

IPM CRSP Program Advisory Board Meeting
June 16, 2006
Day 2
Meeting Minutes

Present: Winfrey Clarke, George Norton, Thomas Schwedler, Bob Hedlund, SK De Datta, Don Plucknett, Larry Vaughan, Larry Olsen, John Dooley, Maria Elisa Christie, Robert Kenny, Debbie Francis, Miriam Rich.

8:25 am Meeting convenes

Winfrey opens meeting.

Follow-up From Yesterday

Debbie reads language concerning pipeline. People liked that language. Agreement to substitute that language into the POPs manual.

Invoicing—"the subawardees shall submit invoices at least quarterly for approval." This language approved.

Schwedler moves that we accept the POPs manual with the minor editorial changes as a document to go forward with. Olsen seconds. Everyone votes in favor.

Budget Issues

SK: Budget scenario and potential cuts. This year is 5%. 07 budget.

Bob: John Thomas has sent out a prediction of what the budget will look like. Office of Ag, which funds all the CRSPs, has had its budget cut from \$33M to \$27M. As a result, they can't give as much to the CRSPs. It's hard to regroup after you've been cut.

Schwedler: Current fiscal year—5%? Yes.

Dooley: We don't have a budget for this year? No.

Clarke: So, because of the delay, you'll be able to make up the 5%? Yes.

Bob: It's a percentage cut across the CRSPs. The intended amt for IPM and sanrem in 07 allocations is \$1.8M. From \$2.4M.

Clarke: You've laid out program and mgmt. Let's look at these.

Norton: One problem: You tell people there's going to be a budget cut and they start saving money and then we have a pipeline problem.

Bob: Serious problem.

Clarke: You need criteria if you're going to assess the progress of a project.

Sch: There might be value in terms of program. Deliverables up to that point in time. If you do across the board cuts. . . You could get programs that won't be able to deliver on what they said. Create competition in the event of budget cuts. (??)

Dooley: So you're saying, let's go back to the PIs now, tell them we're anticipating budget cut, so will they get to us a revised plan—how would they respond? At the same time tell them to stay focused. Give them the option. Then we should be able to review those plans. Then we might have to say “We can't go forward with this project.”

Dooley: Do we have any uncommitted resources? No.

Debbie: There's a little bit.

SK: We need broad framework for the board. Mgmt issue—there is no one answer. We look at it case by case basis. Travel will be considerably curtailed.

TC is covered by program budget.

Dooley: If we were going to look at a strategic way to eliminate budget, which project would you eliminate and why?

SK: The last one that was funded. Don: concurs. SK: South Asia proposal was weakest. Not in terms of content, but in terms of how it was written. But, the problem is: there are a billion people in Asia, and to not have a presence there is not good. George: Right—it's not as well written. You're comparing some that are follow on and some that are new. One too many global themes, and one too many regional programs.

Geo: Thing is: you've met with a lot of institutions. You make those commitments, it's tough.

Dooley: Yeah, but the rules change. We either cut across the board, or we look strategically and cut one. Normally in the long term, you're better off taking the strategic approach. And, cost of the cut is much more evident.

SK: But these are contracts.

Dooley: Our job is to create a framework here.

Sch: What's diff bet global and regional projects? If you had to protect one or the other. How do those values compare?

V: It's strategically hard for a global program to operate in a place where there's no regional program.

Bob: From AID's standpoint, clearly the regional programs would take priority. Amongst the global themes, some are clearly more important than others. Least imp: tospoviruses and parthenium. Or I might look at—we really have 2 on disease diagnostics—Sue's is close. There's overlap there, which it's supposed to be, that's how they were designed, but. . .

V: Another criterion we haven't spoken of yet—these programs aren't equiv in terms of money. If we cut tospo, that probably wouldn't cover it.

Bob: Also consider that tospo is at Wash State, parthenium is at NC State, . . .

SK: But parthenium was scored #1. To me, if we temper with the process, then we're on very shaky ground. I would go with ERP.

Bob: By the time you make this decision next year, you've got 2 years. V: And, we'll have to look at performance. Sch: You can tell all the PIs that we have a budget cut coming. Idea is that you want to be able to distribute it as much as you can. Have a formula.

SK: And tell them not spending your money counts against you. If you don't spend, that's not good, you must have the budget amount used up. Saving it will not work.

Dooley: Some level across the board, 10% max, and then a strategic plan.

SK: So tell them 5% cut is real. Minimum across the board 10% budget in 08; in addition, we will review, some time in 07, progress made by all the regional projects.

Clarke: But you have to say something about what you're going to do about mgmt as well.

V: TC has a responsibility to identify poorly performing projects.

Bob: We have to keep in mind that we're discussing this in terms of the rules, as they have changed.

Geo: as the program unfolds, it will become clear who the performers are.

Dooley: In the next fiscal year, the 5% will be absorbed centrally. Yes. So that's not passed on to the projects. In anticipation of FY 08, what we are going to do is to request that each of the projects provide us a plan by which they absorb a min 10% budget reduction. We may or may not implement that, but in addition to that, we will look strategically at progress in goals and objectives, to evaluate these. The TC and EEP will have a role in that. They will bring us their evaluations a year from now.

Geo: They have to submit right now a budget for the coming year.

V: We do need to look at carryover. Geo: But for this year, there will be at least 10% because we didn't get started until late.

Beyond 10%, will be pulled back (after the first year).

30 day rule – to apply for exemption to 10% carryover. SK wants to remove clause. George-Mali heavy exp occur at the end of the year, rather than throughout the season, like Bangladesh. Mali – season is so defined. John – comfortable with the language as it is now. Key – clearly communicate not managing resources appropriately to complete program – spend money as proposed. Get on with implementation of program – not rewarded with having funds.

SK: I don't want to cut management, it's so hard to regroup after that. It's hard to find scientists who want to serve if they think it's only a job for 1 year. (??)

Schw: Criticism could be alleviated to cut 10% across the board—administratively, programmatically.

SK: We'll look at how big is the ME. I like what Schw has suggested that we'll have a combination of across the board and performance.

New CRSP Guidelines – Bob Hedlund

Bob hands out a copy of an e-mail from John Thomas to a number of people.

These guidelines were completed at 11:45 pm on May 26 and sent out to CRSP council heads for distribution at CRSP council mtg on Tues, May 30th (day after Memorial Day). It was written as a skeleton for attack at the CRSP council mtg.

SK: Any language about ME budget? Bob: Yes.

Bob: This won't affect IPM or SANREM. You can use up to 20%. Will give preference to the one that needs it most. (??) There will be a cost share requirement. The ME should determine the appropriate cost share. Right now mgmt costs are excluded from cost share. There are 4-5 exclusions. The effect of those changes have is they take away some of the unique aspects of the CRSPs. Historically, the CRSP guidelines were written because the CRSPs worked differently.

That's where you found the matching requirement, the annual review of workplans.

As cooperative agreement now stands, I receive the workplans.

That's all I can say, is that these are under revision.

V: One of the issues you talked about, the 25% cost share, was talked about at the TC Committee a few weeks ago. It was agreed that you really want that 25% specified. They do not want us to cost share unnecessarily.

Bob: In discussions with OAA, they wanted to make sure that mgmt discussions were open to everybody.

V: HBCUs weren't on the TC committee, so their voice wasn't represented.

Clarke: I think you need some specification of what the cost share is. In many cases, we show in kind.

Bob: At the same time they (USAID) said they wanted small universities to compete, who can't do all the cost sharing, they say they will award more to those who do more cost sharing.

SK: To me, it's a draft. Minimum, the new CRSP will have to follow this. In order for old CRSP to follow this, they'll have to amend the old one. Having said that, this is still a very fluid document.

Clarke: Just a comment about this CRSP council business, I thought this July 6 was a done deal. This thing has been out there for almost 2 years. When it's appropriate, they hide behind something, at other times, they say, CRSP Guidelines have not been approved. We haven't resolved anything. Something has to be done to bring this to a closure. The CRSP council needs to get this done.

Bob: Since the new RFAs say do not refer to the CRSP Guideleines when writing a CRSP, . . .

Clarke: The 2001 guidelines were not approved, the 2002 guidelines were not approved—they're hiding behind that.

Dooley: Point One, you're encouraging the CRSP council to weigh in; related question—is there value for this CRSP board to weigh in? No. Why is it that BIFAD is being overly passive with respect to its position in this situation. This institution has a member on the BIFAD board—does Michigan State? So why is BIFAD board been so passive? I feel reasonably comfortable to ensure that the VT representative goes in there and says this is unacceptable.

Clarke: Sharon has been quite vocal on this issue. The BIFAD is an advisory board. To me, it's a process. The CRSP Guidelines need to be revised, agreed upon, and approved. We're in the follow-through. Where it falls down, there's only one univ rep who's there on a full-time basis. No full-time univ presence on a daily basis. We have been consumed by these CRSP issues—but we rarely agree on anything. If we do, something like this happens. The 2005 CRSP guidelines have not been approved. And we spend all our time on the CRSP issues. That's what you're up against in the agency.

Dooley: It doesn't appear to me that the BIFAD board is being very agile. BIFAD is not being responsible.

Don: You've made a good point. The lack of BIFAD staff has been a big problem. When I was deputy director of BIFAD, we had a staff of 20 people. Now it's down to one man. It's been a gradual erosion. It's a shell game.

Geo: They're appointed by the Pres., but univ people? No.

Clarke: It was passed a year ago that you need a senior level scientist on the committee—it's been over a year, we have no one. To be fair to BIFAD. The follow through is not there.

Don: They don't have to say no, all they have to do is delay.

Clarke: It's a very frustrating process.

Dooley: There are ways you can hold political agencies to account.

Workplans, Reporting and Performance Indicators – Larry Vaughan

One of headaches in ME is getting timely reporting. So with new IPM CRSP, we wanted online financial and reporting system. Cumulatives were frequently wrong. On average, sent back 3 times, with host countries. This should eliminate that, because everyone is literally on the same page.

Larry presents, and describes how the system works using the online IPM CRSP Financial web site.

Geo: With budget cuts, that will change things.

Bob: If the 25% budget cut does come thru in 08, then in 09 it does go up a little bit. Once that is a reality, you need to ask AID to modify the workplan. Particularly the performance indicators. You want to make sure those have been modified. So that you're not evaluating an \$8 M plan on \$10 M.

Miriam Rich: IPM Publicity: Communicating from Strength.

SK speaks on scholarly journals.

Clarke: In the past, how many scholarly journals have you published? In the 100s.

Clarke: These refereed journals can be used to help them with tenure? Yes.

Schw: It really doesn't matter if the scholarly output is domestic or international.

V: describes the program that Don Mullins has created with undergrads in Mali that he developed as a result of the CRSP thing. He would not have done that otherwise.

Robert provides handout of scholarly journals.

SK to Robert: Update the info on the Publications, Presentations, etc.

Larry: Training Plan

Overall, grad students correlate with budget. (??) We're on track to have fewer grad students.

Clarke: The sub-awardees are the ones who are responsible for getting the students to the institutions and to track that? Yes.

Clarke: Training may or may not be associated with the discipline? Geo: No, it is.

SK: Basic responsibility lies with the site.

V: These proposals were developed with faculty members.

SK: We covered Year 4 review.

Bob: Four year reviews will occur.

SK: It's an important issue for *all* CRSPs.

V: We are one of the youngest CRSPs and yet we were re-competed first. We finally got the 10 year issue on the table, and John Thomas is listening.

Clarke: If AID had said, fine you can keep them in perpetuity, the CRSP council wouldn't have been happy.

USAID Perspective: Bob Hedlund

On May 9, people came to USAID for an "IPM CRSP day." The room was filled to overflowing and people couldn't come. It was about an hour and a half long. Jackie Schaeffer listened attentively. The CRSPs are not being discussed as part of this restructuring. Really not a subject for this board. We don't know what's going to happen. But there will be a new restructuring. There's a restructuring of foreign assistance. Ambassador Tobias is Admin of UASID and Director of Foreign Assistance. His title at State is "the letter F". Within the State Dept, having a one-letter title means you're at the top. He's working with Secretary Rice. AID is in on most of the discussions, but finding out that most of the decisions have been made by the time you get in the mtg. CRSPs are not a factor in those discussions. But from AID's standpoint, we appreciate what VT is doing on the CRSPs, what SK has done. In spite of what seems like a concentrated effort to eliminate IPM CRSP, it hasn't happened yet. It's not a singling out of VT. It's a singling out of a topic that the deciders do not understand.

SK, Final Remarks

As a univ. representative, do a favor to yourself, make it your issue. Dean Alton Thompson of NC A&T, he was a fantastic part of our effort when we went to DC. So there is a full commitment that we as ME have to generate. Our univ community who are our partners need to take on the issue as well. That's why you're here. So this is a

constant challenge. As much as we would like to spend 100% on managing the project, . . .we are having to do damage control.

In spite of all these challenges, this partnership is good. We're going to cash in with this partnership. We have a very dedicated group of people. We have a good team.

John Dooley: Final Remarks

Thanks Winfrey for chairing the meeting. For rest of board members, been a delight to get to know you. This work is important. Recounts story of seeing Taj Mahal. And story of Bangladesh. How important this program is. Thanks Don and Bob.