



**Africa RISING East and Southern Africa  
Project Steering Committee Meeting  
16 July, 2015  
Mangochi, Malawi**

**Minutes of Meeting**

[www.africa-rising.net](http://www.africa-rising.net)



**FEED THE FUTURE**  
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Present**

1. Victor Manyong, Chair - IITA
2. Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon, Secretary - IITA
3. Carlo Azzarri, IFPRI
4. Brian Isabiriye, ASARECA
5. Felix Chipojola, Ministry of Agriculture Malawi
6. Peter Carberry, ICRISAT
7. Mateete Bekunda, IITA
8. Jonathan Odhong', IITA

**Absent**

1. Jerry Glover (with apologies)
2. Hassan Mshinda

**Agenda**

1. Welcome of PSC members (V. Manyong, Chairman PSC)
2. Follow up on action points from last meeting (V. Manyong)
3. Reflection on stakeholder meeting of previous days (V. Manyong)
4. Briefing on recommendations from internally-commissioned mid-term external review (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon, M. Bekunda)
5. Communications update (J. Odhong, Project Communication Specialist)
6. M&E and data management update (C. Azzarri, Program M&E specialist)
7. Staff, West Africa Project Steering Committee, Program Coordination Team and the Science Advisory Group updates (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
8. PSC membership
9. Next activities and upcoming events (I. Hoeschle-Zeledon)
10. AOB

The meeting started at 14:00 and ended at 19:00 hrs. Victor Manyong chaired the meeting.

Minute	Issue/ discussions	Action taken & Responsible person (s)
<b>Agenda 1</b> Welcome	<p>Manyong opened the meeting and welcomed members to the fourth steering committee meeting. He invited the members to review the terms of reference of the project steering committee for the benefit of new members as well as for the old members to remind themselves of the mandate of the PSC.</p> <p>Manyong commended the project implementation progress and also thanked the committee members for their continued role in ensuring project implementation remained on course. He also took time to remind members of the upcoming program-wide external review commissioned by USAID in early 2016 and noted that the outcomes of the exercise will inform decisions by the donor with regards to funding a second phase of the project and program.</p>	
<b>Agenda 2</b> Follow up on action points from the previous meeting	<p><i>Africa RISING ESA Communication strategy:</i> Odhong' reported that a communication strategy had now been developed for the project and shared with all project stakeholders. Implementation is underway.</p> <p><i>Branding guidelines:</i> Zeledon reported that the PCT deliberated on the issue of branding and decided to maintain branding as it is and all project partners to use the templates provided. She also briefed the members that in recent times there have been changes in USAID and Feed the Future branding requirements, but these don't affect the Africa RISING project in the current phase. However, when the project gets a second phase, the program communications team at ILRI will have to hold discussions with Feed the Future branding team for agreement on the way forward.</p> <p><i>Delay in reports/proposal submission and not observing set deadlines:</i> Zeledon noted that the clause emphasizing the funding implications of late reporting hadn't been inserted into the sub-contract with the partners. The members discussed this issue and still advised that the clause be added by the project coordinator into</p>	<p><b>Zeledon</b> to ensure next round of sub-contracts to partners explicitly explains implications for late reporting.</p>

	<p>the next round of sub-contracts issued as a means of ensuring there is a mechanism for enforcing timely report submissions.</p> <p><i>PI's not based in the project country:</i> Bekunda reported that this challenge hadn't been addressed especially in the case of Kongwa-Kiteto (led by ICRISAT) where there is an urgent need to have somebody to represent the PI on-ground.</p> <p><i>Common and consistent, standardized indicators for sustainability:</i> Preliminary indicators have been developed and projects now need to add them into their reporting for the coming year, this will provide a good stepping stone for collection of data on these indicators in phase 2 of the project when the final validated indicators will be available. The upcoming PMMT training will include these indicators. Isabirye recommended doing a pilot phase with the indicators.</p> <p><i>Visualization of SI to show the complexity of AR project:</i> Odhong reported that this wasn't achieved and there was little appetite to carry this task forward by the program communication team at ILRI. He had therefore opted to develop visualization for a less complicated system in Malawi and will work with Regis Chikowo on developing this.</p> <p><i>Data management and storage:</i> It was noted that compliance with data management plan is still a problem. Some of the teams have much more data than they have input into the PMMT and CKAN.</p>	<p><b>Carberry</b> to follow up on ensuring the PI for Kongwa-Kiteto has a site coordinator based in the area in Tanzania to oversee implementation of activities. Feedback expected in the next 2 – 3 weeks after the PSC meeting.</p> <p><b>Azzarri</b> to introduce the indicators to all project partners during the monitoring and evaluation session of the review and planning meeting to help them prepare to collect data on them.</p> <p><b>Odhong'</b> to follow up with Regis on this and develop a diagram for Malawi case for a start.</p> <p><b>Azzarri</b> to review all presentations made by each team and follow up with them on the data they haven't uploaded yet to the PMMT (cc Zeledon and Bekunda). While reporting back on feedback from the PSC meeting to plenary, <b>Zeledon</b> to remind teams that funding for next year proposals is strictly dependent on data upload in the PMMT.</p>
--	---	--

	<p><i>Project teams monthly meetings:</i> Teams are still not regularly holding monthly meetings yet they are an important means of internal communication.</p> <p><i>AR-NAFAKA-TUBOCHA Scaling project:</i> Zeledon explained to the committee members that the issue of reporting for the Africa RISING mother project and the scaling project had been clarified. Africa RISING is expected to report separately to the USAID country mission.</p> <p><i>Partner's participation in meetings:</i> It was noted that, generally, project partners sent junior staff to meetings and this ends up paralyzing decision making during the meetings.</p>	<p><b>Zeledon</b> to remind teams that they need to install regular team meetings and take minutes of the meetings which then need to be uploaded on the wiki for the benefit of the project management .</p> <p><b>Zeledon</b> to remind partners during the report back session about the need to ensure the principal project personnel take part in meetings. As a measure to also discourage this, the committee advised the project management to always explicitly state this requirement in all invitations for meetings.</p>
	Minutes for the previous meeting were proposed for adoption by the chairman and seconded by PSC members.	
<b>Agenda 3</b> Reflection on stakeholder meeting of previous days	<p>Committee members had the following reflections from the two days of review and planning meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project has made good progress, the teams are better integrated. This is one remarkable development over the years.</li> <li>• The image of the project is increasingly positive and this has helped the project with donors like the USAID country missions and DFID seeking to find ways of collaborating with the Africa RISING project.</li> <li>• This year the presentations were much clearer and they were reporting data more clearly, thanks to the reporting template</li> </ul>	

	<p>provided to the teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is need for a marked improvement in data upload to the PMMT and CKAN.</li> <li>• Taking further look at aspects like economic analysis of some of the technologies may be required.</li> <li>• The gender issue is increasingly being focused on and this will contribute positively to the work the research teams have been doing over the past few years.</li> <li>• The teams don't appear to know how to clearly illustrate how their activities are integrated. When they got the opportunity all of them just presented individual technologies and for somebody new, integration doesn't stick out as a message in the presentation by the teams.</li> <li>• The teams need to also increasingly start telling more about what new information they are gathering from their research work. A column should be added to the reporting template on "<i>new information obtained</i>".</li> <li>• Risks associated with technologies were hardly mentioned by the teams in their presentation. This is a key component of sustainable intensification that should be focused on as part and parcel of systems research.</li> <li>• Communication of success stories; do the teams have verifiable data that is robust and they can back up? Why are they shy to present success stories then?</li> <li>• Some of the teams didn't fill the reporting template which was sent to them two weeks in advance of the meeting, hence leading to the program of the review and planning meeting being altered to give them time to fill the template and report. Other options to ensure seamless flow of the meeting program need to be taken.</li> <li>• Modeling needs to be included in systems research as a way of quantifying risks and qualifying data.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Project management</b> was tasked to consider the option modifying the meeting schedule to have one whole day when all participants arrive to fill the presentation templates and generally work on anything else that is required before the official review and planning meeting commences.</p>
--	---	---

<p><b>Agenda 4</b> Briefing on recommendations from internally-commissioned mid-term external review</p>	<p>Zeledon guided the members through a matrix summarizing the responses to the recommendations from the internally-commissioned mid-term external review. Members made proposals for modification of some of the responses.</p> <p>Generally, members also considered the review as positive and congratulated the Africa RISING team; they cautioned that the USAID commissioned evaluation might be more critical. Bekunda felt that the reviewers could have focused more on the science and less on scaling and uptake.</p>	<p><b>Zeledon</b> to update the document with the changes proposed by the PSC and an updated version of the recommendations and responses matrix shared with the members.</p>
<p><b>Agenda 5</b> Communications update</p>	<p>Odhong' made a presentation on the activities implemented by the project communications team in 2014 and the planned initiatives for 2015. He also presented the new communication strategy.</p>	<p>At the next PSC meeting, <b>Odhong'</b> to report on the figures to back up the initiatives and activities implemented by the communications team especially on the usage of the website, project wiki, yammer and Youtube.</p>
<p><b>Agenda 6</b> M&amp;E and data management update</p>	<p>Azzarri presented the following updates on M&amp;E:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In anticipation of the Typology meeting end of August, a column should be added to the team reporting template about farmer selection criteria.</li> <li>• Two templates for household and community level SI indicators have been developed.</li> <li>• The IFPRI team will conduct PMMT training on 17 July in Lilongwe and another one in August; both trainings will focus on offline and online data entry.</li> <li>• USAID have changed their Zones of Influence in Tanzania. However, discussions are still ongoing regarding what this implies for M&amp;E within the Africa RISING project.</li> <li>• The IFPRI team will be holding feedback meetings with farmers in Malawi from 20 July to offer the feedback from the surveys they conducted.</li> <li>• Data management and uploads within CKAN is still behind schedule. The only data from Tanzania has so far been uploaded by Adebayo Abass, Job Kihara and Gregory Sikumba. Malawi is also incomplete.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Small committee</b> to decide on the reporting template about the farmer selection criteria.</p> <p><b>Carberry</b> to develop a concept note on how data could be analyzed by modelers and fed back to the scientists.</p>

<p><b>Agenda 7</b> Staff, West Africa Project Steering Committee, Program Coordination Team and the Science Advisory Group updates</p>	<p>Zeledon gave the updates below regarding staff, West Africa Project Steering Committee, the Program Coordination Team and the Science Advisory Group.</p> <p><b>Staff updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New project administrator recently hired for Arusha</li> <li>• Technology scaling specialist recently hired, based in Morogoro</li> <li>• GIS specialist recently hired, based in Arusha</li> <li>• Gender specialist recruited, based in Arusha</li> <li>• New IFPRI M&amp;E coordinator, based in Arusha</li> </ul> <p><b>West Africa Steering Committee:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also have a concern about monthly meetings; teams haven't been holding them regularly.</li> <li>• Requested IFPRI to provide more PMMT trainings</li> <li>• Need to write up the scalable technologies developed so far</li> <li>• Africa RISING and SIIL to lead discussions on SI indicators</li> </ul> <p><b>Program Coordination Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Africa RISING communication tools need to be improved</li> <li>• Find better ways to present specific deliverables</li> <li>• USAID evaluation and phase 2 proposal writing , calling on all team members to put efforts towards this</li> <li>• Implementation of the priority activities until end of phase 1 (was developed during Washington retreat)</li> <li>• Data sharing plan is binding for all partners</li> <li>• Change in chairmanship – Bernard van Lauwe is current chair replacing Ken Dashiell who stepped down, but will pass on chair in October to Siboniso Moyo from ILRI</li> </ul>	
--	---	--



	<p><b>Science Advisory Group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held a field trip to Babati on 12 Nov, 2014</li> <li>• Held the previous meeting on 13 Nov, 2014</li> <li>• Took part in 2014 Annual Learning event and M&amp;E meeting</li> <li>• One SAG member (Salvador Fernandez) attended the Africa RISING retreat</li> <li>• SAG currently need two new members, including chair</li> </ul> <p>SAG recommendations were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen R4D platforms, including for entrepreneurial activities</li> <li>• Keen to see typologies and how they are used</li> <li>• Better understanding of household dynamics needed for adoption of technologies</li> <li>• More communication required with senior policy makers</li> <li>• Stronger alignment with national/regional actors</li> <li>• Capacity and institutional development for sustainability</li> <li>• SI Indicators: Shouldn't only focus on environmental sustainability, but also on household benefits and institutional capacities</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda 8</b> PSC membership	Manyong made a proposal that the membership be maintained as is currently composed for the next year considering that the project is heading into the last year of phase 1 and bringing in a new member may be laden with various difficulties.	<b>ICRISAT's</b> tenure in the rotational seat in the PSC is extended to the end of phase 1 of the project.
<b>Agenda 9</b> Next activities and upcoming events	<p>Zeledon presented the following upcoming activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation of documents for USAID commissioned review (July -)</li> <li>• Wageningen program design meeting (1-4 September)</li> <li>• Farm typology meeting (31 August – 1 September)</li> <li>• Program strategy workshop preparation (July - )</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget planning</li> <li>• Finalization of research plans, approval by PSC (August)</li> <li>• Preparation of new partner agreements (Sept.)</li> <li>• Zambia meetings (Aug. and September)</li> <li>• Technical report to USAID (October)</li> <li>• DFID project call, Innovation lab calls</li> </ul>	
<b>Agenda 10</b> Any Other Business	<p>Zeledon briefed the committee that Africa RISING has been requested by the USAID Zambia country mission to come in and oversee some carry-over activities from the ending Feed the Future projects in Zambia, including SIMLEZA. Brian Martalus, the Feed the Future Coordinator for USAID Zambia had a meeting with Africa RISING management and SIMLEZA staff the previous day to discuss this new re-organization. The timelines for implementation of the proposed activities (commercialization of Aflasafe, seed systems, soil fertility management, Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes) would be one year. A planning meeting will be held in September in Lusaka.</p> <p>The members noted that this new development is positive for Africa RISING and IITA considering the fact that the donors have continued to express confidence in them</p> <p>Manyong requested members to always respond timely to request by the project He noted that the project was expanding with new baby – Africa RISING projects emerging meaning that the committee members will be requested to go an extra mile. He also thanked members for attending the meeting.</p> <p>There being no other business, the meeting ended at 19:00 hrs. The date and venue of the next meeting will be communicated to members in due course.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee recommended that the <b>Africa RISING management</b> takes up this request from USAID Zambia country mission and consider it as an opportunity to learn and continue collecting data building on the existing baseline surveys in Zambia.</p>

Ibadan, 29 July 2015

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

**PSC Africa RISING East and Southern Africa Project**