

# Minutes of virtual meeting of the WLE Independent Steering Committee (ISC), 5 October 2020

## Present

Diane Holdorf  
Sasha Koo-Oshima  
Izabella Koziell  
Jo Puri  
Mark Smith  
Brent Swallow  
Ann Tutwiler (Chair)

## Observers/ Presenters

Emma Greatrix  
Roseline Remans  
Sonali Senaratne  
Claudia Ringler  
Mike Philipps

## 1. Introduction

The Chair began the meeting with a round of introductions. Following the departure from IWMI of Claudia Sadoff, who has now joined the [Executive Management Team \(EMT\) of One CGIAR](#), IWMI's new Director General, Mark Smith, has joined the ISC. Jo Puri is also about to take up her new position at IFAD.

## 2. One CGIAR

### 2.1 Background

A [presentation](#) was provided on the CGIAR reform process, and the latest updates. The [new One CGIAR Common Board](#) was announced on 1<sup>st</sup> September, which included two CoSAI commissioners, who, as a result, have had to step down from CoSAI. Joining Claudia Sadoff on the EMT, are Elwyn Grainger Jones and Kundhavi Kadiresan. The One CGIAR Research Strategy is being reworked based on consultation comments, to be approved by end of the year. Following that, One CGIAR will define its investment plan 2022-24.

The One CGIAR Mission statement is 'Ending hunger by 2030 – through science to transform food, land and water systems in a climate crisis'. The five impact areas are:

- Nutrition & food security
- Poverty reduction, livelihoods & jobs
- Gender equality, youth & social inclusion
- Climate adaptation & greenhouse gas reduction
- Environmental health & biodiversity

New One CGIAR investments will have to demonstrate progress against several of these impact areas and will be delivered through 3-yearly investment plans ('big lifts'), which are expected to be comprised of:

- Regionally rooted, integrating projects
- That are demand-driven and with a strong focus on end user adoption

- And which deepen engagement local, regional and global private sector
- Whilst supporting end to end innovation
- And demonstrate best in class: AR4D results and performance management

Initiatives already in advanced development, with donor backing, include Excellence in Breeding, Excellence in Agronomy and the Two Degree Initiative (CCAFS, with support from World Bank). There are also discussions ongoing about collaborations at Center level.

In the last meeting, ISC agreed that it was not an appropriate moment for WLE to begin preparing pieces for the future One CGIAR effort, given the uncertainty over the process, and the existing workload of the WLE team. At this later stage, the ISC considers what WLE could *now* be doing to move forward in the context of One CGIAR preparation, and how any such work might be resourced. The question was raised as to how those initiatives that are in progress are handling the 'regionally rooted' requirement.

The following **Emerging ideas from across the WLE portfolio and partners** were presented:

## 2.2 IFPRI One Projects – on water – energy – food and land restoration (Claudia Ringler, IFPRI)

IFPRI is discussing two relevant initiatives, for potential to take forward into One CGIAR discussions:

- Renewable Energy for water agricultural and Land (RENEWAL)
- Sustainable management of shared landscapes and common resources (SMSLCR)

## 2.3 WLE-FISH collaboration (Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu, IWMI, and Mike Philipps, FISH)

WLE and FISH already collaborate and co-invest Focus on where this already co-investment on WLE and FISH CRP. The group aims to look at the productivity of water itself, going beyond the use of water on land, and would like to see shift towards more thinking on underwater crops. Examples include:

**WLE-FISH innovations ready to scale:** IWMI is leading a cluster within the FISH CRP which covers different agro-ecologies and aligns well with WLE. The integration of fisheries into the design and management of different management systems has the potential for significant impact. A decision support system for planners is being developed, based on research on integrating aquaculture and agriculture in Myanmar and Cambodia.

**WLE -FISH innovations under development:** IWMI, WorldFish and IRRI have been working together to contextualize EAT Lancet Commission guidelines in the Myanmar context, using nutrition, landscapes and environmental implications as entry points. The USAID Fish for Livelihoods initiatives looks at water resources modelling implications for scaling aquaculture in Myanmar, under existing and future climates

**The FISH-WLE partnership is focussed on One Health, for potential areas for future research, including**

- Managing trade-offs and synergies for nutrition and health in rice-based production systems
- Integrated approaches that enable fisheries to reduce malaria and improve nutrition and the environment).

The group intends to hold a meeting later this year, to move forward on some of these themes.

## 2.4 EU DEVCO: agroecology and the private sector (Roseline Remans, The Alliance)

A concept note to support agroecological decision making has been approved by EU DEVCO. The 3-year (2021-2023) initiative is being jointly developed by WLE, FTA and CCAFS, with each CRP leading a work package, at approx. Euro 2.5m per package. WLE would lead the Work Package on ‘Innovating pathways for long-term incentives and private and public investments for agroecological transitions’. The next stage is the development of the full proposal.

## 2.5 Next steps

Some of these proposed initiatives will move ahead with bilateral funding. However, if any of these ideas are to be pitched as potential regionally integrating projects for future support under One CGIAR, a decision needs to be made on how to proceed. It is a challenge to move forward with ideas in a ‘vacuum’, when the process for engaging in One CGIAR initiatives is not clear, the research strategy is incomplete, and the demands on WLE are considerable. We do know that it is likely that the future strategy will have a regional focus – is there a way that WLE could prepare for this, as well as other parts of the puzzle? One option to prepare would be to consider a stocktaking-type exercise based around the One CGIAR mission statement ‘*through science to transform food, land and water systems in a climate crisis*’. WLE might also be well placed to consider how to translate evidence into action, including on questions of how behavioral economics can be incorporated across the CGIAR.

WLE does have some resources already set aside to work on landscapes, but further time and funds are needed to take any other ideas forward. One area to consider would be the design of a landscapes component for each region, to ensure this is incorporated into One CGIAR thinking. The challenge here would be the limited scope for extracting valuable findings at a regional level.

## 3. Commission on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification (CoSAI)

Ruben Echeverria, the Chair of CoSAI [presented](#) on CoSAI Engagement plans to 2021. Two Commissioners have taken up positions on the new One CGIAR Common Board and so had to be replaced. Grethel Aguilar and Ume Lele are the two replacements. CoSAI will focus on asking questions, open dialogues and reporting on these dialogues, on six big topics: Future food scenarios, investment priorities, pathways to change innovations systems at scale, SAI and the environment, SAI and human objectives, and Principles and metrics. The investment priorities study is due for completion in November and launch in January, and will include case studies on Brazil, India and Kenya, as well as development partners USAID and IFAD. Findings are not yet ready, but the methodology can be found in the [inception report](#).

CoSAI will likely engage with three key processes in 2021: COP 26 (November); the One CGIAR research portfolio development; and the UN Food Systems Summit. The round table at AGRF in September this year was a successful launch event. The Commission is prioritizing external partnerships, with a view to building up networks that continue this work and thinking, after CoSAI has finished.

From November to March, CoSAI will focus on working groups and public round tables on all six topics, with results to be launched from May to July. The ISC is welcome to participate in these round tables. Global outreach efforts and the launch of the main report will take place from August – October 2021.

On One CGIAR, CoSAI is engaging with the Excellence in Agronomy initiative, and is strategizing on how to ensure that relevant SAI content is included in the future portfolio. Regarding COP 26, there is a

campaign planned on nature and food. It would be good to integrate early findings from CoSAI into these initiatives. A further suggestion for engagement could be the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in January 2021. The UNFCCC Race to Zero Dialogues in November 2020 are also an option for engagement, as is the SAI Platform. On the UN Food Systems Summit, an announcement of who will lead each action track will be made in October. CoSAI is already working with FCDO and CCAFS and will launch some of the investment study findings at the GCA summit in January. It is vital to engage with these kinds of processes, even if the CoSAI products are not yet complete.

A discussion is emerging as to whether CoSAI should continue for a period into 2022, especially given the constraints on progress caused by COVID restrictions and it is worth considering whether certain donors could be approached for support in 2022.

#### 4. WLE management updates

Emma Greatrix provided an update on three management areas. Firstly, the WLE independent external review will take place from October to December 2021, with findings to be published in January. The ISC advised to be ready to write a management response, which will be made public along with the findings. The ISC asked to be updated on the findings of the review in the next meeting in January.

Second, the ISC was informed that the 2021 POWB is due for submission on 31 January and the 2020 Annual Report will be due on 30 April. Meetings for the ISC to review the contents will be held in 2-3 weeks prior to submission date.

Finally, DGIS has now confirmed its funding to WLE for the year. The budgets for 2021 are expected to be released by the CGIAR in November. WLE continues to operate on the assumption that all activities will be completed by December 2021. There have been no further updates on transition plan from the CGIAR Systems Management Office.

#### 5. Follow up actions

Follow up actions from the meeting include:

- a) CoSAI
  - End date. IK should tentatively discuss with Sida the possibility of extension of this workstream into 2022 in the context of building into the new portfolio.
  - Engagement strategy – make clear the trajectory of output and deliverables into key processes and outcomes.
- b) Independent review. The ISC would like to see and reflect on the review findings, and WLE should be ready prepare a management response, whether or not one is required.
- c) WLE engagement in One CGIAR. WLE should limit focus on those that are most likely to have enough backing to be system-wide vehicles (such as the fish-rice-water concept collaboration), and start dialogues with key W2 donors on options for future support.