Members Present: (1) VP Dr. Tsugihiro Watanabe, Chair (Japan); (2) Dr. Narges Zohrabi, Head, Ahwaz Regional Node of IRPID-IRN (Iran); (3) Ms. Li Ruoxi, CNCID & Representative of Beijing Regional Node of IRPID (China); (4) Mr. Ashwin B. Pandya, Secretary General, ICID.

Terms of Reference (ToR):

The Advisory Committee is responsible for developing a Framework Action Plan for the program, guided by the concept document as was presented at the 61st IEC in Yogyakarta in 2010 and keep overall coordination among the Nodes duly supporting their autonomy and maintaining flexibility in fulfilling their roles. These can be categorised as follows:

(a) Develop the Strategy duly describing the strategic objectives and a Framework Action Plan for the program;
(b) Review and monitor the implementation of the program to ensure the quality of outputs and their effectiveness; and
(c) Mobilize and allocate extra-budgetary resources through joint activities.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 1: Brief introduction by SG, ICID

1. SG Er. Ashwin Padya provided a brief introduction and overview of the IRPID Scheme to the Committee members since the launch of the revised scheme in Chiang Mai, Thailand during the 67th IEC meeting in November 2016. Under the revised IRPID Scheme, an Advisory Committee was established for reviewing and coordinating the research activities. Under IRPID scheme, the Regional Nodes (RNs) are to be established, and the functioning RNs are to provide their inputs to the Committee for its consideration and guidance. SG provided a brief update on the RNs established and RNs under formation. He suggested that IRPID RNs may promote the capacity-building activities which cannot generate quick project-oriented outcomes.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 2: Inputs from Beijing Regional Node

2. Ms. Li Ruoxi of the Beijing Regional Node presented a report on the activities undertaken so far by the Beijing RN and future plans.

3. Ms. Ruoxi informed the Committee that multiple activities were carried out by Beijing Regional Node i.e. Beijing Node managed to co-organize webinars. For instance, Prof. Kang Yaohu served as the keynote speaker of ICID Webinar on Advanced Micro Irrigation Technology with Precision Water and Salt Management. Dr. Ding Kunlun gave lectures in the Webinar Series on Rainwater Harvesting jointly organized by FAO, ICARDA and ICID.

4. Efforts were made to organize Chinese experts to attend ICID webinars. Relevant announcements were translated into Chinese and circulated among Chinese experts and students. The average attendance is around 30 per event.

5. Beijing Node also assisted the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery to organize the routine annual technical exchange on irrigation and drainage in December, 2022. More than 300 representatives from governments, research institutes and irrigation schemes attended the event. Topics covered included agricultural water management policies, information sensing/collecting and decision-making technologies of irrigation schemes, water-measuring technologies and equipment, the protection and modernization of the Hetao Irrigation System (WHIS), etc.

6. On May 31 - June 2, 2023, Beijing Node, together with the Ministry of Water Resources and IWHR, hosted a training session on “the digital twinning of irrigation schemes” in Lu’an City, Anhui Province. Courses on standards, architecture, and technological requirements for constructing digital twins of irrigation schemes were provided. Other activities include exchanges of good practices and visits to pilot projects.

7. Ms. Ruoxi also presented the future plan, which includes (i) workshop on WHIS Protection and Utilization (Shigatse, August); (ii) workshop on Sustainable Agricultural Water Management (Beijing, September), during the
18th World Water Congress; (iii) Water Resources Forum (Yinchuan, September), during the 6th China-Arab States Expo; and (iv) 2023 Sino-Japanese Exchange on Irrigation and Drainage (Japan, November/December).

8. The Advisory Committee appreciated the activities undertaken by the Beijing RN. The Committee expected that the activities undertaken by RNs and their functioning will guide the RNs, which are in the formative stage.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 3: Inputs from Ahwaz Regional Node

9. The Head of the Ahwaz Regional Node, Dr. Ms. Narges Zohrabi presented the report on the activities undertaken so far by the Ahwaz RN and its future plans. Dr. Zohrabi provided a brief introduction, including the vision, mission, and action plans drawn up by Ahwaz RN to achieve its mandate. At present IRPID-IRN has eight member countries, including Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Russia, Tajikistan, Georgia, Afghanistan, and South Korea. Dr. Narges Zohrabi expressed some thoughts on the necessity of the workbody on the gender issue and financial support of the relevant NCs. The AC advised Dr. Zohrabi to design the Task Team on the gender issue.

10. Dr. Narges informed the Committee that in recent years, IRPID-IRN has undertaken various activities to guide research activities following the agreed-upon action plan and alignment with the overall strategies of ICID aimed at capacity development. IRPID-IRN AC meetings have been consistently held annually. These sessions take place during IEC meetings at major ICID events, attended by member countries and the advisory committee of IRPID. The main activities undertaken by the Ahwaz RN during the last year was the organization of the international webinar titled “Empowerment and Capacity Development of Women in Water Resource Management” on 3 May 2023.

11. At the national and international level IRPID-IRN contributed in (i) preparation a comprehensive and scientific report on International Workshop on Water Accounting- Concepts and Tools; (ii) translation and publication of the water accounting book for water governance and sustainable development; and (iii) preparation of a comprehensive and scientific report from the empowerment and capacity development of women in water resources management international webinar in English and Persian.

12. Dr. Narges also presented the future plan, which includes (i) initiative for establishment of a new Task Force under the title “Women’s Empowerment in Water Resource Management and Agriculture Water Management” within ICID; (ii) to organize a webinar in collaboration with the WFE-N Workgroup on the role of women in achieving the Water- Food- Energy Nexus; (iii) to host a specialized online workshop by the end of 2023 to discuss the application of global gridded climate data in drought risk management; (iv) collaboration with the Regional Center on Urban Water Management (affiliated with UNESCO) to pursue the organization of a one-day seminar focusing on the role of women in water governance and the water-food-energy nexus; and (v) to enhance the provision of educational programs, strengthen the capacity of managers and experts in irrigation and drainage, and create a comprehensive understanding of the interactions and relationships among water, energy, food, and the environment. Ultimately, this leads to the identification of joint international projects for member countries.

13. The Advisory Committee noted the activities undertaken by the Ahwaz RN and expressed its appreciation for the functioning of the Ahwaz RN. The Advisory Committee recommended the need of establishment of a Task Force on Women Empowerment in Water Management (TF-WEWM).

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 4: Inputs from Mediterranean Regional Node

14. No report was presented from Mediterranean Regional Node, due to its absence from the meeting.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 5: Inputs from Africa Region Node

15. Representative from South Africa informed that the node has been established with 10 years program.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 6: Inputs from Central Asian-Caucasus Regional Node

16. No report was presented from Central Asian-Caucasus Regional Node, due to its absence from the meeting.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 7: Evolving Collaborative Research Mechanism among the Regional Nodes

17. The Advisory Committee reviewed the existing collaborative research mechanism among the RNs and requested all RNs and NCs to encourage the research institutions in their countries involved in AWM to join the network by projecting key information of their research activities for wider dissemination and fulfilling the objective of research mechanism among RNs. Based on the positive achievements of the RNs in Beijing and Ahwaz, the Advisory Committee suggested that it is essential to continue to support the activities and further revitalize their activities. To this end, it is necessary to clarify the organization and structure of the RNs in operation.
18. The Advisory Committee noted that only seven research institutes have been registered so far in the IrriSEARCH (https://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/62) portal, an important tool initiated in 2017 towards fulfilling the objectives of IRPID. The research institutes/organizations once registered in IrriSEARCH, will be provided with User IDs, so that they will be able to upload the information on the IRPID page themselves. It aims to bring together all agriculture water management (AWM) research activities from various NCs on a single forum to help others learn from their experiences. The IRPID Scheme is one of the activities that could provide NCs an opportunity to improve their profile within the countries as it provides various research stakeholders in AWM research, a window to exchange and showcase ongoing research activities in the irrigation and drainage sector worldwide.

19. The Advisory Committee felt that the portal needs to be revitalized in order to achieve its objective of bringing together all agriculture water management (AWM) research activities from various NCs on a single forum to help others learn from their experiences and asked the Central Office to take necessary steps in this regard.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 8: Dissemination Mechanism on Exchange of Research Findings

20. The Advisory Committee noted that a dedicated page on ICID website for IRPID (https://icid-ciid.org/inner_page/77) has been created with an aim to encourage the exchanges of research findings on an intra-node basis and inter-node basis, besides disseminating IRPID activities through ICID News update and ICID News. The Advisory Committee requested the existing functional RNs to upload their activities on this dedicated page for the benefit of all, as it will act as an important tool for the exchange of research findings between the RNs for the benefit of their network countries. SG assured the CO assistance in uploading the information if the RNs face any difficulty in this regard.

21. The Advisory Committee observed that the activities of the RN should be centered on "research", but the importance and possibility of covering related activities such as "human resource development" should be considered.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 9: Establishment of Additional Regional Nodes

22. The Advisory Committee noted that the NCs have been requested to establish additional RNs, by circulating the IRPID Scheme in force, in regions, where the RNs are yet to be formed, keeping in view that new RNs should be recognized based on their willingness to be able to pursue the research activities from their own resources. Accordingly, the RNs should be proposed voluntarily, based on identified needs. It is necessary to set some guiding principles in defining the scope of RNs both in terms of their geographical location and region-specific needs.

23. No update of the new RNs was shared. The establishment of the new RNs is still under preparation.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 10: Leveraging National Funding for Raising Financial Resources by RNs

24. The Advisory Committee noted that one of the objectives of the IRPID is to support the NCs to receive adequate funding from their own governments. In the earlier meetings of the Advisory Committee, the members were unanimous in their opinion that the NCs, through the outcomes of the RNs, sharing the best and new technologies, making use of various ICID communication channels, such as web pages, ICID News and Irrigation and Drainage Journal, were in the best position to leverage the research and development outcomes for their direct implementation in the field. Thus, they should be able to leverage their national funding sources through international collaboration. This item was not discussed in depth since only a few participants attended the meeting.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 11: Any Other Business

25. The Advisory Committee reviewed the proposal received from the Ahwaz Regional Node to consider IRPID-IRN and its activities as a formal workbody, similar to other regional Workbodies. The Advisory Committee recommended Ahwaz Regional Node to continue its work as Regional Node as its activities can’t be treated under independent workbody.