

Minutes of Steering Committee Meeting

Hosted by JICA Kenya

28th October, 2008

The Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) is a multi-stakeholder initiative which aims to double African rice production within 10 years as a means of making a tangible contribution to rural development, food security and an African Green Revolution. The initial steering committee members are AGRA, FARA, IRRI, JICA, JIRCAS, NEPAD, and WARDA.

Initial welcome was given by Senior Vice President Oshima of JICA, who agreed to be Joint Chair of the Meeting with Dr. Namanga Ngongi President of AGRA.

After some discussion of administrative issues regarding the agenda for the Steering Committee Meeting and the General Meeting the following day, Dr. Wopereis gave feedback on the CARD Technical Meeting. The key points discussed/suggested at the meeting were:

- CARD is a facilitating body not an implementing one.
- CARD will have 3 phases. The first 3 years will be concentrated on the country's National Rice Development Strategies (NRDS).
- The term 'Pilot' countries should not be used; instead candidate countries might be better.
- CARD will identify both country-level and cross-cutting issues
- Geographical balance in the list of countries was a concern for many who attended.
- The CARD 'Constitution' was renamed the 'Management Operation Guidelines', and a final draft produced.

Senior VP Oshima outlined three issues that needed particular attention in advance of the CARD General Meeting:

- Discussion of the Management and Operation guidelines.
- The use of the term 'pilot' countries.
- What countries will be chosen, and by what criteria.

Mr. Hiroyuki Kubota gave a brief presentation addressing the last of these issues and requested the Steering Committee to discuss for formulating the recommendation of the Committee to the General Meeting. The key points were

- As agreed at the Technical Meeting the criteria for selecting countries would be: potential for rice production, 'political eagerness' for rice development, readiness of African Rice-producers to accept assistance, and ability of CARD partners to provide assistance
- The technical meeting had proposed a list of 21 candidate countries from which candidates for assistance should be selected:
 - West Africa: Benin, Burkino Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Ghana, Senegal, Togo
 - Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Rwanda
 - East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda
 - Southern Africa: Madagascar, Mozambique
- 21 countries would be beyond the capacity of the Secretariat. Therefore a smaller number should be selected as a first group.
- 14 countries were assessed on a combination of their potential for rice production and the number of rice related projects ongoing in-country (the first and fourth criteria) using available stats and collected information on donor's interventions..
- Based on this assessment 11 countries were proposed as suitable for the first group of Candidate 'Pilot' Countries:
 - High potential/Many rice related projects: *Madagascar, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Tanzania, Sierra Leone.*
 - Relatively High Potential/Many rice related projects: *Mali, Mozambique*
 - Medium potential/many rice related projects (and taking account of geographical balance): *Kenya and Uganda*
- The first group of countries would be asked to prepare a NRDS, which would help demonstrate political commitment and a readiness to accept assistance (criteria 2 and 3). They could then be confirmed 'Pilot' countries.
- If proposed countries are accepted at the General Meeting, then they would be contacted in early November and asked to produce a NRDS. From there:
 - End of January 2009 – submission of draft NRDS to the CARD secretariat
 - Between Feb and April 2009: analysis and assistance in refining of of NRDS.
 - May 2009: Organisation of 2nd CARD General Meeting to approve countries and plans where appropriate.
- The 2nd group of countries could then be selected flexibly on the basis of the progress of the 1st group of Pilot Countries.

Dr. Wopereis asked why only 14 countries were assessed for candidate status and

particularly he was concerned about the absence of central Africa. Mr. Kubota responded that 7 countries were not considered due to inadequate information being available to assess them according to the agreed criteria. He hoped however that CARD might be able to improve knowledge on all countries over time. Mr. Tokuda added that central African countries did not offer the same opportunities for synergies between partners. Mr. Kubota said that there was a desire to move quickly and therefore what already exists in candidate countries on which CARD can build becomes the central issue. Such countries can be considered later.

Senior VP Oshima asked if there were any political sensitivities for Supporting Partners if central African countries are excluded from the first group of the countries. Dr. Sanyang and Dr. Wopereis both implied that there might be for their respective organisations. Mr. Hiroshi Hiraoka suggested that the solution was to explicitly refer to something like 'Phase 1' and 'Phase 2' countries. The countries where difficulties of immediate effects of synergy exist will be in Phase 2. There was general agreement on this point. Dr. Kaufmann suggested capacity building in Phase 2 countries to address some of these concerns. Both WARDA and IRRI have some ongoing capacity development projects in potential Phase 2 countries. FAO representative Mr. Shivaji Pandey also suggested that one criterion missing is the actual or potential contribution of rice to food security. This was widely agreed upon.

Senior VP Oshima suggested adding a couple of appropriate countries to the first group and drawing up a list of 2nd group of countries for presentation to the General Meeting. He also suggested Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire could be addressed as a sub-regional bloc if appropriate. The final list for the first group was increased to 12 countries by adding Cameroon considering the geographical balance of the selected countries. It was also agreed that the term 'Pilot' countries would no longer be used in the Management and Operational Guidelines

Dr. Sanyang then outlined the framework for the NRDS. Senior VP Oshima suggested some flexibility in what should be included in an NRDS, particularly in view of possible capacity constraints among some Ministries of Agriculture. Dr. Kaufman emphasised that it should be as short and easy to read as possible. Dr. Fujimura emphasised that strategies and constraints should be explicitly ranked in importance in the NRDS. Dr. DeVries added that this should be done by rice ecology since that would be an important point of reference. Dr. Otsuka stressed that some statistical data on rice production

should be incorporated in the NRDS, while he also agreed to give some flexibility to the ministry for elaboration of the document. Invitations to prepare an NRDS would be co-signed by AGRA President Dr. Ngongi and Senior VP Oshima, and sent out to the appropriate stakeholders within governments.

Concerns were raised about the short time frame envisaged in the Work Plan, particularly for the formulation of the NRDS, and the time for review by Supporting Partners. Dr. Wopereis suggested that there was a need for a workshop with a key representative from each of the 12 countries before they are asked to formulate the NRDS, from the perspective both of country ownership and the likely quality of the NRDS produced. Dr. Rickman also added it would be important to know who the key person in a government to coordinate with would be. Senior VP Oshima made clear that joint missions were envisaged for the period between Feb - April 2009 to support NRDS process. Mr. Kubota added that face-to-face meetings would allow Supporting Partners to establish the extent of political commitment and the degree to which the NRDS is owned by key actors within government.

Discussion then turned to the Secretariat, which is already up and running within AGRA. Senior VP Oshima thanked AGRA on behalf of the Supporting Partners for hosting the Secretariat. In the future it may be necessary to strengthen it but for now it is more than fit for purpose. Senior VP Oshima added that JICA would be willing to contribute financially to this process. AGRA President Dr. Ngongi agreed to be the externally recognised Director of the Secretariat, though he stressed that as a Special Initiative day-to-day management fell under the remit of AGRA's VP for Policy.

Senior VP Oshima raised the fact that a number of Asian countries have expressed an interest in contributing to CARD through South-South technical cooperation. Vietnam is already working with Mozambique and Indonesia with Tanzania. The Philippines, India, and perhaps also China could also contribute. A future meeting could perhaps be hosted by JICA in Japan to allow those countries to attend if they wish.

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