

SPIA Activities Update

*Prepared for SPIA 37 and ISPC 1 Meetings
ICARDA Headquarters, Tel Hadya, Syria, 12 –16 April 2010*

This progress report provides an update on SPIA activities and current issues since SC 12 held at CIFOR HQ in Bogor, Indonesia in September, 2009. Activities are described under i) recurring activities; ii) on-going and planned activities. Conclusions emerging from the SPIA 37 meeting will be reported verbally by the SPIA Chair at ISPC 1 on 15 April.

I. Recurring Activities

1.1 SPIA's role in the CGIAR PM System: Evaluating Center submissions for the impact culture indicator

Although 2009 was supposed to be the final year that the SC participated in the CGIAR's Performance Measurement System (PMS), the SC was again requested to evaluate Center submissions in 2010 with respect to the publication, output, outcome and impact indicators. As such, SPIA members have begun the assessment and scoring for the impact indicator following the criteria and instructions given in the Guidelines and Annexes. Like last year, the assessment is comprised of (i) Center self evaluation (Components 1B, 1C, 2A, 2D, 2E, 2F), SC evaluation (Components 1A, 2B, 2C) and external peer review (Component 3). The self evaluations are completed and data have been entered into the templates. The three external reviews (ten ePIA studies each) are expected to be completed by 7 April. SPIA members will finalize its own evaluation during SPIA 37 and by the end of April consolidate final scores for each Center and submit on-line.

1.2. Communication Activities

Journal publications from SPIA-related studies:

Following substantive reviews by two external reviewers (contracted by SPIA), revised versions of the six of the seven case studies (one was rejected by the external reviewers) and the introduction/synthesis were submitted by the co-editors to the editors of *World Development*. Last year WD had given the green light to proceed with a formal external review of nine papers submitted for a special issue on 'measuring impacts of policy-oriented research'.

An abridged version of the Maredia and Raitzer report of the SPIA-commissioned Impact of CGIAR research in Sub-Saharan Africa meta-analysis was recently published in *Agricultural Economics (volume 41 (2010): 81-100)*.

The Renkow-Byerlee paper on "The Impacts of CGIAR Research: A Review of Recent Evidence" was revised after an initial review by *Food Policy* and comments from SPIA and Center IA focal points. The paper builds on the report of the Independent External Review of the CGIAR (2008).

CGIAR Impact Website

A proposal for re-designing the CG Impact website was submitted by Tony Murray, independent consultant. The proposal will be considered and discussed at SPIA 37. Earlier SPIA member Ross Conner had done a thorough review from the perspective of an 'outsider' looking at impact information in the CGIAR. In due course, a systematic and comprehensive assessment of clients and their IA related needs will be required. In the meantime, some updating of information and restoring broken links will be done by the Secretariat.

1.3. Strengthening IA Culture in the System

IUCN meeting “Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Defining a global framework”, Lully, Switzerland, 1-2nd Feb 2010

Secretariat staff member James Stevenson represented SPIA as an external participant in this two-day meeting of the Environment and Development group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). IUCN are working towards a framework that will allow them to achieve a greater degree of coherence to their diverse portfolio of projects that address both food security and environmental goals. There were useful discussions on the relationship between intensive agriculture and the environment, which will inform SPIA’s work on synthesizing the literature on agricultural productivity increases and deforestation (see section 2.1 below). There were also a number of useful exchanges on the concepts of vulnerability, resilience and poverty dynamics, all of which can inform SPIA’s work on poverty impacts (see section 2.4 below).

II. On-going Studies

2.1 Advancing Ex-Post Impact Assessment of Environmental Impacts of CGIAR Research

See previous Activities Update and SPIA 36 Meeting minutes for background and rationale

Progress with the six EIA case studies has been slow and, in many cases, not adequate. Target dates for deliverables had to be postponed by two months. Even still, none of the first draft reports of the case studies due on 15 March have yet been received (as of 23 March). The senior consultant submitted his status report on the case studies in early March (see Appendix 1) highlighting the progress to-date and the various constraints. The case studies are expected to be completed by mid May (final draft reports due) and the results and synthesis workshop has been scheduled for 1-3 June in Istanbul. As highlighted in the previous minutes, such delays and SPIA’s overall concern with the quality of some case studies and the capacity of the Centers to successfully undertake these EIA case studies suggest that a new business model for SPIA is in order, i.e., one that relies more on external independent assessments of impact.

SPIA have commissioned Professor Mitch Renkow to write a scoping paper mapping out a framework for the assessment of the environmental impacts of agricultural research and discuss the implications for EIA practice in the CGIAR. Terms of Reference were developed and agreed and the ISPC Secretariat has supported Professor Renkow with literature searches across the CGIAR centre websites. An annotated outline has been drafted and commented on by SPIA members. Professor Renkow will be attending the workshop in Istanbul and will finalise the paper by July 2010.

A companion paper by SPIA members on the links between agricultural productivity increases and deforestation is being prepared, with the specific aim of synthesising the findings from the last ten years in this important and complex literature. An annotated outline has been prepared and writing tasks for different sections shared among SPIA members, with the goal of seeing a full paper through to publication before SPIA 38.

2.2 Crop germplasm improvement: impact initiative with Centers and the Gates Foundation

See previous Activities Updates and SPIA 36 Meeting minutes for background and rationale

The 3-year \$3m proposal submitted to the Gates Foundation by Bioversity on behalf of SPIA and seven centres was approved in November. Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings were held in December and January (see Appendix 2 for key points emerging) followed by the project implementation meeting (PIM) in

early February in Addis Ababa (see Appendix 3 for major outcomes) which officially launched the project. A shared website for the project has been developed on the Gates website.

At the February Fund Council meeting a question was raised about a single donor providing financial support to SPIA on such a large IA project. It needs to be clarified that SPIA regards this initiative as fundamentally important for the CGIAR System at large and therefore this initiative constitutes an essential part of SPIA's strategy and near term operational plan. Furthermore, no Gates money is being used for SPIA's support on this project. All SPIA related expenses for this project are being sourced from the SPIA/SC budget for 2010.

2.3. Randomized control trials (RCTs)

See previous Activities Updates and SPIA 36 Meeting minutes for background and rationale

The previous version of the paper by MM had been externally and internally (SPIA) reviewed and revised following a series of interactions among SPIA members. A significantly revised draft from MM is now being reviewed and further developed by SPIA colleagues. Consideration is being given to broadening the paper somewhat from the initial concept, to address the relative merits of experimental designs (RCTs) versus other methods (e.g. propensity score matching, difference in difference methods, instrumental variable methods) as alternative strategies for increasing the rigor of ex-post impact assessment of agricultural research.

The option to possibly broaden the paper to include observational methods aimed at increasing rigour is motivated by the fact that there has been an increase in the use of such methods in epIAs published by CGIAR centres recently (i.e. papers by Africa Rice Center, CIMMYT, IITA, ILRI, World Fish). It is important to understand the relative merits and range of applicability of experiments but recognise that where an experiment is not technically feasible or financially justified, there are other methods that can be used that, until recently, had been underutilised in the CGIAR. Revisions suggested along these lines will be discussed at SPIA 37 with the goal of sending a final draft for publication soon after.

2.4 Advancing Ex-Post Impact Assessment of Social Impacts of CGIAR Research

SPIA's work over the next few years is expected to concentrate on deepening the assessments of impact of CGIAR research, i.e., going beyond economic and even environmental impact measurements to those arguably closest to the heart of CGIAR goals – social impact indicators, both positive and negative. Rarely have these been measured in explicit or rigorous ways. Some studies have been undertaken, e.g., IFPRI poverty studies, but few of these were conducted at a macro-level sufficient to provide comprehensive estimates of poverty related impacts from CGIAR research investments.

Three critical elements of social impact will be investigated over the next few years, viz:

- a. Impact of CGIAR research on poverty reduction*
- b. Impact of CGIAR research on food security*
- c. Impact of CGIAR research on women and children (gender study)*

Each will be addressed / implemented in a relatively consistent manner. A background/scoping study will be commissioned for each that:

- a. establishes its importance and linkage to CGIAR goals;
- b. reviews previous work attempting to document the impact of CGIAR research on these three goals,
- c. identifies issues and methodological challenges and appropriate indicators of relevance, and,
- d. proposes a way forward, e.g., a series of case studies to build more evidence and develop appropriate methods/techniques.

A phase 2 would be undertaken if deemed relevant and feasible given resource constraints.

SPIA members will discuss at SPIA 37 an annotated outline of a scoping paper on poverty impacts and will discuss options for a suitable process over the rest of 2010.

Contacts have already been made with Will Martin of the World Bank and with Bob Herdt to get their input on a draft annotated outline.

III. Planned Studies

3.1. Assessing the impact of CGIAR investments in germplasm collection, conservation, characterization and evaluation (GCCCE)

There remain critical gaps in the CGIAR portfolio with respect to impact assessment that SPIA and the Centres have been trying to fill over the past several years. One area of CGIAR research and related activities that many recognize as being under-assessed with respect to impacts is ‘germplasm collection, conservation, characterization and evaluation’ (GCCCE), or “Sustaining Biodiversity for Current and Future Generations” as it is referred to under the five broad System Priorities. About 12% of the total CGIAR investment during the last three years has been allocated to this item. In terms of total investment, it is estimated that some US \$800 million (2002 dollars) has been invested by donors in this area of research activity. Despite this significant investment, there appear to be few studies of impact assessment to document the benefits derived.

The aim of this study would be to compile the documented evidence of impacts in terms of CGIAR goals from GCCCE related activities. The study would focus on estimating the value of the stored material using concepts like existence values, inter-generational equity and the like, as well as their contemporary value as sources of genetic material for breeding and biotechnology.

SPIA has had some contact with Melinda Smale, ex-IFPRI and a widely-recognized authority on the subject. Melinda has expressed an interest in leading the study, but would like assistance from IFPRI. A draft set of ToRs was sent to her with a request to suggest revisions and a clearer (narrower) focus. SPIA would also like to involve key people at Bioversity (Adam Drucker, Eli Gotor) and at the Global Crop Diversity Trust at FAO. Consideration is being given to organising an expert group planning workshop in late June/early July to discuss the background (methodology) paper to be commissioned and decide on next steps, i.e., whether to initiate case studies, or independent reviews, etc. (mid Jun '10)

At SPIA 37, members will discuss the relevance and priority of this proposed study in the context of the overall workplan and budget for 2010-2011, and decide on a timetable for implementation.

Appendix 1

Report on Activities

Environmental impacts in ePIA

Jeff Bennett

28 February 2010

1. CIP

- Liaison with Project Leader, Guy Hareau
- Project continues to be focused on potato biodiversity in the Andes
- Questionnaire design has progressed to a final version after pre-testing in the field
- An experimental design has been provided to the project team
- Advice has been given as feed back to the progress report and in subsequent skype and email conversations
- Project is progressing well

2. IWMI

- Liaison with Project Leader, Dennis Wichelns
- Project focus has changed to the operation of sluice gates in Bac Lieu Province in the Mekong Delta (Vietnam)
- Advice provided as feedback to progress reports and via skype conversations
- IWMI has sun-contracted local experts
- Dr Le Canh Dung has carried out a Participatory Rural Appraisal of sluice gate operations and impacts and will design and implement a non-market valuation survey
- Dr Ngo Dang Phong will carry out bio-physical modelling and use the model to predict environmental impacts
- Initial difficulties in establishing a suitable topic appear to be resolved and progress is being made.

3. ICARF

- Initially in association with Dr Byerlee, liaison with Project Leader Laxman Joshi
- Project remains focused on the environmental impacts of avoiding monocultures of clonal variety rubber plantations
- Advice has been provided regarding an appropriate research strategy, particularly regarding the prospects of surveying manufacturers of 'green rubber' products such as tyres.
- Initial data collection of adoption of forest rubber strategy has been completed
- Project has been delayed because of the heavy travel commitments of the PL and the delays in arrival of a Dutch student who was intended to be part of the research team

4. CIAT

- Initially in association with Dr Mywish, liaison with Project Leader Doug White

- Advice given as feedback to the progress report
- Scope of the project has been limited to soil and carbon impacts of bean cultivation. The geographical coverage of the project has also been restricted due to resource constraints
- Estimation of environmental values proposed to be done via the use of related commodity prices rather than a non-market valuation process
- Delays experienced as the PL has left CIAT and is now resident in the US

5. ICARDA

- Initially in association with Dr Mywish, liaison with Project Leader Simeon Kaitibie
- Focus of the project remains on the groundwater impacts of supplemental irrigation of wheat crops in Syria
- Advice given as feedback to progress report and as suggestions for the revision of a draft questionnaire.
- Exploration of the links with ICAR project to focus on the option value of groundwater supply however the coordination costs of this proved to be too high
- Ill health and subsequent relocation of the PL has been a source of delay

6. ICAR

- Initially in association with Dr Byerlee, liaison with Project Leader Suresh Pal
- Focus of the project remains on water savings in the Indo-Gangetic Plains of India. Similarities with the Syrian water project were explored but were not advanced.
- Communications with the Project Leader have been sporadic but a questionnaire that uses Choice Modelling has been designed and feedback delivered.

Summary

Progress across the projects has been mixed. Initially, the distinction between environmental impacts as opposed to on-farm productivity impacts caused some confusion in the establishment of appropriate case studies. All projects have now defined appropriate case studies and methods of investigation. Their results should be useful inputs into specific epIA of the research investments under consideration but also provide valuable lessons for the extension of other epIAs to include non-marketed, environmental impacts. The projects' scopes have been defined to match the resources available. Most delays are now primarily due to researcher availability with significant concerns arising due to ill-health, relocations and the impacts of competing time claims. All project leaders have indicated that they expect to be able to meet the time frame, specifically, the presentation of results at the next workshop currently scheduled for 1-3 June.

Appendix 2

1st Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting on 1 Dec 2009: Outcomes and Next Steps

Attendance (via Skype): PSC members (Derek Byerlee, Mywish Maredia, Gerry O'Donoghue, Elisabetta Gotor, Tim Kelley), Greg Traxler, Prabhu Pingali, Tom Walker

1. Opening remarks from the Chair

- Proposal document dated 22 September is the final version of the project proposal.

Action: Gerry to circulate the 3-page contract signed between Bioversity and Gates Found.

2. Modus Operandi

a. Project Steering Cmt TOR (oversight, quality control)

- Major responsibilities of PSC laid out in the Proposal document (p. 16-18) – oversight and quality control; but, does PSC need a formal set of TOR? Chair preferred a 'light touch' approach, not day to day management, which is the project coordinator's role.

Action: PSC members review oversight responsibility description on pp. 16-18 and weigh in. If no response by 8 Dec, decision is that formal TOR for the PSC are not required.

b. Bioversity's TOR (admin/logistics, budget, contribute to program leadership via the PSC; undertake research if proposal successful - #3 obj)

- Formal TOR not explicit in proposal but three major responsibilities include: admin/budget of the project; contributing to PSC; participation in component 3 (if submitting grant proposal and selected)
- Ltr of agreement btn Bioversity and seven Centers will have to specify outputs /deliverables, and I.P. terms; who owns it?

Action: on I.P., will be guided by proposal document, but agreement must be reached with Center focal points at the PIM; will add to items for PIM program agenda.

- Gates perspective: data & results become public domain within 12 months; development of a common database placed in a central depository (SPIA & Consortium) is part of the project proposal.

Action: review project proposal on the database issue and responsibilities for maintaining.

- Agreed on two letters of agreements per Center covering PIM and Obj 1 (first) and Obj 2 (second)

Action: Tom to develop first letter of agreement draft prior to 9 Dec and send to PSC for perusal.

c. Project Coordinator's TOR (leadership, coordination) -- needs approval

- Draft TOR approved, but add: "SPIA secretary to be the primary contact point".

Action: Letter from Chair of PSC to Bioversity (Gerry) indicating as such and requesting that a formal ltr of appt be issued to Tom Walker as per conditions outlined in the TOR.

d. Gates Foundation

- Request from Greg and Prabhu that they be seen as collaborators and peer professionals in this project rather than as donors in the traditional sense.

e. Nature & frequency of interaction between PSC, Bioversity and Coordinator

- PSC meeting frequency: once a year face-to-face, but virtually (skype) every quarter or so (as needed); will meet again prior to project implementation meeting (PIM). PSC will interact with Project Coordinator on a regular basis, as required.

3. Initial Activities Overview (with Tom Walker joining)

a. finalize venue (Addis, Bamako) and dates for PIM

- Importance of not delaying project implementation; preference for an early date for PIM; decision taken to have the PIM between the last week of Jan to the first week of Feb.

Action: Tom to elicit preference from Centres for possible dates between 28 Jan and 5 Feb, and to assess availability/preference for Addis or Bamako for those dates; decision will be taken by PSC by next week (9 Dec). Rome venue under consideration, but lower preference.

b. travel arrangements for PIM (lowest cost economy + fixed per diem)

- Not discussed, but, as per norms, a fixed amount of per diem (t.b.d.) plus fixed amount of travel budget (approx. \$2,500) will be included in budget in the first ltr of agreement with the Centres.

c. agenda for PIM & expected outcomes

- Major expected meeting outcomes were discussed in the context of meeting preparation requirements; existing databases (previous study) reviewed; selection of country x commodity priorities, protocols for collecting data for Obj 1 and 2 – the major expected outcome; identifying a statistician asap is critical.
- In next version, attempt to reduce program agenda to 2.5 days.
- Participants list briefly discussed: in addition to Center focal points, Gates reps., PSC members, and statistician, fingerprinting expert, IFPRI, a few others (to be determined)

Action: Tom to develop a participant list considering a specific role/contribution from each, i.e., no observers, and send to the PSC for consideration.

d. hiring consultants, selection process, develop ToR (Tom)

- Not discussed (but could Tom propose several names for each slot required, e.g., statistician, fingerprinting, etc., to the PSC for consideration?)

4. Other Matters

2nd Project Steering Committee meeting, 21 January 2010: Major Outcomes and Follow-up Actions Required

Attendance (via Skype): PSC members (Derek Byerlee, Mywish Maredia, Elisabetta Gotor, Tim Kelley) and Project Coordinator (Tom Walker)

Apologies: Gerry O'Donoghue

1. Business arising from last meeting

One outstanding issue is IP, database access and management and responsibility. Should be included in a session at the PIM.

2. Participants

All PSC members (except GO), two Gates staff and all seven CGIAR centers will be represented; info. about tickets, per diem and visas sent. Other participants include: Cheryl Doss (gender specialist), Cosmos Magorokosho (CIMMYT plant breeder), Ekin Birol (Harvest + economist), Stan Wood (Harvest Choice), David Raitzer (resource person) and Sushil Pandey (for S. Asia project). Statistician not yet identified, but TW to follow-up with

USDA. EG will send CVs of two statisticians at Reading to TW for consideration; highly desirable to have statistician attend the PIM. TW also to follow-up with Peter Gregory (breeder, biotech specialist) or Margaret Smith (both Cornell). Reps from Ethiopian NARS also expected.

3. Program Agenda

A number of suggestions made for shifting speakers around and re-organizing the sessions, e.g., moving up Stan Wood to Day 1, shifting David Raitzer presentation to Day 3, giving breeders a slot on Day 3, etc., also, keep focus of Day 1 on Obj 1, Day 2 on Obj 2 and Day 3 on Obj 3 + other. I.P. issues and ethical issues to be made explicit in the program session (probably last session). TW to revise & circulate. TW to provide guidance/instructions to discussion leaders vis-à-vis expectations in terms of what Centers will bring to the table for discussion on each session, e.g., a proposal for commodity x country priorities, options for national survey leadership, etc., and what is expected by end of the session. DB, MM, TK to send bullets to Raitzer who will prepare brief (2-page) concept note as basis for discussion of Obj 3 – priorities for IA grants and protocols. Contracts: # days required for C. Doss determined after looking at TOR. After latter is approved, DB to request Bioversity for ltr of appt.

4. Expected Outputs from the PIM

TW had circulated in advance a draft set of outputs. PSC did not explicitly address this, only in the context of the program agenda. In a follow-up msg, DB requested TW to assign responsibilities and deadlines to each of the 14 proposed outputs (to be done at the PIM in Addis), and, to move up the deadlines for submission to late February for many of the outputs.

Appendix 3

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 15th for the implementation of Objective 1 up to August 31st.

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

a. 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

b. Assemble varietal release data for new countries and new crops (not part of 1998 initiative)

c. Document 'unofficial' variety releases (escapes, unlisted private sector, etc.)

d. 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.

a. for CGIAR: FTE, expenditures (full cost, w/ institutional overhead), annual 1999-2009, by commodity

b. for private sector by commodity (FTE only; 2009)

c. national programs (min: FTE by degree only, 2009; desirable: FTE by degree, gender, discipline (w/I CI); researcher & technician)

d. 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.