

SIAC 5th Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting, Wednesday 27 November 2013, 3:00pm Rome, Skype

Major Outcomes and Follow-up Actions Required

PSC Members attending: Doug Gollin, Gerry O'Donoghue, Alan Tollervey, Greg Traxler, Julian Alston, Tim Kelley

Observers: Rachel Sauvinet-Bedouin, Mywish Maredia, Byron Reeves, James Stevenson and Lakshmi Krishnan

1. Approval of meeting agenda

DG suggested adding a discussion of SIAC financial status, but otherwise, the agenda was approved without amendments.

2. Follow up from previous meeting minutes

a. *FC approval of revised proposal for W1 support to SIAC and progress with establishing a project admin cell in the ISPC Secretariat in Rome:* Original SIAC proposal submitted to FC in April 2013, and subsequently amended and updated at the request of World Bank with explicit reference to governance structure and clear delineation between use of funds from W1, Gates, IFAD, and ISPC core funding. Further, the Fund Use Agreement between World Bank and FAO was modified to accommodate this special initiative, which took time. This FUA is now in approval process from the FC, with a decision expected mid-Dec. An asst project administrator has been hired to manage finance and budget related activities of SIAC, and will join in December 2013. Providing an update on financials, GD said that the initial understanding was that all grants should go through the CO but now only the Gates component is, and, a bulk of this is a grant for MSU. The contract with MSU ends in January 2013, and we will need to report back to Gates in the first week of February. MM provided a brief update on the MSU spending: only \$0.6 million of the \$1.2 million disbursed will be spent by end of 2013 because of delays in starting activities.

Action: GO, TK and MM to follow-up offline on budget issues, payments, upcoming contractual changes required, etc.

b. *Meeting of the FC committee on Evaluation and Impact Assessment (FCCEIA):* DG mentioned that the last committee meeting was poorly attended. FCCEIA and Governance committee haven't had Chairs, and require an effective Chair to steer the committee. AT has adopted the Chairmanship of the governance committee and cannot take on EIA as well. GO and Jonathan Wadsworth encouraging members to step up. **Action: DG and RB to follow-up with JW on Chair for FCCEIA.**

c. *IFAD support to SIAC program:* There had been some confusion at IFAD as to which department should have processed the formal request for support, initially submitted in March 2013. No further update, pending approval from IFAD.

3. Review of Objectives 1 and 2 activities to date

a. *Objective 1: Develop, pilot and test methods for collecting reliable adoption data*

1) *Cassava in Ghana study proposal:* This study tests the effectiveness of 4 household-based methods of tracking varietal adoption for cassava against the benchmark of DNA analysis of samples. MSU has sub-contracted with IITA, Crop Research Institute Ghana, and Agriculture Innovation Consulting Ghana for the field survey work.

2) *Beans in Zambia study proposal:* Similar to cassava, this study tests the effectiveness of the following four household-based methods of tracking varietal adoption for common beans, and will evaluate against DNA finger-printing. MSU is collaborating with CIAT and Zambian Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) for field work, and LGC-Genomics will conduct DNA analysis. MSU and CIAT are exploring the possibility of doing another bean study in Uganda, and collect that data as a part of the maize study in Summer 2014 (See below).

MM stated that the data collection for beans (402 households) has been completed and MSU has received the dataset. For cassava, data from 500 cassava farmers will be submitted next week. The next step is to perform the analysis and get the samples for the crops to Cornell and LGC-Genomics.

3) *Maize in Uganda study proposal:* Preliminary work has been completed, and the data collection to follow in Summer 2014. DNA analysis to be done by University of Georgia and NARO Uganda.

4) *Call for concept notes on 'Advancing Methodologies for Tracking the Uptake and Adoption of Natural Resources Management Technologies in Agriculture (Activity 1.2)* Out of 7 concept notes received in July, 4 were invited to submit full proposals. These proposals have been received and JS will lead the external review process in mid-December.

b. *Objective 2: Institutionalize collection of adoption data at national level*

1) *Hiring consultant and planning meeting in Bangkok (for SA and SEA regions):* A 2-day inception meeting with Centers and NARS partners will be held in Bangkok in mid January. MSU is in the process of making logistical arrangements

(25-30 participants expected + Tom Walker and SPIA representatives). MSU was unable to reach a mutually agreeable TOR with consultant they were planning to hire, and have abandoned the plan to hire a consultant at this stage.

- 2) *Policy oriented research outcomes*: MSU and SPIA have had preliminary discussions on how to plan and implement Activities 2 and 3. Based on these discussions, MSU will conduct 5 sub-activities under 2.2 including literature reviews and reviews of existing datasets (LSMS, FAO, WRI, etc.) to move forward. MSU has been in touch with Peter Hazell (IFPRI) on Policy Oriented Research Impact Assessment workshop in 2014, and will use this as a platform to advance Objective 2.3.
- 3) *Institutionalization*: ICAS conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in October – MM and BR explained that this was a scoping trip to understand what is going on and who the players are. No further updates. MM and TK will meet with officials in Delhi in mid Jan to discuss the scope for getting access to Indian Cost of Cultivation data.

4. Review of Objectives 3 (Assess the full range of impacts from CGIAR research) and Objective 4 (Strengthening the community of practice for *ex post* IA in the CGIAR)

- a. *Nutrition and health impacts*: The call for full concept notes for studies to assess the nutrition and health impacts of CGIAR research is being managed by SPIA Associate Erwin Bulte at Wageningen through an explicit review and selection process (attached). 12 concept notes were selected (from ~60 received) and invited to submit full proposals by 6 January.
- b. *Long-term, large scale ex post IAs across the full range of impacts*: Have delayed action on this to address other SIAC priorities and attend to various funding and admin issues. Plan is to bring on a full SPIA member early in the year to provide leadership to this activity – managing a call for proposals similar to the health and nutrition call.
- c. *Micro-level studies*: SPIA will issue a competitive call for proposals in Feb 2014, to be managed by SPIA Associate Karen Macours (Paris School of Economics). For this meeting, SPIA proposed 3 small commissioned pieces of work that build on already established or planned Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) that have direct relevance to SPIA's agenda. FAO contribution to ISPC/SPIA WP&B 2013 would be used to fund this activity. The 3 proposed initiatives are
 - 1) Paris School of Economics / IITA / Innovations for Poverty Action. Lead contact: Rachid Laajaj
 - 2) Tufts University. Lead contact: Jenny Aker
 - 3) University of California, Davis. Lead contact: Michael Carter

RB-S requested clarifications (1) on how these micro-studies fit in SPIA/SIAC's larger strategy since the topics for the studies are very different from each other; (2) how these will build on other projects and add value, particularly the first two proposals that refer to existing projects; and (3) the institutional set-up. AT raised a similar question – if these were opportunistic or part of a larger whole. DG responded that these are all opportunistic, and while the SPIA agenda is to issue call for proposals that are systematic (KM to lead a call in January), this leaves the opportunity to fund specific studies that may be useful for modest sums of money (\$15K-\$70K in this instance). TK added that these studies are of strategic importance since they would allow us to get a sense of how accurate on-farm or on-station trials conducted by researchers are as a basis for estimating impacts at a scale. SPIA would lose the 2013 funding from FAO for these studies if the contracts are not in place by mid-December. DG added that this has been an iterative process with Karen Macours (SPIA Associate) engaging with researchers to spread information on the type of research we are interested/engaged in. JS provided a brief update on the ATAI (a largely Gates funded initiative) meeting in July for matchmaking between the likes of CGIAR Centers and groups of development economists: the IITA-PSE and UC Davis study was an outcome of this process and JS was a part of those meetings.

Decision: PSC approval was given to proceed in commissioning these initiatives.

- d. *IA of under-evaluated areas of CGIAR research, e.g., livestock, irrigation management, agro-forestry, policy and social sciences, NRM, etc.*: Have delayed action on this to address other SIAC priorities and attend to various funding and admin issues; intention is still to commission 6 scoping studies (one for each area) to assess IA work to-date and the scope for undertaking new efforts (methods, data) to document IA for specific CG-related interventions. Planning for Jan/Feb 2014.
- e. *Collaboration with the LSMS-ISA survey effort*: As a part of SPIA efforts to support CGIAR in collecting data that is nationally representative, and can be used to assess the adoption and impact of innovations, we will partner with LSMS-ISA to add questions to their existing surveys. We have agreement with World Bank LSMS-ISA team for SPIA to hire two MS graduates to work with the team in SSA in piloting protocols. Discussions with CG Centers for hosting arrangements now underway and a call advertising the two positions will be issued in late December/early January.

- f. *Small grants (Activity 4.1)*: Annual budget for this activity is US \$ 75k. Call announced 5 October; we will be receiving submissions on a rolling basis with SPIA taking decisions regularly (one in a quarter or less). Four received so far (CIMMYT, ILRI x 2, IWMI) - total value of \$30,000; currently seeking clarification from proponents on specific use of requested funds.
- g. *Strengthening IA in the CGIAR and helping build a community of practice through new partnerships*: Open call for concept notes issued on 28 August, received 11 CN of which 5 have been shortlisted; proponents were invited to submit full proposals by 25 November (concept notes and full proposals shared with PSC). SPIA reviewed and ranked the full proposals, and DG summarized this with a recommendation to fund one proposal on a priority basis and requested comments from PSC. He added that the question of whether a second proposal can be funded would depend on re-considering the budgetary allocation in January.
JA responded that he had reached a similar conclusion on the top three proposals. For one of the proposals, the level of participation from the key persons/institutions could change the relative ranking. RB agreed that the top proposal recommended by SPIA was more focused than the others, and addresses some impact topics where there is a need for learning on how to conduct IAs. GT was OK going ahead with the recommendation. AT commented on the review process, and expressed concern that it was unclear what the review process was, when the proposals would come to the PSC and expectations of them. He suggested that SPIA follow the ISPC process wherein a review is presented to the PSC for agreement/comments to increase transparency. RB agreed with the suggestion and added that SPIA shared the framework for assessing proposals upon request, and she was comfortable with the way reviews were done.
Decision: SPIA to share this framework and review ranking/comments with PSC immediately. Approval granted to proceed on a no-objections basis, pending review of this material by the PSC by Monday 2nd December.
- h. *Quality rating of Center/CRP ex post impact assessments*: In responding to our mandate to improve the quality of *ex post* IAs coming out of the Centers and CRPs, SPIA is planning to develop a peer review process for rating the quality of *ex post* IAs (e.g., 3 stars – excellent, 2 stars – good, 1-star – acceptable, and no star). Centers/CRPs would be encouraged to submit to this system given pressure from donors for only accepting *ex post* IA studies that have gone through this review. Little progress to-date due to pre-occupation with other tasks. A similar arrangement will be developed for evaluating the portfolio of adoption and *ex post* IAs generated by the CRPs and submitted as part of the external IEA evaluation.
Action: TK, with input from Julian Alston (has done something similar for ACIAR) to develop a proposal with suitable criteria for evaluation within the next month or two.
- i. *CGIAR Impact website*: The content management platform for <http://impact.cgiar.org> has been upgraded. Website is being re-organized to highlight key *ex post* IAs, events (call for proposals, etc.) and publications. A key component is re-working the publications page to make it easier to browse/find articles. While the developer does not have precise timeline estimates for some of the newer features, we aim to launch the larger version mid-December.
- j. *Donor demands for and utilization of impact assessment related information*: Idea is to do a baseline survey of donor demand for and satisfaction with IA studies in the CGIAR. Following SPIA's 2004-2005 donor demand survey on use of *ex post* IA studies, SPIA will survey donors to understand:
- How/whether use of *ex post* IAs has changed/evolved over time; current perceptions of CGIAR *ex post* IAs
 - Are/how some of these changes in use/perceptions relate to actions (e.g. publication of impact briefs) taken by SPIA on the issues identified in 2005
 - Additional actions required of SPIA, to feed into SPIA strategy. And use this opportunity to solicit feedback from donors on quality ratings of CGIAR *ex post* IAs, methodology and parameters proposed
- A first version of the survey has been drafted, and will be finalized by mid-December. In the meantime, a decision on timeline for data collection and (potentially) hiring an external consultant to follow-up with donors will be made.

6. Other Business: AT observed that World Bank VP Rachel Lambert is expected to be in FAO (Rome) for ISPC meeting on metrics (December (10-12), and suggested that TK/JS provide her a brief update on SPIA.

7. Next PSC meeting

Mid to late January, full proposals for health and nutrition impact study received and externally reviewed.