

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the  
**WORKING GROUP ON TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH UPTAKE AND EXCHANGE (WG-TRUE)**  
24 June 2012: 08.30-10.30 hours, Adelaide, Australia  
*Strategy Theme: Knowledge*

**Year of Establishment: 2007**

**Completion of the Mandate: 2012**

**Mandate:** To support research and development of technology and innovation processes for improved irrigation and drainage

**Members Present:** (1) Prof. L. Vincent, Chairperson (The Netherlands); (2) Dr. (Mrs.) Shaden Abdel-Gawad, Vice Chairperson (Egypt) represented by Tarek A El Samman; (3) Mr. Stephens Mills (Australia); (4) Dr. Kazumi Yamaoka (Japan); (5) Dr. Moch Basuki Hadimuljono (Indonesia) represented by Dr. M. Amron; (6) Dr. Chan Chee Sheng (Malaysia) represented by Ms. Hayatibinti Zainal.

**Member Hon.:** Prof. Gao Zhanyi, President, ICID (China)

**Observers:** (i) Mr. Ian Atkinson (Australia); (ii) Belinda Barker (Australia); (iii) Ahmet Seren (Turkey); (iv) Mr. Kotaro Mizoguchi (Japan); (v) Prof. Klaus-Dieter Volos (Germany); (vi) Nadine Demur (Turkey); (vii) Mr. Raft Al-Intake (Iraq); (viii) Muharrem Ozdemir (Turkey); (ix) Dr. Shukhrat Mukhamedjanov (Uzbekistan); (x) Dr. Tirupataiah Kota (India); (xi) Mr. Uttamraj Timilsina (Nepal); (xii) Prof. Ruey-Chy Kao (Chinese Taipei)

**Apologies:** Mr. Sietan Chieng (Canada); Prof. J. Annandale (South Africa)

**Website:** <http://wg-true.icidonline.org/>

**Item 1 : Review of membership**

There were three nominations for the membership of the group viz. Dr. Vehbi Ozaydin (Turkey); Mr. Shiv Kumar Sharma (Nepal); Dr. Raghuvanshi (India). None of these nominees were present. A representative of Turkey was present on behalf of Dr. Ozaydin and from Nepal on behalf of Mr. Shiv Kumar Sharma. Mr. Stephen Mills introduced Ian Atkinson (Australia) as replacement for him, given his retirement, for consideration in this and any future WG involved with TRUE issues. In view of the completion of the mandate and tenure of the group, no nominations were accepted for the WG-TRUE. It was proposed that these nominations could be put forward for any new committees as per support of respective national committees at that time.

**Item 2 : Tenure of the working group**

The tenure of this Working Group “Technology Research Uptake and Exchange” has now reached its last term. It has fulfilled part of its workplan with the active support of members and representatives, especially from Japan, Malaysia, South Africa, Egypt and the Netherlands. It also solicited views and findings in the field through a questionnaire of ICID members via the National Committees. The findings and activities were reviewed in the session.

There were brief contributions and discussions of key findings by WG-TRUE members from Australia and Japan, and active participation from the floor, including from German, Turkish and Malaysian Observers. Some suggestions for further work included:

- Gaining greater knowledge about the processes among donors and decision-makers supporting research,

- Other WGs want advice from this workshop on how to build R&D processes in their field (a request from the WG-SDTA.). In turn, those interested in TRUE processes could work with ICID WGs to document the evolution of the knowledge base and outreach of particular groups.

It was agreed that the mandate given to WG-TRUE by the special session organized in 2005 at the end of the WG-R&D tenure on 'Drivers for Change: Bridging Research and Practice in Irrigation and Drainage', had enabled very useful learning about past and current programmes that can inform new partnerships for the coming future. A particular success of the group has been showing the diversity of approaches to TRUE that countries have developed having different kinds of farmers, system agencies, communication processes within different possibilities of funding and institutions, also facing different demands on their water resources and management. This documentation of alternative approaches is extremely useful in relation to future development debates.

Thus, maintaining understanding of this diversity of responses and potential processes for R&D under changing national and global conditions is a relevant topic for ICID.

The group endorsed the importance of a continued forum for discussion of technology research, which would continue to look at processes of research evaluation, uptake and exchange within ICID. However, it was relevant to reformulate the committee membership for any new committee, including a new Chairperson.

It advised that development of any new WG related with Technology is formulated alongside and after the discussions to develop a new ICID programme around the theme 'Research and Technology Transfer Programme'. It was suggested to initiate a temporary sub-committee to advise on this, made up from the Vice-Presidents taking responsibilities for the themes of - Systems, Basin, On-farm and Knowledge - together with active past WG-TRUE members (including Adelaide, Tehran, Yogyakarta or nominated replacements). Vice-President Gerhard Backeberg could initiate this interim sub-committee, given his past associations and inputs into the WG-TRUE and WG-R&D, experience and interest expressed to help this in the last year.

Past power points and papers submitted to the WG will be submitted to the ICID Secretariat for posting on the website.

### **Item 3 : Report of the Sub-committee constituted by WG-TRUE**

A sub-committee as suggested by the WG in 2011 did not materialize further during the year. Thus, the WG picked up the discussion from Tehran that endorsed the importance of R&D as an important part of the work of ICID, but with a view to explore a realistic mandate in relation to the global ICID programme 'Research and Technology Transfer' (RTTP), that had grown from the document 'Intensification of Irrigation and Drainage Research to Achieve Global Food Security' in Yogyakarta.

To guide these discussions, Mr. Tyagi summarized points from the draft document 'Research and Technology Transfer in Irrigation and Drainage programme' (RTTP) which had been circulated to WG members. This document summarized the objectives of the programme, and the distribution of responsibilities/TORs between a Board of Governors/Secretariat/ Regional Nodes and national committees. President Gao Zhanyi also added to this discussion.

The following feedback was given regarding the RTTP draft proposal:

#### *Objectives and Name -*

- This is currently a very ambitious programme, but also with some challenges. It discussed the critical reviews of the IPTRID program, but nevertheless decided to develop a programme focused on capacity development and knowledge transfer focused in a series of regional nodes that will also have a thematic focus. Past WGs have expressed concern that the major mandates of technology research, capacity building and knowledge dissemination should not be pushed together in one structure. Also the focus on capacity building and knowledge dissemination in the RTTP means that the clear focus on technology research is actually diluted. Rather technology issues become undifferentiated in a larger thematic focus. However, the energy and commitment behind this programme is clear, so we support it but with the following critical suggestions to help its development:

- The programme gives a strong focus first to 2-4 nodes only (and thus only selected themes), to see how these evolve. With these ICID should be able to evolve a set of working principles to help establish realistic working practices between a Board of Governor (BoG), Secretariat (St) and nodes, and a good design for a management framework.
- Alongside these nodal programmes, ICID and the RTTP programme should continue to recognise that a diversity of modes for Technology-R&D exist, and continue to exist. Thus, the nodal format for capacity building and knowledge dissemination is not the only one to be promoted. ICID continues to encourage exchange of information on changing processes of R&D and how to assess and manage this. The objectives can be amended to state this.
- It may be useful to bring a more specific focus on what technologies and technology issues are addressed in thematic questions and nodes (if any). At the same time, it can be recognised that no one node should claim to be the main or only centre working on certain technologies. Rather such expertise will be locally specific.
- The recognition of boundary work and collaboration with other international organisations working on irrigation and drainage (FAO, CGIAR, INGOs etc.) can be restated. This is important as organisations like FAO also now think to work with nodal centres and centres of excellence for certain water management issues.
- ICID is a knowledge agency, not an implementing agency. Care is needed on how it is expanding into an advisory body, with expectations arising that it is also a funding-raising agency. The objective concerning enhancement of financial resources available may need to be modified. Exchange of detailed technical knowledge and matters is a topic for ICID and its workgroups. Actual implementation of uptake is a matter for government and local bodies. However, there is a need to have more advice on benchmarking for studying technology uptake that helps to show that uptake is wanted in time and how to achieve this and monitor it.
- The zero draft of the RTTP document uses the term 'technology transfer' for the programme, which some feel has associations linked with both 'top-down' uni-directional actions towards farmers, and lack of reference to social context. These associations, and use of the term, go against past work of the WG-TRUE and WG-R&D. There is a need to understand how technology reaches and affects farmers, and recognise that technology is not always neutral. So we recommend a different title – could 'Knowledge transitions in irrigation and drainage management' or 'Technology research processes in irrigation and drainage' be a better title? The objectives of the programme can state explicit recognition of efforts to address diverse scales of farmer and development contexts in these transition processes, and an ethics statement.

#### *The structure of a Board of Governors/Secretariat and their TORs*

This is also an ambitious structure, and in its current form risks having high demands on personnel, funding, general management and specialised administrative support (like auditing). Also the actual governance relations between the BoG and nodal centres is not really clear – is this really a nested hierarchy, or is it more a consortium of nodal centres to which a BoG gives general guidelines? The TORs revolve mainly around supporting and servicing the nodes, also envisaging a secretariat that provides many monitoring and evaluation requirements. Yet again there is limited manpower or funding for this, and expectations of inputs from NCs seem unrealistic for some regions. We suggest the following:

- There is careful design of standardized performance and monitoring tools and criteria, with a view to such monitoring work being done within the nodal centres, if necessary by an ICID link person. Information should come from the nodes to ICID. We suggest minimal development of any additional secretariat at this time.
- The paper talks of establishing the programme along with a 'system-level science strategy'. This is an ambitious statement that is rather beyond the mandate of ICID itself. Is 'awareness strategy' more appropriate?
- A clear statement and set of procedures is needed around the financial procedures arising with development of this programme, especially concerning the sending and receiving of funds. Regional transfer of funds is sometimes difficult, with different countries also having different accounting regulations. Clear responsibilities will also be needed for auditing any financial aspects of this programme.

- The BoG is seen as coming primarily from WG-Chairs. We think this is too demanding on people, and also sets up pressures for regional nodes to develop to cover many different topics (IPTRID also began to suffer from these problems). Better a smaller range of topics and nodal centres to start with.
- There seems an assumption of powers of approval and sanction by the BoG on the work of the nodal centres. Yet the senodes will undoubtedly acquire diverse national and international funds and inevitably develop many links, and also their own governance structures. Thus, the BoG needs a responsible but also realistic structure of responsibility in what it can approve or veto. Is it more relevant to think of a consortia model rather than nested agency model? We think the role of the BoG may lie in approval of a core of programmes across at nodal centres, rather than expecting to have responsibilities in all programmes of nodal centres. ICID can also make more clear what status of ICID members will be acceptable to do this work in the BoG. Also clarify what will be the actual ICID position in governing arrangements of a nodal centre, if at all.
- Thus, we suggest the BoG is made up from some/all Vice-Presidents (as people with an elected mandate), perhaps 1-2 WG Chairpersons and the Chair of PCTA, but also to allow for special co-opted ICID members to be on the Board who have real experience in running capacity building and knowledge dissemination, and who write/contribute actively on knowledge, capacity and R&D issues (thus having peer-review standing also).

All these suggestions are best handled by the IEC, perhaps also through a small sub-committee to hammer out revision on the mandate, procedures and starting tasks for the new programme

#### **A new sub-committee or working group on ‘technology research processes in irrigation and drainage’**

The focus in the nodal centres around knowledge and capacity building leaves a role for a sub-committee or working group to continue a focus on the diversity of processes of technology development that is also not involved in the running of any bigger programme. Rather representatives from the nodal centres could be members in such a new sub-committee or working group.

Our suggestion is to try again to initiate a temporary sub-committee to advice on a new name and mandate. This can be made up from the Vice-Presidents taking responsibilities for the themes of - Systems, Basin, On-farm and Knowledge together with active past WG-TRUE members (including Adelaide, Tehran, Yogyakarta or nominated replacements). Vice-President Gerhard Backeberg could initiate this interim sub-committee, given his past associations and inputs into the WG-TRUE and WG-R&D, experience and interest expressed to help this in the last year. The findings and any proposal can be discussed in the IEC meetings of 2013 as part of a special WG session, with a title to be confirmed.

#### **Item 4 : Any other business**

The Chairman added a supplementary agenda which:

- Cited the workplan of the WG-TRUE (reviewed in item 2 above)
- Tabled the following papers related to this workplan, also first presented by Dr Gerhard Backeberg(South Africa) at the WG meeting in Tehran, as an example of a Research Uptake process in an African country:
  - *James Blignaut and XolaniSibande In-field rainwater harvesting and water conservation techniques: Assessing the impact of fifteen years of WRC funded research in ThabaNchu, Water Research Commission South Africa, Report TT 444/08*
  - *Backeberg, G. Improving rural livelihoods with rainwater harvesting and conservation on communal croplands in South Africa: Opportunities and obstacles Paper presented at the Second International Foundation for Sustainable Development in Africa and Asia, Gottingen, 14-16 2009*
- Tabled a discussion document by the Secretary General ‘Research and Technology Transfer program’ for item 3 (the related discussion is minuted under item 3 above).

The Chairman thanked the membership of the WG-TRUE for their work and support during the tenure of the Working Group, and declared the Working Group closed.