

**Improving CGIAR Effectiveness through Knowledge Sharing (KS)
A project of the ICT-KM Program of the CGIAR**

**Call for proposals for pilot activities to support institutional and scientific
knowledge sharing**

**Template for proposal submission
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A project of the ICT-KM Program of the CGIAR**

Call for proposals for pilot activities to support institutional and scientific knowledge sharing

Template for proposal submission

Note: the proposal must not exceed 4 pages and should be sent to ks@cgiar.org by Wednesday 15 May, 2007 at 13:00 GMT.

Contact Information – Project Leader

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Project Details

Title of Proposal	Application of KS tools to impact monitoring and project M&E to a community-based fish culture project in Vietnam
Area (please include one area: KS in Research; Institutional KS; Virtual Team)	KS in Research
List of staff/partners and expertise working on the project	Dr. Natasja Sheriff (WorldFish Center) – CPWF35 project leader, Dr Hao (RIA 2, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) – Vietnam country leader, Dr Diemuth Pemsil – Impact Assessment specialist
Project Duration using Grant Funds (in month)	18 months
Country(ies) of Implementation / Languages used or needed for virtual team projects	Vietnam

Project Questions

PROBLEM DEFINITION:

The Challenge Program on Water and Food project, 'Community-based fish culture in seasonal floodplains and irrigation systems' (CPWF35) is currently in its third year of implementation. This complex project involves national research partners in five countries, namely Bangladesh, Vietnam, China, Cambodia and Mali. The project aims to develop appropriate technologies through an adaptive learning approach over a number of culture cycles, encouraging both national partners and direct beneficiaries at the community-level to evaluate fish culture activities each year and modify the approach for the subsequent year based on their learning experience.

The project presents a number of challenges in terms of project management, Monitoring and Evaluation and monitoring for impact. Currently, impact monitoring is based on the collection of survey data, which is proving to be costly, time-consuming and complex. Whilst quantitative data is valuable for the measurement of certain information, such as household income and expenditure, the scope of the questionnaire is currently being revised to include only essential information and to reduce field time and costs currently dedicated to data collection, and to increase the application of innovative approaches such as Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change (MSC). The use of approaches which adopt a more participatory approach to impact monitoring are required to ensure that we are building a complete and accurate picture of project impacts, which allow project beneficiaries to more openly share their experience of project impact outwith the confines of a structured survey approach. Significantly, these approaches place emphasis on the impacts and changes which are important to beneficiaries. They will also serve to validate the information obtained using survey approaches. National partners have already expressed an interest in applying these techniques to explore the changes occurring in the communities where the project is being implemented. However, our partners lack the experience in applying this new approach and would benefit from additional support and training to apply the tools most effectively.

At the broader level, experiences from the pilot activities will also link with KS based approaches to M&E for effective project management and the development of guidelines to support WorldFish staff and strengthen Center capacity in project planning, proposal development and project implementation.

The project team in Vietnam will benefit as a direct result of the proposed project activities. However, at least 40 people in the CPWF35 project will actively benefit from the application and evaluation of the KS tools through scaling-up processes following on from the pilot activities. It is anticipated that the approaches will then be incorporated into the broader activities of partner institutions as a result of the experiences acquired through the CP project, with a potential to reach a wide audience in each institute.

OBJECTIVES:

- **to apply KS tools, including Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change, to assess the impact of community-based fish culture in seasonal floodplains in Vietnam, and to evaluate the value and applicability of the tools in the project context**

- **to build capacity amongst national partners, and CPWF35 project staff at IFPRI and WorldFish, in the application of KS tools for Monitoring and Evaluation**

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

The CPWF35 is in its third year of implementation. Approaches such as Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change have been identified as possible tools for understanding impact from the perspective of project beneficiaries.

The specific activities leading to the implementation and evaluation of the Outcome Mapping and MSC approaches will be developed in consultation with project partners in Vietnam during the inception phase of the project. It is anticipated that training either for the national project team or the WorldFish team as trainers of the approach for broader dissemination amongst project partners will be required. The KS Tools for impact monitoring will be applied at the community level in Vietnam, in conjunction with on-going regular monitoring visits, with the project team documenting each step in the process.

In Vietnam, the project involves numerous partners representing the potential partner groups recommended in the call: IFPRI (CGIAR center), Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 2, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (RIA2) (NARES partner), CBOs – the project focuses on the organization of community groups to develop fish culture in flooded rice fields. Informal CBOs are currently operating at project sites in each of the partner countries. At the broader project level, the CPWF35 involves a CGIAR center in Mali (WARDA), fisheries departments in Cambodia, Bangladesh and China, and NGO's in Cambodia. Scaling-up activities post-project will reach these organizations.

The project currently lacks specific expertise in the implementation of Outcome Mapping and MSC and may benefit from training and facilitation in these areas. The activities will be piloted over an 18 month period. The start of the study will coincide with the stocking of fish in rice fields, in July/August 2007, and will monitor two fish culture cycles, with completion of pilot activities anticipated by December 2008.

Requested Budget : \$30,000. The budget requested covers costs to support field research expenses to undertake the participatory, community level research for impact monitoring, 50% travel expenses for the project leader to attend the inception workshop and end of project workshop, travel costs for the project leader to visit project partners in Vietnam, costs of documentation preparation and printing, and one month of salary costs for the project leader.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Outputs:

1. Report documenting the application and validation of Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change within the CPWF35 project, focusing on the value, applicability and usability of the approaches in the context of a multi-partner project addressing community-based fish culture

Outcomes:

1. Improved understanding of the impacts of community-based fish culture on household livelihoods, based on the experiences of project beneficiaries and communicated through

- the use of participatory approaches such as Outcome Mapping and Most Significant Change
2. Increased capacity amongst project partners and amongst WorldFish Center staff in the application of innovative tools for project impact monitoring
 3. Validation of the applicability of KS tools in the context of i) multi-partner projects, ii) of fish culture and fisheries projects
 4. Strengthening of M&E activities at the institutional level, leading to increased uptake of effective monitoring and evaluation activities in WorldFish Center projects and enhanced project impact
 5. Dissemination of KS tools for M&E and impact assessment to project partners and partner organisations

Project beneficiaries:

Project partners: All project partners, including CGIAR Centers, will benefit on a number of levels from the project outcomes and outputs. Experience in the use of these tools is currently limited amongst researchers both within organizations like the WorldFish Center and national partners. By being directly involved in the application and evaluation of these tools, all project partners will experience first-hand the benefits and disadvantages of the tools.

Direct beneficiaries: at the community-level through effective response of project activities to their changing needs or project impacts

KS Community and the broader research community: project activities will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the use and validity of the KS tools to project impact and Monitoring and Evaluation

Benefits at the institutional level: institutions such as the WorldFish Center will benefit from more effective monitoring for impact, and M&E for project management

The project activities will feed directly into the on-going activities of the CPWF35, which will continue until March 2010. In addition, there is a clear need for the development of the outputs described above at both the project and organizational level. The application of the tools and the outcomes they will generate will serve to test approaches which will be more broadly applicable to project planning and development activities at the WorldFish Center.

INNOVATION: How is your project idea innovative or unique?

The project is innovative in its application of the KS tools in the context of a complex, multi-country project. This type of project is becoming increasingly common within the CG system, requiring new approaches to M&E and impact assessment, as currently being pursued by CGIAR.

REPLICABILITY:

Project activities will provide substantial opportunities for sharing tools with project partners, who will be involved in the evaluation of the tools as part of the overall research process. Pilot activities will be initiated in one project country, with the potential to scale up to all five project countries as a direct result of the pilot project. Three CGIAR centers are currently involved in the project, who will benefit from the lessons learned in Vietnam and subsequent scaling-up activities. The project outputs will also feed directly into M&E needs at the organizational level, initially at the WorldFish Center.