

AGRODEP Steering Committee, Scientific Advisory Board, and Network Advisory Committee
Annual Meetings · Nov 18, 2013 · Joint Morning Session · Dakar, Senegal

Minutes

Participants

Steering Committee (SC) Participants

Ousmane Badiane (SC Co-chair), IFPRI; **Stephen Karingi**, UNECA; **Mustapha Sadni-Jallab**, WTO; **Greg Traxler**, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) Participants

Bernard Decaluwé (SAB Co-chair), Université Laval; **Johann Kirsten**, University of Pretoria; **Will Martin**, World Bank; **Maximo Torero** (SC Co-chair), IFPRI

Network Advisory Committee (NAC) Participants

Greenwell C. Matchaya, ReSAKSS; **Kimseyanga Savadogo**, University of Ouagadougou; **Miriam Omolo**, AGRODEP Member Representative

AGRODEP Staff Participants

Antoine Bouët, IFPRI; **Betina Dimaranan**, IFPRI; **Alimatou Diop**, IFPRI-Dakar; **Ismaël Fofana**, IFPRI-Dakar; **Kathryn Kincheloe**, IFPRI; **David Laborde**, IFPRI (via GTM); **Fousseïni Traoré**, IFPRI-Dakar

Meeting Agenda and Introductions

The meetings of the AGRODEP Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), Steering Committee (SC), and Network Advisory Committee (NAC) were held at the IFPRI-Dakar office in Dakar, Senegal on Monday, November 18, 2013. The three committees met in a joint session in the morning. This was followed by a presentation during lunch by IFPRI Research Fellow Tanguy Bernard, who talked about the motivation for and activities of the newly-formed AGRODEP Impact Evaluation Network. In the afternoon, the SAB, SC, and NAC held separate business meetings before coming back together for a joint session at the end of the day.

This document covers the joint meeting held in the morning of November 18, and is organized according to the meeting agenda, as follows: i) Opening Remarks; ii) Overview of AGRODEP Activities; iii) Modeling Component; iv) Data Component; v) Network Component; and (vi) Grants Program and 2014 GTAP Conference. The minutes of the parallel meetings of the SAB, SC, and NAC are provided separately.

Ousmane Badiane gave the welcome remarks and introduced the agenda of the meeting. He highlighted the successful growth of AGRODEP over the past three years, the need to take stock of the last 12 months and to look forward. Recruitment of members was accelerated in the past two years to achieve a critical mass of researchers that can benefit from AGRODEP programs. Over the next two years, the project will

focus on making strengthening the skills of the current group for members through training in economic models and modeling tools, grants, and workshops. The welcome remarks was followed by introductions from all those present at the meeting.

Overview of AGRODEP Activities

Betina Dimaranan provided an overview of AGRODEP's activities in the past year. She provided a reminder about the goals of AGRODEP and the project's key components before recounting the highlights of AGRODEP activities in the first two years. The roles of the SAB, SC and NAC were also recounted before the presentation of the key activities in 2013 such as membership activities, training activities, grants programs, publication incentives, and the launch of new membership categories.

Key Discussion:

- **Membership Listing:** AGRODEP members in individual countries is listed in each specific country page; a country page can be accessed by clicking on that specific country on the map of Africa in the front page of the AGRODEP website. Aside from the list of AGRODEP members, each country page also includes a listing of the models that are relevant for the country, and data, publications, and links to other resources that are specific for the country. It was suggested that a listing of members by country be made more readily accessible on the website without having to select each country from the map on the front page. A distinction should also be made between listing by nationality and by current location.

AGRODEP Modeling Component

Fousseini Traore presented an overview of the activities of the modeling component starting with an inventory of the current set of supported models and toolboxes in the model library followed by a summary of the activities in 2013. The toolboxes and modeling innovations and developments planned for 2014 were also presented. These include toolboxes for demand elasticity estimation, for food and nutrition security indicators for CGE modeling, for SAM manipulation for CGE modeling, and for consistent trade policy aggregators and measurements. In terms of modeling innovation, AGRODEP plan to develop a macro-econometric model, develop a new stochastic commodity model to analyze intra-annual issues, and extend the MIRAGRODEP regional integration models to tackle labor market integration and monetary integration. Examples were provided to illustrate the need for a consistent trade policy indicator and to explain the usefulness of macro-econometric models.

Key Discussions:

- **Types of Models:** Concern was raised regarding potential over-emphasis on models for regional and global CGE especially since they have limited usefulness in examining agricultural, nutritional, and national issues. It was pointed out that the CGE models can be modified to provide greater focus on agricultural issues and that AGRODEP also offers single-country CGE models and several partial equilibrium models that can be used to address agricultural and national issues. The project also supports econometric models, e.g. models used in impact evaluation, for micro-level analysis. The regional and global models are still particularly important for analysis of trade agreements.
- **Research Focused:** Concern was raised about the models becoming too IFPRI research-focused. Clarification was provided that the models are developed for the use of the members and not of

IFPRI. A suggestion was made about maintaining a balance between in-house and members' research.

- **Model Usage:** The AGRODEP team needs to make sure that the models and tools are being used effectively by the members. Greater emphasis will be made in 2014 on helping the members use the models and toolboxes in AGRODEP's model catalog through training courses and mentorship.

AGRODEP Data Component

Betina Dimaranan presented an overview of the activities of the data component in the past year, along with the plans for 2014. She reported on the current country coverage for the main data types (household survey data, social accounting matrices, national agricultural statistics) in the AGRODEP data portal, and outlined the plans for continued data warehousing, increased efforts in SAM development and documentation, and increased model-data interaction to support the data needs of the modeling component in developing a regional CGE model and several modeling toolboxes.

Key Discussions:

- **Data verification:** Clarification about raw data verification was provided. The data on commodity prices provided in the Food Security Portal, to which a link is provided from the AGRODEP data catalog, are verified using a parametric procedure that minimizes measurement error. AGRODEP provides links to several external datasets, e.g. the World Bank household survey datasets, and the quality of these datasets are not verified by AGRODEP. However, AGRODEP validates and documents data for new social accounting matrices that are not available from external data sources.
- **Data warehousing:** Concern was raised about the AGRODEP data portal being just a warehouse of data. Data warehousing of data available from other sources is one of just one aspect of the AGRODEP portal. Links to existing datasets, e.g. LSMS data, are provided in the AGRODEP website. AGRODEP does not have sufficient funds for creation of large datasets like household surveys but provides grant funding to fill some data gaps, such as preparation and documentation of Social Accounting Matrices that are developed as part of research projects.
- **Access to GTAP data:** It was announced that the latest African version of the GTAP database, GTAP Africa 2, is freely accessible to Africans and to the public from the GTAP website. The GTAP Africa 2 data base is an aggregated version of the GTAP 8.1 database wherein the 32 African regions are individually represented and the rest of the world is aggregated into 10 regions. AGRODEP also has verbal agreement with GTAP for AGRODEP members to obtain access to the standard global database contingent on AGRODEP's contribution of new African SAMS for the GTAP database.

AGRODEP Network Component

Ismael Fofana reported on the progress in 2013 in the areas of membership, training program, publications support, and communications and network support. Aside from the fifth membership round conducted at the beginning of 2013, the project also launched AGRODEP affiliate membership for three members who have moved out of Africa and implemented the first de-selection of three inactive members. Under the training program, AGRODEP introduced competitive seed-fund grants which are

available only to members who attend each specific training course. He also reported on members' participation in each of the activities and outlined the network component's plans for 2014.

Key Discussions:

- **Training costs:** An estimate of the cost for the training for each participant was requested. The total cost which includes airfare, airport transfers and other transportation, lodging and board range from around US\$800 to US\$2,700 for 5 days for each participant. The average figure of US\$1,500 per participant for 5 days does not include compensation for the training instructor. So far, training courses have ranged from 3 to 10 days, with some courses split into two parts that are delivered separately.
- **Seed fund grants:** These are small grants of \$5,000 each which are designed to encourage use of tools and techniques taught in a course by funding a portion of a larger research project that is related to the training course. The course instructor(s) are involved in the proposal review and selection and in mentorship. Four to six proposals have been received in each course so far and zero to a maximum of two proposals are selected from each course.
- **Gender breakdown:** Thirty percent of AGRODEP members are female. This ratio was reached with no special effort made to ensure adequate gender proportion. It was observed that 30% is still too low and that efforts should be made to raise this figure. A suggestion was made for previous applications to be examined to compare the proportion of women who were selected relative to the proportion of women that applied, and to look into why the number selected is not higher.

AGRODEP Grant Program and GTAP Conference

Antoine Bouet provided background information on each of the three types of AGRODEP grants: grants for innovative research, grants for gaps in research, and research valorization grants. He gave an update on the status of twelve innovative research grants and three gaps in research grants awarded in 2012 and seven research valorization grants awarded in 2013. He also reported on progress with the selection of grant proposals received in response to the calls for innovative research and to gaps in research which were both made in 2013. Antoine Bouet also reported on progress towards the preparations for the GTAP Annual conference that will be co-hosted by AGRODEP in Dakar on June 18-20, 2014.

Key Discussions:

- **Role of mentors:** Clarification about the role of mentors in research grants was provided. Mentors provide guidance towards producing a good research report including help in methodology, data, and editorial comments.
- **GTAP Conference:** Several remarks and clarifications about the forthcoming GTAP conference were provided.
 - The conference will provide very good publicity for AGRODEP.
 - A discount in the conference registration fee is available for students and for participants from developing countries.
 - The January 15 deadline for abstracts is also the deadline for submission of proposals for special sessions.
 - The conference can host up to 400 participants; we hope to have at least 150 from Africa.