

IPM CRSP 2004 Kick-Off Meeting
November 12, 2004 (Day Two)

Morning Session Chair: S.K. De Datta

De Datta thanked everyone for coming. He outlined plans for the day.

1. George Norton, Chair - Determining the Scope and Geographic Focus of RFAs for Regional Centers of Excellence

George Norton of Virginia Tech outlined his remarks. He described a typical year's budget of a little over \$2M. That leaves somebody for the global themes. There are five at 500,000 a piece, so \$2.5M a year. He described the regions: Asia, South Asia, etc. There are 10 different regions. However, there won't be 10 different programs. It will be more like 5-6 regions.

Norton said there would be some carry-over from previous CRSPs. "There will still be a participatory approach. It will also be multi-institutional. There will be at least two universities in any particular region. We would expect NGO and private sector involvement. We also expect linkages to 1890 schools. We also have host country institutions. We have a multi-disciplinary approach in any region. We will have an entomologist, an economist, a plant pathologist, a gender specialist, and a nematologist in each region."

Norton described the participatory appraisal process and how that works.

Other ME staff as well as AID CTO Bob Hedlund described what they expect:

- in some of the sites there's a biotech component, a socio-economic part, an impact assessment, and a policy/regulatory analysis as well
- it's appropriate to involve other CRSPs
- this is an opportunity for you as potential bidders to look at an early draft, and ask for clarification
- give us ideas on how to make the process clear and transparent
- give us ideas on how best to solicit mission support; and should the ME provide further guidance?
- how can we as an ME facilitate host countries?
- how will IARC involvement as a requirement affect things? Can we guide bidders to certain relationships?
- partnerships must be non-exclusive
- biotech should be included where appropriate; biotech tools and GMOs are different
- proposals will include gender analysis

The issue of impact assessment was discussed. It was suggested that the ME have a strategy to focus a regional effort on biological topics, then get someone from a particular

region involved for impact assessment. ME staff noted that impact assessment needs to be built into proposals.

The issue of global themes and how to pursue them was discussed. It was noted that global themes provide some consistency.

ME staff assured the group that information would be posted on a web site. The portal will guide users to the kind of consortia one would put together for a full program.

Participants brought up the issue of coordinating the consolidation process: two groups working on the same thing without knowing that another group somewhere else was doing that. ME staff responded that this was indeed a concern, and that perhaps the EEP might suggest ways to handle it.

CTO Hedlund noted that with AID, “fairness trumps clarity. Anyone who expresses an interest in that first announcement, those people get notified. There’s a period of two weeks when people can submit questions. All questions are answered in the same day. Everybody has the same opportunity. Questions are posted as well as the answers, but not who asked the questions. Any award of a contest can be protested. Most of them are. The point is: the process will be fair.”

A participant brought up the idea of a regionalization strategy implying a single location within a region.

The issue of the timeframe of events was discussed as well. Things won’t happen right away.

Cooperation with other CRSPs was discussed.

ME staff noted that one needs to include budget information and a statement of work in the planning grant proposal.

The issue of what exactly a planning grant is was discussed. Response: “The point is to show EEP, ‘Hey, these people know what they’re talking about, we’d like to see these people develop something.’”

* * * Coffee Break * * *

2. Short Heinrichs, Chair - Determining the Scope of RFPs for Global Theme Programs

Short Heinrichs of Virginia Tech said the gist of this session would be aimed at coming up with some comments from participants regarding the scope of the themes and the possibility of adding themes.

The many facets of themes were discussed: is there an advantage to having global themes awarded first?; one needs regions first, then one needs global themes; global themes

established in order to provide economies of scale; the importance of mission buy-in with themes; invasive species and global themes; the issue of interacting with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. government; the role of themes in helping to standardize information.

Discussion of Specific Topics

Then the group moved into discussing the various topics: viruses; regional diagnostic labs, IPM information technology; and impact assessment.

* * * Lunch * * *

3. S. K. De Datta – IPM CRSP Governance

S. K. De Datta outlined how Virginia Tech has managed the project: transparently and in a participatory fashion, believing in the importance of having a multiplying effect. He described the financial management set-up, the program management and communication structure, and spoke of the importance of ensuring cost control as well as quality control.

De Datta also mentioned the Program Advisory Board with its eight voting members. George Norton will be sitting in as interim Technical Committee chair and will be a non-voting member of the Board. The Board will be composed of member representatives. Every board membership will have a term, then rotate out. Past board members won't automatically be board members. There will be effort to keep the board balanced by gender and 1890 institutions. The Board will be formed as soon as possible. It will be a policy-making body.

De Datta noted that by March, the IPM book will be out. George Norton thanked everyone for their effort over the past year.

He concluded by saying that “we have the very best management team. We are committed to correcting our mistakes as fast as we have them pointed out.”

4. Larry Vaughan and Debbie Glossbrenner – Web-Based Technical and Financial Reporting

Larry Vaughan of Virginia Tech spoke about web-based technical and financial reporting, and how that will be done.

According to Vaughan, “the M&E system should be built into workplans. Annually, it's all put together. We will have an online reporting system. This should make things easier; however, we want feedback from those of you who have been doing this for a long time. NC State has a lot of experience with this. (Jim VanKirk). We want to get input from you folks and find out how information should flow. We want to facilitate host country co-PIs.”

ME staff noted that we have two big documents: the workplan, and the annual report.

A participant noted that there needs to be flexibility in how one achieves goals over time, because things can change.

Ron Stinner described the system they have in place at North Carolina State University and discussed its benefits and challenges. All information comes out of a database and is open to the public. It is searchable. The site posts both the plan of work and the individual annual reports. From the administrative side, there's the ability to turn the information off and on. The site also accepts pictures and graphs.

Debbie Glossbrenner of Virginia Tech described information flow on the accounting side of things. "What's important is how information flows, how it works. [There is an] online financial tracking system. Basically what happens is, once we get a statement of work, I put that in a form that Sponsored Programs needs to issue a sub-award. The budget comes out in a line item format. Then we track the spending by those line items. Sponsored Programs just needs to see cumulative amounts. Cumulative invoices. We want to develop a spreadsheet where individual sub-awardees will put in the amounts they have spent with backup spreadsheets. They submit the Excel spreadsheet to us; once we OK it, we download it into the database. They can go into the system, tell the system to print out their last cumulatives; they can put in their current expenses; the Excel spreadsheet will automatically put in the new amounts. Then we can go pull the specific information that we need."

Vaughan added that "this is the kind of auditability that AID will be asking for anyway. One advantage for program leaders is that you will also be able to track host country spending. You'll have a better understanding of how assets are being used." He also noted that copies of receipts optically scanned will be submitted to Virginia Tech with each invoice.

5. Bob Hedlund – Closing Remarks

Bob Hedlund, USAID CTO for the CRSP, thanked the participants for their 11 years of efforts. He expressed appreciation on behalf of USAID for the efforts of the research team under the leadership of Dr. S. K. De Datta of Virginia Tech.