

WLE Nile/East Africa focal region planning meeting

23 September 2013, NBI, Entebbe (draft)

This note lays out the key points arising from the collective conversation held between an invited small group of key partners involved in the emerging WLE research for development programme in the Nile Basin/East Africa Corridor. While not capturing every word exchanged the note aims to both document this process and contribute to preparation for the full partner consultation to take place 17th -18th November in Addis. (Meeting objectives, the agenda and participants list are attached in annex to this note)

Part 1: Setting the stage

1. Introduction and expectations

Opening and welcome by Teferra Beyene, Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) Executive Director

Amanda Harding, facilitating the meeting, invited participants to introduce themselves and to share with the group what drives their interest and motivation to be part of this regional initiative. The following motivational words were extracted from participants' introductions and offer a basis on which guiding principles and a vision for change in the region:

Facilitators of change; Enablers; Participatory processes (of substance as opposed to performative); Women; Power and politics; Working in and with diversity; Dialogue; Small-scale farmers; Equity; Transboundary; Decision making; Livestock – integration; Solutions and opportunities; Local – national; Formal – informal; People; Relevance.

It was well noted that though a small group it represented a combination of key regional organisations, international development organisations, donors and CGIAR WLE partners, reflecting a running theme through the day of partnership rooted in the region, relevance and alignment.

2. Overview of WLE

Presentation by Andrew Noble, Director WLE

Simon Langan (IWMI Head East Africa office) noted that while the CPWF Nile Basin Development Challenge will end this year, WLE will effectively ensure continuity in the CGIAR's roles in undertaking research for development. He is excited by the change process that has been implemented within the CGIAR and how this will contribute to turning around the livelihoods of communities in the region. He noted that 50% of participants in today's meeting are non-CG which is a departure from the norm. There is a need to carefully assess where we should make investments to effect change which can best be achieved through a process of cooperation, co-ownership, co-design and co-implementation. The meeting was convened to gather information and views from different perspectives on what are the R4D needs in the region. A further outcome from the meeting was to identify who are the key stakeholders that should be invited to the full consultation on 17th and 18th October.

Andrew ([link to presentation](#)) reflected on the transformation that the CGIAR is going through, and the desirability to work with partners from outside the System. WLE has one of the largest number of non-CGIAR partners of all CRPs.

The focus of the WLE program is on the fundamental resources (land, water and ecosystems) on which our entire food system is predicated upon. In his presentation Andrew highlighted the urgency in addressing the current impasse that we face in the sustainably managing these resources by alluding to the fact that our current agricultural systems contribute significantly to the challenges we face that include climate change, biodiversity losses and perturbations to the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles.

WLE has a focus on improving efficiency, restoration degraded systems and reducing risks and uncertainty. This was exemplified with a priority setting example for the Volta & Niger.

Discussions following the WLE presentation

- Richard Soppe asked about the vision on the practicalities of the program. Andrew explained that the focal region coordination group(s) will have the responsibility for practical implementation. Partnerships are critical, as well as putting research into action, and political connectivity. There will be a need within WLE partners to re-align their activities to those of the programs.
- Link to Government partners - Hezron Mogaka referred to partnerships, particularly with governments as possibly the weakest link. Andrew indicated that a minimum of 30% of resources should be assigned to engaging with partners and if possible this figure should increase. To ensure that this occurs it will be incumbent on all of us to generate the desired resources to achieve this.
- Alan Nicol argued that market systems and trade are often driving NRM decisions and asked if this was considered within the WLE framework. He called for bringing in partners to address this important issue. Andrew's response suggested that WLE could partner with PIM as they focus on markets and trade and would welcome others into the program to provide these insights.
- Katherine Snyder noted that this program needs to chart a course that evades the mistakes made by many programs in the past to land degradation in which blanket approaches that did not address either short-term needs of poor households, the differences between men and women, or the biophysical differences within the landscapes. These issues have led the majority of projects addressing land degradation to fail. . We have the tools to address these needs, but the question is how we apply them.
- Andrew referred to the political discourse around water at a regional level, but many of the challenges that are faced are local in nature. In addition to impartial views and evidence based information that WLE and partners could provide, aligning with strategic partners who can influence the discourse at the appropriate level will be critical for WLE to demonstrate impact.
- Several participants noted that a multilevel approach was needed, not just in intervention design but in working with different levels of institutions (from local to national) and aiming engagement differently according to the differences in scale.

Value added of the WLE programme to the Nile Basin/East Africa region

Emerging from this discussion greater clarity was achieved on what WLE could bring to the region. It would;

- Articulate a rationale for regional cooperation as an umbrella for regional R4D

- It's independence (combined with quality research) would give credibility, convening power and enable trust amongst key actors
- Have the scope and capacity to work from landscape to basin + link across scales as well as globally
- Provide proof of concept, i.e. argue on the basis of evidence, analysis and through a combination of diverse legitimate partners
- Work through and with partners – as the very basis of the regional R4D programme (but will need to better define what partnership is, entails and how it evolves)
- Learn from models of R4D from other basins
- Provide intellectual leadership and contribute to capacity building in the region
- Act as an enabler
- Develop and provide technical expertise

The group agreed that there is a need to identify the key issues and get buy-in across the emerging partnership base. Possible drivers and foci that were identified include:

- Markets
- Livelihoods
- Landrights and policy
- Building on past knowledge and existing work
- Scale - impact at scale – political system + decision makers
- Targeting
- Partnership
- Gender and addressing the gender gap

Discussion:

Alan Nicol asked where WLE would place itself on the investment vs. impact axes? Andrew Noble responded that accountability and value for money are critical core values of WLE but that there are numerous ways of measuring impact.

3. Regional Presentations

NBI presentation on Opportunities, Challenges, and Research Priorities in the Nile Basin

Dr. Abdulkarim Seid ([link to presentation](#)) provided insights into the seasonality of Nile flow, which is low upstream but high downstream. Rainfall in the Blue Nile is very seasonal with 70% of rainfall occurring within 4 months.

- Upstream, the Lake Victoria sub-basin plays an important role in flow regulation. Key challenges in the basin are lake level decline, water quality and land degradation.
 - The Blue Nile (rising in the Ethiopian Highlands), a highly eroded and degrading watershed, contributes 60% to the flow at Aswan, Egypt. The watershed offers huge potential for increased food production, hydropower and opportunities for regional cooperation
- The Nile Delta is fully regulated. Challenges in the delta are the decline in per capita water availability, declining water quality, sea level rise and soil salinization.

Challenges and opportunities in the Nile Basin present themselves in a context of rapidly changing economies and population. Water storage matters in terms of mitigating against variability. The degree of dependence on transboundary inflow is very high for Egypt and

Sudan, but virtually non-existent for Ethiopia. This implies a choice between pre-emptive control or cooperation on Nile water.

The NBI has the following core functions: water resources management and development and facilitating cooperation. NBI emphasizes the benefits of cooperation vs. the risks of non-cooperation. It fosters dialogue which is important for appropriate policy decisions. As such NBI strives to break the barrier between science and decision making. Opportunities for cooperation are in the areas of:

- Flood risk management
- Hydropower development and power trade
- Agricultural trade
- Joint management of water storage
- Manage risk and uncertainty
- Manage scarce water resources and their supply and demand

NBI achievements:

- Forum for dialogue
- Technical cooperation leading to increased knowledge
- Improved mutual understanding (including non-government stakeholders)
- Prepared joint projects and investments
- Mobilizing international support
- Reduced information and knowledge asymmetry
- Cooperation is high on the agenda in all basin countries

Areas of applied research that NBI sees a possible areas of research and collaboration:

- Ways for enhancing the efficacy of agricultural water use
- Demand side management and potential
- Ecological flows
- Rainfed agriculture
- Transboundary water resources management in a water scarce basin
- Salinity – water and salt balance development in the Nile Delta; scenarios for managing salinity.

Sustainable management of water, land, and ecosystems in ECA: ASARECA perspective on challenges, opportunities & priorities

Hezron Mogaka presented ([link to presentation](#)) the NRM and ecosystems services agenda of ASARECA. The objectives of shared interest for cooperation were considered as follows:

- Improving agricultural water productivity
- Gender responsive NRM policies and governance issues with a focus on land
- Managing ecosystems for quality, equitable and sustainable services

ASARECA is concerned with how to cost-effectively enhance water availability and productivity in an equitable and gender responsive manner, and is attempting trying to address challenges highlighted below. This would include having ‘ambassadors’ (or champions) strategically placed, e.g. in critical government positions.

ASARECA looks also at scenarios of development as a means of developing options and strategies (as supposed to a more linear “solution” based approach).

Challenges:

- How to create and sustain appropriate institutional structures and arrangements
- How to attract policy and planning for water, land and ecosystems
- How to accelerate adoption of innovations
- How to best work among partners
- How to respond to varying and changing climate conditions
- How to infuse a gender perspective

It was noted that four out of thirty fastest developing economies in the past year are located in Eastern & Central Africa: Rwanda, Congo DRC, Ethiopia and Tanzania. Africa is seen as the new frontier for agricultural expansion. There is huge potential for irrigation. The following priorities were identified for mobilizing this potential:

- Technologies for optimizing water and land uses
- Markets, value addition and public-private partnerships (PPP)
- Creating social capital and capacity building

Discussions following the NBI and ASARECA presentations

Els Lecoutere asked for a brief picture of agreements and restrictions posed by transboundary water cooperation. The answer to this was that existing agreements are not restrictive. She also asked about issues in relation to oil found in the basin. With respect to oil, pollution and water quality are issues. This could have significant implications for regional development along with the recently discovered vast quantities of ground water.

Amanda pushed the discussion from “great ideas to coherence”, by asking: “what does the NBI and ASARECA see as the role of WLE in working with your institutions? What are the entry points? What are your tips for funding?”

A potential role of WLE could be to offer models that have worked elsewhere; provide intellectual leadership, knowledge and information input; models and scenarios for development as well as an ability to leverage funding (e.g. from EU and USAID).

Part 2: Agreeing an initial WLE Regional Road Map

4. Framing WLE Nile/East Africa Corridor R4D

Before moving into small discussion groups a wider discussion noted that the notion of “**hope spots**” had arisen – with a potential to help frame WLE’s regional R4D. Cutting across these hope spots appeared to be issues of equity, smallholders, valuing of natural resources and power dynamics/realities.

Alan saw R4D opportunities emerging using the geographical areas to anchor the research. Across the regional areas he suggested working with incubator platforms, testing

environments and innovation/ incubation hubs, focusing on markets and trade, maintaining a central livelihoods objectives and linking to policy impacts.

Simon reiterated the suggested “4 + 1” framework, based on four regions (Lake Victoria, Blue Nile Ethiopian Highlands, Sudd Wetlands and Nile Delta) plus the entire Nile Basin. The entire basin perspective being important in taking an ecosystems approach and reviewing trade-offs in natural resource management in contrasting eco-regions and across the different riparian states.

Three guiding questions for framing the WLE Nile / East Africa focal region R4D agenda were discussed in groups:

1. What do you think of the “4 + 1” geographical split? Advantages vs. challenges
2. What should the R4D focus be?
3. What are the commonalities and linkages across these R4D focus areas?

Outcome of the group discussions on framing:

The geographical split:

There was general agreement that the proposed geographical split was useful. However, this depends on what questions are being answered. Are we looking at types of problems or types of ecosystems? Does the basin perspective reflect the national priorities of concerned countries? What’s missing?

Justification for the split was based on:

- Livelihoods and ecosystems characteristics
- Patterns across landscapes
- Geographical areas represent different characteristics of key importances to people’s livelihoods across the basin
- Represent distinct socio agro ecosystems
- Forward looking given key drivers
- Provides full basin perspective and cross boundary opportunities
- Reflects ambition of impact

R4D Focus:

R4D focus is based on systems thinking addressing opportunities for change. People should be at the center of the change discourse. The focus needs to include:

- Specific gaps in information, understanding and analysis to inform and enable existing policy implementation in the basin (NBI)
- Population and environment
- Strategies to improve productivity (e.g. where are the markets?)
- Equity
- Connectivity
- Water resources use efficiency
- Markets – critical driver
- Adopting technologies and innovations
- Efficiency and sustainability – cross scale and scale of impact
- Cooperation and benefit sharing

Commonalities and linkages

The issues are region specific but potentially of significant relevance at the basin scale.

One group suggested a basin R4D objective as:

- i) Achieving equitable and gender responsive improvement of livelihoods
- ii) Easing pressure on NR systems (water and land)

5. Summary of process for defining a regional R4D programme

The group reached consensus on the following overall approach and phased process to achieving initial definition of the WLE Nile/EA R4D programme:

1. This planning meeting sets the boundaries and overall framework in terms of:
 - a. Key Opportunities for Change and Impact (formulated in terms of change for people where water, land and ecosystems combine as key drivers)
 - b. Key Drivers based on the 4 + 1 regional focus
 - c. Guiding principles on how to develop the programme in the region.

This framework will be described in a background paper prepared for the Consultation Meeting. It will take care to formulate opportunities for change in terms of people, their livelihoods and interaction with ecosystems, land and water.

2. An initial mapping of who is doing what and where in the region – now and planned – to be initiated before the consultation meeting. Mapping to be an iterative and live document.
3. Consultation 17th – 18th October Addis will aim to :
 - a. identify gaps and additions to identified opportunities for change, impact pathways and guiding principles. The consultation group will then take these components further through articulation of the substance to each one.
 - b. align with major development and policy priorities (reality and relevance check)
 - c. further develop theories of change for the 4 + 1
 - d. form the key inputs for a series of concept notes (to be submitted to WLE – but not exclusively; WLE to potentially back CNs and “pitch” to donors)
 - e. build the partnership base and create sense of co-ownership.

6. Consultation process and participation in the meeting

In discussing participation at the consultation meeting it was agreed that WLE would need to: check geographical spread, check spread of key actors groups, target individuals within organisations/institutions and support the invitation with personal contact (phone/email/Skype).

The group agreed on the following categories of participants and brainstormed on individuals and institutions. This list was seen as a starting point for a more considered and inclusive participants list.

1. **Government** (national level)
 - Ministers of Water and Irrigation from Sudan and South Sudan
 - Ministers of Agriculture (in 4 regions?)
 - Uganda Chairperson Agricultural Parliamentary Committee (see Hezron/Alan for name)
 - Minister of Water and Irrigation Egypt (see Richard Soppe)
2. **Researchers**
 - CG presence – needs a balance, from within region, importance of involvement and ownership of the process vs overwhelming/agenda setting
 - University of Cairo (see Richard S)
3. **Regional Organisations**
 - UNEP
 - GWP (regional office with NBI – needs double checking on best person from Ruth Beukman)
 - UNECA
 - ASARECA
 - FANRPAN
 - NBI
 - IGAAD
 - AU-CAADP
4. **Donors** (observer status? As partners to the programme – shift in relationship, important to be involved from outset, see the process, build their capacity, recognise the inclusion – reflection – R4D outcome focus)
 - SDC
 - SIDA
 - MBGF
 - WB
 - IFAD
 - FAO
 - USAID
5. **NGOs**
 - include gender, population and environmental NGOs
 - Farm Africa
 - CARE – GWI
 - LWR Centre
 - World Vision (Amanda not convinced – will look into best INGOs in East Africa engaged in NRM, livelihoods ...)
 - Farmers associations/unions/platforms
6. **Private Sector**
 - public private partnership (see Andrew – Tanzania)

7. Action points agreed as a result of the Planning Meeting

1. Prepare a “long-list” of participants for the full consultation meeting 17-18 October in Addis (Martin)
2. Prepare the shortlist + send invitations (Martin and Mala)
3. Background paper of Entebbe pre-meet outcomes (Abdulkarim, Simon, Martin, Amanda)
4. Presentation based on background paper at Consultation Meeting on 17th October in Addis (NBI to consider, agreement that this would preferably be a non-CGIAR partner)

Annex 1: CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems Nile Basin Regional Focal Program Planning Meeting

September 23, 2013, Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat, Entebbe, Uganda

Agenda

Monday, September 23, 2013

Morning Session

Time	Topic	Speakers
Part 1: Setting the stage		
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome from NBI Executive Director	Teferra Beyene
9:15 – 9:30	Introduction and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting objectives • Individual presentations (name, position, what brings us together) 	Simon Langan Amanda Harding
9:15 – 10:15	Introduction to WLE – global program, why WLE focal region programs and current set of WLE activities in the Nile/East Africa Corridor <i>Purpose is to provide a common understanding of what WLE is and what it can offer. Discussion would focus on looking at value added of WLE in the region.</i>	Andrew Noble Presentation Facilitated discussion (Amanda) – Q & A followed by brainstorm/conversation on WLE value added
10: 15 - 10:45	Coffee Break	
10:45 – 12:30	Regional Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NBI Presentation on challenges and opportunities and what are research priorities in the region - ASARECA Presentation on regional research priorities and needs <i>Purpose is to share insights on development</i>	Presentations: Dr Abdukarim Seid (NBI) and Hezron Mogaka (ASARECA) Facilitator: Amanda



	<i>challenges, opportunities and priorities and potential research needs</i>	
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	

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Afternoon session

Part 2: Agreeing an initial WLE Regional Road Map		
Time	Topic	Speakers
1.30 – 2.30	<p>Conversation and validation on major challenges and research thrusts to focus consultation on.</p> <p>Setting boundaries, guidance and principles for Regional AR4D – what and how it can and can't do (small group discussions then group conversation)</p>	Facilitator: Amanda
2.30 – 3.00	Coffee Break	
3.00 – 4.00	<p>Workshop preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives and expected outputs for consultation - List of participants for consultation workshop - What needs to be prepared - Identify roles and next steps 	Facilitator: Amanda Simon
4.15 – 4.30	Wrap-up: Review of meeting objectives and agreed action points	Simon and Amanda
4.30	Closing	Andrew and Teferra

Annex 2: PARTICIPANT LIST WLE NILE BASIN FOCALPLANNING MEETING IN ENTEBBE 23RD SEPTEMBER 2013

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