

Minutes of virtual meeting of the WLE Independent Steering Committee (ISC), 14 April 2021

Present

Diane Holdorf
Sasha Koo-Oshima
Mark Smith
Brent Swallow
Ann Tutwiler (Chair)
Stefan Uhlenbrook
Claudia Ringler

Apologies

Jo Puri

Observers/ Presenters

Julia Compton
Emma Greatrix (minutes)

1. Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the new WLE Leadership, Stefan Uhlenbrook (Director) and Claudia Ringler (Deputy Director), who had been formally introduced to the ISC at the previous meeting.

2. Annual Report 2020

The [2020 CGIAR Annual Report](#) was presented to the ISC by Stefan Uhlenbrook, Claudia Ringler and Emma Greatrix.

ISC comments and observations on the AR included a noteworthy improvement in how much researchers are focused on the outcomes they are delivering, as well as the number, variety, and geographic spread of the outcome stories. This is the result of a push for impact by CGIAR and other donors in the last few years, as well as a general change in attitude within individuals and organizations, to focus more on impact. The increase in private sector partnerships is also notable.

Action: The motion to move the Annual Report to approval was made, seconded, and carried.

3. CoSAI Update

Julia Compton presented an [update](#) on the Commission on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification (CoSAI), seeking ISC input and advice on opportunities for influencing, as well as opinions on the options presented for the final CoSAI publication.

Contributions from the ISC on influencing opportunities included:

- Within the preparations for UNFSS, there is an exercise ongoing with FCDO about how public money is being invested, including on research and nature-based solutions. The CoSAI studies would be useful inputs to this.
- Meetings are planned between CoSAI and regional bodies in June, to present future scenarios and SAI Innovation priorities. The CoSAI results could also potentially feed into upcoming UK government ministerial and senior official meetings as well as regional meetings with farmers.

WBCSD is carrying out CEO consultations before UNFSS, and it is suggested that CoSAI contact WBCSD on this.

- The CoSAI Investment baseline study and Investment gap study will be presented in the 'transforming innovation' campaign webinars, and the results will feed into UNFSS etc. Other potential routes for influence include:
 - o The UK and Italian governments,
 - o the knowledge products group synthesizing work from FAO and others, and
 - o FAO and UNEP are launching the Ecosystems Restoration Decade on 7 June, World Environment Day, which could be an opportunity to showcase the CoSAI studies.
- Regarding potential members of the joint task force on principles and metrics, it was proposed to consider representatives from FARA, APAARI and other regional research agencies, along with CGIAR donors and representatives of development banks.

Regarding the final publication of CoSAI, we need to carefully consider the target group, and who will write it, when deciding on the format. Possible formats for consideration include a 50-page report, scattered articles, a peer-reviewed report and a summary in a journal (note: this was the original rationale behind setting up CoSAI), an open-published book, a special issue or a collection in a journal.

One issue to consider is the divergence in opinion across the Commissioners, which poses a challenge for single article style products. A multiple authorship model (e.g. book, special issue/collection) could help to overcome that barrier. The advantages of a report are providing a springboard for communications, although there are also arguments for doing the same via academic papers (noted the time needed for review and editing) and collections.

4. Update on the One CGIAR Process

Stefan Uhlenbrook and Mark Smith provided an update on the ongoing One CGIAR process, which is moving along at a rapid pace. The strategy document is explicit about references to land, water, ecosystems, which is of significant benefit to the teams developing the new initiatives.

There are opportunities to use the body of research at the science-policy interface, although this has not been a significant part of the discussion to date. Much of the work builds on stakeholder inputs from existing initiatives and for example the 2-degree initiative, and colleagues co-developing the initiatives also come from a range of CG and non-CG backgrounds. Wider consultation would need to be a bigger part of the next stages of development.

Considering the structure of the new initiatives, a question was raised on how the Nexus initiative will be developed, when there are also regional initiatives - what will the synergies be? The Nexus initiative plans to work in East Africa, South Asia and Central Asia, and in doing so will collaborate with the regional initiatives to ensure complementarity.

5. Transition Planning

Emma Greatrix provided an overview of the administrative arrangements for the closure of WLE Phase 2. The work planned on curating WLE data was welcomed.

The proposed \$60k (the same amount for all CRPs) of allowed carry-forward seems to be very little compared to the immense tasks involved for 2021 reporting. It was proposed to draft a letter signed by the ISC and DG to put forward to SMO, requesting this figure be reconsidered.

Action: WLE Director and Chair to discuss the possibility of writing a letter to SMO about the allowed carryover into 2022.

6. AOB

The ISC is asked to participate in the upcoming joint ISC-MC meeting in June, over two meetings of two hours each, after which there will be a break for several months before the next meeting.

The joint meeting will include a presentation of the three WLE synthesis products, and a session on CoSAI.

Action: Date for ISC-MC meeting to be confirmed.