

**Annex 4: Meeting of the CGIAR Impact Assessment Focal Points (IAFPs) & the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) of the CGIAR Independent Science and Partnership Council**  
Meeting at the Hilton Marquette, Minneapolis, USA, 25 July 2014

The *Impact Assessment Focal Point Meeting* was jointly organized by SPIA and the IAFPs of the CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) and Centers, in the spirit of similar meetings held in the past. The objectives of the meeting, similar to previous meetings, were to:

- (1) Enhance communication/interactions between the Centers/CRP IAFPs on *ex post* IA related issues
- (2) Give and receive feedback on Center/CRP *ex post* IA study plans and strategies
- (3) Update IAFPs on selected SIAC activities and elicit feedback
- (4) Discuss areas of complementarities and overlap between SIAC work and overall M&E and IA work at CRPs and Centers

The program agenda, list of participants and individual presentations can be found here on the CGIAR Impact site <http://impact.cgiar.org/meetings-and-events/iafp-usa>

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

The SPIA Chair Doug Gollin welcomed the participants to the 2014 IAFP-SPIA meeting, and the Secretariat, particularly Ira Vater, for helping organize the meeting along with IAFPs. In attendance were IAFPs representing 12 Centers and 14 CRPs; a representative each from BMGF and the Consortium Office; representatives from MSU and Virginia Tech (Activity Leaders in the SIAC program); a SIAC Project Steering Committee (PSC) member; the SPIA Chair and his Research Associate, two SPIA members, and four ISPC/SPIA Secretariat staff.

The sessions were organized around CRP themes (commodity improvement focus, NRM and the environment improvement focus, systems analysis and improvement focus, policy oriented focus), followed by updates on SPIA's current work and reflections from the donor agency. The proceedings that follow merely highlight the presentation, and summarize discussions following each presentation and during the general discussion at the end of each session.

## **SESSION 1: Crop Improvement Focus**

### **1.1 CRP Wheat and CRP Maize: Presentation by Monica Fisher**

- Monica Fisher presented metadata (study type, impacts assessed, data used, geographical focus etc.) on Impact Assessment (IA) studies done at Wheat and Maize CRPs between 2010 and (June) 2014.
- An overwhelming majority of such studies is *adoption studies* – only 3 ePIAs were done. These studies use a variety of empirical approaches in documenting adoption and impact, including RCTs like that of CASFESA and NuME.
- They would like to develop a core set of adoption and impact indicators in the future, and are deeply interested in collecting panel data (SIMLESA, DTMA) as well as making use of secondary datasets (e.g. LSMS). For the latter, they are aware of discussions to add (maize) variety related questions to the LSMS questionnaires.

Doug Gollin observed that a lot of the studies are based on observational/cross-sectional data around a project. Such studies pick places where adoption (high levels) has already occurred or has high potential for adoption – in that sense, by necessity, this is opportunistic data collection. Fisher agreed that while some of the projects are restricted to the population where intervention has occurred, they are attempting to collect data that is more generalizable. For instance, in case of DTMA, one of the (two) surveys is across 13 countries where adoption is occurring (they ask breeders and seed companies where dissemination has occurred, and this constitutes the sampling frame).

This year, however, they have selected 3 DTMA countries and will be able to generalize to districts where maize is a very important crop. Greg Traxler (BMGF) wanted to understand how many surveys CIMMYT was doing this year, and how many farmers were involved. Fisher thought this would be around 20, and for the projects she is working on in Uganda and Iran, the surveys target 800 households each. Across the CGIAR, James Stevenson (ISPC Secretariat), observed that is likely to be around 100-200K households.

### **1.2 CRP Roots, Tubers and Bananas for Food Security and Income: Presentation by Guy Hareau**

- Guy Hareau highlighted RTB's six step priority setting assessment exercise done at the request of the Fund Council and ISPC to align RTB with SLOs and IDOs.
- He also spoke about their impact assessment strategy for 2014-15, and highlighted some specific IA studies at each RTB partner Center (Bioversity, CIAT, CIP, and IITA).

A general question on the extensive priority setting exercise (that included survey of 1,681 experts across 5 RTB crops and 4 regions) was how the demand from final beneficiaries was assessed. Hareau noted that they had not, and that this was a downside of the process. Daniel Suryadarma (CIFOR) asked how they link *ex ante* assessments to *ex post* assessments, and Hareau responded that they were attempting to do this: while RTB has a planning horizon of 2 years, the *ex ante* assessments (slide 12) referenced in the presentation look 6 years into the future. Hareau also mentioned that they were milking the DIIVA dataset to conduct additional studies on determinants and constraints to adoption in some countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

### **1.3 CRP GRiSP: Presentation by Sam Mohanty, Arouna Aminou, and Ricardo Labarta**

- Sam Mohanty presented a highlight of GRiSP IA studies : 16 adoption studies/IA related to germplasm enhancement, 20 related to management enhancement, and 4 on both are ongoing or have been completed in the last 5 years.
- Mohanty pointed out that they try not to have IRRI researcher as the lead researcher in the study - that this increases the credibility of adoption studies and IAs. It is not necessarily the case that IRRI-led studies overstates the outcomes/impact – for instance, the ACIAR-funded study (slide 4) estimates higher total benefits and higher average annual benefits for Indonesia and Philippines from varietal development and releases than an IRRI study (even as management showcases the ACIAR study).
- Aminou highlighted AfricaRice and GRiSP work in 41 hubs (23 countries), and noted how M&E and impact assessment are both being done in these hubs.

Bob Herdt (SPIA Member) raised a question on the type of intervention/information provided in the Philippines rice crop manager (smartphone app) IA. Mohanty responded that this was primarily information to farmers on nutrients – quantity of fertilizer that can be applied – based on cropping information and soil data they provide. Frank Place (ICRAF) was interested in the AfricaRice effort to collect data from 19,885 postharvest actors given the limited CGIAR experience, and challenges involved. Aminou briefly spoke about the sampling protocol they developed. For instance, in case of rice, there are a number of such actors (parboiler, miller, trader, etc.). And to develop a sampling frame of traders, they go to the markets and do a complete listing of traders before sampling from such a list (taking care of attrition from refusal to participate).

### **1.4 ILRI and Livestock and Fish CRP: Lucy Lapar**

- Lapar presented a highlight of ILRI IA studies stating that they focused on *ex post* and *ex ante* assessments, as well as IA strategy, key constraints to effective IA of Center and CRP portfolio, and challenges for IA in moving from Center to CRP.
- She had to go back a decade (1998) to find a compilation of IA studies (Thorton and Odero ed. 1998), and there hasn't been such a compilation since.

- There is recognition that M&E does not tell them what would have happened in the absence of their program – so they are moving in that direction, and are funding at least one IA in a year.
- In speaking to challenges in conducting effective IA of CRP and Center work, Lapar pointed out that CRP funding for IA is restricted to CRP work. In that sense, CRPs dictate the kind of IA that will be implemented at the Center level, and will not support IA initiatives that fall outside the CRP mandate (e.g. work prior to CRP era). She also pointed out that CRPs are evolving and may not be ripe for IA.

Doug Gollin, in responding to Lapar's summary of challenges, flagged a question for general discussion on how Centers and CRPs prioritize which technologies to evaluate with RCTs (considering RCTs are expensive). In L&F's case, Lapar responded that they are attempting to identify best bets – within each of the 8 value chains, they are looking at *ex ante* assessments to identify best bets that can later be subject to IA.

### **SESSION 1: General Discussion**

- Tim Kelley (ISPC Secretariat) noted that it is clear that M&E is getting pretty systematic treatment (e.g. at IRRRI). For IA, it appears that there is funding but it is unclear where the demand is coming from – where is this demand coming from? How is all this going to get prioritized? And to what extent is CRP going to leave all previous work to ILRI?
- Sam Mohanty (IRRI, GRiSP) responded that at GRiSP the IA budget became the M&E budget, and there is no longer any IA funding. Unless they get initial funding (e.g. from SPIA or BMGF) to start IA work, there is no dedicated IA budget for GRiSP even if there is interest and in-kind support from project staff.
- Guy Hareau (RTB, CIP) agreed with Mohanty that there is more money for M&E in RBM sites than for IA.
- Abdoulaye Tahirou (IITA) pointed that CRPs tend to hire M&E specialists, and assume that IAs will be done by Center economists.
- Aminou Arouna (AfricaRice, GRiSP) agreed with these perspectives – that because many are focusing on M&E, at AfricaRice, they are attempting to illustrate how there is complementarity between M&E and IA, but that they are different.
- Speaking to prioritization, Nancy Johnson (IFPRI, A4NH) noted that they were using Theory of Change (ToC) to understand if IA is required (again, like ILRI/L&F, identify best bets). The need for ePIAs comes from looking at what evidence they need going forward, not necessarily because they identify what is working/good.

Steve Franzel (ICRAF) spoke to the issue of collecting adoption data, and extrapolating from small adoption surveys to larger areas. For crops such as maize that get sufficient attention from central statistical agencies, and extension systems are pushing seeds, this is relatively easy. At the other extreme, in case of sweet potatoes, napier grass, or agroforestry, seed is not distributed formally, there is plenty of farmer-to-farmer dissemination, and there is a lack of prioritization of products – hence, adoption is patchy and few adoption surveys are done. Is there some means of exchanging ideas or information to tackle some of these issues?

Bob Herdt noted that across the system, a large number of farmers are being surveyed – with any one survey is focused on a single commodity, and impact assessments focused on the project areas. For e.g. in case of Western Kenya, there are a lot of commodities and markets in question, and hence they are essentially covering the same geographical areas through multiple surveys. Is there a better approach to conduct these surveys? Do large-scale ones that are not project-oriented and can give us a sense of technologies that are being adopted in the agricultural system? In responding to this, Doug Gollin asked Centers and CRPs how much they coordinate with each other on surveying,

and if this is systematic or haphazard/opportunistic. If the latter, there could be a useful role for SPIA to play as a clearing house for information on survey initiatives by various Centers and CRPs.

- Abdoulaye Tahirou (IITA) agreed this might be a good idea, but noted that when IITA, AfricaRice and ICARDA attempted to collaborate, the survey lengthened to 45 pages – that it may not be always practical and may increase time required of farmers.
- Monica Fisher (CIMMYT, Wheat, Maize) also agreed that this would be a good initiative, and in responding to Tahirou’s concern thought that duplication was taking place regardless (i.e. surveys already ask about many other crops besides the focus of Center/CRP), and that one could first evaluate how much of the collected data is necessary for analysis in order to reduce survey length.
- Ricardo Labarta (CIAT) agreed that such a coordination effort requires a lot of investment at the beginning, but is worth the effort. He pointed that they had an excellent experience with DIIVA where they coordinated with ICARDA for potato and barley (typically grown by the same farmers). However, in his opinion, it was easier to coordinate with Centers than CRPs (despite the nature of CRPs being a collaborative effort).
- Sam Mohanty (IRRI and GRiSP) spoke of IRRI’s experience in South Asia – how resource scarcity necessitated data collection collaboration between ICRISAT, CIMMYT and IRRI.
- Marie-Charlotte (IWMI, WLE) thought such collaborations could also improve the quality of IA by (potentially) providing baseline data for the areas they are interested in.

Given donor (for e.g. BMGF) interest in adoption outcomes, Doug Gollin asked the Centers/CRPs to speak to adoption studies (other than DIIVA) done on a regular, systematic basis. While it was clear that CIMMYT (SIMLESA), GRiSP (moving towards panel data every 3 years), CIAT (Bolivia, Peru, Rwanda), IITA (building on DIIVA), and CIP (Peru) are all doing some data collection, it isn’t always nationally representative or systematic (beyond the project).

## **SESSION 2: NRM and the Environment Improvement Focus**

### **2.1 IWMI and CRP Water, Land and Ecosystems: Presentation by Marie-Charlotte Buisson**

- Marie-Charlotte Buisson used examples of IAs done by IWMI to illustrate their approaches to project and policy IAs.
- She also spoke specifically to challenges in IA of the research conducted in IWMI and WLE, particularly attribution, baseline, IA of program and IA of project/activity, and sustainability aspects.

Peter Hazell (IFPRI) asked if IWMI/WLE constructs counterfactuals with and without policy change.

### **2.2 CIAT: Presentation by Ricardo Labarta**

- Ricardo Labarta spoke about how CIAT is rebuilding its IA capacity, and the challenge of conducting IA work across the 11 CRPs CIAT engages with.
- He also highlighted recently completed CIAT studies, including the one that builds off DIIVA data, and on-going ePIAs.

### **2.3 WorldAgroforestry, CIFOR, and Forests, Trees and Agroforestry CRP: Presentation by Steve Franzel and Daniel Suryadarma**

- Steven Franzel presented highlights from on-going IAs at ICRAF, and spoke about how establishing baselines for ePIAs is a high priority in research for development (R4D) projects.
- Daniel Suryadarma spoke about IA at CIFOR – as an institution that engages in policy research, CIFOR gets to impact through influencing policy and practice. He also spoke about how PORIA is challenging due to a multiplicity of issues (selection into treatment, uncertainty in policymaking timelines, context dependence etc.).
- CIFOR is attempting to improve the rigour of PORIA research methods, and is looking for collaborators to develop and test such methods.

In responding to a ePIA of agroforestry practices in Malawi, including of fertilizer tree technology, Tim Kelley (SPIA) asked if there is an aggregate estimate of the extent to which fertilizer trees have spread. Frank Place (formerly of ICRAF, IFPRI) responded that conservation farming group in Zambia was disseminating them to 10,000s of farmers. But he hadn't worked with major development organizations that have disseminated this in the recent years, and this is something they don't have a good sense of yet.

## **SESSION 2: General Discussion**

Doug Gollin asked if the challenge in measuring NRM outcomes is that they cannot be measured at the household level. Steve Franzel (ICRAF) responded that this wasn't an issue of measurement at the household level, but one of patchy adoption and extrapolation: diffusion is frequently based on where development agencies work or is dependent on farmer-to-farmer dissemination. James Stevenson (SPIA) added that adoption does appear to be a relatively rare event in nationally representative surveys like LSMS-ISA. Bob Herdt (SPIA) countered that some of the NRM work has been occurring for 20-30 years – for instance, fodder shrubs in maize cropping systems, and that if diffusion has indeed occurred, we would have found that by now. Mywish Maredia (MSU) noted that a community survey could be helpful in instances where household surveys may not be efficient.

Peter Hazell (IFPRI) asked if and what measures of environmental impacts were being captured. Frank Place (IFPRI, formerly ICRAF) responded that for soil (work at Centers like ICRISAT and CIAT) – soil carbon and soil moisture content using high resolution imagery is measured. On the vegetation and tree cover front, similarly, very high resolution mapping and spectral techniques are starting to come up. In response to Anita Regmi's (Consortium Office's) concern about the lack of discussion on environmental impacts, Doug Gollin and Tim Kelley (SPIA) confirmed that SPIA is interested in NRM as a research category and impact area, even if there isn't substantial track record (data isn't available for reasons Frank Place pointed out or attribution is difficult).

There was also a general discussion on the demand for measuring gender impacts. Nancy Johnson (IFPRI) noted that the challenge in gender research isn't in data collection (disaggregated data can be collected), but the gap at the Theory of Change level about how gender influences research (and Abdoulaye Tahirou (IITA) agreed). Lucy Lapar (ILRI) also agreed with Nancy – for instance, one needs to examine if the preference for varietal characteristics is gender dependent - and, stated that an approach where every questionnaire requires gender-disaggregated sections may not be necessary, even as one recognizes that separate interviews may be needed in specific contexts (e.g. in Malawi, without asking the woman/women in household, complete information on income cannot be assembled).

## **SESSION 3: Systems Analysis and Improvement Focus**

### **3.1 Dryland Systems CRP and ICARDA: Presentation by Aden Aw-Hassan**

- Aden Aw-Hassan spoke about the work of Dryland Systems CRP across 5 regions (West African Sahel & Dry Savannas, North and West Africa, East and Southern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, including impact pathways and relation to IDOs.
- He also highlighted some recently completed and on-going studies, including ones on zero tillage, collaboration with CRP Wheat, and supplementary irrigation.
- In speaking to challenges and constraints to IA work, he noted that a portion of the total research budget should be earmarked for IA to enable effective coverage of CRP and Center portfolio.

Frank Place (ICRAF) stated that the uniqueness of System CRPs is their integrative approach – in many senses, significant effects on poverty will only occur with such approaches, and that it would be more interesting to evaluate these innovative approaches instead of individual technologies (and this poses a significant methodological challenge).

### **3.2 Integrated Systems for Humid Tropics CRP and IITA: Presentation by Abdoulaye Tahirou**

- Abdoulaye Tahirou also presented on the framework, theory of change, and impact pathway for Humid Tropics.
- In its approach to IA, Humid Tropics intends to conduct situation analysis and baseline studies as well as conducting ePIAs in Action areas. HumidTropics has identified how each type of study under strategic studies, impact evaluation, and outcome evaluation contribute to the System Objectives.
- Speaking to challenges of conducting IA, Tahirou stated that there were difficulties in transitioning to experimental methods, data quality issues (noise in measurement of plot level yields in RTB crops), and the issue of selection bias and attribution in past and on-going programs.

Doug Gollin commenting on both systems presentations, stated that one way to think about IA is to identify a lot of possible locations of these hubs *ex ante*, and choose a subset of these over time – both in places where there are activities and places where there isn't in order to establish some kind of logical counterfactual. He raised a question on what happens in places where the CRPs are not actively engaged – how does impact correlate with the intensive space versus margins. Steve Franzel (ICRAF) observed that choosing a counterfactual could be tricky as donors (e.g. in Kenya) may choose to work in a site because of no/low CG presence.

### **SESSION 3: General Discussion**

Bob Herdt, in adding to the SPIA Chair's comments on counterfactual, observed how many take counterfactual as synonymous with control. For impact analysis, we should feel free to think more broadly: what information can we use/bring to bear in terms of what the innovation would or would not have done? He also emphasized that impact analysis goes beyond measurement of consumer and producer surplus.

Based on Tahirou's presentation of a target of 11 million people lifted out of poverty, Doug Gollin raised a question to other CRPs – if they were feeling pressured to specify these high level targets. He noted that it may not be feasible to measure how many people are lifted out of poverty *and* attribute this to research. Greg Traxler (BMGF) observed that that is a number that is important to donors. Frank Place (IFPRI) noted that the other issue with such number is that at CG level, there isn't one intervention that will lift people out of poverty – but it is hard to capture the effect of integrated approaches with the current approach to IA (individual studies).

### **SESSION 4: Policy oriented focus**

#### **4.1 Agriculture for Nutrition and Health CRP: Presentation by Nancy Johnson**

- Nancy Johnson presented highlights from recently completed IAs on biofortification (RCTs in Uganda and Malawi on orange sweet potatoes), food safety, and integrated agriculture-nutrition-health programs. Additional evaluations are being planned in these areas (e.g. iron beans in Rwanda, iron pearl millet in India, integrated programs in Burkina Faso etc.).
- She also spoke about how the creation of CRPs, and work on IDOs and impact pathways is positively influencing impact orientation of research, and new approaches they are implementing as regards the same.

#### **4.2 Policies, Institutions, and Markets: Presentation by Frank Place and Peter Hazell**

- Frank Place presented a list of completed, on-going, and planning ePIA studies, and some results from the completed studies.
- He then spoke to the challenge of policy oriented impact assessments, and the workshop being organized by IFPRI and PIM to identify best practices.

Aden Aw-Hassan (ICARDA) asked how the idea that policy research should be demand driven is reflected in the PIM framework, specifically where the policymaker was involved. Frank Place

responded that governments do invite IFPRI to work on programs and gave specific examples. Tim Kelley (ISPC) noted that policies often develop in ways that it can be hard to ascertain if it is a positive or a negative development – it is not always easy to perceive this beforehand, there will be winners and losers. Peter Hazell (IFPRI) spoke about how (in longer policy processes) it may be difficult to find the people who were around at the time to be able to provide insight into how the policies were made and the role of research (complicating ‘contribution’ analysis, attribution difficult). James Stevenson (ISPC) asked if CRPs and Centers draw on the expertise of political scientists: Peter Hazell (IFPRI) responded that IFPRI does use political scientists, and Daniel Suryadarma (CIFOR) spoke of how CIFOR includes two political scientists as researchers and a knowledge broker (who works on UNFCCC processes).

JV Meenakshi (SPIA Member) observed that there are two types of policy influences: deriving policies from evaluating programs, and creating a demand where there isn’t awareness of the existence of lacunae in policy – the latter is more challenging, and perhaps a reason why there isn’t much of that on the research agenda.

Doug Gollin speaking to the challenges in PORIA, agreed that there is concern with attribution and pathways of policy changes etc. However, one could approach this from the other end, and look at the reduction in number of bad policies and document this. The analogy in crop productivity is documenting an increase in productivity, and being able to attribute this to specific research agenda. Nancy Johnson (IFPRI) stated that the ToC does both, and Daniel Suryadarma (CIFOR) agreed that CIFOR/FTA does this as well – for instance, working backward on sustainable forest management in Congo (using ODI’s outcome assessment).

#### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: SIAC (Strengthening Impact Assessment in the CGIAR)**

During the last session, there were presentations on Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the Strengthening Impact Assessment in the CGIAR (SIAC) program, 2013-2016 by SPIA Chair, SPIA Secretariat, and partners Mywish Maredia (MSU) and Jeff Alwang (Virginia Tech), presentations for which can be found online.

#### **Agriculture technology adoption and poverty: Presentation by Bob Herdt**

Bob Herdt spoke briefly to IA of agricultural research, and links to poverty impacts. He cautioned researchers from falling into the ‘yield trap’ without thinking about the concept of productivity and the idea that there are direct costs associated with yield gain. And that one should go beyond measuring productivity – measuring, at the minimum, income gains. He spoke about the importance of defining the target population for agricultural research more carefully. In reference to the fact that adoption outcomes are still poorly documented, emphasized that ‘we should be talking about the number of people using specific technologies’, and the distribution of adoption (disaggregate across agroecological zones, gender etc.). For instance, Swarna Sub-1 case shows that land that is inherently poor benefits more, and that is a good story. Finally, researchers need to remember that agriculture is practiced in a larger economic context, and poverty reduction may occur when people move out of agriculture.

#### **Responses to SIAC presentations and general discussion**

In speaking about the SPIA quality rating mechanism, Doug Gollin emphasized how this would be a voluntary mechanism and will function a bit like an online journal (SPIA membership would manage the process by using appropriate external reviewers). While journals may emphasize novelty and originality, SPIA is more concerned with doing something correctly and doing it well. For the star rating, given the lack of precedent for this, the rating system will be calibrated over time. He noted that the draft set of criteria was available on the website for feedback.

In response to the SPIA presentation on Quality Rating (SIAC Objective 4.3), the following questions and comments were raised

- It is important to judge relevance and context of studies – in the older system, major evaluations were compilation of many other studies, providing a better context than individual adoption studies.
- An approach to incentivizing researchers to submit their work to the Quality Rating process would be to publish rated/reviewed work as SPIA Working Paper. While some IAFPs thought that a SPIA Working Paper series might be considered more prestigious, others agreed that one would have to evaluate how this will compete with existing Working Paper series at the Centers. Overall, the success of this process would depend on how donors view the final product – whether they view these IAs as examples of good quality work.
- A frame of reference on historic studies could be the IEA evaluation of CRPs timeframe – the idea is not to review and rate all (older) publications.

Doug Gollin also noted that SPIA could broker review of concept notes in order to ensure that studies are designed more effectively from the very beginning.

During the general discussion that followed, Doug Gollin observed that there is enormous pressure on Centers and CRPs to do project-level studies, and asked the IAFPs how they got at higher-level issues (e.g. integrated approaches). In the discussion that following, the following points were raised

- Donors continue to drive demand for IA, and of specific projects. However, CRPs fund IAs out of their own interests – to inform their strategies. For e.g. at IRRI, since 2010, there is a pot of money for strategic research, including impact assessments.
- Measuring indirect effects of agricultural research – non-farm economy, price effects, labour market effects etc. are beyond the focus of an individual Center or CRP. What is missing in IA is a look at the system-wide impacts.
- Sentinel sites are a different approach to IA – they respond to the need for long-term assessments, and shifting targets.
- SPIA is issuing a call for proposals on long-term, large-scale impact assessments that will go beyond a single crop/commodity and require an integrated approach.

#### **Donor perspectives: Presentation by Greg Traxler**

Speaking as a donor representative, Greg Traxler spoke to outcome and impact indicators of interest to donor agencies, the evolution of both the CGIAR system and the quality of IA, and other perspectives on IA. He noted that DIIVA was a response to the lack of systematic collection of adoption data in the system: that BMGF had hoped that DIIVA would illustrate the feasibility and approach in regular collection of such data, but that such institutionalization does not seem to have occurred. To BMGF, credible information on the level of adoption/diffusion is critical because there is a strongly maintained hypothesis that farmers would not adopt a technology that isn't profitable, that total benefits are correlated with area under technology, and further, that the overwhelming part of benefits is through crop improvement in the CGIAR. Perhaps this lack of focus is because of incentive compatibility – for researchers, it isn't a priority to go around and collect such data. Now, MSU was taking the DIIVA effort forward (through SIAC Objective 2.1) even as the reliability of expert opinion and household survey data is in question (e.g. in Ethiopia, only 9% of farmers were able to correctly identify wheat varieties). In this context, DNA fingerprinting (something MSU is also working on) appears to hold significant promise, and he encouraged IAFPs to use the SPIA efforts to ramping up this effort and extending it.

On IA methods, he thought it encouraging that the IAFPs are using methods that are more credible. In response to some of the discussion on RCTs, he agreed that one would have to examine the instances in which it is the correct tool to use (it gives a strong power of the test but, in other instances, one is looking for big differences). He also stated that donors have a significant appetite to understand gender issues – that some serious impact work is required around that. A frequent



question that is asked internally is the numbers of people lifted out of poverty as well as distribution of benefits. He also agreed that while there are cases where a single technology is helpful and is an appropriate focus for IA, assessments of research programs are appropriate in other contexts. Donors are also increasingly monitoring impacts over a short period of time: for instance, can one observe impacts at the end of one investment period, and perhaps a maximum of 10 years (not more than that).

### **Close of the meeting**

Prior to the close of the meeting, a discussion on the next IAFP meeting followed: suggestions included pre-conference sessions at IAAE-Milan 2015 or ISPC Science Forum 2015, and SPIA will discuss these (and other) options with IAFPs before finalizing. Doug Gollin closed the meeting by thanking the participants, particularly the IAFPs for the excellent presentations and discussions. He reiterated that SPIA should be looked upon as a resource on impact assessments, encouraged IAFPs to interact with one another through the website and blog, and that he (and others at SPIA) would love to hear individually from the IAFPs outside of the IAFP meetings on these topics.

DRAFT