



INDICATOR HARMONIZATION MEETING

Venue: CABI at World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Nairobi
11 a.m. on 23rd August, 2011

Present:

Emmanuel Rutsimba, AGRA M&E, Program Officer, M&E, AGRA
Abednego Kiwia, Coordinator, Soil Health Program, AGRA
Ganga Rao, Legume Breeder, ICRISAT/TL-II
Issac Savine, TSBF-CIAT (N2Africa, TL-II, AfNET)
Kelly Stenhoff, M&E Specialist, IFDC- CABI/ASHC
Lydia Wairegi, Agronomy Post-doc, CABI/ASHC
Collins Abuga, M&E Assistant, IFDC-CABI/ASHC

Agenda:

1. Background information and what has happened to date
2. What stands to be gained
3. Discussion on relevance, feasibility and timeline to continue with the indicator harmonization exercise
4. Agreed next steps and timeline

Background:

SHP (AGRA), N2Africa (CIAT and IITA) and Tropical Legumes-II (ICRISAT, IITA and CIAT) are programs funded by IITA have each received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to promote legume production in Africa given its crucial role in nutrition, enhancing nitrogen fixation in the depleted African soils as well as boosting farmers' incomes. CABI has received funding from BMGF for design and production of extension materials focusing on soil health and integrated soil fertility management (ISFM). While the programs may be different in size, approach, target beneficiaries and geographical coverage, they have one thing in common – legume focus. This therefore means that the indicators of measurement can be harmonized to enhance collaboration among the projects and explore possibilities of joint impact evaluations particularly in countries where the projects operate. This is also important for BMGF as it enables them to compare results from the projects across different countries in which they operate to appreciate change/or not, resulting from their investment. The meeting was therefore held to explore areas of collaboration among the four projects.

Salient questions to frame discussions on this initiative include:

- How can we be effective in terms of having more impact?
- What do we measure?
- How do we measure it?
- What can we do together?
- How do we work together?

- When do we do it?

It is expected that each project may have a variety of different indicators but it is anticipated that due to the legume and ISFM commonalities in the projects, a number of these indicators may come into focus as common interest among the group of assembled grantees.

What stands to be gained:

1. Indicator harmonization to better gauge joint contributions to impact
2. Once common indicators are identified, definitions of the indicators (e.g. is yield to be defined as kg per hectare, per type of crop, or per variety of legume need to be developed and agreed upon. Such as to enable the comparison of “apples to apples”.
3. When gauging impact, a coordinated approach for measuring the performance of the projects can be developed. Joint impact evaluations and divvying up responsibilities for data collection can generate efficiencies.

Discussion:

1. This is the fourth meeting on indicator harmonization. The prior three meetings were as follows:
 - 1st meeting was with the Project Coordinator for TL-II and Bashir.
 - 2nd meeting was with Franklin in which it was agreed that the harmonization initiative is feasible and that a natural starting point would be the sharing of indicators for TL-II
 - 3rd meeting was with Ken of N2Africa and 39 N2Africa Indicators were shared.
2. Cereal-legume programs and indicators are also to be considered.
3. The design of the initiative and the nature of the composite activities are anticipated to come together out of a collaborative effort motivated by serving the same client/beneficiary base and in acknowledgement that indicator harmonization will bring greater efficiencies and other added value to our work. It is not to be supply driven, but owned by participants.
4. AfNET is backstopping 24 AGRA funded projects in Eastern and Southern Africa and they also represent the NARS. There are a lot of synergies here. However, it was underscored that this indicator harmonization initiative is presently restricted to BMGF grantees as BMGF is interested in focusing in on impact being influenced by BMGF funds.
5. ASHC is not in a position to introduce new indicators to partner organizations that it will work with to design and produce materials for the partner to disseminate. However, it is within ASHC's interests to be involved in order to understand at the outset which common indicators we may expect to run into when we encounter and assess our partners' M&E systems. Assessment is expected to bring out indicators that may be expected to change due to increased availability of appropriate technical and extension knowledge. It was agreed that as ASHC by design interacts with a variety of grantees, it can take easily bird's eye view of which indicators are most commonly used and which particular ones speak universally legumes and ISFM. ASHC is also in a position in which it can transmit lessons learned about indicators from grantee to grantee and from the joint initiative to grantees (both BMGF and non-BMGF funded).
6. So far Emmanuel has only received indicators from N2Africa

3.0 Agreed next steps and timelines;

In view of the above; the following were agreed as next steps and the revised proposed timelines to enhance collaboration:

- (i) Interest in collaboration to be circulated among the key project stakeholders, particularly the project leadership and staff responsible for M&E. Notes from the discussions shared – **by 23th August.**
- (ii) Each project submits to Emmanuel (M&E Program Officer – AGRA) a set of key performance indicators for monitoring and evaluating their project. Emmanuel will then identify those that are common, and produce a “Common Performance Indicator Table” to be shared amongst staff of the three projects for their input – **by 24th August.**
- (iii) The Common performance Indicator Table (CPIT) shall be expanded to include; indicator definition, methodology for data collection, source and frequency for data collection. **by 7nd September.**
- (iv) Based on the developed CPIT, the project team shall agree on how joint impact evaluations can be conducted, data collection methodologies/tools harmonized and how data reporting can be improved. A tentative date for the next meeting was set for 11 a.m. on **20th Sept** at CABI however there is a likely conflict with a multi-day AGRA/CIAT/AfNET meeting over data sharing and a common database that starts on Sept 19. ASHC indicated keen interest in being a part of this meeting.
- (v) The project teams shall then agree on the possibility of organizing a stakeholder meeting/workshop to share the proposed framework of collaboration and seek its validation – **by 25th October.**
- (vi) A joint monitoring and evaluation plan of action of the Common Performance Indicators shall be developed and implemented – **November 2011.**