



SANREM CRSP

SANREM CRSP Technical Committee Meeting

9-10 am EDT, May 19, 2011

Participants:

Jeff Alwang, TC Chair

Greg Amacher

Michael Bertelsen

Stephane Boulakia

Christina Brannan

Catherine Chan-Halbrendt

Maria Elisa Christie

S.K. De Datta

Neal Eash

Steven Hodges

Michael Kelly

Keith Moore

Michael Mulvaney

Jay Norton

Amado Ohland

Vara Prasad

Harry Rea, USAID AOTR

Manuel Reyes

Lindsey Sutphin

1. TC Meeting was called to order by Jeff Alwang, TC chair, at 9:00 am.
2. Mike Mulvaney requested a change from the previous meeting's minutes to say that he was asking for 500 g soil samples, not 550 g. Harry Rea motioned to approve the amended minutes, and Manny Reyes seconded.
3. S.K. De Datta's opening remarks:
 - He went over SANREM's structure, with the Management Entity, advisory Board of Directors, and Technical Committee. He said the Technical Committee is a self-governing group for quality control of the SANREM projects.
 - He said there has not yet been official word of when the External Assessment Panel will begin its evaluation of SANREM projects, but he anticipates it will happen in Year 3.
 - The search for the next full-time program director is ongoing, and he hopes to soon have a director in place, but cannot confirm when that will happen.Mike Kelly noted that Anne Alexander, Board of Directors chair, had planned to be at the meeting, but she had a last-minute conflict and was unable to attend.
4. Discussion of annual meeting site for the next year:
 - Harry Rea said it would make sense to have the meeting in Washington, D.C. in Year 4 (2013) in order to help continue interest in the CRSPs.
 - Jeff Alwang said the International Economics meeting would be in Brazil in 2012, and there are many examples of conservation agriculture in the country to look at.
 - Vara Prasad is holding a regional meeting in West Africa during FY 2012.
 - o Neal Eash asked what it would cost to fly to West Africa, the group said about \$1500-2000 a person, plus about \$60 a day, about \$3000 per person overall



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- The ASA/CSA/SSSA conference is in Cincinnati, Ohio from October 21-24, 2012
 - o S.K. De Datta said SANREM could hold the annual meeting in conjunction with the conference since many of our researchers are already members of ASA/CSA/SSSA and we could get conference rates at the hotels.
 - o Neal Eash said SANREM could propose our own topical symposium community, and would automatically be given one when seven people signed up.
 - o Manny Reyes asked about who would pay the registration fee, which would be around \$300 for members and \$650 for non-members.
 - o There was discussion about having the TC meeting right before or right after the ASA conference. Jeff Alwang suggested having it the Saturday-Sunday before the ASA conference to avoid making everyone pay a fee.
 - o Jeff Alwang asked everyone to think about having the meeting in conjunction with the conference, and to keep the dates (October 21-14, 2012) open
 - o Jay Norton asked to consider getting the group outside during the next meeting on field trips
 - The group agreed to defer a decision on the location for the next meeting until the TC teleconference in September.
5. Administrative issues:
- Reporting and deadlines – Keith Moore
 - o The revised research strategy papers were due Sunday (May 15, 2011). Mike Kelly has received three of them so far, and Keith Moore asked the group to turn those in shortly.
 - o Work plans are due August 15, and the ME needs to know about any budgetary changes for the next fiscal year by then.
 - o Jeff Alwang asked if the PIs are to assume their budget will not be changed. Keith said his understanding is that we will be okay financially for the next year, and it's the following year where the issues may be more serious.
 - o As part of the work plan creation, PIs need to plan their international travel, including where they are going to go and who they are going with
 - o In order to have the work plans come in on time, PIs should get all necessary information from their host country partners two weeks before August 15
 - o USAID indicators deadline is August 31, PIs will have more to report this year. Keith reminded them to pick a data collection cutoff point.
 - o The annual report is due October 15, host country partners should have their information sent to the PI by October 1.
 - o Keith urged the group to look at the directory and make sure their host country partners are listed, and send in contact information for those missing.
 - Budget and invoice issues – Christina Brannan
 - o The budget narratives should be in by the end of August -- this will prevent a delay in invoices getting paid.

- The ME does everything it can to have invoices paid within 30 days. In order to have them paid more quickly, have someone notify Christina when a receipt is uploaded to Scholar. She also needs to know who the financial staff is so she will know whose names to look under. Before receipts are submitted, check to see if they are legible, a good scanned copy, and large enough to be read.
- Stephane Boulakia said they were six months late dispersing their budget, and are just now finishing money from the first year. Now, they are dispersing the budget for the next year. The Year 2 budget is supposed to be distributed by October 2011, how is he supposed to do this? Christina said the Management Entity can make exceptions for special circumstances, and that the PI of the project, Manny Reyes, should submit a written explanation of the problem.
- Neal Eash said he wanted to know how he could find out how much money he has left in a year.
- S.K. De Datta asked if there was a way for PIs to check their money flow at any given time.
- Jeff Alwang recommended emailing how much money each project has on a quarterly basis to the PIs.

6. Other issues:

- Jeff Alwang asked for recommendations to improve communications across sites
 - Several participants suggested Listservs for specific topics, such as socio-economics. Amado Ohland volunteered to look into listserv creation
 - It was suggested that the ME create a password-protected working paper page on the website could improve flow of information.
 - Manny Reyes suggested a table of cover crops that everyone could add to.
 - There was group consensus that whatever communication tool was chosen needed to be emailed, and preferably archived for future reference.
- Collaborative authorship of publications
 - S.K. De Datta said co-authorship with host country partners should be required, and all scientific papers produced should be collaborative and have multiple authors.
 - Joint-authorship conventions differ between sociology, economic, and agronomy papers.
 - Mike Mulvaney asked if we should define what joint-authorship is. There is a big difference between an acknowledgement at the bottom of the page and co-authorship, and co-authorship is not given lightly.
 - Greg Amacher said we are trying to recruit graduate students who will go on to become scholars. Graduate students listed with many authors on a publication look less impressive, and we need to ensure that students are given the proper credentials to succeed.
- Improving interactions between CCRAs and LTRAs

- Jeff Alwang said he is aware of problems in CCRA-LTRA communication from the PIs.
 - Mike Kelly said PIs should communicate these issues to him along with perceived solutions.
 - It was suggested that the Technical Committee put more emphasis on evaluating the CCRAs.
 - Mike Mulvaney said he would welcome any sort of CCRA review and suggestions from the LTRA PIs.
 - Jeff Alwang said it is hard to finalize work plans because he does not know what the CCRAs will require of him for that year, and how to incorporate the CCRAs in the work plan. As a result, people feel forced to do things for the CCRA that were not in their work plans.
 - Interaction between CCRAs and LTRAs was part of SANREM's RFA, but it was not included in the budget.
 - In the interest of time, Jeff Alwang suggested discussing this matter further in the next meeting.
7. USAID update – Harry Rea
 - USAID is planning several sessions at this year's ASA/CSA/SSSA conference, and Harry will email more information to Mike Kelly to share with SANREM researchers participating in the conference.
 8. The next meeting will likely be through teleconference during the first week of September to go over the work plans. Jeff Alwang said to provide him with any material the group wanted included in the agenda.
 9. Manny Reyes moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 am, and S.K. De Datta seconded the motion.