

**TASK FORCE ON  
IRRIGATION SERVICE DELIVERY (TF-INSPIRE-SCHEME)****SCOPING DOCUMENT****1. Introduction and rationale**

- 1.1 Global experience suggests that the sustainability of irrigation systems and the financial viability of irrigation agencies relies, to a large degree, on the quality of the irrigation services that the agencies provide to farmers. Reliable service provision increases the farmers' willingness to pay for delivered water, reduces water wastage, provides a starting point for agricultural intensification and diversification, and helps break the vicious build-neglect-rebuild cycle that many irrigation systems are locked into.
- 1.2 Despite its importance, service delivery has not always received adequate attention from irrigation professionals. Instead, poor service delivery is often accepted as an unavoidable necessity, and efforts to improve services are often seen as too difficult and time-consuming.
- 1.3 Some I&D agencies have significantly improved the quality of their services and have adopted innovative ways to engage with farmers and non-farming stakeholders, monitor key performance indicators, achieve financial viability, and improve efficiency. Agencies across the world have piloted a wide array of activities, have adopted their own home-grown pathways to solutions, and have achieved various degrees of results.
- 1.4 Other agencies are beginning the process of identifying and implementing measures to improve the quality of their service provision to their customers. They would like to better understand what they can do to get started, how they can prepare for those initial steps, and where they can find more information and guidance. However, not much of this information is readily available.
- 1.5 Thus, there is a need for an exchange of information, experience, and lessons learned among I&D agencies interested in improving their services. Issues of interest include accountability and financial viability, systematic monitoring of customer satisfaction and benchmarking of performance, better management of assets, and adoption of a broader management function within the water system in which they operate.
- 1.6 A better exchange of information between irrigation agencies can help generate knowledge, provide incentives, and create momentum for improvements in irrigation service delivery. It would help irrigation agencies learn about pathways that can lead to more sustainable irrigation service delivery and provide a platform for discussing ways to improve technical operations and innovation, service orientation, commercial operations, financial sustainability, human resources, citizen engagement and corporate governance.
- 1.7 Promoting exchange, learning from experience, sharing best practice and developing innovations related to irrigation service delivery will form the core mandate of the Task Force on irrigation service delivery (TF-INSPIRE-SCHEME).

**2. Objectives****2.1 *Relevance of the Task Force (TF)***

2.1.1 The relevance of the TF can be specified as follows:

- (a) the topic of irrigation service delivery is relevant to the vision and mission of ICID and of interest for its members;
- (b) the TF is expected to contribute to achieving all six goals of ICID, i.e., enabling higher crop productivity with less water and energy, catalyzing change in policies and practices, facilitating exchange of information, knowledge and technology, enabling cross-disciplinary and inter-sectoral engagement, encouraging research and support the development of tools to extend innovation into field practices and facilitating capacity development;
- (c) Irrigation service delivery has hitherto not received the attention that it deserves. There is a growing recognition that better irrigation services will help irrigation schemes improve performance and will help farmers achieve their production targets and increase their incomes.

**2.2 *Relevance of the Task Force to the scope of the Thematic Area***

2.2.1 It is expected that irrigation service delivery will be acknowledged as an important thematic area in the management of irrigation systems. Several development partners have recognized its importance and a growing number of investment operations are supporting service delivery. The establishment of a Task Force

will help consolidate these developments, will help champion irrigation service delivery and create a critical mass for the future, and is expected to generate knowledge and exchange experience.

### 2.3 *Existing gap that the Task Force is expected to fill*

2.3.1 Several ICID past and present Working Groups and Task Forces operate within the overall thematic area of the performance of irrigation schemes, including the Task Forces on Financing Water in Agriculture (TF-FIN), on Farmers' Involvement (TF-EIF) and on Benchmarking, and the Working Groups on Water savings for Agriculture, on Technology and Research Uptake and Exchange (WG-TRUE) and on the Modernization of Irrigation Services (WG-MIS).

2.3.2 Each of these WGs and TFs addresses critical elements of irrigation service delivery. E.g., a better understanding of benchmarking of irrigation performance can potentially provide an incentive for irrigation management decision makers to improve the performance of their schemes; similarly, farmers' involvement in the management of irrigation schemes can become a driver for irrigation agencies to improve their responsiveness to the customers of their services and improve their quality. There is a need to address irrigation service delivery in a more comprehensive manner and develop the knowledge, tools, policies and information to strengthen the quality of these services. None of the WGs or TFs are presently mandated to operate within the broader space of irrigation service delivery.

2.3.3 This TF will generate the knowledge and critical mass among irrigation managers to adopt a service delivery orientation. It will help develop the knowledge, tools, policies and information on irrigation service delivery and make these available to its primary audience, viz, the managers of irrigation schemes. Many schemes have adopted a service delivery orientation and are ready to share their experience. Others have started thinking about improving the quality of their services and wish to learn. TF-INSPIRE aims to promote learning from and by peers and generate a body of knowledge that can help irrigation management decision makers take the first and subsequent steps.

2.3.4 The new TF-INSPIRE has acquainted itself with the activities of all relevant ICID work bodies when preparing this Scoping Document.

## 3. **State of knowledge on the topic**

### 3.1 *Other International Organizations that are working on the subject*

3.1.1 TF-INSPIRE is supported by several International Organizations that have programs and activities on this topic:

- (a) The Asian Development Bank
- (b) The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- (c) The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO);
- (d) The International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)
- (e) The International Water Management Institute (IWMI);
- (f) The Islamic Development Bank;
- (g) The World Bank (WB).

### 3.2 *The niche that the TF-INSPIRE is expected to fill in this area*

3.2.1 The specific niche that this TF can fill in this area can be formulated as follows:

- (a) Generate and exchange knowledge, information and best practice experience, and prepare practical papers on irrigation service delivery
- (b) Develop tools and instruments on irrigation service delivery for implementation by irrigation managers
- (c) Champion irrigation service delivery during international events, including those organized by ICID and development partners
- (d) Produce manuals and how-to guidance documents easy to read knowledge products (with audio-visuals)
- (e) Develop and maintain a website and serve as a repository for documentation on irrigation service delivery.

### 3.3 *How is the Task Force expected to collaborate with the other International Organizations?*

3.3.1 TF-INSPIRE has been established in close collaboration with international partner organizations. A launching event was organized on November 25, 2020. Each of these partner organization has expressed interest in the topic of irrigation service delivery, and has committed to play an active role in incubating and developing TF-INSPIRE.

#### 4. Work Plan

##### 4.1 Scope

4.1.1 The TF will support the development, collection and exchange of knowledge and information, tools and best practice. It will serve as a platform for interaction between irrigation managers and will champion irrigation service delivery in national and international fora. The Task Force will identify and assess options to improve the sustainability of the INSPIRE platform after the end of the mandate of TF-INSPIRE.

4.1.2 The **Annex** has the details on the results-based work-plan for the period 2021 to 2027.

##### 4.2 Target audience

4.2.1 The primary target audience of TF-INSPIRE are the irrigation management decision makers. The secondary audience are the development partners that wish to support client organizations in adopting a service delivery orientation.

##### 4.3 Outputs

4.3.1 The major expected outputs during the six-year life of the TF are the following:

- (a) Manuals, how-to guides and handbooks on irrigation service delivery, with an emphasis on the challenges associated with its implementation in irrigation schemes;
- (b) Presentations for national and international events of relevance to irrigation service delivery;
- (c) A website that serves as a platform for information exchange between irrigation managers;
- (d) An open-access repository for documentation on irrigation service delivery;
- (e) Tools and instruments to help irrigation management decision makers adopt and improve irrigation service delivery.
- (f) A note on the future of INSPIRE after the end of the mandate of TF-INSPIRE.

##### 4.4 Timelines

4.4.1 The initial term of this TF will be six years. This timeline is based on the work-plan give in annex, which will be further refined during inauguration and when rolling out the TF. Six years is deemed appropriate in view of the important agenda of TF-INSPIRE and because of the significant gaps in knowledge and information that exist in the broad area of irrigation service delivery. During these six years, the TF will also aspire to establish INSPIRE as a sustainable and financially viable platform for irrigation managers at the end of the TF's mandate.

##### 4.5 Collaborators and dissemination strategy

4.5.1 The TF will adopt a hands-on outreach strategy to generate and share knowledge and information. The information that will be developed, collected and disseminated will be selected such that it is of relevance to irrigation management decision makers and of practical use for implementation.

4.5.2 The dissemination strategy targets the irrigation management decision makers who can apply the findings and recommendations of the TF in their daily activities, including in policy making, and who can share relevant experience and knowledge with other members of the TF.

4.5.3 The Annex presents a detailed work plan including the major activities for the period 2021 to 2027 and the main actors responsible for realizing the activities.

#### 5. Core Group

5.1 The Core Group consists of: TBD



**RESULTS-BASED WORK PLAN FOR THE TASK FORCE ON IRRIGATION SERVICE DELIVERY (TF-INSPIRE-SCHEME)**

Activity	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Actors
Adoption of scoping document by TF-INSPIRE partner organizations	█							Development partners
Appointment of officials		█						Central Office
Inauguration meeting and workshop; approval of work plan		█						TF-ISD officials and development partners
Thematic workshop on ISD			█	█	█	█	█	TF-ISD officials and development partners
Exchange of knowledge and information on ISD		█	█	█	█	█	█	TF-ISD officials development partners
Prepare thematic papers and manuals			█		█		█	TF-ISD Officials
Prepare overview paper on state of the art of ISD						█		TF-ISD officials
Options analysis and paper for establishment of sustainable platform on ISD					█			TF-ISD officials
Implementation of recommendations of options analysis						█	█	TF-ISD officials

