

# WLE Science Focal Points Meeting

9-10 December 2013, Amman, Jordan

## 1. Background and objectives

The CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems was established in February 2012. It comprises a complex mix of implementing partners (11 CGIAR Centers and FAO), research themes and regions.

The overall objective of the first meeting was to reach a shared vision of the program for the next two years in order for WLE partner activities to align with and contribute to the vision and objectives of WLE. The meeting focused on supporting WLE researchers to better understand WLE, and in turn, enable them to contribute to the vision for the program, through

- Discussing and creating a basis for a common understanding of how WLE activities are providing a "new approach" to CG-activities.
- Providing updates on decisions made on program structure for the next two years
- Inviting researchers to contribute their ideas on development challenges and research needed to address these challenges
- Fostering understanding by researchers of how their own current research fits into the WLE bigger picture; enabling Science Focal points to be 'champions' of WLE within their own centers

Information on the conference (Full agenda, participants list, presentations and supporting material) can be found of the [WLE Wiki](#).

## 2. Key messages from the Meeting

This was the first meeting of the WLE Science Focal points, which in fact extended beyond the Focal Points themselves, with most Centers sending several WLE scientists to participate. It allowed for the first time a fruitful two way exchange of information between SRP leaders and researchers, with researchers better able to understand the overall objectives of the research portfolios and the SRP leaders given the opportunity to find out more on the details of the activities within their portfolio. The input given by researchers into the development of priority areas of work for the focal regions was also highly valuable.

A Community of Practice on Fundraising was developed by the Fundraising group which met during parallel meetings and this is seen as a positive step for WLE.

Overall it was agreed that this was a useful step towards alignment of all research activities with the goals of the program. There was also a general consensus that more can be done to encourage and improve alignment, with WLE to take responsibility for developing impact pathways at the global level and providing guidance to researchers to find their place within these pathways.

## 3. Overview of sessions and discussions

### Day 1:

#### Introductory presentations

Mahmoud Solh, Director General of ICARDA opened the meeting and expressed his appreciation for the progress that WLE has made in the last two years and its inclusive approach. He also explained that WLE is an important program for ICARDA as it hits on some of the main areas related to sustainable intensification that ICARDA is working on particularly in Central Asia and the Middle East.

Peter McCornick, Deputy Director General – Research of IWMI expressed his gratitude to ICARDA for hosting WLE’s first Science Focal Points meeting in Amman, reflecting that the challenges of water and land management in Jordan serve as a reminder of the importance of the principles of WLE.

Andrew Noble provided an overview presentation of WLE, its progress to date and current set up. This year’s main challenge was related to funding cuts which has impacted on operations for this year, however there is a clear indication now that funding will be increased next year and the program needs to look to the future. WLE is one of the critical CRPs for the CGIAR because it focuses on how we manage our environment for food production; if we don’t get this right we won’t be able to feed the world. WLE’s vision encapsulates everything we are trying to do in terms of using the environment to improve food production and address poverty reduction, using an ecosystem services based approach.

The subsequent discussion centered on three main issues. The first dealt with the issue of translating WLE theory into practical activities. WLE works at scale and is providing more than just technical solutions to farmers which are already there. One focus of WLE will be to look at the suite of technologies and how they can be integrated at a social and institutional level. WLE projects look at impacts at a wider scale and how ecosystems can be an entry point for enhancing poverty alleviation, sustainable intensification and natural resource management. A WLE project focuses on engaging in policy and investment processes in order to improve their social and ecological sustainability.

The second issue revolved around impact pathways and WLE Intermediate Development Outcomes. It has to be recognized that IDOs relating to WLE and natural resource programs are different than productivity IDOs, as these kinds of programs can take a longer time to evolve. In addition, the impact pathways of WLE are embedded in the work of others, such as working through donor or government programs which have entry points that have wider impacts. WLE should engage groups and bring our modest research to initiatives that are on a much bigger scale.

The final issue related to moving beyond traditional entry points. Some participants brought up the need to engage the youth; others focused on the issues related to feminization of agriculture and out-migration. Likewise, there are new investors in developing countries such as China, large scale private sector and others who are having a greater impact and ways to engage these groups need to be identified.

## Alignment of WLE activities with aims of Working Groups and Strategic Research Portfolios

In preparation for the discussions on the integration of WLE’s core themes into partner activities, presentations were made by the leaders of the two WLE working groups: Ecosystems Services and Resilience (ESS&R); and Gender, Poverty and Institutions. The WLE Gender Strategy is now in place, with the next stage now to be to move beyond understanding and strategic thinking and into action. For example, so far 1% of the portfolio is mapped to gender activities, whereas a minimum of 10% of the program should be dedicated to gender related research and analysis. Within ESS&R, highlights were provided of the achievements so far particularly in terms of engagement with partners at the global level.

Each Strategic Research Portfolio Manager presented an overview of their work and priorities for the coming year. Participants were then asked to discuss specific activities and their integration into WLE. This was done for most of the afternoon. A short reflection from each group is provided:

<b>Irrigation</b>	<b>Rainfed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers pleased to be part of a new a new team</li> <li>- Opportunities to work together across centers</li> <li>- Identified new area of work in Uzbekistan</li> <li>- One activity will move to Basins SRP</li> <li>- In the focal regions IWMI, ICARDA and IFPRI are all in Nile, Central Asia and Pakistan: opportunity to act together as a true program in these areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common vision on landscape approach</li> <li>- Time to explain to each other the content of the activities has been very useful, going beyond the information available in the plans.</li> <li>- Communicating the program to others is going to be a key area of focus.</li> <li>- Weakness – impact pathways are not well articulated in the documents</li> <li>- Opportunity going forward is to work together in</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main weakness is gender</li> </ul>	<p>focal regions</p>
<p><b>Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integration in the SRP across SRPs is working very well. The decision analysis cluster has worked across the whole program</li> <li>- Next step forward – how to harness everything achieved in the last year</li> <li>- New ideas – build capacity to work on decision analysis with advisory groups</li> <li>- New ideas - behavioral techniques to be integrated into the work, i.e. how is decision making influenced?</li> <li>- New ideas – working ESS into business models</li> <li>- New ideas – targeting NAMAs and Strategic action plans</li> <li>- New ideas – quantifying the uncertainties in research impact pathways</li> <li>- New ideas- can we better package the land, health tools for use behind the SDGs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Basins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not all activities fit into the Basins SRP. It was clarified that all activities have to contribute to the structure /clusters of the SRP</li> <li>- Clarified nutrient flows and other research, at global level, fits into the Basins SRP</li> <li>- How to find a mid-point between legacy projects and delivering on expected outcomes?</li> <li>- We have 3 years to go and we are now looking for very tangible outcomes</li> <li>- There are a few possibilities for inter-center collaboration.</li> <li>- The activities are addressing ecosystem services but how does this collection of ESS activities fit into something bigger</li> <li>- All centers use similar tools, e.g. SWAT – need to put together a SWAT model community</li> <li>- Weakness – even when inter-center collaboration is possible, there is still a tendency to work alone</li> <li>- Weakness – gender integration into this SRP is a challenge</li> <li>- Sometimes reticence to scale up, concern over whether we can really do this</li> <li>- Basins is seen as an integrator across SRPs but so far there is no specific activity on this</li> </ul>
<p><b>RRR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion beyond expectations – very rich</li> <li>- ICARDA will revise activity to be more in line with RRR</li> <li>- 3 outputs jointly identified</li> <li>- What was missing? ICRISAT</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gender Poverty and Institutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is willingness to integrate gender</li> <li>- There is a lot going on but it is not necessarily clear on paper</li> <li>- Weakness – Impact pathway</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ecosystem Services and Resilience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impacts on ecosystems services (land use change) - how to improve irrigation but reduce these impacts?</li> <li>- Overall ESS values/ benefits should be greater than the costs</li> <li>- How to turn problems into opportunities, e.g. making use of salt. Potential new ecosystem service, in salt resistant tree species for the rehabilitation of environment and acting as cash crops</li> <li>- Interlinkage between irrigated and rainfed landscapes. Whatever interventions that are done in irrigated landscapes are either beneficial or detrimental</li> <li>- Within the group, some centers consider ESS more strongly than others. If those that do not have this well integrated were to improve this, it would help the coherence of the program and the would clarify the impact pathway</li> <li>- How to strategically link with current initiatives e.g. ongoing project on supply of water to cities from upper Tana River basin. The partners involved would like to provide data to some of the tools, we could incorporate into capacity building</li> <li>- We are mainstreaming ESS but we also need to position this with stakeholders that are interested and improve on our impact pathways</li> <li>- ESS research goes beyond biophysical assessments. Going beyond that (social, institutions...) needs to be looked at together with partners.</li> </ul>	

Some of the general issues that arose from the discussions include:

- There is a need to develop a global impact pathway beyond the regional and SRP-related pathways. Overall, the Impact Pathways process needs review – it would have been useful for WLE partners to have received guidelines on how to develop these. WLE should also consider setting program level impact pathway(s) so that activities can then nest within these.
- There was interest to set up a community of practice, particularly on modelling, building upon the previous CPWF group. Other possible COPs include on business modelling, etc.
- There is a need to improve access to information on what activities are going on as it is difficult for individual researchers to grasp what is happening in different activities. Is there a better way to report and plan across centers?
- How is WLE going to interact and collaborate with other CRPs? This is particularly important in terms of avoiding 'stakeholder fatigue'. An example was given of the Ganges Delta, in which the CGIAR has set up an advisory committee under the Agricultural Research center that covers all 6 CRPs operational in the region.
- How will WLE work with FAO? Currently FAO is working with RRR, Ecosystem Services and on the Agricultural Water program with IWMI. FAO has access to the high level government officials; WLE could tap into their convening power

## Day 2

Jeremy Bird, Director General, IWMI, provided an update from the strategic management perspective, highlighting that the Steering Committee of WLE is taking an active role in the program and will be briefed on this meeting next week. He shared the positive news that funding issue that has constrained the program since 2012 is now resolved and additional funds have been officially confirmed to be allocated to WLE to cover the shortfall.

There will be a review of WLE commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) in 2015 and the proposal preparation for Phase II is also imminent; for both of these, we need to be ready to show outcomes and impact. It is important that we build on existing work, e.g. CPWF, and at the same time we do also need to set ourselves on the right track to something new and be aware that getting away from 'business as usual' takes time.

## WLE Focal Regions

Andrew Noble made a presentation on the progress toward developing the WLE Focal Region programs which is a key new element within WLE and represents an opportunity to really show the WLE paradigm shift in action. The focal regions will focus on influencing large scale investments as well as identifying key ecosystems services to maintain.

The 'storyline' coming out of this meeting will comprise a development challenge and research questions for each region. Beginning with these basic questions, these programs for each region will be developed over the coming months. A process for commissioning research will then follow. A key element within this process will be including gender and ESS as genuine integrated components.

Each focal region made a presentation on progress that has been made by teams so far in defining the development challenge, and there followed a productive day of discussions to refine the challenges for the above regions, with smaller groups also formed to consider how to potential priority areas for the Andes/Central America, Tigris/Euphrates and Central Asia.

### Greater Mekong presentation (Eric Baran)

Here the focus is on investment with possible research areas including:

- Research areas:
- Benefit sharing/gender
- Mitigation of dam impacts
- Land governance
- Impact of Investments / trade off analysis

- Impact of sediment reduction & social consequence

Suggestions included to look at different forms of energy generation beyond dams; and to mention fisheries more explicitly.

#### Volta / Niger presentation (Pay Drecshel/ Fabrice DeClerck)

The 'storyline' of this region is to 'better managing demands in the south' by managing demands and co-directing and designing interventions. Key elements include:

- Connectedness between migration trajectory, including gender aspects, e.g. women becoming primary stakeholders in the north
- WLE brings the capacity to look at large scales and larger temporal scale and it can bring people together in a neutral space
- Capitalize on strengths of the many centers in this region. This is not currently done through other means.
- First focus countries will be Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria
- Target groups will be donors and decision makers

Next steps –the draft will go back to design group, then review by stakeholders and key donors

#### Ganges presentation (Craig Meisner)

Storyline – improving access to quality and productivity of land and water resources and reducing environmental risks. A follow up development challenge note on the Ganges produced based on these discussions is available [here](#).

#### Indus presentation

Storyline - can the resilience of the Indus basin irrigation system be assured for years to come? There followed a recommendation that the storyline needs adjusting to better reflect research questions and go beyond irrigation systems

Marcela Quintero summarized potential priority areas for Latin America / Andes, noting that this region has strong examples of the Benefit Sharing Mechanisms that could be adapted and applied to other regions. The Nile Basin countries presentation was given by Simon Langan, outlining key development challenges identified. Richard Soppe summarized priority challenges for Central Asia and Tigris/Euphrates.

## Communications and Planning

Given the lengthy discussions on focal region priority setting and additional time set aside for Project leaders of individual activities to discuss alignment with SRP Leaders, a brief summary only was given on Communications. It was highlighted that CG Space now has around 300 journals/ reports from WLE, including 77 journal articles from 2012. A request was made for output and outcome stories.

A brief explanation was provided on the planning and reporting process, with a reminder given to the group that Annual reports are due at the end of January.

## Fundraising for WLE

The fundraising group, consisting of representatives from seven Centers which had been meeting in parallel sessions, re-joined the main meeting. Mireille Perrin presented their key outcomes. These included

- Setting up an informal community of practice
- A framework for collective fundraising
- Identification of joint fundraising opportunities
- Identification of communications and marketing requirements

## Annex 1: Agenda

### Monday 9th December: What story can each SRP tell based on the portfolio of activities?

Time	Agenda Item	Background Documents	Lead
8.30 – 9.00	Welcome by ICARDA Director General  Introduction to meeting and objectives		Dr Mahmoud Solh  Facilitator: Richard Soppe
9.00 – 10.30	Update on WLE  <i>Presentation by Program Director followed by facilitated discussion with panel</i>		Presentation: Andrew Noble Facilitator: Emma Greatrix Panel: WLE MC
10.30-11.00	Coffee Break & Group Photo		
11.00-11.30	Overview of Working Groups on GPI and ESS&R  <i>Introduction to this afternoon's 'surgery' style 1 on 1 sessions with the WG Leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief on gender &amp; ESS inclusion in activities</li> <li>WLE Gender strategy</li> </ul>	Nicoline De Haan Fabrice DeClerck
11.30–12.15	Alignment of activities with SRPs: Group work with SRP Leaders (continues after lunch)  Each SRP to meet with a group of researchers. Aims of session: 1) Reach agreement on adjustments to 2014 plans 2) Improve understanding of content and direction of SRPs/ ACs and identify linkages between different partners and their activities 3) SRP/ WG leaders understand partner research activities in more depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of 2013 activities and SRP leader grades</li> <li>Center activity plans/ budgets for 2014-2015</li> <li>Activity Cluster document</li> </ul>	Irrigation [Sanmugam Prathapar & Theib Oweis]  Rainfed Systems [Deborah Bossio & Suhas Wani]  RRR [Pay Drechsel]  Basins [Vladimir Smakhtin & Claudia Ringler]  Information systems [Keith Shepherd & Lisa-Maria Rebelo]
12.15-13.30	Lunch		
13.30–15.00	Alignment of activities with SRPs - Group work with SRP Leaders	As above	As above
15.00-15.15	Coffee Break		
15.15–16.15	Researchers have 10 minute appointments with SRP & Working Group leaders to discuss specific activities and their integration into WLE		SRP & WG Leaders
16.15-17.00	Wrap Up: Highlights from the SRP sessions and Working Groups		Facilitator: Michael Victor
17.00-18.00	Closed Session: WLE Management Committee		
	Evening : Group Dinner		

## Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December: Focal region and innovation fund activities

Time	Agenda Item	Background Documents	Lead
8.30 – 8.45	Review of Day 1/ Intro Day 2		Facilitator: Richard Soppe
9.00 – 10.15	Development challenges in WLE focal regions Introductory session to focal regions, encompassing: 1) Impact pathways 2) Structure of Focal region programs (Rationale; Recommendation on funding split between center activities/ focal region activities and innovation; processes and criteria for accessing focal region and innovation funds) 3) Development challenges in the regions 4) Regional representation (outline of process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process doc for focal regions</li> <li>• Process doc for innovation funds</li> <li>• Process doc for regional representation</li> </ul>	Presentation: Andrew Noble  Facilitator: Emma Greatrix
10.15-10.45	Coffee Break		
10.45-12.30	Focal Regions: group work  For each priority region, discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key Development Challenges for the region</li> <li>- What kind of research could help to meet the development challenges?</li> <li>- Complementarities between participating centers that could be part of focal region research for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop reports from Nile, Volta, Indus, Ganges, Mekong</li> <li>• Development challenges in 4 priority focal regions</li> </ul>	Pay Drechsel – Volta/Niger  Claudia Ringler – Mekong  Deborah Bossio– Nile  Suhas Wani/ Prathapar Sanmugam- Ganges/Indus
12.30-13.30	Lunch		
13.30–14.30	Focal Region Programming: Feedback to Plenary		Facilitators: Nicoline de Haan & Fabrice DeClerck
14.30-15.00	WLE Reporting/Budgets		Emma Greatrix
15.00–15.15	Coffee Break		
15.15–16.00	WLE Communications and Knowledge Management Aim: Improved sharing/ communication with science focal points, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WLE branding</li> <li>• Outreach for WLE activities</li> <li>• Link center web-pages with WLE site</li> <li>• Messaging/events</li> <li>• Report series and document repository</li> </ul>	Knowledge management in WLE	Michael Victor
16.00-16.30	Fundraisers group: feedback to plenary		Mireille Perrin
16.30-17.15	Wrap Up & Close		Facilitator
	Evening: Free		

## Annex 2: Participants

CIAT	Fred Kizito
CIAT	Marcela Quintero
CIAT	Justine Cordingley
CIAT	Deborah Bossio
CIP	Roberto Quiroz
ICARDA	Richard Soppe
ICARDA	Theib Oweis
ICARDA	Debra Turner
UN-INWEH	Manzoor Qadir
ICRAF	Keith Shepherd
ICRAF	Ermias Betemariam
ICRISAT	KH Anantha
ICRISAT	Tilahun Amede
ICRISAT	Suhas Wani
ILRI	Mats Lannerstad
WorldFish	Yumiko Kura
WorldFish	Craig Meisner
WorldFish	Eric Baran
IITA	Alpha Kamara
WLE	Andrew Noble
WLE	Emma Greatrix
WLE	Michael Victor
WLE	Nicoline de Haan
WLE	Martin van Brakel
IWMI	Peter McCornick
FAO	Pasquale Steduto
IWMI	Pay Drechsel
IWMI	Vladimir Smakhtin
IWMI	Lisa-Maria Rebelo
IWMI	Luna Bharati
IWMI	Everisto Mapedza
IWMI	Simon Langan
IWMI	Karen Villholth
IWMI	Sonali Sellamuttu Senaratne
IWMI	Miriam Otoo
IWMI	Jeremy Bird
IWMI	Javier Mateo-Sagasta
IFPRI	Claudia Ringler
IFPRI	Wei Zhang
IFPRI	Dawit Kelemework Mekonnen
IFPRI	Ruth Meinzen-Dick
Bioversity International	Bhuwon Sthapit
Bioversity International	Ehsan Dulloo
Bioversity International	Fabrice DeClerck
Bioversity International	Devra Jarvis
<b>FUND RAISERS</b>	
IWMI	Mireille Perrin
IITA	Kristina Roing de Nowina
Bioversity	Alison de Luise
ICRAF	Catherine Watson
CIP	Victor Mares
WorldFish	Pamela George
ICARDA	Rima Dabbagh