IN IDEAS ON HOW TO REFINE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

- The project explored opportunities for on-farm refinement of the 6ES standard recommendations by identifying factors that can affect N supply and/or crop responsiveness, and exploring evidence for changing N recommendations due to these factors.
- A project working group inspected data from recent field trials and discussed their implications in workshops that included research and extension agronomists working in the Australian sugar industry.
- A roadmap was therefore sought for evaluating and integrating information from various sources into the 6ES guidelines, thereby maintaining their currency into the future.

SOUND MANAGEMENT OF NUTRIENTS IS A KEY FACTOR AFFECTING PRODUCTIVITY OF SUGARCANE CROPS

Nitrogen (N) has additional significance due to ongoing concerns about elevated concentrations of dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) in water flowing into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

The project concluded that:

i SEVEN FACTORS SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF INITIAL EFFORTS TO INFORM AND IMPROVE DECISION-MAKING ABOUT SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES ON-FARM

These included N management:

- following legumes fallow crops
- for high-performing blocks
- for late harvested blocks of sugarcane
- for older ratoons
- where soil sodicity occurs
- where water-logging occurs
- where mill mud was applied

The project recommended the development of a **6ES 'tool box'** that will assist growers and/or advisors to identify and evaluate options for refinement of the standard recommendations.

The roadmap will also identify research gaps. ▀

START
N⁷

IMPROVED ROUTE TO
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

