

## **Key points emerging from the Varietal Diffusion and Impact Assessment in SSA (DIVA) project initiation meeting in Addis (Feb 2-4)**

- 1. Agreement on submission of existing data sets from the 1998 initiative.** Agreement to locate and submit the three Objective 1 datasets from the 1998 initiative (Evenson and Gollin project) to the Project Coordinator (PC) by 15 February and a one-page work plan by March 15<sup>th</sup> for the implementation of Objective 1 up to August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 2. Agreement on minimum and desirable datasets for Sub-objectives 1, 2, and 3**

Sub-objective 1. Varietal release data for priority commodity by country combinations

- Update varietal release data (yearwise, same countries, 1999-2009)  
Minimum data: cultivar name, year released, origin, genetic background, release classification based on institutional origin and role of CG Centers and stage in selection/breeding realizing that the classification will vary from crop to crop depending on informational needs and crop characteristics); Desirable data: selected characteristics of variety
- Assemble varietal release data for new countries and new crops (not part of 1998 initiative)
- Document 'unofficial' variety releases (escapes, unlisted private sector, etc.)
- Submit clean version of 2, 3, 4 to SPIA and CG Consortium one year after data collection is completed and data are documented

Sub-objective 2. Strength of Crop Improvement Programs data for countries in the priority commodity by country combinations.

- for CGIAR: FTE, expenditures (full cost, w/ institutional overhead), annual 1999-2009, by commodity
- for private sector by commodity (FTE only; 2009)
- national programs (min: FTE by degree only, 2009; desirable: FTE by degree, gender, discipline (w/I CI); researcher & technician)
- Each CG Center should examine the level of data collection in their respective chapters in Evenson and Gollin and make every effort to insure that the tabular analysis in their chapter can be updated at least at the same level of aggregation as was found in the tabular analysis. Again, this may vary somewhat from Center to Center while respecting the minimum data requirements described above.

Sub-objective 3. An illustrative 12-step procedure was described that should be useful in eliciting improved cultivar-expert opinion in a common format. Major steps include documentation of the identity of the experts, a description of the experts' agroecologies that were used in eliciting this information, cultivated area of each agroecology, an area estimate for local varieties as a group in each agroecology, a ranking by remaining area of for all improved varieties that experts believe are grown in the agroecology, and an assignment of area to the ranking.

- 3. Identification of priority commodity x country combinations.** The list of priority commodity x country combinations was revised. For several Centers, such as IITA and to a lesser extent CIMMYT, the revised list exceeds the number allocated in the proposal for Objective 1. They agreed to send an updated list to the project coordinator so that he could begin to analyze coverage for SSA as a whole which will feature in the first technical report. Moreover, ICRISAT needs to finalize their list.

- 4. Submission for the first technical report.** Agreement that each Center will have completed at least 2-3 commodity x countries priorities for all three sub-objectives in Objective 1 by 31 August (submitted to PC). This initial submission is also important to ensure that each Center is on the right track and that feedback from the Coordinator and other members of the PSC can be obtained. This early submission only applies to the initial 2-3 commodity x country priorities.
- 5. Agreement on country selection for Objective 2 in carrying out the national diffusion survey.** Agreement that the primary aim of Objective 2 was the validation of the expert cultivar-specific estimates in Objective 1.3. The earlier thinking that each Center would choose a separate country for the diffusion survey was rejected. More than one Center can operate in the same country. In that regard, CIMMYT has chosen Ethiopia for wheat and maize, ICARDA has selected Ethiopia for barley, faba beans, lentils, and other minor grain legumes of their interest, and CIP has selected Ethiopia for potatoes. AfricaRice has chosen Nigeria for rice and IITA has selected Nigeria for maize, cowpeas, cassava, and soybeans. CIAT will focus on Rwanda for beans, and CIP has chosen Uganda for sweetpotato. ICRISAT needs to select a survey country.
- 6. Lack of agreement on extra commodity coverage of non-Center mandate crops in survey countries.** Spontaneous collaboration on commodity coverage outside CG-mandated crops did not emerge and is not a formal requirement. However, Centers are still free to negotiate amongst themselves if they want to engage in reciprocity which seems desirable in this area.
- 7. Agreement on flexibility in the conduct of the national adoption survey.** A unified format and approach for the national diffusion survey was not agreed to. But the need for spatial breadth was emphasized in geo-referenced communities. For most Centers, the survey will employ a combination of community and household questionnaires. Because Centers have considerable freedom to design their survey specific to their needs, release of funds for Objective 2 in the Letter of Agreement is contingent on the approval of 2-4 page work plan.
- 8. Partial agreement on a list of minimum and desirable data to be collected under Objective 2.** Similar to Objective 1 such data were discussed but were not fully agreed upon. A list of minimum data to be collected in the community questionnaire was given in slides 37, 38, and 39 in the project coordinator's presentation. In particular, the feasibility of collecting varietal allocation data in a community setting was questioned even with the use of participatory approaches. The need for piloting some work in this area was underlined. This area requires more thinking and iterating back and forth in the next couple months.
- 9. Agreement that proposals in Objective 3 would be aligned with the Centers' work and partnered with them.** This restriction on access in assignment of grants in Objective 3 was another major decision taken at the Project Implementation Meeting. This does not mean that each Center's proposal will be awarded a grant in Objective 3, but it does mean that Centers will have more incentives to search for partners and apply for grants than would otherwise be the case in a truly open competition. Proposals can either be Center-led or Partner-led.

- 10. Agreement on the need for overview economics assessment research in Objective 3 to complement focused-research further down the impact pathway.** This point originated from the presentation of hypotheses for Objective 3 many of which referred to results from a cost-benefit analysis of varietal change in SSA. In that regard, a proposal for commissioning a consultancy on estimations of “k” and “K” factors as a basis for estimating economic rates of return from research was tabled. However, no decision taken (this issue is related to the question of whether and how much effort will be given to estimating (relative) yield performance of MVs. A proposal for commissioning a background study of adoption and impact of agric R&D in SSA (systematic, comprehensive analysis) was also made. No decision reached (option remains).
- 11. Agreement on implementation procedures for Objective 3.** A sequence of steps was described for the implementation of Objective 3 on impact assessment of varietal change. Critical steps in the sequence focuses on a call for proposals explaining the objectives and criteria for proposal selection and outlining several of the major hypotheses to be tested and on an external panel judging proposals.
- 12. Agreement on Letters of Agreement.** A draft letter of agreement (between Bioversity and Commodity Center) was revised at the workshop. Concern was expressed about language related to intellectual property. To facilitate the approval process at the Centers, those with Gates Foundation Projects were asked to submit approved boilerplate to the project coordinator so that he could prepare a revision by end of Feb which in turn would be submitted to Bioversity (through PSC) for approval and action; target payment for Objective 1 was the 15 March.
- 13. Agreement on the detail in budgetary submissions.** It was agreed that it would be desirable if the sub-grantees would not have to account for funds by types of expenditure but would only have to report on the expenditure status of each disbursement in their financial reporting. Centers stated that project funds would primarily be destined for supporting operating expenses. Agreement by Bioversity is needed to assess whether or not this minimal reporting of expenditures becomes a reality.
- 14. Recognition of the potential of HarvestChoice to contribute to the project.** Harvest Choice (IFPRI) as a platform could provide overarching support to all three Objectives in the form of areal survey sampling in Objective 2, to the translation of experts’ agroecologies into more disaggregate spatial units amenable to more incisive analysis in Objective 1 and, most importantly to the macro-economic modelling of effects derived from high spatial resolution in Objective 3. Stan Wood should remain engaged on all future correspondence.
- 15. Recognition of the complementarities in adoption research with HarvestPlus.** Both IITA for cassava in Nigeria and CIAT for Rwanda are joining forces with HarvestPlus (IFPRI) in the conduct of adoption research envisaged in Objective 2.
- 16. Agreement on the desirability in the use of DNA fingerprinting to contribute to improved cultivar identification.** The foundation of the projects rests on reliable varietal identification. Peter Gregory is preparing a proposal with CIMMYT,

BeCa, and other potential partners to assess the contribution of DNA techniques in the form a well-designed pilot study that examines not only cost-effectiveness but also the additionality that DNA techniques brings to farmer varietal identification and plant breeder varietal identification based on morphological characteristics. The Gates Foundation sees the potential value of such work and is the target donor for the pilot study which will mostly be funded outside the project.

- 17. Agreement on the need for punctual gender-related inputs into the project.** These include an understanding of the decision making on varietal choice in the national diffusion surveys in Objective 2 and on gender-specific impacts of varietal change in Objective 3. The latter are being reviewed by Cheryl Doss whose participation in the project is desirable when the work plans for Objective 2 are discussed and the proposals in Objective 3 are assessed.
- 18. Agreement on expected outputs from the project.** These included (i) the databases; (2) a book manuscript (similar to Evenson and Gollin, 2003 but with a greater emphasis on cross-cutting overview papers co-authored with Center participants ), and (3) country-level reports that are a high priority for NARS. Should also consider a set of “Impact Briefs” for donors (not discussed at the meeting).
- 19. Agreement on the desirability of a project website/blog.** A suggestion was made to consider setting up a project website/blog, where relevant project information (proposal, PSC meeting agenda and minutes) is posted. Greg will provide support from Gates for this (see recent email).
- 20. Recognition of the desirability of widening representation in the Project Steering Committee.** A suggestion was made to consider expanding the PSC to include a representative from the Centers. This idea will be discussed at the next PSC meeting
- 21. Recognition of the timeliness of communication from the donor to the Center DGs.** Greg Traxler volunteered to write a memo to DGs encouraging them to support this effort & provide resources/assistance to the project scientists as required.
- 22. Recognition of the complementary nature of the comparative project in South Asia.** The work in South Asia was described in the project both in regard to its comparative complementarities with regard to Objectives 1 and 2 and also with regard to its advanced work in some areas such as Objective 1.2 in the elicitation of strength of NARS. Tom will discuss ICRISAT’s participation in the project in SSA and South Asia later this month with Cynthia Bantilan. Sushil Pandey indicated that it would be useful to have the coordinator or a member of the PSC present at the launch of the South Asia project later this year.
- 23. Recognition of the need for a survey statistician’s input in the project.** This felt need was alluded to at several times during the workshop. The recent work by AfricaRice should be highly informative in this area. The ideal would be to identify someone who can travel to SSA and work with Center participants.