



## Minutes

### **Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Ngurdoto Mountain Lodge, Arusha, Tanzania**

The meeting started at 11:30 and ended at 3:30pm

#### **Present**

Edward Kanju, IITA (representing chairman Victor Manyong)  
Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon, IITA (Project Coordinator)  
Hassan Mshinda, COSTECH  
Felix Chipojola, DARS Malawi  
Jerry Glover, USAID  
Brian Isabirye, ASARECA  
Jonathan Oduong, IITA (Project Communications Specialist)  
Catherine Njuguna, IITA (Project Communications Specialist, Eastern Africa)  
Carlo Azzari, IFPRI (Project M&E Specialist)  
Jeffrey Oliver, IITA (Project Communications Specialist, Southern Africa)  
Bekunda Mateete, IITA (Project Chief Scientist)

#### **Absent**

Moses Siambi, ICRISAT

#### **Agenda**

1. Welcome of PSC members (E. Kanju on behalf of V. Manyong, Chairman PSC)
2. Follow up on action points from last meeting (E. Kanju)
3. Management and implementation issues encountered since last PSC meeting (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon, Project Coordinator; M. Bekunda, Chief Scientist)
4. Reflection on stakeholder meeting of previous day (J. Glover, USAID Representative)
5. Communications update (C. Njuguna, Project Communication Specialist)
6. M&E and Project Mapping Tool update (C. Azzarri, Program M&E specialist)
7. Staff update, briefing about WA Steering Committee, PCT, and SAG meetings (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
8. PSC membership
9. Next activities and upcoming events (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
10. AOB: Project and Program Review

#### **1. Welcome remarks (E Kanju) and notes on attendees (I Hoeschle-Zeledon)**

Edward Kanju, representing IITA East Africa Director and chairman of the Steering Committee, Victor Manyong, welcomed the PSC members. He explained that Dr Manyong was not able to make it because he needed to attend the IITA Directors' retreat in Tamale, Ghana. And since it was his first time to attend and supposed to chair a PSC meeting, he suggested that another member takes the chairmanship. Jerry Glover volunteered to chair the meeting.

Hoeschle-Zeledon proceeded to elaborate about last year's invitation to have a permanent member of the Ministry of Agriculture from Malawi. She indicated that the person appointed by the Director for Research

and Technical Services was recently replaced by Felix Chipojola. For ASARECA, the DG had nominated Iwan Rwomushana but he could not make it. So he is represented by Brian Isabirye.

## 2. Review of and matters arising from the minutes and action points of the previous PSC meeting

*Africa RISING Communications Specialist:* Hoeschle-Zeledon introduced and welcomed Mr. Jonathan Oduong as the recently-recruited communications specialist for Africa RISING to be based in IITA-Ibadan. She indicated that although Jonathan will only be officially starting with IITA in mid-October, attending this PSC meeting is a good start for him to get familiarized with the project as well as the personalities implementing and partnering with it.

*Africa RISING ESA communications strategy:* the issue of the communications strategy for ESA was briefly discussed. It was mentioned that a draft was developed for each of the regions during the early part of 2014 but this still needed to be reviewed, revised, and finalized. **Action point:** Jonathan to review and make recommendations to finalize ESA communications strategy in consultation with the ILRI program communications team as well as with Catherine, Jeffrey, and Kathie Lopez.

*Project branding:* It was reported that the Africa RISING branding guidelines have been finalized and are available via the Africa RISING wiki site. However, an issue was raised about some partner organizations wanting their individual, institutional brands (logos) also shown in program communications products. For example, the front cover page for reports, feature logos of IITA, IFPRI, ILRI, and Feed the Future, but some partner organizations are insisting on putting their logos as well if their inputs into or participated in preparing the report. It was also noted that ICRISAT is using its own templates even in matters relating to Africa RISING. **Action point:** Program Coordination Team (PCT) to revisit the Africa RISING branding guideline and see how, if possible, the individual need for the institutions to be recognized could be accommodated while still promoting a common program identity. PCT to forward recommendations to all PSCs.

*Delay in reports/proposal submission and not observing set deadlines:* Hoeschle-Zeledon told the PSC that this problem still persists despite her consistent follow-ups. She highlighted the importance of submitting reports/proposals on time and in the format specified. Glover followed up by saying that the late submission of even just one organization or partner upsets the whole reporting process including the release of subsequent funding. **Action points:** It was suggested that in following up submission of reports, Hoeschle-Zeledon will send the initial reminder. If no responses are received, she will send a second reminder and copied to Glover. He will respond saying that future funding is conditional to sending the reports on time (i.e., no report, no funds). A clause should also be put in all new sub-agreements with partners to emphasize the funding implications of late reporting.

*Contract value below many of CGIAR Centers' minimum values:* It was reported that although this issue was not as evident as in previous years, it still exists especially among institutions that have small sub-contracts. This has been partly resolved as the program is now working towards long-term (3-year) planning as in the case of West Africa. In ESA, planning is now for a 2-year period. **Action point:** It was suggested that centers that receive small amounts of money to lump all budgets related to the same project/program regardless of site and disburse this at the same time.

*Improving partner involvement in Malawi:* Improvements have been observed. For example, during the presentations at the review and planning sessions, different partners were involved.

*Improving partnership with the USAID missions:* This has been realized through the good work of Hoeschle-Zeledon and Bekunda. As a result of their efforts, the Tanzania mission will very likely invest in AR to do

scaling up work. The Bureau for Food Security will consider funds for scaling up pigeon pea as a component in the integrated systems.

*Redefining research teams:* This has been addressed in a related session during the review and planning meeting. **Action point:** A number of the work packages are being combined.

*PI's not being based physically/present in the project country:* Some of the PI's from the CG centers have to come from Malawi and Kenya. To reduce travel and related costs, there is need to use the national partners more. Glover noted that this would be a good approach as USAID would like more national researchers to be engaged. Bekunda noted the issue also had more to do with individual personalities, citing that some PI's/researchers – although being based out of their responsible countries – were doing quite well. Hoeschle-Zeledon added that this was also related to individual workloads (e.g., those with a lot of the workload were not on top of things). Mshinda said this is an area COSTECH can help tackle together with the Director for Research and Development (DRD). **Action point:** Researchers with too much workload should be encouraged to engage national partners. However, they need to mentor the persons, which also will require some time. Hoeschle-Zeledon to follow up.

*Common and consistent, standardized indicators for sustainability:* Glover reported that there was a loose working group looking into this led by Peter Thorne from ILRI. He's received a lot of inputs. The team will share recommendations which will be discussed at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AASS) conference 11-15 February 2015. USAID will be organizing a high profile side-event to work on and announce global SI indicators. One of the issues will be to look at what qualifies as SI. In the meantime, Thorne will report on the task force's recommendations at the M&E meeting in November. We are involving many stakeholders beyond Africa RISING. By next year, we will have a clear set of indicators for sustainability. However, Bekunda was concerned that the indicators for SI will be coming in near the end of the project and asked how the program could get some of these indicators to use now? For example, some of the work by Fred Kizito on erosion indicators could be considered SI indicators, though they are not defined as such. Glover responded that for M&E purposes we will need measurements that are collected across all the sites. For SI we will need a minimum set of 4 or 5 indicators that all country teams can include to ensure there is uniformity. Then we use this minimum set and present them to the global community to show how we measure SI, interpret and use for decision making. **Action point:** Before November, teams to do their homework and work out process leading to the February 2015 meeting in the US.

*Visualization of SI to show the complexity of AR project:* The illustration presented by Ken Giller to showcase integration was good but overly simplified. **Action point:** Program Communication Team to consult the websites provided by Jeroen Groot and come up with a suggestion for better visualization.

*Data management and storage:* Azzarri noted PMMT was developed by IFPRI for data management and storage. The M&E team had developed guidelines on data management which they had sent to Hoeschle-Zeledon and Thorne to send out to researchers. However, Hoeschle-Zeledon had not circulated it because of long absence from the office. Azzarri said there was still time for feedback as long as it was received in a month's time, so they can be incorporated into the current version which will be launched at the M&E meeting in November. Hoeschle-Zeledon elaborated that there was a new CGIAR policy on data management that CGIAR Centers' scientists must comply with and make their data available. As for AR, we also require them to share their data through the PMMT. How will the two work together? Azzarri explained that the PMMT was in line and complied with the CGIAR policy for open access. The policy stipulates that all data generated from research should be published within six months. After six months the data is released for public use. He also said there will be no need for duplication of data. The current

site for data storage was temporary. A final space has to be identified. **Action points:** (1) Hoeschle-Zeledon to link Azzarri through virtual meetings with IITA e-Research Team and with Martin Mueller for M&E discussions; (2) Hoeschle-Zeledon to send the draft guidelines on data sharing and management to selected key scientists, national partners, and to IITA's newly-hired a data management specialist; (3) link partner's contracts to draft CGIAR/AR guidelines on data management; and (4) finalize AR data management guidelines two weeks before M&E meeting.

*ICRISAT membership to the PSC:* Covered in Hoeschle-Zeledon's presentation on management issues.

*A partner organization to replace AfricaRice in AR:* No new partner had been brought on board to replace AfricaRice as core implementing partner of AR, although ASARECA had proposed two organizations for consideration. However, AfricaRice will still be part of AR as a partner in the new scaling activities funded by the USAID mission in Tanzania.

### **3. Project management and implementation (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon and M. Bekunda)**

*Late submission of technical and financial reports:* has been discussed above. PSC needs adequate time to approve donor reports and proposals. When funds requested are not fully used we don't get to know this until end of year financial reports. In the past, we have a lot of unspent resources. This reflects badly on IITA as it implies either there was no implementation or poor planning. It also reduces the amount of money for overheads. This year we hope that partners will spend the requested funds appropriately. We have also requested teams to hold regular monthly meetings. These have been consistently held by the Babati team and the minutes written and shared. Kongwa and Kiteto team has only shared minutes of two meetings. No info is available from Malawi and Zambia. These meetings have helped in monitoring the project's progress and activities. **Action point:** Remind teams to conduct monthly meetings and to submit minutes to project coordinator and chief scientist as well as upload them in the AR Wiki site.

*A new project funded by USAID mission in Tanzania:* IITA through AR is about to submit a proposal to the USAID mission in Tanzania for a project to backstop the development efforts by providing technologies that have been identified as scalable. Generally, there was poor participation of key partners in the proposal development and contributions from AfricaRice were yet to be received. There will be need for new partners for implementation – this then will lead to more complications at management level. Glover asked Hoeschle-Zeledon whether she sees herself managing two distinct projects –research and scaling up. She said they will be two distinct projects. IITA would give the second project a different project number. **Action points:** (1) Hoeschle-Zeledon and Bekunda to agree with USAID Mission on reporting, on whether the Mission needed only report on the scaling up project or overall AR reports. The funds are coming to IITA for scaling up technologies and for training partners; (2) Mshinda can assist in identifying partners for scaling up.

*Partner's participation in meetings:* Some scientists in charge of research send representatives to planning and monitoring meetings who do not have the necessary authority to make decisions. This has made such meetings ineffective as consensus is usually not reached. **Action points:** ???.

*Delays in the establishment of AR research facilities (i.e., virus diagnostics lab at SELIAN) and training on MLN:* Efforts to build capacities in diagnostics and training in Maize Lethal Necrosis were being hampered by the delay in clearing of the chemicals being shipped to Tanzania. This was also a problem with bringing in forage materials from Kenya. **Action point:** Procurement Team at IITA Dar Office to inform Dr Myaka of Ministry of Agriculture of this problem.

*Kogwa & Kiteto Team leadership:* As the PI has a heavy workload and resides in Malawi, ICRISAT was requested to identify someone on the ground to support him while still maintaining overall responsibility and supervision of the site. However, this suggestion was not welcomed and seen as criticism of ICRISAT and the staff. ICRISAT suggested that they could drop out if it was felt they were not performing well. ICRISAT was requested to come up with a proposal to ease the situation before the PSC meeting. In the meantime the PI informed that two staff were recruited to support him. These are also based in Malawi.

*MoUs with mission supported FtF projects:* We have MoUs with mission projects (i.e., INVC, NAFKA, TUBORESHE CHAKULA) but not implemented. However, this will change with NAFKA and TUBORESHE CHAKULA with the new proposal funded by the mission in Tanzania. **Action point:** Jerry to follow up with missions to ensure MoUs are implemented.

*Social science/gender research in AR needs strengthening:* It was noted that AR's social science and gender research is weak and needs to be strengthened. It is hoped that this will be partly addressed by the socio-economist who has recently come on board. Hoeschle-Zeledon also informed that IITA was searching for a gender specialist from CIM for AR. In terms of M&E, Azzarri said that one of his focal activities for IFPRI will be the generation and analysis of gender disaggregated data sets for the project. This will help in identifying interventions and technologies that specifically suit certain groups and genders. **Action point:** Azzarri to provide gender disaggregated data set for analysis next year.

#### **4. Project Communications update (C. Njuguna)**

Njuguna reported on progress made this year on project communications as well as the development of the draft AR regional communications strategies for ESA and WA early this year. She also discussed the AR branding guidelines that the Program Communication Team had developed but needed to be revisited based on requests by project partners regarding inclusion of institutional brands in communication products. The communications team composed of Njuguna for Eastern Africa, Oliver for Southern Africa and also Lopez for West Africa had documented various project activities in Tanzania and Zambia including visit of the USAID team from Washington, farmers' field days and write-shops. From the write-shops, priority scientific papers and other communications materials from the different sites were identified for finalization with support from the Coms team. Also, the communications team will identify stories and necessary communications related activities from the plans being prepared at the meeting to ensure they are able to provide the necessary support needed. The recruitment of Jonathan will go a long way to boost the communications activities of the project. **Action points:** (1) Revisions, if any, to AR branding guidelines need to be followed up with Program Comms Team; (2) train PhD students in communications to help in backstopping communications activities; (3) Program Comms Team to propose ways to disseminate AR stories to a wider audience through the CGIAR network; (4) develop audience segmentation studies to determine appropriate communications products and messaging; and (5) develop proposals to engage AR researchers in national dialogues in agriculture.

#### **5. M&E and Project Mapping Tool update (C. Azzarri)**

*Data and Typologies:* Data is available including aggregated statistics. We need to have a common methodology for typologies. Wagenigen University has done this for Malawi. For Zambia and Tanzania we can go ahead with our typology data. We need to find a common methodology across the teams, decide which variables to use.

*Recruitment of M&E Coordinator:* Six candidates have been shortlisted. Final interviews to be conducted in Washington, with final selection to be made in next few weeks.

*PMMT training:* IFPRI is continuing with training in the 3 sites on PMMT. Working on feedback from 3 trainings.

*Deadline for submission of FtF indicators:* 30 September.

*Si indicators:* The M&E team will also organize sessions on sustainability indicators and receive feedback from team leaders. This year was devoted to data analysis service provision to research team working on data and papers. Malawi team there are many dimensions to look at. There will also be overlapping-learning event agenda.

*Data management rules* – There is need to agree on rules on data management. We need to agree where we put it whether on CG space and who we give access to. We are providing data to everyone if they sign agreement e.g. MSU. However, do students need to have access to data? There is also reluctance to put data on a gspace. We need to strip data so specific farmers are not identified.

**Action point:** M&E to continue to provide needed data as requested by scientists/students working on activities under AR.

## **6. Staff update, briefing about WA Steering Committee, PCT, and SAG meetings (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)**

*Staff:* Recruited a agricultural economist who is already on board  
Recruited project communications specialist to be based in IIITA-Ibadan  
Recruitment ongoing for gender specialist to be based in Arusha, Tanzania  
Recruitment ongoing for M&E coordinator to be based in Arusha

*Feedback from WA Steering committee meeting:* The WA Steering Committee asked IITA to commission an external evaluation in anticipation of an external review. The evaluation team was put in place in consultation with PCT and scientific advisory group. AR-WA evaluation to take place in September/October this year. Similar reviews suggested to be undertaken for ESA and Ethiopia during the next cropping season.

*Science Advisory Group (SAG):* The constitution of this group took time as we were not clear on ToRs. However, the team was constituted in Feb. 2014 and held its first meeting in July. They gave their feedback on the project and wide range of technologies being developed including:

The program should have included M&E from the beginning.

Program had positive influence on USAID development projects (Tanzania proposal, Mali).

We have impressive wide partnerships.

Research is supply driven.

We are neglecting the policy environment.

Who can best scale-up.

We need more livelihoods focus.

Provide cost-risk information to farmers for better decision-making.

Vested interest in specific research topics in defense of individual institutional interests. However, scientists from different institutions now working as a team.

Not enough social analysis.

Is SI viable solution for resource farmers? What incentives do we give farmers to adopt technologies?

Revisit research hypotheses to make them testable. They felt some are not testable. (This was also identified in the learning event which saw the need to revise our document which is a living document).

Include more social science partners.

Invest in capacity building to improve our partnerships not just for students but also for report writing.

Need partnership with policy makers.

Revisit gender mainstreaming.  
Project need to develop exit strategy.  
Invest in capacity building beyond students.  
Identify policies that either inhibit or actually support our work.

**Action point:** Comms Team to conduct online survey (Survey Monkey) involving members of ESA steering committee members to prioritize SAG recommendations for immediate action. Give results and recommendation to PCT meeting in November. Also include other scientists in online survey but separately from the steering committee members.

*Program Coordination Team:* It had held four meeting since last Steering Committee meeting - 3 were physical and one virtual.

The chair rotates between IITA and ILRI and Siboniso Moyo is the new chair from ILRI. From November, IITA will take over.

Scientists should make use of online communications tools.

Gender strategy – we are using the one for the Humidtropics CRP. Soon we will have a gender expert onboard and to develop a plan for implementation.

SI indicators – develop a minimum set, see above.

Data management – AF tools vs. partners and center's policies.

AR and SIMLESA - explore opportunities for joint learning, scaling, capacity building

## **7. Upcoming events (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)**

Tropentag, Czech Republic, 1 September 2014, Hillbur and WUR with posters, Snapp with oral presentation

AR Learning Event, 11-14 November 2014, Arusha, Tanzania

Program level M&E meeting, 10 November 2014

PCT meeting, 10 November 2014

SAG meeting, 12 November 2014

SAG field visit, 13 November 2014

Visit CISA project in South Asia, March 2015

AAAS conference, Feb 2015 in California

Humidtropics Conference, March 2015 – several AR papers accepted for presentation

ESA Review commissioned by IITA to be finalized before May 2015

## **8. Reflections on 2014 project review and planning meeting (J Glover)**

From the review meeting, I see we are moving towards staff and research integration. Initially we had CGIAR Centers and partner institutes working as individual entities but now we have seen teams working together. For example, we saw a pigeon pea breeder giving a presentation on agroforestry.

Linking mission objectives to our work in -Tanzania Mission is now seeing AR as important to their work.

Impressed with our inclusion of partnerships though we have no strategy and its more opportunistic.

Exit strategy not yet needed, there could be a phase two. There is still a lot of work to do. We have engaged over 150 scientists. In 2015, we will have both internal (IITA commissioned) and external (USAID commissioned) review.

Poorly conveyed messages through poor presentations – this could be because scientists not reviewing their presentations beforehand and poor preparation. Bekunda said he had asked for presentations and had last year circulated rules and guidelines for presentations which were not followed. Isabirye also commented the presentations did not show a lot of the integration in the presentation though in the ground it may be going on. A summary slide to show how results from one research feed into another would be helpful.

Edward Kanju – AR must make it clear to the scientists on the purpose and aim of presentations. It must also create a forum for the scientists to discuss their science and data such as a scientific conference. They also need support in preparing papers. There is also need to know the audiences and disseminate using different channels to reach out to different categories.

**Action point:** Communications teams to come up with guidelines for presentations and conduct training on presentation skills. Do outlines for presentations with IITA head of communications and share first with IITA scientists.

## 9. PSC membership

At the PSC, we have a CGIAR seat that rotates every year. Last year, ICRISAT was selected and their term will be over by end of month and we should identify a successor. Last year, it was proposed that IWMI should follow as we thought we would be having a strong collaboration with them through the irrigation project. We also had proposed to have CIAT come on board the following year.

However, it was agreed that it's often difficult when new member comes on board to contribute to what is going on including on commenting on the proposals. It was therefore agreed that ICRISAT continue for another year as a member of the ESA PSC.

**Action point:** Hoeschle-Zeledon to inform ICRISAT

## 10. External review (IITA commissioned)

We need to agree on whether we need one and the possible timing. The coordinator and chief scientists need to travel with the M&E team. So the best time is between the last week of February and mid-March. From the West Africa team, there were three reviewers: a Ghanaian and two from the UK.

**Action point:** AR-ESA to have external review between the 4<sup>th</sup> week of February and mid-March 2015. Hoeschle-Zeledon to approach the team leader of the WA review Jim Ellis-Jones and find out if he's available during the period indicated for the AR-ESA review. Hoeschle-Zeledon to also solicit for names and contact details of other possible reviewers.

As there were no other matters to be discussed, the chair declared the meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.

Ibadan, 26 September 2014

I.Hoeschle-Zeledon, C. Njuguna, J. Oliver, J. Odhong