

Inland Valleys Newsletter n° 4

Dec 2000

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we send you this IVC newsletter which is long, long overdue. We will do our best to send you an update at least every four months from now on. But: we need your help! Please send us your comments, short articles, pictures, and ideas to publish in the next issue of this newsletter. We intend to send the newsletter by email (and by ordinary mail for those who have difficulties to connect).

This year has been another, hopefully the last for a while, transition year for the IVC: Sitapha Diatta and Marco Wopereis took care of the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) at WARDA as an interim-solution for the last 11 months. With the arrival of Marie-Jo Dugué the new RCU is now, finally, firmly in place. Marie-Jo and Marco will divide IVC coordination responsibilities, where Marie-Jo will be more involved in administrative coordination, and Marco more in scientific coordination.

We would like to thank Dr. Sitapha Diatta for all the energy he has put into the consortium during the last year. We are happy to let you know that he has already agreed to continue to contribute to the IVC as a scientist and an active member.

It seems ages ago that Drs Jean-Yves Jamin and Pieter Windmeijer left, but Jean-Yves and Pieter: thanks a lot for all your efforts to get the IVC up and running since 1995.

Development of inland valleys is a very promising avenue to improve food security in West Africa, given its geographical importance and its scope for intensification and diversification. Our consortium has great potential to contribute to that goal. During Phase I, the National Coordination Units have gradually built up partnerships of inland valley development stakeholders in their own countries. These partnerships already extend in some countries all the way from farmer to national policy level. Such 'vertical partnerships' will certainly facilitate reaching more people, i.e. expanding the coverage of our activities and technologies to other communities, beyond our key sites. At the regional level, the NCUs and international institutions gathered in the IVC have the potential to work on common research themes, using common methodologies to make faster progress. Moreover, the IVC should allow spill-over of promising ideas, developments and technologies that work in one country to others. As we said, the potential is there. It is now up to all of us to make Phase II of the IVC a success!

Marco Marie-Jo

New coordinators

Marie-Jo Dugué

I have been working for 25 years as an agronomist in various areas and environments : teaching and research in

France (Pr Sébillotte staff, then ESITPA, from 1975 to 1984), research and development in Burkina Faso (Yatenga from 84 to 87), support and training for Farmers' organisations in Senegal and Cameroon (CADEF in Casamance-Sénégal- in 91-92, CERN in North-Cameroon from 94 to 97), Initiating the first stage of PRASAC (94-95), Editing of a manuel of agronomy (93)... My responsibilities outside work have given me much experience in leading and managing teams and taught me useful negotiations skills.

Marco Wopereis

During the last 12 years I have been working on rice, the most important food crop in the developing world. From 1989 to 1994 I was based at the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, Philippines. I first worked as a project scientist on soil physical measurements in rice soils. Afterwards I became Coordinator Crop and soil management of a research network on rice bringing together 9 Asian NARS, IRRI and 2 Dutch research organisations. From 1994 to early 2000 I was working as an agronomist in the Irrigated Rice Research Program of WARDA, based at WARDA's regional Rice research Station in Ndiaye, Senegal. Since March 2000, I transferred to WARDA's headquarters in Mbé, Côte d'Ivoire to work on the development of irrigated and rainfed lowland systems in West Africa, as a natural resources management scientist.

Changes at the IVC secretariat

Miss Warkha Diagne, better known to you as Adja, our IVC secretary, has left WARDA on November 10, 2000, to pursue further studies in the United States. Adja has done a marvellous job over the last three years. She was very much aware of developments within the IVC, and the who-is-who within our consortium. That made her very efficient in handling your requests. She also managed the logistics of our annual meetings and workshops in a very professional way. We will surely miss Adja's dynamic presence in the IVC, and wish her good luck and all the best for the future.

Adja has been replaced by Miss Brigitte Kouadio. Welcome Brigitte !

Phase II of the IVC: getting started on working groups

As you know from the strategic plan for phase II, the IVC would like to move more towards technology development and scaling-up of promising technologies and away from characterization, which was the predominant activity in Phase I. The following four main

research themes have been proposed, and were discussed during the 2000 annual meeting held at WARDA in April:

- 1) Characterization of inland valley land use dynamics
- 2) Development and evaluation of technologies for improved production systems and natural resource management
- 3) Socio-economic and policy aspects of improvements in inland valley use systems
- 4) Technology dissemination processes and impact pathways for inland valley development

Terms of reference were prepared for four working groups, one for each research theme, and sent to all of you in June 2000. So far, we have had very little response from the working groups. Perhaps we have been too optimistic in presuming that such discussions would be possible by email. NCU's complained during our trips in the region about problems with their email systems. Another way may be to communicate your ideas directly to the RCU by ordinary mail or fax. Please feel free to do so! Here are some additional comments on the four research themes, in addition to the terms of reference already sent to you.

1) As you can see, Theme 1 is still about characterization! However, here we do not mean characterization as in Phase I (the more 'static' regional, semi-detailed and detailed characterization studies) but more '**dynamic' characterization**. Key words for this theme are *sustainability, equity and social change*.

You could think, for instance, about the evolution of land use in an inland valley over time: Are the same people active in an inland valley after land development as before land development? Has income increased? Are more women and young people employed?

Questions can also be raised on biophysical issues. Has water availability improved after land development, and if so, can such gains be sustained? Have nutrient flows and weed flora changed after land development? Are new land uses cropping up? Is there scope for integration of livestock, aquaculture? What about externalities: are downstream water users happy with inland valley development?

Such issues can be studied in many ways.:

- Long term monitoring programs at benchmark areas
- 'snap-shot studies', where you investigate a certain hypothesis or problem in inland valleys that are nearby, but at more or less advanced development stages. In doing so, future constraints or opportunities can be predicted for inland valleys that have not yet been developed.

- Another way would be to work on a gradient, for example on a rural to peri-urban gradient, and study the importance of distance to markets on inland valley development.

2) Research theme 2 is about **participatory development of technologies**. Next to development of new technologies, it is obviously important to make a catalogue of what we have! What technologies are available in the IVC? As of now we do not have a good overview. All NCUs have produced a state-of-the-art paper on inland valleys and technologies in use, and a summary of these papers has almost been finalized. The RCU will try to compile a catalogue out of these reports as soon as possible. We will then circulate the catalogue among members for your comments. The three concept notes that are currently being prepared, i.e. on integration of livestock and aquaculture in inland valley development, and on further evaluation and application of the DIARPA decision tool mostly address this research theme.

3) Research theme 3 is about **socio-economic and policy aspects of inland valley use**. An important aspect of this theme is to see how we can get national policy and decision makers interested in inland valleys. Do national development plans include a section on inland valleys? This may be true for some countries, but not for others. There is an opportunity here to learn from each other. Related to Theme 1 are the socio-economic aspects of inland valley development. Who profits from these developments? Who are the losers if any? Have sound cost-benefit calculations been carried out? What resources are involved?

4) Research theme 4 is very much about **impact on the ground, scaling up and partnerships**. This is really one of the most important aspects of Phase II. The bottom line is simple: *How can we get a promising technology to more people in a quicker but sustainable and equitable way?*

A technology can for example refer to a variety, a weed management or soil fertility management recommendation, or a simple technical solution to improve water control.

- There are spatial and temporal dimension to scaling up: How do you expand use of a technology to larger areas, and when is the best time?

- There are also institutional and economic dimensions: Scaling up is very much about people: what partnerships do we create to be most effective? Is it economically viable to scale up?

- Finally there is a technological dimension: do we need to adapt the technology itself, i.e. simplify or adapt it in another way to scale up?

Very important is also to understand what can **catalyze** successful scaling up: what are the sparks that promote rapid diffusion?

Clearly our own consortium should be a powerful instrument to create partnerships, diffuse information and create pathways for scaling up!

We are looking forward to your reactions. We hope that the new project proposals you are preparing for 2001 will focus on one or more of these research themes. During the annual workshop we may also consider the development of special larger projects on one of the four themes.

IVC coordinators visited 8 out of 10 IVC countries in 2000

Drs. Sitapha Diatta and Marco Wopereis visited eight out of the ten IVC member countries in 2000. Unfortunately we were not able to visit Sierra Leone and Guinea this year. Here are some general conclusions from our visits.

We received very positive feedback from the National Coordination Units (NCUs) visited during our trip. There is a clear need to visit the NCUs at least once a year, preferably in the period September - November. All NCUs emphasized the need for WARDA to urgently send the budget to cover NCU support costs. It was also repeatedly brought to our attention that research funds need to be received by the NCUs by the end of May to respect the wet season cropping calendar. During our discussion it became also clear that the working groups on the four research themes for Phase II need to be activated as soon as possible to have concrete workplans and common methodologies ready before the next annual workshop.

A three day meeting of theme leaders and involved WARDA's researchers will be held in end of January 2001 in to speed up this process (i.e. to write a baseline document for discussion during annual workshop).

All NCUs visited agreed to send one member to WARDA for a period of three weeks during January - March 2001 to work on a scientific or more popular article based on Phase I results, to be published in an internationally refereed journal. Most NCUs expressed interest in the three special projects that are being prepared, i.e. integration of livestock in inland valleys; integration of aquaculture in inland valleys, and further validation and application of the DIARPA decision tool.

The SPIRIVWA (Sustainable Productivity Improvement for rice in Inland Valleys in West Africa) project funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) faced considerable difficulties this year. Land development was again delayed and is now expected to start in Burkina Faso (near Banfora) and Côte d'Ivoire (near Gagnoa) during the dry season of 2001. In Nigeria (in the Bandeh valley), further land development will continue in 2001. We will keep you informed about progress made in this important project.

We would like to thank all NCUs for their hospitality and perfect organization of our visits.

Marco and Sitapha

Project proposals for 2001: new guidelines

You can now send in new project proposals that count for funding in 2001. Please send in a maximum of three proposals per country to the RCU. The maximum amount that is available per country is US\$ 10,000. Please feel free to write one larger proposal, two medium-sized or three small ones for this amount. We encourage you to send draft version of the proposals in early, so that the RCU can comment on these before final submission.

The deadlines for submission are as follows:

February 1:

First drafts of project proposals received at RCU

February 12

Comments on project proposals sent back to NCU

March 1 :

Final versions of project proposals received at RCU

Kindly use email as a means of communication with the RCU as far as possible.

Annual workshop 2001: tentative plans

The IVC annual workshop is tentatively scheduled for the **second half of March 2001**. Venue will be WARDA's headquarters at Mbe, Cote d'Ivoire.

We are thinking of a three-and-a-half day event, including one field day. The Consortium Management Committee and the CFC project management committee will meet before and after the IVC annual meeting.

Tentative schedule:

19 March	afternoon	Consortium Management Committee meeting
19 March	afternoon	CFC project management committee
20 March	whole day	IVC annual workshop
21 March	whole day	IVC annual workshop
22 March	whole day	IVC annual workshop – field day
23 March	morning	IVC annual workshop (closure)
23 March	afternoon	Consortium Management Committee
23 March	afternoon	CFC project management committee

Workshops proceedings: catching up

The last proceedings published by the IVC date from 1996. To deal with this tremendous backlog, the new coordinators are working on one volume, that will give a synthesis of results presented in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Concept notes on special projects: an update

As you may remember, during the annual workshop it was decided to appoint three scientists to write concept notes on special issues that are of interest to a large number of NCUs. The three themes were: (i) opportunities for the integration of livestock in inland valleys; (ii) opportunities for the integration of aquaculture; and (iii) further validation and application of the DIARPA decision tool.

Dr. Yte asked for feedback from all of you by email in October, and is currently compiling a concept note from the material he received so far.

Dr. Larbi has promised to send in a concept note by the end of December, after he has familiarized himself with the IVC. The RCU gave him a pile of IVC documents during their visit to ILRI at the IITA station in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Concerning DIARPA, a CD-Rom will come out early 2001. The concept note will now be prepared by François Blanchet of EIER in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso instead of Jean-Claude Legoupil who will be leaving West Africa by the end of this year.

Ghana workshop

The Ghana NCU is organizing a workshop on soil fertility management for inland valleys at Tamale, Ghana from 26 to 28 february 2001.

Funding is available for a limited number of participants from other NCUs (either from IVC or other sources). Please apply directly to Dr. E. Otoo, and include an estimate of costs involved.

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Miscellaneous information

The RCU has received an announcement on an International Course on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to be held in Wageningen, theNederlands from 18 March to 30 June 2001. More information on this course can be obtained from the RCU or directly from the IPM Course Coordinator :

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