

# Report of the VBDC Capitalization Workshop

Held on Thursday, 28th March and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the VBA Conference Room

## Background

Representatives of three of the five VBDC projects met for the following specific objectives:

- Review emerging messages from the projects and the audience category that could use the messages
- Review emerging outcomes from the projects;
- Identify other 'quick wins' that we need to focus on, in the next months including any scientific outputs that can be written up in the short term either within or between projects
- Discuss preliminary plans and scientific contributions to the final VBDC Science Conference coming up in September 2013

Before the meeting project briefs were prepared and sent to each project team to be represented at the workshop. This brief consists of two sections: (a) a section on '**looking back at what has been anticipated**' in the project at the beginning of the program i.e the research questions, potential target audience and expected outcome; (b) a second section on '**projecting the project story**', which captures the emerging key messages, some outputs and project priorities for 2013. Moreover, some questions were listed in the brief to guide the process of reflection within project teams before and during the workshop:

In addition to specific project brief, a summary of emerging key messages from projects V1 – V5 was distributed to the participants.

This report and the attached synthesis in present the result of the various discussions and an update of the emerging messages from all VBDC projects.

## Workshop process – 28 March

The meeting, started at 9am. There were seven participants in all representing projects V1, V4 and V5. Dr. Cofie welcomed the participants and set the context of the one-day meeting as a platform for exchange between different project team members involved in the VBDC and focusing on what we have achieved and what we still plan to do till the end of the project in Dec 2013 . She explained the content of the background materials which had been sent earlier to the project teams and which were also made available as hard copies for the workshop. The program agenda was approved by all participants. They introduced themselves to better know each other. Dr. Cofie explained that she plans to meet projects V2 and V3 separately when they are available.

## General information about the CPWF program and the objectives of capitalization workshop

- Research activities are ongoing in the six CPWF Basins: Andes, Ganges, Limpopo, Nile, Mekong and Volta. The Limpopo, Nile and Andes Basins began operations a year or two before the Volta program. Some of the projects in this first batch of basins are already rounding up their field

activities, so they have some key messages that will be accessible to all. Moreover, each basin is now developing appropriate continuation strategy beyond 2013

- A program level 'Peer Assist' meeting is coming up in the Andes in June 2013. This would be attended by basin leaders and CPWF Management Team. One of the objectives of this meeting is to review all emerging messages from the other CPWF Basins.
- As part of CGIAR reforms, the CPWF has been integrated since 2012, into CRP5 which is called Water Land and Ecosystems (WLE). Given this reform, the financial system of the CPWF has also undergone some changes. Funds are being received from the CGIAR through the CRP5. Although the VBDC has a direct funding support from the European Commission (EC), fund administration still passes through the CGIAR – CRP5. Unfortunately the funding support given by the European Commission to the whole CGIAR was truncated this year thereby affecting specifically the CPWF-Volta. That has led to reduction in the number of activities to be implemented in 2013 in the VBDC. The project leaders have prioritized activities that would be done by their project team till the end of the project. Only a limited funding for these prioritized set of activities has been secured for 2013.
- The VBDC program will end in December 2013. Dr. Cofie recognized that the program encountered slow fund disbursement and 21% budget cut in 2012 which altogether negatively impacted on the normal course of research activities. But she encouraged we should see how to move forward and neatly round up what we have set out to do.
- WLE management prepares its regional program meeting this month, starting with the Volta and Niger Basins. The WLE program activities in the region will start in 2014. In principle, the program will build on the achievement of CPWF in the Volta/Niger basins from phase I to phase II

In response to Dr Cofie's presentation, Dr. Daré said it is important to analyze the VBDC financial constraints mentioned above. In his view, the risks associated with implementing the program were not identified in a comprehensive manner. Funding has been cut progressively, 21% in 2012 and completely in 2013. Lead institutions cannot cope with funding crises in the same way. So a plan B for funding for the program and its projects should have been devised at the outset. That is an important lesson for future projects. Mahamadou Sawadogo added that although the decision to cut funds was not meant to influence projects negatively, the effect is that it resulted in cutting off some partners with whom the program started to build trust and influence positively. This may contribute to tarnishing the image of the program and the institution.

### **Capturing main project messages**

Dr Cofie asked why it is important to capture project key messages.

To this question participants responded with the following reasons:

- project accountability for the research funding and to project partners
- Monitor and document everything that has been done.
- Communicate with target groups and disseminate best practices through appropriate outlets.
- Document our research results and learning to be able to tell the stories of what has been achieved and to better define the way forward
- Guide, inform and support policy makers in decision making.

Dr Cofie further explained what is meant by output and outcome within the CPWF program. Outputs are the immediate results of project activities while outcomes refer to changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices and skills. Outcomes should be supported by appropriate research evidences and /or outputs. This led to the discussion on research publications and the identification of the following publishing options for the VBDC research results.

- Individual journal articles
- Project based single article to be combined in a special journal volume
- Conference proceedings
- Organized journal contributions from various researchers within projects, between projects and across basins
- Book chapters

Dr. Dare said scientific publication depends on the objective. One objective is to provide visibility for the VBDC and the researcher himself/herself. He suggested that instead of all researchers seeking to publish their results on individual basis, it would be better to have a special journal issue that could enhance the publication of research articles. There are few interdisciplinary journals where we can publish the VBDC research results. He added that the publications could be within the VBDC or between the CPWF Basins and he encouraged Dr Cofie to identify possible papers from the list of output submitted by the projects and explore journal outlets.

Dr. Cofie accepted this proposition but remarked that it is easy to identify a scientific journal but the challenge is to get researchers to be committed to writing articles for publication at the right time. Mahamoudou Sawadogo said it would be difficult to put all the articles together in a single journal while Dr. Issa Ouedraogo suggested that we may consider compiling many articles to be published as a book. He said the V1 team is planning to update the PGIS report to a publishable piece of material.

### **Project updates (what has been done, what is on-going and what will be done )**

This session consisted of short update on what has already been done and what is still to be done in each project.

#### **1) V1**

Dr. Issa V1 gave a PowerPoint presentations purposely prepared by Dr. Jennie Baron for the workshop. He presented V1's work on the targeting successful AWM in Burkina and Ghana. The V1 team has reviewed success factors for several agricultural water management interventions through series of stakeholder consultations and PGIS. Out of the technologies reviewed across rainfed - irrigation continuum, three most successful technologies have been captured in the Bayesian model. He noted however that, social and human related factors are largely missing in the model. He also highlighted the project's priorities till end of the project which include: completion of Masters Theses at KNUST and University of Ouagadougou; Finalization of the out-scaling tool with at least 3 technologies including the associated technical and user manual; Learning Events in Burkina Faso and in Ghana and Finalization of

reporting requirements

Dr. Dare asked that if the social and human factors are largely missing, how can he say a technology is successful? Does this refer to the social proxies for the model or in terms of livelihood change? Can success in one social group be replicated in another social group? He also wanted to know if there was both qualitative and quantitative data in the Bayesian model.

Dr. Issa Ouedraogo responded that it was difficult to measure the improvement of the living conditions of populations as a result of the technologies application in the field. He explained that some qualitative information is still missing in the model but they are planning to integrate missing information as much as they could find within the time available.

Mahamoudou Sawadogo asked if we could make this model an open source software to allow users to improve its effectiveness and applicability? Dr Cofie responded that SEI is planning to host the model in the Volta region where users can easily access it.

## **2) V4**

Dr. Dare presented the status of V4 project. The project is based on the observation that there was not enough interaction between different players in IWRM implementation. So the V4 project stepped in to facilitate consultative platforms (Multi Stakeholder Platform, MSP) that would enhance such interaction. In Burkina Faso, the first 4 workshops focused on examining the question of: What is a local water committee (CLE)? Responses were collected and from there emerged the vision of key players on IWRM at the local (user), provincial (CLE), Regional (decentralized technical services) and national (state institutions) levels. A fifth MSP was organised at the request of the CLE to support them in the design and implementation of an action plan for their operationalization.

In Ghana, only regional and local levels have been considered. At the local level, the impacts of flooding have been identified by the people themselves as a key IWRM issue. A third workshop is planned to establish the link between the role players and the biophysical model developed on flooding. - In Ghana there are always issues on water management. This is the Binaba-Zebilla watershed area selected for intervention by project V4. It is around Bawku in Upper East Region of Ghana. A third workshop will be held between May and June in response to the need to regulate issues across the community and beyond.

## **3) V5**

Dr. Cofie gave an overview of V5 project which was designed as the coordination project for the VBDC. V5 works on the following areas: coordination to ensure that there is integration between the V1-V5, communication, stakeholder engagement and innovation research.

- Two Students from Emory University and one from an Austrian University are expected to undertake internships in V5 from May to July on various topics.

•Mahamoudou Sawadogo remarked that the Global Water Partnership is supporting V5 in terms of external communication. But they require outputs from the research team to share externally.

**Sub group meeting.**

Each project team met separately to discuss the questions listed below and later presented their responses at the plenary for general discussion:

- 1) What did your project set out to do? Validate the research questions in the brief
- 2) What answers can your project provide to the questions you set out to answer? (e.g from your output to date) Where would we find the evidence of this? (leading to listing and compilation of existing /potential output)
- 3) What have you achieved and can be proud of?
- 4) Review the emerging key messages
- 5) Review the emerging outcome
  - Any changes that happened and were brought about by the project, its partners and its work? Any changes in knowledge, attitude, skills behavior/ practice?
  - Who or what changed?
  - How did these changes come about? (your project team's contribution)
  - Can you point and list any evidence of this? This would include the description of how the situation was at baseline (any measures taken then?) to illustrate and possibly measure the change.
- 6) What do we want to leave behind as the VBDC legacy?
- 7) Reflect on what remains to be done to get there and match with your 2013 prioritized activities?
- 8) What other things did we learn along the way for R4D (in addition to the key messages)?

The responses have been used to update the initial draft document on emerging messages for each project (Annex 1).

During the feedback discussion, the following observations were made

- Most of the research questions stated in the draft document are valid. Only a few were modified (V4 and V5). V1 has answer to all the initial research questions
- In addressing the question of emerging messages, the project teams showed what has been done in respect of each research question but they were not able to make very clear and final statements about the key message. To do that will require more time for each project team to come together and brainstorm on their results. This is challenging as the researchers are scattered in different places and they have not fully analyzed all the information they have gathered to enable message extraction. To this challenge, Dr. Cofie suggested that the draft messages could be based on available information and completed activity reports. These could be revised or validated when all information gathered have been analyzed.

- For V1, INERA will like to do more PGIS. They have the resources to do it but need to confirm from the project leader if the exercise is still useful for the model development
- In terms of R4D, participants remarked that the CPWF implementation has been challenged by factors such as:
  - Researchers' position in their respective institutions
  - Number of non CPWF projects each researcher is involved in
  - Some researchers are expected to play active role or lead components that are not their research domain and interest
  - Staff mobility within the program
  - PLs knowledge, interest, skill and availability to work in the project
  - Researchers are not accountable to CPWF but to own organization – a fact undermined by the CPWF program design
  - Combining task of scientific research and management
  - Size of the project teams

Dr. Cofie made a summary of the day. Out of the 8 questions that guided the workshop process, only 4 were exhausted. The participants agreed to continue the reflection during a half day meeting on Thursday, 11 April 2013. The meeting ended at 17h 30 minutes.

## Participants

1. Mariam Balima
2. Isa Ouedrago for 28 March only
3. William's Dare
4. Bio Torou for 28 March only
5. Olufunke Cofie
6. Mahamoudou Sawadogo
7. Aly Diarra
8. Karen Greenough – for 11 April only

## Workshop process – 11 April

The follow up workshop held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April lasted for about three hours. The limited time was used to respond to question 5, on emerging outcome. All inputs have been used to update the brief prepared for each project – see annex.

Dr Cofie will further consult with individual researchers and make a synthesis for the VBDC

### Annex 1: Updated project briefs



VBDC-Capitalization-  
V1\_11\_04\_13-summa



VBDC-Capitalization-  
V4\_11\_04\_13-summa



VBDC-Capitalization-  
V5\_11\_04\_13-summa