



Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project

Project Coordination Committee Meeting
6 October 2012, Ngurdoto Mountain Lodge, Arusha, Tanzania

The meeting started at 9:10am and ended at 2:15pm

Present

Victor Manyong (chair)
Jerry Glover (donor rep)
Catherine Njuguna (project communication, assisting in notes)
Jonne Rodenburg (CGIAR Centers' rep)
Mateete Bekunda (project chief scientist)
Stan Woods (program M&E)
Naomie Sakana (program M&E)
Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon (secretary, project coordinator)

Absent–

Dr Seyfu (ASARECA) with apologies
Dr Hassan Mishinda (COSTECH) with apologies

Agenda:

1. Welcome of PCC members (V. Manyong, PCC Chair and J. Glover, USAID Activity Manager)
2. Presentation of program management structure, PCC and membership (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
3. Reflection on the workshop and proposed work plan
4. Discussion on ESA project management and structure
5. Presentation on program and project communication (C. Njuguna)
6. Next activities (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
7. A.O. B

1. Welcome of PCC members by Victor Manyong and J Glover, USAID

Manyong started by welcoming all the members of the PCC present. He also relayed apologies from ASARECA and COSTECH. He confirmed the quorum. While checking the agenda he added under AOB the operationalization of the Program Science Advisory Group. The new agenda was adopted. He emphasized that this was the first of the PPC meetings across the program and that other PCCs could learn from us.

Glover noted it was important to move fast on finalizing the work plan and start implementation of project activities because the rains were about to start and therefore the planting season. He stressed the ESA project was the first real plunge into the activities of Africa RISING and that it was

important to transfer the lessons learnt across the larger Africa RISING program making use of the communication tools in place.

2. Presentation of the Program Management Structure, role of PCC and membership

Hoeschle-Zeledon presented the present Program Management Structure.

Below discussion related to specific components of the Structure.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit: Wood noted it was important for M&E team to keep up to date with the implementation of the program. Therefore it had identified M&E project focal points from the two lead CG centers for each region, IITA's J. Rusike (for ESA) and T. Abdoulaye (for West Africa) and L. Oruko (IFPRI/ATA) in Ethiopia. He also assured that IFPRI were in the process of recruiting an M&E specialist for each region (M&E project leads) to work full time on the project in collaboration with the focal points in each region. However, until the new staff is in place, Nome Sakana will be the temporary M&E officer for ESA. The M&E team will agree on standards for evaluation which will allow determining changes brought about by the project and its impact. Baseline surveys will be designed in line with recommendations by the research teams. Glover noted the project will work at different scales at household and community levels which should be captured in the M&E.

Manyong said the M&E officers should be well integrated in the research team to help define interventions at the plot, landscape, and community levels. The sustainability of the initiative will also be a critical aspect to consider. He advised that IITA had recently recruited an agricultural economist at a PhD level for its office in Kivu, DRC and had a collection of CVs that IFPRI was free to look at, to fast track the recruitment of the M&E officers.

Recommendation to the PCT: Membership of M&E team should include the three M&E specialists to be recruited, in addition to the chair and the 3 M&E focal points. It is also suggested that a non-M&E specialist being part of the team (e.g. 1 chief scientist). He/she will help bring in different perspectives and build the bridge to the researchers. The team should meet twice a year with funding from IFPRI.

Communications Team:

The ESA PPC suggests that frequency of meetings should be specified. It also raised the questions whether there will be communication leads in all countries. This should be clarified by the Communications Team as it does not seem to be necessary to have a person in each country. Addition of a non-communication expert should be considered.

Project Coordination Committees (PCCs)

In ESA, the PCC is made up of 1 IITA as chair, 1 chief scientist, 1 rotating CGIAR membership that currently is being held by AfricaRice, 1 sub regional organization (ASARECA) and 1 NARS member, (COSTECH), 1 project coordinator, 1 communication project lead, 1 M&E project lead (N. Sakana for now in ESA), 1 USAID activity manager. This membership was considered OK for year2. In future, a representative from Malawi should be included.

Comments on the Terms of Reference:

- The PCC should provide advice and **oversight** of the project to ensure conformity with the research framework and Program overall objectives, and not stop at coordination. Coordination takes place at the implementation level. The PCCs do not implement. They should play the watch dog role to ensure the project is on track and it is meeting the

Program goals and objectives. Maintaining the current ToR, the strong principles of the Program Document were felt not to be translated to the PCCs.

- It should therefore **approve** annual work plans and budget – not simply advise
- **Makes** decision by consensus

It was noted that **Project Steering Committees** would be a more appropriate term for the committees.

For ESA, it was also noted that the participation of sub-regional organizations such as ASARECA and the NARS were important members to ensure co-ownership of the project and receive support in diffusion of the technologies. COSTECH was very enthusiastic when first contacted yet no representative was sent to the meeting. ASARECA on the other hand is undergoing leadership changes so it was important to lobby again on the importance of the project by using all resources to create awareness.

Action: Manyong to follow up with COSTECH and ASARECA. Glover and Manyong to draft and send letter on the project to the new ASARECA management.

Finalize M&E report and communications strategy

Manyong appealed to all the PCC members to take their tasks seriously and respond timely to requests to not delay the project implementation process.

3. Reflection of the workshop and proposed plan

Manyong thanked the organizing and supporting teams, including Hoeschle-Zeledon, Bekunda, Lazaro, and Mwasaga for a well organized meeting. He expressed his special thanks to Ewen Le Borgne for excellent facilitation. He said the workshop was successful and he was supported by Wood who said he had found it very useful and was impressed by the progress made in the project.

Rodenburg noted that for the rice-bases systems, the way forward was clear for each of the team members. They had a good idea of what to do next and who was in the team. He mentioned that the teams around the maize based systems might need further guidance. He also felt that the jumpstart projects were very useful though some did not understand that they were only short term.

Glover said that the rice work should not go into own direction. He advised that AfricaRice and AVRDC should review their plan to ensure it conforms to the research framework and necessary corrections should be made. He also noticed that some partners were expecting the jumpstarts would lead to larger projects.

It was generally noted that through the jumpstarts good partnerships were established and good proudest were produced. However, during the workshop too many ideas had come up to develop work plans. It was therefore good to reduce to smaller writing teams of five members to develop work plans and share with the wider stakeholders.

Bekunda reminded that he was going to have meetings with other CGIAR colleagues in Dar es Salaam on following Thursday and Friday to create research teams and decide who will develop the work plans based on the discussions on the project during the recent workshop.

Hoeschle-Zeledon noted that though the workshop did not end up in a work plan however, it created a sense of belonging and ownership. It has also provided good lessons for the next annual meeting to be held in West Africa. She also noted that though invited, there was no representation from the private sector. For her it was understandable as it was still early in the project and

perhaps they did not see the value –what was in it for them. To bring them on board, there must be a concrete benefit for them.

Manyong said the workshop created ownership of the project and came up with good suggestions to take it to the next level. The next step was to develop a work plan and send to the PCC. He stressed that timing was very important especially for countries like Malawi which had one growing season and if missed would mean a whole year lost.

4. Project mapping Tool

Wood shared an interactive online tool, the Project Mapping Tool, which collates and harmonizes all the data for the project including sites, activities as well as data on who else is working on the sites. IFPRI had already started to load all data from Africa RISING. The next step would be to agree where it will be hosted to make it accessible.

5. Further discussion of ESA project management and structure

Working group: Hoeschle-Zeledon asked whether it was still important to have a working group as had been suggested earlier on in the planning of the project. It had been agreed the project team should keep the group informed on the project activities. The suggested members included NAFKA, COSTECH, policy makers, and the USAID mission in Dar es Salaam.

Manyong noted it was particularly important to keep the USAID mission in Dar es Salaam on board and up to date with the project implementation.

Action: Keep the communication channels open to the working group even if it is not formalized. All project documents to be forwarded to them to keep them up to date with the project implementation.

Country representatives/spokespersons in each country: Glover said the missions in Malawi and Zambia were very keen on the project. However, the mission in Zambia was short of money and had reduced its funding to the FtF. CIMMYT was committed to work in Zambia with other funding to avoid interruption of work started. There could be a shift from SIMLEZA to Africa RISING in next fiscal year. A meeting will take place in February in Zambia.

It was agreed that there was no immediate need for country representatives but in future there should be a NARS liaison officer as a bridge to the national partners. For the time being, in Malawi, the contact person was identified as Chikowo from Michigan State University, while in Tanzania Bekunda should play this role.

6. Program and Project Communication Strategy

The overall communication of the program is led by ILRI, Peter Ballantyne, in collaboration with IITA communication staff. For the IITA-led components of the projects in ESA and WA, the communications work will be incorporated into IITA's communication activities. The key people were Kathy Lopez for WA and Jeffrey Oliver supported by Catherine Njuguna for ESA.

ILRI developed the communications and knowledge sharing tools for the program from the wiki spaces to the Flickr which are being promoted.

Njuguna said for ESA and WA, a draft communication plan has been developed which will be polished once the implementation plans of the projects are finalized. The plan spelt out the key target groups to communicate to and activities for the first year. These include the donor, the policy makers, the project team, other NARs, media and the beneficiaries and the tools and channels to reach them.

Comments:

- Corporate branding strategy for Africa RISING: USAID logo should be used judiciously to not discourage other donors to join the program. It is also recommended that no CRP logos should appear on any Africa RISING publications
- It should come up with clear branding for different types of products.
- We need soon a project brief and other PA material
- Communication should not focus on quick wins. Africa RISING is not about quick wins
- M&E of Communication should also be considered

7. Next activities

- Finalization of work plan within this month
- Preparation of project budget: Funds will be allocated to partners according to activities and their costs.

Overheads: Hoeschle-Zeledon reminded that the funds allocated to partners were no pass-through funds. IITA was responsible to the donor for the final project outputs and use of funds. Therefore, the institute was going to charge full overheads. This will also apply to partners contracted by IITA and with sub-agreements with next level implementers. Lead organizations contracted by IITA should however sub-contract only the final implementer to ensure no further OH occur.

- Finalization of program document including logframe, M&E plan, Comms Strategy
- Research team to be constituted to develop work plans and budgets. On the budgets, the research team should be informed that while they are drawing an annual plan, they are looking at four years with staggered funds. However, they also should not take it for granted that all the research activities will be funded for all the four years. Some work will be shorter and will be phased out in the course of the project. So over four years, the plan should be clear on what will be achieved at the end of the year and then the milestones for each of the year specified.
- Issuance of sub-agreements with partners for one year
- Report on FtF indicators to USAID
Glover clarified that the indicators are not based on research. So for Africa RISING, we will look at what will need to be done and determine better indicators in future. e.g. change in productivity most telling measure to monitor the project success.
- Additional staff recruitment – to be communicated later as the project implementation plan is finalized.
- 6 months technical and financial report to USAID by end of October
- Organization of first cross program learning event

8. AOB

Science Advisory Panel: It had been suggested to have such a standing body and the potential members had been also proposed. The meeting agreed that having the science advisory panel would send very strong messages on the importance of the project and its research. However, the meeting was not in agreement with the proposed membership. It was suggested that it should be an independent panel and should therefore not have the scientists implementing the project as members. It should also have a balance between African and non-Africa researchers. Social Science expertise was also felt to be missing. Some eminent experts should be attracted. Its role should

also be well defined including its influence on the research carried out by the program. It should have a chair and meet regularly in person.

Regarding the proposed names, Glover explained that he had wanted an advisory team in place to send all the project documents to get their feedback. The names he had suggested therefore were people, who were already familiar with the project, were known experts in their various fields and who had been involved in the project in one way or another and had requested to be involved or kept updated.

It was agreed to still have the ad-hoc advisory group in place to look at the documents once finalized and give their feedback. The Science Advisory panel should be given more thoughts and constituted middle of next year.

Next physical PCC meeting: This will be held at the next annual project review/planning meeting, tentatively first week of October 2013. It will look at what has been done so far. Suggestion: 2 day workshop of the project team and one day for the PCC. If need arises, virtual PPC meetings can be called by the chair.

Ibadan, 13 October 2012

I. Hoeschle-Zeledon

Secretary, PCC Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project