

**SIAC Objective 2.1: Planning and Inception Meeting
January 15-16, 2014**

SUMMARY NOTES¹

**By
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The following points summarize the discussion during the inception meeting held on January 15-16 in Bangkok. Also, the updated list of CCCs is provided in Table 1.

DAY 1 (January 15)

The discussion/feedback/suggestions focused on three main areas: the proposed guidelines, the panel of experts, and general suggestions.

Proposed guidelines:

- Descriptor #6, first database: Yield advantage vs. expected yield/yield potential/average yield. It was suggested that collecting yield advantage was going to be challenging, even if experimental data is used since the advantage is relative to the specific control used in the experiments and does not refer to farmers' fields. Instead, it was suggested to collect information about the yield farmers might expect/realize from using modern varieties (MVs) or the average experimental yield reported for the specific MV.
- Descriptor # 7, first database: Phase of the adoption cycle. Participants mentioned that the answers to this question would heavily depend on the expert's knowledge about the variety. However, there will be no way to validate these answers, unless farmers are asked about the varieties grown over time.
- Bioversity: the person representing Bioversity was concerned about not including the contributions of germplasm conservation (e.g., gene-banks) in this proposed project. He said that Bioversity is helping to collect, conserve and characterize germplasm and that these contributions will not be quantifiable in the proposed project.
- Second database, criteria for exclusion using "seed recycling status." It was mentioned that it will be tricky to take this into account when estimating adoption rates and that this should not be standard across CCCs since there will be great variation between crops and countries. Also, we are interested in capturing the "genetic quality" of the MVs and not the "seed quality" so collaborator should understand that we are not interested in accounting for the quality of the seed that farmers use.
- Table 5 of the guidelines seems too detailed. It was suggested to pool MVs for which adoption estimates are low into one category and to concentrate on the top X number of most important MVs to estimate variety-specific adoption rates.
- It was suggested that, contrary to what is noted in the draft Guidelines, Center participants should visit each country to coordinate data collection (at least at the beginning of the process) and guarantee that everything is in place to start data collection.
- Also, Centers and NARS should only include "varieties in the pipeline" (when estimating adoption rates) if these varieties are already being used in farmers' fields (but have not been released yet). If varieties might be released but are not being grown in farmers' fields yet, these should not be included because they may never be released.
- It was commented that one consideration that we need to keep in mind is that adoption happens after certain threshold level. Unless this level is reached, there will be no adoption of a particular MV.

¹ We thank Lakshmi Krishnan (SPIA) and Christopher Root (MSU) for taking notes during the meeting and sharing them with us. But the usual disclaimer applies.

Further, dissemination of varieties generally is not part of a varietal development program, which is the reason why sometimes good varieties may not be adopted.

About the panel of experts:

- One issue raised is that it was not clear who decides who will be in the panel. NARS? CG Centers? We (MSU) leave this decision to the Centers and NARS, but hope the guidelines will help ensure that the panel structure across CCCs will have some common elements in terms of types of people to be invited to serve on the panel.
- How to deal with expert bias when obtaining estimates of adoption rates? One suggested way was to have a diverse panel (e.g., include breeders, extension agents, NGO members working on seed production/distribution or extension, people working on dissemination of MVs). Also, the role of the panel facilitator is key since this person should guide the panel so they can reach a consensus.
- The panel of experts should physically meet in a location to conduct this exercise. Conference calls are not appropriate. Further, the panel should meet for 1-2 days. Individual meetings with each expert are not adequate and should be avoided.
- Key to the process: facilitators and panel members should prepare ahead of time (prior to the meeting) so they can be prepared to give their opinion and to support it. One suggestion made was that for every estimate provided by experts, the expert needs to give an explanation about where the number came from. This transparency will provide more confidence in the data and help the users make an informed ‘interpretation.’
- Since in many cases, experts may be region-specific, it may be necessary to conduct several panels of experts in different regions of the country/state/province. If there are experts who can provide information at the highest level of disaggregation required (e.g., country or state/province), these experts may participate in each of these regional meetings. One alternative to conducting many (spatially and temporally separated) regional meetings is to meet in one central point at the same time (i.e., all regional experts get together) and then getting the estimates disaggregated by regions (or sub-regions) and then aggregating those at the national level as a meta-panel.
- What to do when the panel does not reach consensus? Consensus should not be reached because of tiredness. Instead, the panel facilitator should “facilitate” the discussion so a consensus can be reached based on evidence and explanations. In these cases, better “triangulation” of the information will be needed. It was mentioned that in countries where adoption is either extremely high or extremely low, reaching consensus should not be a problem. However, it is more likely that issues will arise when adoption rates are between these extremes.
- If budget permits, taking experts on a field day to a particular region could be valuable to help them realize whether their prior beliefs about adoption rates are according to reality. If this takes place, experts should talk to farmers about what varieties they grow.
- Some Centers/NARS expressed interest in receiving more guidance on how to conduct the Expert Elicitation (EE) process. MSU agreed to provide this guidance or help support travel by an expert to any training sessions organized by the centers/CRPs.

General comments:

- It was suggested that this EE process, though intended to collect the necessary data, would also stimulate better monitoring within national and regional programs. The example from Nepal (post-TRIVSA) was case in point.
- Also, including less CCCs may be “more” since Centers/NARS could concentrate resources and efforts in collecting quality-data.
- Centers/NARS participants were suggested to check Evenson and Gollin (E&G) database to see which CCCs were included in this study. For these CCCs, the estimates of adoption could be used as a benchmark to comment on the change in adoption of MVs between these two time periods.

- If representative household data are available, Centers/NARS need to judge these data (provide a description of how it was judged and what decision was made about whether to use the data and why) and decide whether putting together a panel of experts may be necessary. If such data are not available or available data are judged inappropriate, the panel of experts will be necessary. Regardless of this, the Centers/NARS need to provide the required two databases (with accompanying discussion/summary documents) to MSU.
- Centers/NARS need to consider potential issues if they plan to use seed data to estimate adoption rates. These issues are discussed in detail in the draft Guidelines document.
- “Perceived” adoption is the correct word to describe the estimates of adoption. Use this word across all reports and databases.
- Resources should be set aside to “fill in” any gaps in the data as the project progresses.
- The Guidelines are Guidelines, not a manual. The proposed methodology can be tailored to particular situations.

DAY 2 (January 16)

During the second day of the meeting, there were several group meetings so Centers and NARS could discuss the proposed methodologies and CCCs. Further, part of the discussion focused on:

- (1) Definitions
 - (2) Methods and structure and expert panels
 - (3) Definitions of CCCs – In case of India and China, do not need nationally representative data, as discussed in the Guidelines. Each state and province is considered a CCC.
- Although it was suggested that the estimates of adoption could follow crop improvement zones/regions developed by breeders rather than administrative sub-regions (to report disaggregated estimates), we may not want only estimates from breeders and their domains, especially because the panel will include diverse members for whom the geographical sub-divisions may not be adequate. Thus, we need to take this diversity in the panel into consideration when dividing the country/state/province into sub-regions. Also, the area harvested data (which will be used as weights to estimate the national level percentage share) may only be available by administrative units rather than agro-climatic zones.
 - When varieties are bred for quality (e.g., resistance to diseases) rather than higher yield, these qualities or attributes need to be included in the database as the MV’s “superior advantage” or “attribute.”
 - The issue on how to quantify the contributions of germplasm conservation was raised again. But it was agreed that at this point in time, there may not be any evidence of adoption of improved varieties of bananas/plantains in the region (attributable to CGI) and thus this was a low priority crop for this Activity.
 - The following discussion pertains specifically to the proposed CCCs (prior to the meeting); however, the updated list of CCCs is provided in Table 1:
 - For forages – it makes sense to include forages as a crop if there is a crop improvement program at the national level on forages.
 - For countries with small areas (<50K hectares) in sweet potatoes, it may be better to substitute these smaller countries in SE Asia and focus on provinces in China.
 - At the time of CCC compilation, SPIA considered whether it was a CG mandate crop and whether there was sufficient area within countries. This eliminates many small countries such as Bhutan. However, if we use the criteria of the importance of a given crop in the local diets, Bhutan (and other smaller countries) may be considered as a CCC (for potato). For CIP, some of the countries may be excluded if the area to a particular crop is too small. So we need to be clear about what the selection criteria is.
 - In some SE Asian countries, for maize, CIMMYT will need to develop partnerships to deliver on this project. There was a concern expressed if there was enough time for them to do so. Currently, their list of invited NARS partners was based on their existing relationships with NARS.

- MSU might think of alternate ways to get adoption information if there are CCCs that are not covered by any Center/CRP as part of this exercise but still feels they are important.
 - Rice in Pakistan. This was identified as a gap. They already have an excellent survey on wheat, so could focus on rice.
 - Cambodia. Rice is the main crop but now have a breeding program on maize and mung beans.
 - Important gaps identified include: chickpea in Iran and Pakistan; lentils in Iran, Nepal and Bangladesh; rice in Pakistan and Malaysia; groundnut in China, Indonesia, Myanmar; wheat in Mongolia; maize in Bhutan, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand; potato in Iran and Pakistan; barley in Iran and China; soybeans in India (but not a CG mandated crop for CGI in this region); bananas in Tamil Nadu and Kerala (but not a CG mandated crop for CGI?).
 - Following crops were considered non-CG mandated crops and thus will receive low priority (although they are important in some countries) – mung beans, black gram and other grain legumes.
- Timeline for databases: Although December 2015 is end date for the SIAC Project, the databases are needed from the Centers prior to this date to fill in any gaps in the data and conduct the validation exercise (to be done by MSU). March 31st was proposed as the final date to submit the databases to MSU. But a draft report and datasets are needed 2-3 months before that to allow for review and feedback. See the overall SIAC project's milestones table presented at the meeting in the Table 2.
 - The Centers made presentations about the proposed implementation plan. All agreed to comply with the proposed timeline for major milestones. These PowerPoint presentations were/will be shared with participants via Dropbox.
 - The issue of training was discussed. Different models were put forward by the participants, including a decentralized model (training the 'trainer' who then visits each CCC to train the actual EE facilitator), Center or commodity focused model (where each center/CRP will include a training activity of all their NARS partners at a central location in their workplan). Opportunities to include NARS partners from other CCCs with a geographic region in the second model were discussed. MSU will look at the proposed training plan in each workplan and try to find synergies to maximize participation and minimize costs. The goal is to 'train' all the facilitators that will be conducting the EE panels in all the CCCs. It was agreed that MSU will support participation of 'experts' at these training sessions.
 - The deliverables of this project include the two databases with accompanying narratives on how data was compiled, background materials used, and summary of expert panel discussion; and a descriptive report of the results. Each Center/NARS has the freedom to analyze the data as they see fit. The descriptive report to be submitted by each center/CRP along with the databases should be as interpretative as possible (and not just repeating the numbers in the descriptive table). This type of insights on what the data represents can only be provided by the NARS representative and may not be understood by analysts to be involved in latter stages of data aggregation.
 - MSU will provide examples of the Descriptive reports, dummy tables, etc. as a guide to Center/NARS partners to help them develop the reports.
 - Center/CRPs will follow up on the CCCs identified as '?' in Table 1 and provide a final list they will include in their workplan to MSU asap. MSU may look for other options to collect the adoption data for any major gaps still remaining.

Table 1. Crop-country-combinations (CCCs) in SIAC Project, Objective 2.1 (draft version: January 16, 2013)

Country	Rice	Maize	Wheat	Barley	Sorghum	Ground-nut	Chick-pea	Pigeon-pea	Lentil	Cassava	Potato	Soybeans \a	Sweet potato	Forages	Black gram beans \b	Mung beans \b	ALL
Afghanistan			1														1
Bangladesh		1	1						1?		1						3+1?
Bhutan		1?									1						1+1?
Cambodia	1	1?								1				1		1?	3+2?
China (provinces listed below)	1	1	1	1?	1?	1?				1	1		1	1			Not counted
India (states listed below)	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1		1	1	Not counted
Indonesia	1	1				1?				1	1		1	1			6+1?
Iran		1	1	1?			1?		1?		1?						2+4?
Laos	1									1				1			3
Malaysia	1?																1?
Myanmar	1					1?	1	1		1						1	5+1?
Mongolia			1?														1?
Nepal		1	1						1?		1						3+1?
Pakistan	1?	1	1			1?	1?				1?						2+4?
Papua New Guinea													1				1
Philippines	1	1?								1	1		1	1			5+1?
Sri Lanka																	0
Thailand	1	1?								1							2+1?
Timor																	0
Vietnam	1	1?				1				1	1		1				5+1?
Total	7+2?	5+5?	5+1?	1?	1?	1+2?	1+2?	1	3?	7	6+2?	Not counted	4	4	Not counted	1+1?	42+20?

\a Not a CGIAR mandated crop in Asia (will receive low priority)

\b Not a CGIAR mandated crop (will receive low priority)

Table 1 (continued).

India States (39)				Banana: TN, Kerala /// 2
				Rice: Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu /// 4 states
				Maize: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh /// 8 (80%)
				Wheat: Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh /// 6 (80%)
				Barley: Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP /// 4 (80%)
				Lentil: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, UP, West Bengal /// 4 (80%)
				Cassava: Kerala, Tamil Nadu /// 2
				Potato: Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal /// 6
			Sweet potato: Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal /// 3	
China Provinces (39-40)				Rice: Zhejiang or Anhui /// 8 provinces (70%)
				Maize: Guangxi, Guizhou, Sichuan, Yunnan /// 11 prov (80%); 7 (70%)
				Wheat: Anhui, Gansu, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Xinjinag /// 9 (80%); 7 (70%)
				Sorghum: 1
				Cassava: Guangdong /// 1 (70%)
				Potato: Gansu, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Sichuan+Chongqing, Yunnan /// 10 (80%)
				Sweet potato: Anhui, Guangxi, Guizhou, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Sichuan+Chongqing /// 5-6 (80%)
			Forages: Guangdong, Hainan, Yunnan ///	

Color	Meaning	Observations
	Added to current list, low CG priority	For black gram beans and mung beans, no CG center, need to find local partners (AVRDC?)
	Changed	
	Will consult	For chickpeas in Iran and Pakistan, will consult with ICARDA. For groundnuts in China, ICRISAT will check if this will be possible. For work in Afghanistan, SIAC/SPIA will consult with donors for approval to work in the country (North and Northeast regions are secure areas). For forages, CIAT will select a few countries and provide updated list. Wheat in Mongolia if there is a national program

Table 2:

SIAC Activity 2.1 Milestones and Time line (that MSU has in their sub-contract)

Objective	Activity	Sub-Activity	2014												2015																												
			13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36																	
2 (Outcomes)	2.1	2.1.1																																									
		2.1.2																																									
		2.1.3																																					27	27a			
		2.1.4																																					28	28a	28b	28c	29
		2.1.5																																					30				
		2.1.6																																					31	32			
		2.1.7																																					33				

List of Milestones (ex-post of the Planning / Inception Meeting)

ACTIVITY	2.1	Organize the collection of crop germplasm improvement research related direct outcomes
Milestone	27	Regional training workshops of identified partners to collect varietal adoption data completed in both the regions
	27a	Workplan and budget submitted by Centers (Feb 28)
	28	Sub-contracts with all the implementing partners (data collection for Activity 2.1 for all CCCs) in place
	28a	Training workshops
	28b	submit draft completed data and report for 1-2 CCCs for feedback
	28c	Draft reports and draft datasets 1 and 2 (Jan 31)
	29	Two databases for all CCCs—varietal release/pedigree database and variety-level adoption database completed (March 31)
	30	Audit of expert opinion elicitation process for a few (5-10%) CCCs completed
	31	Candidate CCCs to conduct validation surveys finalized
	32	Representative surveys completed in selected CCCs and results available for validation purposes
	33	Synthesis report on the findings from the current round of adoption estimates plus the previous results from DIIVA and TRIVSA completed

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Title:
Subject:
Author: Byron Reyes
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 23/01/2014 18:31:00
Change Number: 9
Last Saved On: 23/01/2014 20:19:00
Last Saved By: Byron Reyes
Total Editing Time: 21 Minutes
Last Printed On: 03/06/2014 11:36:00
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 7
Number of Words: 2,687 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 15,322 (approx.)