



**Africa RISING East and Southern Africa
Project Steering Committee Meeting
1 July, 2016
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**

Minutes of Meeting

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Present

1. Victor Manyong, Chair - IITA
2. Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon, Secretary - IITA
3. Carlo Azzarri, IFPRI
4. Felix Chipojola, Ministry of Agriculture Malawi
5. Peter Carberry, ICRISAT
6. Mateete Bekunda, IITA
7. Jonathan Odhong', IITA (at a later stage)

Absent

1. Jerry Glover (with apologies)
2. Brian Isabiriye (with apologies)
3. Hassan Mshinda

Agenda

1. Welcome of PSC members (V. Manyong, Chairman PSC)
2. Follow up on action points from last meeting (V. Manyong)
3. ESA project update (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
4. Reflection on Africa RISING's phase 1 legacy (based on previous day and morning presentations) (V. Manyong)
5. Discussion on evaluation team's findings and recommendations (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
6. Presentation and discussion of ESA proposal for phase 2 (M. Bekunda)
7. Presentation and discussion of phase 2 M&E proposal (C. Azzarri)
8. PSC membership (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
9. AOB

The meeting started at 11:10 and ended at 13:00 hrs. Victor Manyong chaired the meeting initially but had to attend to another duty later on. Chairmanship was passed on to Peter Carberry.

Minute	Issue/discussions	Action to be taken & Responsible person (s)
<p>Agenda 1 Welcome</p>	<p>Manyong opened the meeting and welcomed members to the fifth steering committee meeting. He stressed that a lot of exciting things were happening in the project since the last meeting in Mangochi, a year ago. He invited the members to introduce themselves. Then he presented the agenda and asked if any changes were needed. The agenda was adopted as presented.</p>	
<p>Agenda 2 Follow up on action points from the previous meeting</p>	<p><i>Delay in reports/proposal submission and not observing set deadlines:</i> Zeledon reported that a clause about implications of late reporting has been included in all contracts issued after the last SC meeting.</p> <p><i>PI's not based in the project country:</i> Carberry reported that ICRISAT had recruited a new staff (at NRS level) based at Dodoma in February 2016 to support the team leader. Despite this welcome progress, Zeledon noted that responsiveness by the team leader to communication was still slow or missing.</p> <p>Bekunda informed that the staff is not allowed to communicate directly with the chief scientist but needs to go through the Kongwa/Kiteto team leader. This leads to poor flow of communication.</p> <p><i>Common and consistent, standardized indicators for sustainability:</i> Azzari reported that work on Si indicators has been handed over to the SI indicator working group led by Columbia University and MSU. The indicator framework needs to be implemented now and there is a need to determine a minimum set of indicators to be measured by all research teams in all countries.</p> <p>Bekunda requested guidelines for the selection.</p>	<p>Carberry informed that the team leader based in Malawi will be supported soon by additional staff e.g. groundnut breeder which should free some of his time to be dedicated to Africa RISING.</p> <p>Carberry to talk to the Konwa/Kiteto team leader to ensure easy communication by the site coordinator in Dodoma with all team members, the chief scientist and the Africa RISING manager.</p> <p>IFPRI team to prepare a paper on minimum data collection across the program.</p>

	<p><i>Visualization of SI to show the complexity of AR project:</i> Zeledon reported that this action point from the previous meeting had been completed.</p> <p><i>Data management and storage:</i> Azzarri and Zeledon informed that the action point from the previous meeting had been implemented. Compliance with data management policy is now part of all partner agreements in the project.</p> <p><i>Farmer selection:</i> Zeledon and Azzarri reported that information on farmer selection was compiled last year.</p> <p>Chipojola emphasized that farmer selection is a sensitive issue at the moment in Malawi. The government has complained that projects always choose the same farmers therefore only a few of them benefit from the different ongoing and previous projects in the country.</p> <p>In response to the farmer selection issue, Bekunda noted that research projects should be treated differently from development projects because they usually work with a very restricted number of farmers and selection is also usually premised on the ability of the farmer to assist with the research.</p> <p><i>Modeling needs to be included in systems research as a way of quantifying risks and qualifying data:</i> Zeledon reported that two different proposals addressing the subject of modelling were received by the management team from both ICRISAT and IFPRI. A discussion took place at PCT level, and it was decided that the decision about whether or not to engage in modelling and which proposal to adopt be left to the research teams.</p>	<p>Bekunda with Apurba and theme leaders to set criteria for farmer selection in phase 2; to document how it was done in the past by end of July 2016.</p> <p>Azzarri and Carberry to clarify differences/similarities of the two proposals. Once this clarity is established then this will be communicated to the research teams for each to select what suits their needs/interests.</p>
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	<p><i>Project teams monthly meetings:</i> Zeledon informed that there is not much improvement on the team meetings yet, noting that Babati and Malawi meetings are held irregularly and no information from the Kongwa/Kiteto team meetings available.</p> <p>Bekunda reported that (in the case of Babati team) the internet always poses a constraint to virtual meetings.</p> <p><i>Communications update:</i> Odhong could not give the update because he was facilitating the parallel write shop</p>	<p>Team leaders to hold meetings as regularly as possible. Monthly meeting might be too frequent. This reminder to be relayed to the team leaders.</p> <p>Odhong to make a pdf of his presentation and send it to the SC members</p>
<p>Agenda 3 ESA project update</p>	<p>Zeledon made a presentation which updated steering committee members about: the additions to Africa RISING ESA project - in Zambia and Malawi; status of the AR-NAFAKA project in Tanzania, highlights in ESA during the past 12 months, challenges encountered from her perspective, pausing of SAG, phase 2 proposal development progress and upcoming events.</p>	<p>Zeledon to replace DADOs and AEDOs by District Assembly in her report on Malawi partners. There were no further comments from the members on these updates.</p>
<p>Agenda 4 Reflection on Africa RISING's phase 1 legacy (based on previous day and morning presentations)</p>	<p>Committee members had the following reflections from the presentations of manuscripts for publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citations should be removed from the abstracts. • Not all manuscripts qualify for a special issue of a journal and will have to be submitted to different journals. Teams should make suggestions of their intended journal the following day. • There is still a lot of compartment research; a lot of data a lacking analysis; meta-analysis at higher level is missing. • Much of the research proposed has already been done by others for many years. • Systems work is missing, e.g. livestock and manure use for soil fertility. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR should work with other scientist in the region e.g. on MLND, there are scientists working on the issue in Malawi. • Social scientist should be co-authors of all papers. • Only good AR publications should be in the public domain otherwise it will hit back. • Technical protocols should be in local languages. • Not all research results were presented. • The internal reviewers did a good job. • Deadlines for finalization of manuscripts and submission to journals should be set. • Bekunda and Zeledon should write on action research development at higher level as introductory paper of a special issue of a journal. 	
<p>Agenda 5 Discussion of the USAID commissioned evaluation team’s findings and recommendations</p>	<p>Zeledon guided the members through a matrix summarizing the key findings of the evaluation (relevant for ESA) and their recommendations. She also distributed copies of the responses from the AR management to the evaluation report which was submitted to USAID.</p> <p>Carberry found the matrix very useful. He also pointed out the fact that based on his intuitive reading of the evaluation report the evaluators seem to be suggesting a shift in the scale of project implementation from field-farm level to a higher level (farm-household-value chain level) in phase 2. To implement this shift, new skills sets will be needed within the project. He therefore advised that a change in the mix of current staffing to allow for addressing the new challenges in phase 2.</p>	
<p>Agenda 6 Presentation and discussion of ESA proposal for phase 2</p>	<p>Bekunda referred to the draft proposal that had been shared with all committee members and refrained from a presentation of its content. Members then provided their immediate verbal inputs which will be followed by written submissions (in track changes) on the proposal document.</p>	<p>Zeledon and Bekunda to analyses the staffing needs and the performance of current staff and take action on recruitment.</p> <p>Steering Committee members to provide comments on draft phase 2 proposal by 8 July.</p>

	<p>Carberry commended the proposal, noting that it proposed a lot of good work. He however also expressed concern that despite the good ideas contained in the proposal, it was short on how the ideas will be implemented. He also inquired whether cross-cutting research would support other research topics and how harmonization across countries and regions is planned to happen through cross-cutting research.</p> <p>Bekunda cited difficulties of mutual understanding between biophysical and social scientists as a challenge in the effort for harmonization.</p>	
<p>Agenda 7 Presentation and discussion of phase 2 M&E proposal</p>	<p>Azzarri briefed the committee that the new scope of work for the M&E team proposes a midline survey in a lighter form compared to the baseline survey in order to save funds and time. He also informed members of efforts being made to have the data repository (CKAN) and PMMT on the same server. Currently, CKAN is on the ILRI server while the PMMT is on the IFPRI server. Carberry asked how the M&E team will react to the criticism of the evaluators that there were no performance indicators.</p> <p>Azzarri responded that the future performance indicators would come from the SI indicator framework and that once the set of indicators have been decided on, they would be embedded on the PMMT.</p> <p>Bekunda requested IFPRI to come up with suggestions on what the researchers should measure.</p> <p>Zeledon asked how the outscaling would be measured as it would not be covered by the SI indicators. Azzarri responded that this would be captured by the FtF indicators.</p>	<p>IFPRI to write a paper by end of July on minimum data sets required (same as under Agenda 2)</p>
<p>Agenda 8 PSC membership</p>	<p>Zeledon informed members that the extended tenure of ICRI SAT in the rotational seat in the PSC will end in September 2016.</p> <p>She also expressed concern that COSTECH had</p>	<p>Zeledon and Bekunda to propose another research representative to the members for approval.</p> <p>Manyong to write to the COSTECH DG</p>

	<p>not participated in PSC meetings for the past two years and no feedback had been provided as to why this was the case.</p> <p>Zeledon also informed members that Jerry Glover will likely no longer be able to be a member of the Africa RISING Steering Committees due to increase in other responsibilities at USAID.</p>	<p>to nominate another representative for the institution. Bekunda to liaise with Manyong for potential alternative member to COSTECH.</p> <p>Zeledon to discuss with Jerry alternative representative from USAID.</p>
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Ibadan, 9 July 2016

I. Hoeschle-Zeledon (Secretary) and J. Odhong

PSC Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project