



Gender Equality Update

One of the benefits of AIC membership is the opportunity for you to participate in overseas scientific development work. A major project in this area is the AIC International Twinning Partnership Program (ITPP), funded by CIDA. AIC has required its overseas project partners to collect baseline information on Gender Equality (GE), to determine actions that would improve equality, and to report on the implementation and results of those actions. AIC committed itself to work on GE in its administration and governance.

Gender equality is a long term process that demands change on both the individual and organizational levels and means committing to a process of learning, analysis, reflection and action. AIC has begun that process.

To assist staff with implementing Gender Equality (GE) in AIC, a Gender Equality Task Team (GETT) was formed. That team has continued to provide support, guidance and direction as AIC learns about and incorporates Gender Equality into its work.

The GETT first hired consultants chosen through a Request for Proposals process. The consultants conducted an Institutional Assessment and participated in planning and facilitating a roundtable on GE prior to the AIC conference in November, 2007. The roundtable identified three key recommendations from the Institutional Assessment to focus on:

- coming to a common understanding of what GE is to AIC;
- determining the scope of activities and programs that AIC is involved in and what it can influence;
- defining indicators to measure the results of what it can influence.

Following the roundtable, the GETT worked on these three recommendations and learned more about GE. The GETT members have now completed a definition of GE specifically geared to AIC, identified and clarified GE terminology, described the levels of influence AIC has over the scope of activities it is involved with, and developed a draft GE Policy. The latter will be presented to the AIC Board of Directors at their August meeting along with a

recommendation that AIC establish a Gender Equality Committee to continue GETT's work.

When developing the GE Policy the GETT began with a vision and what it means in practical terms.

AIC's GE Vision

- Males and females have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to the development of the organization and its programs, and to benefit from the results.
- AIC is recognized more broadly (i.e. beyond board, staff, committees) as a leader in GE.

What it means in practical terms

- Gender equality is clearly reflected in the structures, budgets, and policies of AIC.
- Program choices and decisions of board, staff, committees are guided by AIC's vision for gender equality as outlined in the gender policy and will act as evidence of its implementation.
- AIC ensures GE is considered in partnership decisions. GE is an integral part of partnership choices.

During a meeting in early June, several GETT members once again gave of their time and talents to conduct an initial review of the major function areas of AIC from a GE perspective. This will be the basis for the Gender Equality Committee being recommended to the AIC Board of Directors. GETT is also completing the Terms of Reference for the GE Committee and an initial Orientation Package on GE for board, staff and committee members.

When the Orientation Package is completed either the new GE Committee or staff will be contacting board, staff, committee members and AIC members to determine a process for assessing and addressing GE in all that AIC does.

Gender Equality is a human rights issue. As a Canadian organization at the forefront of agricultural policy, AIC has the opportunity and obligation to lead by example. AIC is showing progressive leadership by addressing GE so thoroughly. As a member you should be proud of your organization and we hope you will lend your support and participate actively

when asked.

We will be adding a Gender Equality area to the AIC website where we will post the documents outlined in this article, as well as other relevant materials. If you wish to review the documents in the meantime, or if you are interested in working as part of or with a Gender Equality Committee, please contact Tom Beach at iadp@aic.ca.

Tom Beach, International Program Coordinator

ETCANSOL - A Soils Project in Ethiopia

Sam Gameda and Bob Eilers, members of AIC and the Canadian Society of Soil Science (CSSS), travelled to Ethiopia in April to participate in the Ethiopian Soil Science Society (ESSS) AGM. International Program Coordinator Tom Beach joined them to sign a one year project agreement between AIC, ESSS and CSSS, to discuss project plans and to meet with government and non government groups.

In meetings with ESSS, representatives discussed the status of their Organizational Assessment, Gender Equality, Results Based Management, operational and reporting requirements, fostering south-south professional exchanges and developing a proposal for an ETCANSOL Phase II.



Bob Eilers, Zebene Mikru and Tom Beach talk with local farmers. *Photo: Sam Gameda*

Over the next year ESSS will complete the organizational assessment and hold a national conference on Soil Science and Water Management which will start the development of a national program to assess and disseminate research in soils and water management. ESSS and CSSS will use the information from the Organizational Assessment and the National Conference to develop the Phase II proposal which will build ESSS capacity and promote improved soil and water management in Ethiopia.

The partners recognize that to ensure the needs of both science and extension are met, the Phase I conference must focus on the science, gaps in the science, and identification of the focus areas for

application of the research. An Applied Science Workshop in Phase II must focus on the areas of application of research and how to improve researcher to producer communication.

CSSS and ESSS members also met with government agencies and non government organizations including:

FEWS NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network) which is working in partnership with local organizations gathering data to develop risk assessment maps and predictions.

NGOs working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Extension Department to develop materials for farmer associations and cooperatives.

The Secretary General of the African Soil Science Society (ASSS), which is building on a resurgence of membership and activity. It has made the Soils Atlas for Africa and technical meetings for members its priority. The work on the Atlas is being supported by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Italy.

FAO, which is partnering with ESSS on the Scientific Review Workshop planned for January 2009.

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MOARD), about extension functions which are under the Ag Development Sector.

CIDA officers at the Ethiopia Canada Cooperation Office (ECCO) to introduce ESSS and discuss areas in which ESSS can be of assistance. CIDA officers were very interested in the partnering approach of the projects and especially the scientific basis for the partnering. There is a great interest in and need for scientific societies to bring science to bear on policy issues.

Scientific societies provide a country wide network of participants from various government agencies, institutes, universities and private sectors, thus bringing a range of expertise, issues and concerns from all regions of the country to NGO partnerships. This network also provides important two-way communications for collation and dissemination of information relating to BMP's for soil and water management.

The economic and social environment in Ethiopia is steadily improving. ETCANSOL is already proving to be a catalyst and focal point, bringing different departments and agencies together and increasing awareness of activities in the country.

It is obvious from the enthusiasm, expertise and participation of ESSS members that there is a high level of commitment to and interest in the project. The enthusiasm and optimism is contagious and the

three Canadians returned with a strong commitment to assist ESSS in reaching their goals.

Tom Beach, International Program Coordinator

Building Bridges: The Canadian Cereal Research and Innovation Lab

A new grain centre of excellence, bringing together federal government and university researchers, as well as marketing and regulatory bodies, is being planned for Winnipeg.

Proponents expect the Canadian Cereal Research and Innovation Laboratory to result in quicker development of new crop varieties, less costly duplication of research equipment and staff, more opportunities for market development and potentially news services, such as expanded food-safety research.

Digvir Jayas, a member of the AIC Board of Directors, was quoted in the *Winnipeg Free Press* as saying, "It would put Winnipeg and Manitoba on an international scale for research in the grain crops area."

Those involved in the project include AAFC's Cereal Research Centre, the University of Manitoba, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian International Grains Institute, the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre and the Canadian Wheat Board.

The new centre will cost as much as \$150 million, employ up to 500 people and take up 28,000 square meters of space. It will likely be located at the University of Manitoba "Smartpark". The project must receive formal approval from the federal government before construction can begin, and it is anticipated it will take three to five years for the project to be completed.

Source: Winnipeg Free Press, June 11, 2008

Farewell to Brenda Millar

On June 5th AIC sadly bid farewell to Brenda Millar, AIC's International Program Officer. Brenda began working with AIC on the International Twinning Partnership Program in April 2001, took a brief break in 2002, and returned again in 2003.



Brenda is known throughout AIC's overseas projects for her strong dedication, her warm and approachable nature, her knowledge and analysis of project design and implementation and her technical capacity and knowledge of the many complex aspects of reporting to funders.

Brenda is moving "up the valley" to her home town and committing more time to family. We will miss having Brenda around on a regular basis but are very pleased that she has agreed to work with us on an occasional basis which will be determined by our needs and her availability.

We wish you well Brenda and will certainly keep in touch.

