



Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems

Making a difference in the lives of the poor



Report on Progress 1

February 2012

The CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems (CRP AAS) began operations in July 2011 with an initial focus on establishing the key governance, management and science leadership capacities required for successful delivery. As this has progressed we have also started implementing a first suite of focal country activities, along with work to produce key science outputs to support country roll-out. This first report on progress summarizes the main highlights of our work so far.

Program Oversight Panel

The Program Oversight Panel (POP) was established in November 2011 by the WorldFish Board of Trustees in their role as governing body of the Lead Center. Following extensive consultation with CGIAR donors, the Consortium Board, Centers, and partners, six independent members of the POP were appointed (Chris Barlow, John Kurien, Jo Luck, John Lynam, Kyoko Kusakabe, Rekha Mehra). They are joined by Stephen Hall as representative of WorldFish, and Barbara Schreiner as representative of other participating CGIAR Centers. Jo Luck was appointed as POP Chair.

The POP held its first meeting in Penang from 9-10 February 2012 during which the program's workplan

and budget for 2012 were approved, together with the Terms of Reference and operating arrangements for the Program Leadership Team. In this first meeting the POP also discussed how they can best work together to fulfill their role in overseeing and supporting the program, and providing overall science oversight and strategic guidance. The POP will meet with the PLT in Bangladesh in early July 2012, and hopes to meet at IWMI in February 2013.

In an interview about the CRP and her appointment as POP Chair, Jo Luck offered the following comment:

“ I'd like to say how honored and excited I am to work with the other members of the Panel and the staff involved in the Program. I really do believe that the approach being taken in the Program will lead to success building on increased investment in quality research and transparent dissemination of findings at every level. I very much look forward to being part of this and contributing how I can to the success of the Program. ”

Program Leadership Team

The Program Leadership Team (PLT) was established in the last quarter of 2011, and met for the first time in Penang from 16-19 January 2012. It will meet again in

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Bangladesh in early July and work between meetings through five working groups covering program roll out, science, gender, communications, and country operations. The PLT brings together representatives from participating CGIAR Centers (Bioversity, IWMI, WorldFish), representatives from CARE and CRS, Country Managers (or their delegates), the head of the Program Support Unit, and lead scientists for the Program's six research themes. The PLT is chaired by Patrick Dugan in his role as Program Leader.

At its first meeting the PLT reviewed and agreed plans for program roll out in Bangladesh, Solomons and Zambia in 2012, and further preparatory work in Cambodia and Philippines where full roll out will take place in 2013. In support of this work the PLT reviewed working drafts of the program handbook, M&E manual, and gender strategy, and a process is now in place to further refine and use these to guide roll out. The PLT also agreed a series of key science and policy products that the program will produce in 2012 as part of our focused approach to science delivery and communications.

First stages of roll out

In 2012 the program will roll out in selected locations (hubs) in Bangladesh, Solomons and Zambia. Building on the program proposal, teams in each country have worked with partners to refine the choice of these hubs and this is being followed in each with detailed diagnosis and design. As we proceed from scoping to design and implementation the program will move from identifying issues and trends impacting AAS landscapes to working with communities to understand how these impact agriculture, natural resource management, and livelihoods at local level. Our research agenda will in turn be designed to better understand and identify solutions to these issues, as well as identify mechanisms for scaling out the results.

The first scoping phase was carried out in Western Province of Zambia in October and November 2011, and concluded with a national launch workshop in Lusaka on 7 December. The strong presence of partners from government, NGOs and the private sector, together with donors and CGIAR Centers reflected the strong partnership approach of the program and its success to date in Zambia. We look forward to strengthening this further as the program rolls out here and in the other focal countries.



Hon. Emmanuel Chenda, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock (left) at the national launch workshop in Lusaka

Science

We are giving strong emphasis to harnessing learning from the past and ongoing projects of the CGIAR and partners that help provide foundational science for the program. To this end we have identified a suite of key publications that will be produced as a series of working papers, journal submissions, and policy briefs over the course of 2012. In conjunction with this work the program is giving special emphasis this year to distilling our research and analysis in three key areas that will be central to the program's success: our approach to gender, impact assessment, and linking local interventions to landscape approaches in AAS.

- **Gender.** A working paper and journal article on “Transforming aquatic agricultural systems towards gender equity” are in preparation. These will be followed towards mid year with a policy brief entitled “A transformative approach to Gender in AAS” and a working paper on gender lessons from the first roll out in program hubs in focal countries.
- **Impact Assessment.** In recognition of the special challenges of impact assessment in natural resource management systems the program has prioritized design of an effective approach to Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment. This has involved working with partners and the CRPs on Water, Forests, and Climate Change to develop an improved conceptual framework for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment (MEIA) of natural resource management research, and pursue the development of improved methodologies for pursuing such MEIA. We will also work with other CRPs to identify selected locations where two or more CRPs can work together on MEIA, and pursue synergies in our research.

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- **Landscape approaches in AAS.** CRP AAS seeks to have impact at scale in large aquatic landscapes through careful targeting and design of research that addresses household and community level opportunities combined with effective engagement with partners and policy processes at larger scale.

This approach is being synthesized in a number of key publications, including a review paper and policy brief entitled “Importance of aquatic agricultural systems”, and a policy brief “Making a difference in AAS landscapes”.

Summary bios of POP members:

- Jo Luck (Chair) served as Chief Executive and President of Heifer International for 18 years (1992-2010). She received the World Food Prize in 2010 in recognition of her leadership of Heifer’s work in rural development and poverty reduction. In 2011 Jo was appointed by President Obama to serve on USAID’s Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.
- Chris Barlow serves as Fisheries Program Manager for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Prior to joining ACIAR he was the fisheries advisor for the Mekong River Commission.
- Stephen Hall is Director General of The WorldFish Center. His previous positions include CEO of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and Professor of Marine Biology at Flinders University, Australia.
- John Kurien was one of the founders of the International Collective in Support of Fish Workers, and is a leading proponent of the rights of fishers and other rural resource users. He serves as an advisor to FAO.
- Kyoko Kusakabe is associate professor of Gender and Development Studies at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. Her work includes a particular focus on gender and fisheries.
- John Lynam has worked closely with several CGIAR Centers and for both the Rockefeller Foundation and the Kilimo Trust. He was one of the authors of the new CGIAR Strategic Results Framework.
- Rekha Mehra is Director of Economic Development at the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). In this role she oversaw the independent scoping study of gender in the CGIAR Research Programs.
- Barbara Schreiner is a water resources and management consultant having previously served in senior positions for the Government of South Africa. She currently sits on the Board of the International Water Management Institute.





Members of the Program Leadership Team

Neil Andrew	Lead “Socio-ecological resilience and adaptive capacity”
Rupert Best	Catholic Relief Services representative
Alan Brooks	Cambodia manager
Tabeth Chiuta	Zambia manager
Charlie Crissman	Lead “Equitable access to markets”
Boru Douthwaite	Lead “Knowledge sharing, learning and innovation”
Bill Downing	Head of Operations and Program Support Unit
Patrick Dugan	WorldFish representative and Program Leader (Chair)
Kevin Kamp	Bangladesh Manager
Maripaz Perez	Philippines Manager
Mike Phillips	Lead “Sustainable increases in system productivity”
Ranjitha Puskur	Lead “Gender equity”
Blake Ratner	Lead “Policies and Institutions to empower AAS users”
Andrea Rodericks	CARE representative
Leo Sebastian	Bioersity representative
Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu	IWMI representative
Anne-Maree Schwarz	Solomons Manager



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