



International Food Policy Research Institute

2033 K Street, NW Washington, DC
20006-1002 USA
Tel: + 1-202-862-5600
Fax: +1-202-467-4439
ifpri@cgiar.org • www.ifpri.org

IFPRI-Dakar

Titre 3396 Lot #2
Dakar Almadies – BP 24063 Senegal
Tel: +221 33 869-9800
info-agrodep@agrodep.org • www.agrodep.org

**First AGRODEP Steering Committee (SC) Meeting
Thursday, June 9, 2011
Dakar, Senegal**

Minutes

Steering Committee Participants:

Ousmane Badiane (Co-Chair), IFPRI
Lindiwe Sibanda (Co-Chair), FANRPAN
Simon Dradri, COMESA (representing Cris Muyunda)
Mbène Dièye Faye, CORAF\WECARD
Abdul Kamara, African Development Bank
Yamar Mbodj, Le Hub Rural (formerly with ECOWAS)
Cristina Mitaritonna, CEPIL
Josef Schmidhuber, FAO (representing Pietro Genari)
Greg Traxler, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

AGRODEP Staff Participants:

Valdete Berisha (IFPRI)
Antoine Bouet (IFPRI)
Betina Dimaranan (IFPRI)
Ismael Fofana (IFPRI)

Meeting Agenda

The first Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held at the IFPRI office building on Thursday, June 9, 2011 in Dakar, Senegal. The agenda items included the following: i) Overview of AGRODEP; ii) SC membership, ii) Steering Committee Terms of Reference, iii) Review of AGRODEP Activities, iv) Review and finalization of the following documents: a) 2011 Workplan, b) Membership Extension Plan, and c) Grants Program.

The online version of the SC Meeting Agenda on the AGRODEP website provides links to all presentations and documents related to the agenda items discussed at the meeting.

The minutes are organized according to the agenda items and the decisions and recommendations that were made by the SC members present at the meeting. The approved items and the main action points are summarized at the end of the minutes.

1. Overview of AGRODEP

Ousmane Badiane presented an Overview of the AGRODEP modeling consortium, focusing on its objectives, composition, governance, membership, funding and vision in five years.

The presentation included a brief overview of the three main components of AGRODEP: i) data, ii) modeling, and ii) network components. It also provided an overview of the overall structure of AGRODEP including members, partners, experts, as well as its governing bodies and their roles, such as: i) Steering Committee

(SC), ii) Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), iii) Network Advisory Committee (NAC), iv) Project Manager, v) Deputy Project Manager, and vi) three components coordinators.

The presentation also covered the main AGRODEP activities in 2010-2011, including the Inception Workshop held in October 2010, membership activities, drafting of the terms of reference for the governance bodies, and website development.

The Steering Committee discussed the need for AGRODEP to have a strategy for networking with policymakers. It recommended designing an outreach plan that is concrete and user oriented. The idea of organizing workshops for policymakers was also discussed, but it was noted that AGRODEP needs to look into more cost-effective outreach activities by partnering with other initiatives like ReSAKSS and participating in workshops organized for policymakers by other organizations.

The committee also called on the AGRODEP management team to continue to remain demand-driven. AGRODEP needs to make it clear that it works on relevant issues; it is not only gathering researchers and tools, but also answering key questions.

The SC discussed the need for AGRODEP to establish a network of experts that will help with the necessary calibration of models. The SC also discussed the importance for AGRODEP to influence data collection by interacting with agencies that collect data and advising them on collection process so that they can meet the needs of AGRODEP.

The SC recommended a wrap-up session at the end of the day that brought together members of the Steering Committee (SC) and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) in order to better understand the issues addressed by each committee.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC agreed that AGRODEP management needs to design an Outreach Plan for AGRODEP.
- The SC agreed that a network of experts for model calibration needs to be established and institutionalized.
- The SC agreed that AGRODEP needs to develop a Data Partnership Strategy to ensure access and quality of data.
- The committee agreed to include a wrap-up session with the Scientific Advisory Board at the end of the day.

2. Steering Committee Membership

The size and composition of the SC, as well as term limits of SC members was discussed. In terms of the size and composition, the committee agreed that the SC membership needs to be limited to 20 members drawn from G6 categories (see Table 1 below). If a member withdraws, there will be no need for automatic replacement from the same institution. In addition, nomination of new member institutions will be done by the SC. With regards to membership terms, the committee stressed the need for continuity and noted that SC membership should be rotating, but rotation should start from year four.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC decided to extend an invitation to ECOWAS and the African Union to join the Steering Committee.

Table 1: SC Membership Categories

G1 International Research Community (IRC)	G2 Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs)	G3 Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs)		G4 Developme nt Partners (DP)	G5 Regional Economic Communities (REC)	G6 AGRODEP Members
IFPRI GTAP CEPII	FANRPAN ASARECA EPRC CORAF	ADB USITC WTO	FAO WBI UNECA	BMGF USAID	ECOWAS COMESA AU/NPCA	Members

3. Steering Committee Terms of Reference

The committee discussed the role of the SC and noted that its key role is to oversee the general operation and strategic direction of AGRODEP. The question on whether the Steering Committee should focus more on the process or the content of AGRODEP operations was raised. It was suggested that the SC needs a greater focus on content and strategy and should be more proactive instead of reactive where it only approves documents submitted by the management.

The approval authority of the SC was also discussed and it was suggested that such an authority needs to be made more explicit in the SC terms of reference.

It was noted that the SC will be responsible to review and approve the following documents: i) Workplan, ii) Steering Committee Terms of Reference, iii) Membership Extension Plan, and iv) Grants Program. The SC can approve document virtually in the future.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC approved the TOR subject to revisions discussed above.
 - Membership size limited to 20 members drawn from G6 categories (see Table 1)
 - Nomination of new member institutions will be done by the SC.
 - SC membership should be rotating, but not for the first four years to ensure some continuity.
 - The SC agreed that for decision-making purposes, one representative from each of the six categories of members needs to be present.
 - Approval authority of SC needs to be made clear and more explicit throughout the TOR.
 - If a member withdraws, there will be no need for replacement.
- The SC also agreed to organize SC meetings twice per year in the first year: once in the first quarter in January/February and once in June/July.

4. Review of AGRODEP Activities

In the Review of AGRODEP Activities, Antoine Bouet reported on the main AGRODEP activities in 2010-2011, including the Inception Workshop held in October 2010 in Dakar, the design of a quarterly Workplan for 2011, the establishment of the Network Advisory Committee, the drafting of Terms of Reference for the SC, SAB, and the NAC, and the Membership Letter of Agreement, the extension of membership from the initial 27 members to an additional 29 members. Additional activities reported were the monthly AGRODEP Newsletter launched in April 2011; a questionnaire for Assessment of Capacity Building Needs among AGRODEP

members; a temporary AGRODEP website and Open Atrium for members to communicate and exchange ideas and materials; and a new professionally designed AGRODEP website that is underway.

5. 2011 Workplan

The AGRODEP Workplan for 2011 was presented by Antoine Bouet and highlighted key activities planned under each component: data, modeling, and network.

The SC noted that the 2011 Workplan was operational, but there was not enough time for SC to provide substantive comments. It was suggested that in the future, the SC should have an opportunity to talk about the broad issues and provide general orientation input to feed into and guide work program definition.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC approved the 2011 Workplan, but an **Outreach Plan** should be prepared and submitted for approval to the SC by September 15, 2011
- The SC agreed to organize a video teleconference to talk about strategic issues. The videoconference will include presentations on each component of AGRODEP;

6. Membership Extension Plan

Following the presentation on AGRODEP membership extension by Ismael Fofana, the Steering Committee recommended that AGRODEP explore the possibility of selecting African researchers who are not based in Africa with different types of benefits. The SC also discussed the role of mentorship for members and noted the need for a continuing relationship between resource people and members.

In terms of the size of AGRODEP membership, capping was considered unnecessary; the current cap of 200 members is temporary and will be re-visited by the end of next year. It was noted, however, that AGRODEP is trying to be cautious so that it does not extend too fast in the first phase which could compromise quality and make it difficult to meet the needs of its members. It was also noted that the next round should improve targeting of researchers to attract applicants from Central and North Africa.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC approved the Membership Extension Plan and recommended the following:
 - Explore non-Africa based applicants.
 - Revisit the 200 membership cap by the end of next year.

7. Grants Program

The presentation on AGRODEP's grant program by Betina Dimaranan highlighted the three types of grants that AGRODEP will offer: i) competitive call for innovative research - only for AGRODEP members; ii) competitive call to address gaps in research - open to AGRODEP members and researchers outside AGRODEP; ii) financial assistance for research valorization – only for AGRODEP members.

The discussion focused on the grants to address gaps in research. The committee noted that in the review process AGRODEP needs to ensure that proposals are not skewed to only one issue. In addition, it was suggested that co-chairs of the SC identify experts on certain topics within each group to review proposals. Different committees can be assigned with different review aspects or tasks.

In terms of the grants for innovative research for which only AGRODEP members are eligible to apply, the committee discussed the grant amounts and agreed that the amounts are appropriate at present, but can be reconsidered in the future.

In terms of the research projects to be funded under this type of grants, it was noted that special consideration will be given to projects that are in the line with the CAADP Agenda. Four priority topics for CAADP agenda were identified: (a) climate change and water resource management; (b) government marketing policies; (c) trade policies and competitiveness; (d) market access.

The SC noted that the four CAADP priorities may be confused with the four CAADP pillars and recommended to change how these priority areas are referred to.

In addition, the SC noted that AGRODEP should be more ambitious and not limit itself only to those topics on which it has tools available. Perhaps a challenge topic should be added? Finally, the committee also agreed that members should be free to choose the country of focus in their research.

Decisions/Recommendations:

- The SC approved the Grants Program, but it should indicate that the proposed review of grant proposals to address gaps in research should be done not by the SC Co-chairs but by SC members identified for specific topics.
- Under the CAADP Priority topics for grants, change government marketing policies into output and input marketing policies

8. Other Business

Final discussions by the SC included AGRODEP funding needs. It was noted that AGRODEP has a total budget of 14 million US\$ for 5 years coming partly from USAID (36%) and partly from BMGF (14%) with a 50% GAP. Each year has its own determined amount. AGRODEP has approached the government of Netherlands and the European Commission for funding in order to address the current gap.

Another issue that was discussed was the legal responsibilities of the SC and it was noted that the committee is not a legal responsible body; legal issues related to AGRODEP are IFPRI's responsibilities.

Finally, the SC stressed the need for a timeline for approval decisions by SC and SAB to guide actions: what needs to be approved and when in order to ensure smooth implementation process by management team. The SC noted that the project year for AGRODEP is September to August.

Summary of documents approved by the Steering Committee:

- **Steering Committee Terms of Reference** were approved subject to the revisions below:
 - Membership size limited to 20 members drawn from G6 categories (see Table 1)
 - Nomination of new member institutions will be done by the SC.
 - Membership should be rotating, but not for the first four years to ensure some continuity.
 - For decision-making purposes, the SC will ensure that a representative from each category of members is present.
 - Approval authority of SC needs to be made clear and more explicit throughout the TOR.
 - If a member withdraws, there will be no need for replacement.
- **The 2011 Workplan** was approved, but an **Outreach Plan** should be prepared and submitted for approval to the SC by September 15, 2011.
- **The Membership Extension Plan** was approved; the SC recommended that the management team needs to study the possibility of non-African based applicants and implications for selection and de-selection criteria. In addition, the 200 membership cap is temporary and will be re-visited by the end of next year.
- **The grants program** was approved. However, the proposed review of grant proposals to address gaps in research should be done not by the Co-chairs but by members of the Steering Committee.

Summary of Key Action Items:

- Include a **wrap-up session** with the SAB at the end of the day.
- Develop a **Data Partnership Strategy**.
- Establish a **network of experts that will help with the calibration of models**.
- Make the **focus on policy** more explicit and visible in the work-plan by establishing better and clearer links to the CAADP.
- Design and submit an **Outreach Plan** for SC approval (due, September 15, 2011)
- Draft **informal guidelines** about the resource people, e.g. what is expected from them and what are the incentives for them to contribute to AGRODEP.
- **Invite ECOWAS and African Union** in the Steering Committee.
- SC recommends the management team to explore the possibility of having **non-Africa based AGRODEP members**.
- Under the **CAADP Priority topics for grants**, change government marketing policies into output and input marketing policies.
- Organize a **video teleconference** to talk about big strategic issues and presentations on each AGRODEP component.