

SANREM CRSP Technical Committee Teleconference Minutes

2 to 3:30 p.m. EST Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008

Participants

Gerald Shively, Purdue, TC chair
Jeffrey Alwang, Virginia Tech
Maria Elisa Christie, Virginia Tech
Manuel Reyes, North Carolina A&T
Shirley Tarawali, ILRI
Corinne Valdivia, Missouri

Harry Rea (ex officio), USAID
Michael Bertelsen (ex officio), Virginia Tech
S.K. De Datta (ex officio), Virginia Tech
Theo Dillaha (ex officio), Virginia Tech
Deanne Estrada (recorder), Virginia Tech
Keith Moore (ex officio), Virginia Tech

Action items

1. The revised format for SANREM CRSP trip reports will take effect immediately.
2. A draft outline for semiannual progress reports from the LTRAs and revisions to the TC portion of the POP Manual will be sent to the BOD for approval. (Theo and Keith)
3. Nominations for a new TC chair will be made to the current chair by e-mail. (Jerry)
4. Nominations for a NGO/private-sector/federal representative on the TC will be made to the current chair by e-mail. (Jerry)
5. A listserv will be created for the host country TC representative to communicate with host country partners. (Theo)

Agenda items

New member. TC Chair Jerry Shively called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. He welcomed Shirley Tarawali* as the new IARC representative to the TC.

Borlaug fellowships. Theo reminded the committee that the deadline to apply for 2008 Borlaug Leadership Enhancement in Agriculture Program (LEAP) fellowships is March 15. He noted that there is some flexibility in credentials this year because the program wants to increase the number of applicants. The requirement for English fluency, however, has not changed.

Annual meeting. Manuel Reyes gave an update on preparations for the SANREM annual meeting, set for May 26-28 in the Philippines. Victoria Espaldon, who is directing the planning, has reserved 61 rooms at Splash Mountain for meeting participants and is sending regular updates. She continues to research the costs for meeting rooms and for cultural tours.

Administrative review. Harry Rea gave an update on the pending SANREM administrative management review (AMR) Feb. 26-28. AMRs are managed within USAID and are used to make decisions on whether programs will be extended. This coming year, USAID will decide whether to extend the SANREM program for another five years. If SANREM is extended, BIFAD and SPARE will review the extension proposal. AMR panel member Hans Gregersen is contacting SANREM principal investigators and researchers. After an in-depth phone interview with Corinne Valdivia and Jere Gilles by phone regarding project management of LTRA-4, the

panel has decided not to visit the University of Missouri but to visit Indiana University instead. Reyes said the AMR panel has been in touch with SANREM Board Chair Alton Thompson and will visit North Carolina A&T on Feb. 29.

Chair election. Election of a new TC chair before May's annual meeting was discussed. A brief discussion followed about whether the current chair could serve again and the merits of leadership continuity at this phase of the program. Shively said he is no longer involved in a SANREM LTRA and cannot attend this year's annual meeting but would not wish to create a leadership void. He requested that nominations be e-mailed to him and copied to all TC members for consideration before the next teleconference.

POP manual. The updated description of the Technical Committee for the POP manual was discussed and the TC approved of the changes. It now goes to the BOD for approval. The TC also reviewed and approved new templates for travel and semi-annual reports. PIs were reminded that the semi-annual report is due April 15.

New business

Fund distribution. Keith Moore announced that funding for cross-cutting initiatives and graduate student support has been processed and is with the VT Office of Sponsored Programs. Hopefully, universities and other partners will receive the modifications within the next week. Responsibilities under the modifications are described for each partner.

USAID reporting. Dillaha noted that current USAID reporting requirements call for annual reports to be submitted before the management entity has received the information from PIs. He asked for discussion on whether PIs could submit the information, or some components of it, earlier than Oct. 15. Rea said that deadline was set with the intention of putting the CRSPs on a fiscal year cycle beginning Oct. 1. But each management entity has the prerogative to maintain its own schedule and to send the information whenever available to USAID. Moore asked whether the previous year's data is adequate for USAID's purposes and how the reporting requirements fit in with the PIs' work plans. Rea said the previous year's information is generally sufficient for USAID's reporting purposes. Valdivia said her project cannot submit its annual report earlier because September and October are its busiest months for planning and planting. She asked what would need to be reported early. Dillaha said it would be helpful to the ME if best estimates of gender breakdowns, training, and publications could be submitted earlier. The consensus was that the deadline and procedure for LTRA annual reports should not be changed and that the ME will compile information for USAID as it becomes available, with possible requests to PIs for earlier estimates of USAID indicators.

Private-sector/NGO member. Shively asked what existing connections TC members have in the private sector and non-governmental agencies that might fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Devona Bell of Winrock International. Names proposed were Howard Shapiro of Mars International, Prakash Hebbar of the World Cocoa Foundation, and personnel of Ecosciencia in Ecuador. Jeff Alwang agreed to discuss the possibilities with Ecosciencia officials and report at the next teleconference.

EEP report. Dillaha gave a summary of the SANREM External Evaluation Panel's report, which contained 12 specific recommendations for the CRSP as a whole, including more communication among researchers. Highlights were praise for the new cross-cutting research and a recommendation that SANREM be extended for another five years. The report will be discussed in greater detail at the annual meeting. The EEP asked about the role of the host-country representative on the TC and interaction among host-country partners. The current TC host-country representative, Elizabeth Jiménez, sees the role as a strong one reflecting the perspective of host-country researchers generally. Rea said the Aquaculture CRSP TC consisted of an equal number of host-country and U.S. PIs. Also, its host-country PIs visit each other and participate in seminars and training, an effective learning tool. Dillaha said the exact role of SANREM's host-country TC member is a policy matter that should be referred to the SANREM BOD.

Program extension. If SANREM is renewed in October 2007, the ME will immediately start working with the EEP, USAID, and others to develop a new SANREM Phase IV research proposal/program so that Phase IV RFAs can go out during Phase III and new research activities can be in place by the start of Phase IV. Shively said if SANREM is extended, it might be organized with more host-country TC participation and provisions for researcher exchange visits.

Host Country TC representative communications. Elizabeth Jiménez's earlier request to establish a forum for information exchange among host country (HC) researchers on all SANREM projects was brought up for discussion again. The TC discussed the pros and cons of the proposal as they had at the Cochabamba annual meeting. A concern among PIs was that researchers in the field who are already difficult to reach may be inundated with requests for information. Valdivia proposed asking each PI to appoint a delegate to coordinate information exchange among projects. Dillaha suggested that (1) a listserv be created with host country partner names supplied by the LTRA PIs, (2) that the listserv be used on an experimental basis for six months by Elizabeth to communicate with the host country partners, (3) that LTRA PIs would also be members of the listserv, and (4) that he would discuss the proposal with Jiménez. Reyes made a motion to adopt Dillaha's suggestion, which was seconded by Valdivia. The motion passed unanimously. After the experimental period, the TC will decide whether the forum interferes with communication between PIs and their research teams.

* Dr. Shirley Tarawali is director of the International Livestock Research Institute's (ILRI) People, Livestock and the Environment research theme (Theme 5) based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme focuses on enhancing the role of livestock in contributing to the sustainable livelihoods of poor households, in particular the natural resource and human health assets. Previously, she had 20 years of research experience, mainly in crop-livestock systems in West Africa as an agronomist based in Ibadan, Nigeria, working in a joint appointment between the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and ILRI. She has been part of a number of multidisciplinary teams involved in diverse activities related to intensifying crop-livestock systems. Tarawali has authored or co-authored 38 articles in scientific journals or peer-reviewed publications, and contributed in an authorship or editorial capacity to 36 books and proceedings articles. In the SLP, Tarawali led an innovative approach to crop-livestock research within the SLP involving five international institutions and a range of national agricultural research systems (NARS) partners in Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. This approach, implemented with farmers to address holistic farm systems, included aspects of crop and livestock production, resource management and socioeconomics.

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