

**MINUTES FOR THE 8TH MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AC-IRPID)**
03 September 2024: 14.00 – 15.30 Hours
Sydney, Australia

Members Present : (1) VP Dr. Tsugihiko Watanabe, Chair (Japan); (2) Ms. Gao Hong, Vice Secretary, CNCID & Representative of Beijing Regional Node of IRPID (China); (3) Dr. Bahrom Gaforzoda, Head, Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Node (Tajikistan); (4) Dr. Alok Sikka, IWMI Representative; (5) VP Dr. Watchara Suiadee, Strategy Theme – Irrigation and Drainage (Thailand); (6) VP Prof. Dr. Sylvester Mpandeli, Strategy Theme – Natural Resources (South Africa); and (16) Mr. Ashwin B. Pandya, Secretary General, ICID

Observer Present : (i) Mr. Sharif Mahmudov (Tajikistan); (ii) Mr. Rasu Suepsahakarn (Thailand); and (iii) Dr. Irena G. Bondarik (Russia)

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 Pandya 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 can 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 for the information of the Advisory Committee.

3. Ms. Ruoxi informed the Committee that on November 4, alongside the 25th Congress, the Beijing Node hosted a successful Side Event on the Modernization of Irrigation Systems, building on the postponed 4th World Irrigation Forum (WIF4). The event facilitated dialogue among scholars, promoting collaboration in irrigation system modernization.

4. In January 2024, the Beijing Node hosted a technical exchange on irrigation and drainage with the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Key topics included agricultural water management, smart irrigation systems, and the preservation of World Heritage Irrigation Structures (WHIS).

5. During the 10th World Water Forum (WWF10), the Beijing Node collaborated with the China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research and the China Water Museum to present the "Nourishing Civilization: World Heritage Irrigation Structures in China" exhibition at the Bali Water Museum's China Pavilion. The exhibit showcased significant ancient Chinese irrigation works, such as the Dujiangyan and the Zhengguo Canal, using informative panels and interactive multimedia to highlight their technical details, historical impact, and current conservation efforts. It also outlined future plans for their relevance in modern water management. The exhibition drew attention from local and international dignitaries, including China's Minister of Water Resources, Li Guoying, and Indonesia's Minister of Public Works and Housing, Basuki Hadimuljono.

6. During the AIWW3 in late September in Beijing, the Beijing Node will host a thematic session on Improving Water-Use Efficiency for Food and Energy Production. Additionally, it will facilitate discussions between the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) and the Research Institute for Drainage (RID) on water resource management policies for agriculture, advancements in agricultural water management technology, and adapting to climate change.

7. In late October, the Beijing Node will organize the annual Sino-Japanese exchange on irrigation and drainage in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province. It will also assist in the preparation conference for establishing the World Heritage Irrigation Structures (WHIS) association and conduct a training session for WHIS managers.

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

8. No report was presented from Ahwaz Regional Node, due to its absence from the meeting.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 4: Inputs from Southern Africa Region Node

9. VP Prof. Dr. Sylvester Mpandeli of the Southern Africa Regional Node presented a report on the activities undertaken so far by the Southern Africa RN and future plans for the information of the Advisory Committee.

10. The South African National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (SANCID) was awarded the rights to establish, coordinate, and facilitate the International Research Program for Irrigation and Drainage (IRPID) focused on Southern Africa by the International Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). This was approved by the International Executive Council at a meeting in Adelaide, Australia, in November 2022. The Water Research Commission (WRC) of South Africa serves as the Secretariat for the IRPID. Since November 2022, the WRC has initiated four research projects in partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the South Africa Weather Service, the University of Zimbabwe, and the Water Research Council of Kenya.

11. In 2023, SANCID organized an IRPID workshop in Pretoria, South Africa, aimed at developing a ten-year framework plan based on IRPID activities in Southern Africa. Since then, several activities in the region have been organised. All 15 Southern African countries were invited to attend the launch of the Southern Africa IRPID node. A ten-year capacity-building program was developed by Prof. Dr. Mpandeli, Prof. Dr. Tafadzwa Mabhaudhi, and other key strategic partners. This program was shared with ICID colleagues at the WRC-IWMI side event during the 25th ICID Congress in November 2024 in Vizag, India.

12. Currently, there are four research projects under the IRPID node, titled: (a) Development of a WEF Nexus Index and its application to the SADC region; (b) Water WEF Nexus narratives and resource security; (c) From theory to practice: developing case studies and guidelines for WEF Nexus implementation in Southern Africa; (d) From theory to practice: developing case studies and guidelines for WEF Nexus implementation in Africa. This work is ongoing, with a second workshop planned before the end of 2024.

13. These four projects involve a total of 15 postgraduate students, the majority of whom are pursuing Master's and doctoral degrees. Since 2022, several research outputs (scientific papers, book chapters, books, and conference/workshop proceedings) have been generated or published based on these projects. A second IRPID-Southern Africa Regional Node workshop is scheduled for February 2025 in Pretoria, South Africa.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 5: 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 6: Inputs from Central Asian-Caucasus Regional Node

15. The 69th IEC at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada in August 2018 vide its Resolution IEC-2/69 gave in principle approval to the establishment of a Regional Node in Central Asian and Caucasus Region (CACRN) at the initiative of Tajikistan NC. Since then, TAJNCID has made considerable efforts towards its establishment by contacting the member and non-member countries of ICID in the region.

16. Mr. Gaforzoda Bakhrom and Mr. Sharif Mahmudov of the Central Asian and Caucasus RN presented an update about the establishment of the Regional Node in CACRN, and activities undertaken so far, and future plans for the information of the Advisory Committee.

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

The Advisory Committee noted that one of the IRPID's objectives is to assist NCs in securing sufficient funding from their respective governments. In previous meetings, the Committee members were unanimous in their view that NCs, by utilizing the results of the RNs, sharing cutting-edge technologies, and engaging through various ICID communication channels such as web pages, ICID News, and the Irrigation and Drainage Journal, are well-positioned to apply research and development outcomes directly in the field. Consequently, they should be able to leverage their national funding sources through international collaboration.

AC-IRPID Minutes Item 11: Any Other Business



