

Minutes of the Sixteenth Meeting of the
WORKING GROUP ON WATER SAVING FOR AGRICULTURE (WG-WATS)
 New Delhi, India
 08 December 2009: 09:30-13:15 hours
Strategy Theme: Systems

Date of Establishment: 1994

Completion of the Mandate: 2013

Mandate: "To recognize proven water saving success, and to identify and promote successful water conservation".

Members Present: (1) VPH Dr. Mark Svendsen (USA, 2007) Acting Chairman, on behalf of VPH Eng. Hussein El-Atfy, Chairman (Egypt, 2000); (2) Mr. N. L. Lecler (South Africa, 2003) represented by Dr. Sue Walker ; (3) Mr. Mehrzad Ehsani (Iran, 2006); (4) Mr. Kim Russell (Australia, 2005) represented Mr. Ian Moorhouse; and (5) Er. M. Gopalakrishnan, Secretary General, ICID.

Member Honoraire Present: President Hon. Peter S. Lee.

Observers: There were 24 other observers present at various times during the meeting.

Website: <http://www.wg-wats.icidonline.org/>

A. CONTINUING ITEMS

Item 1 : Review of the membership

The WG accepted new members Mr. R. K. Gupta (India) and Dr. Muhammad Arshad (Pakistan), both of whom had been nominated by their national committees and were present at the WG meeting.

The WG accepted, regretfully, the resignation of Dr. Alain Vidal as a member of the WG, while at the same time welcoming him as a Permanent Observer from the CGIAR Challenge Program for Water and Food. Other pending nominations were deferred because the nominees were not present.

In the absence of a regular Secretary, the Acting Chairman requested Mr. Mehrzad Ehsani to act as Secretary for the WG meeting.

Item 2 : WG Publication on 'WatSave Scenario'

The publication of the book "*Water Saving in Agriculture*" released in 2008 was announced by PH Mr. Peter Lee and Dr Kulkarni. Mr. Ehsani informed that the book has been translated into Persian and published by IRNCID. IRNCID will provide one copy of the book to the Central Office and will post a pdf version on the IRNCID website.

Item 3 : WatSave awards

3.1 The 2009 WatSave awards

The Acting Chairman informed that 8 nominations from 4 national committees had been received for the 2009 WatSave awards. A committee Chaired by PH Mr. Peter Lee reviewed the nominations and selected winners in the three identified categories. These will be announced at the IEC meeting on 10 December 2009.

3.2 Sponsorship

Discussion of sponsorship options was deferred and included in the discussion of Item 3.3.

3.3 Review of Criteria and Evaluation Process for WatSave Awards

At the request of the Acting Chairman, PH Mr. Peter Lee made a presentation to the WG describing the review process and posed several following points for discussion by the WG related to issues that had arisen during the review process:

1. There is some confusion over the nature of the three awards as to whether they are primarily awards to people or awards to achievements. The strong recommendation of the Mr. Lee was that the primary emphasis be on the achievement itself. To this end, he recommended that the phrasing of the award be “an award for [*the achievement*] to [*the individual or team behind the achievement*]” in that order. He also recommended that the titles of the achievements be concise and descriptive, and that they be limited to 10 words. These recommendations were discussed by the working group and endorsed.
2. A question arose as to whether an organization could propose an achievement and be considered for an award. The ICID rules governing the awards allow submissions by an “individual/team”. The question raised was whether a nomination, under this language, could come from an organization itself, without specifying individuals. After discussion, the WG concluded that the nomination could come on behalf of an individual or a team of named individuals, but not from an organization itself, as this diffused responsibility for the achievement excessively. Mr. Lee proposed that the wording of the rules be changed from the present to “individual/team of individuals”. This recommendation was endorsed by the WG.
3. There are currently three different awards given – one for technological achievement, one for managerial achievement, and one for young professionals. Mr. Lee observed that at times the committee felt that a nomination in one category actually fit better, and was more competitive, in another. He recommended that the evaluation committee be authorized to shift a nomination from the category in which it was submitted to another category when this was appropriate and beneficial. The WG endorsed this recommendation, with the proviso that the Central Office draft a short paragraph describing each category and include these descriptions in the call for nominations and on the application forms, since these terms are not currently defined explicitly.
4. The submissions this year (2009) included an interesting one that came from a farmer, but which did not fit easily into one of the existing categories. One difficulty with such nominations for achievements by farmers is that they generally do not cover the extensive areas required in the “technology” and “management” categories. The Acting Chairman added into this discussion the issue of the current financial burden on the sponsoring national committee, a burden which would grow with the addition of any new award categories. Currently a sum of US\$ 2,000 is attached to each of the awards. After considerable discussion, the WG concluded that a farm-level category, where a farmer was responsible for the achievement, should be added to the set of WatSave awards, assuming that the following change in the financing of the awards is made concurrently. The new stipulation would be that the current total value of the awards, US\$6,000, would not be exceeded as a result of adding any new award category, and that the basic award in each category be set at US\$500. Recognizing that the need for the financial part of the award (as opposed to the professional recognition) is greatest for Young Professionals and for Farmers, however, the WG recommends that recipients in each of these two categories additionally receive a grant consisting of (a) remission of conference fees for the session at which the award is made, and (2) a grant for partial coverage of travel and accommodation expenses. The base award amount could be raised if funds to support the increase were available within the award pool. The WG requested that the Central Office develop a more detailed set of procedures for implementing these changes in the financial component of the awards and circulate to the Chairman and members of the WG for comment and approval. This should be done in advance of the issuance of the call for the 2010 WatSave awards.
5. At times, several nominations for awards in a single category have come from the same country in the same year. This can lead to difficulties for the evaluating committee, since members will often not have detailed firsthand knowledge of the situation in a particular country, and thus are not in a position to judge the realism of individual submissions. For this reason it is preferable to have the nominations first screened by the sponsoring national committee, after which a single nomination in each category would be forwarded to the evaluation panel. Mr. Lee recommended that this change in the rules be made. After discussion, the WG endorsed this suggestion.
6. WatSave rules currently allow nominations for achievements developed in a non-ICID member country to be submitted by a willing member country, with nominations limited to one per country (member or non-member). The emphasis in this formulation on countries has caused problems in the past when a particular achievement has roots in more than one country. In addition, the example of a situation in southern Africa

was given where University-based teams made up of students and researchers from more than one country may be responsible for a candidate achievement. This wording also gives rise to the case where one member country might be advancing nominations from several different countries in a given year. After considerable discussion, the WG reached consensus on a recommendation to the IEC that the WatSave rules be amended to allow for a single submission from each active national committee in each category in a given year. The nomination advanced by the national committee might come from that country, from a neighboring country, or might be comprised of a multi-national team. However, only one nomination per national committee per category would be accepted.

Dr. Kulkarni noted the importance of broadening the base of countries submitting WatSave nominations beyond the handful that currently submit. The WG concluded that a strong and actively promoted workshop at Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2010 would provide a useful way to help broaden the base (see Item 5).

Item 4 : Framework for cooperation and interaction among ICID member countries and work bodies

The issue of linkages among WGs was raised and discussed. There was general agreement that such interactions were desirable. Mr. Lee pointed out that the theme leaders did provide some of this linkage. Other interactions should be on a case by case basis when a particular need arose.

Item 5 : Internal Workshop on ‘Water saving achievements’

The possibility of a workshop on water saving achievements was raised by the Acting Chairman, noting that while often very useful when organized on topics of broad interest, success of such workshops usually depended on the presence of a “champion” and several other willing and active participants in the organization process. The possibility of organizing a workshop in Yogyakarta in 2010 was discussed, and the South African group came forward with an offer to explore and lead the organization of such an effort, working with the Chairman and members of the WG. The WG welcomed this offer.

Item 6 : Newsletter and webpage of the Working Group

The idea of a newsletter was again raised and discussed. The WG felt that including news items related to the WatSave awards and other WG activities in the existing ICID News was a sufficient print outlet at this time and that there was not a compelling need for a separate WG newsletter.

Item 7 : Work plan

Mr. Mehrzad Ehsani (Iran) pointed out that as the mandate of the WG was extended to 2013 at the Lahore meeting, the WG needs to update its work plan to cover this period. The Acting Chairman noted that the core elements of the work plan were the management of the WatSave award process and could include the proposed Yogyakarta workshop on water saving achievements.

Mr. Ehsani presented several additional ideas for inclusion in the work plan - in particular, preparation of one or more books related to “water productivity”. The WG discussed the nature of the value that could be added to the existing shelf of text and reference books by the WG and concluded that capturing actual field experience would have to be the central element of our comparative advantage. The WG agreed that it would proceed to develop the Yogyakarta workshop as a base for other activities, while Mr Ehsani would prepare a concept paper for this workshop elaborating concepts on the basis of which a broader water productivity theme might be considered.

Item 8 : Any other business

Since there was no other business on hand, the meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Acting Chairman.
