**CCAFS science meeting summary**

## Background and rationale

The annual CCAFS science meeting took place on 18-19 March in Bodega Bay, California and brought together 70 participants. The theme of the 2013 science meeting was ‘social learning’ and the objectives of the meeting were to:

* Showcase past and on-going participatory work and experiences from CCAFS and the wider CGIAR
* Develop ways in which participatory (social learning) approaches could inform and improve current and future CCAFS work

## 2013 CCAFS science meeting activities

Over 1.5 days, participants reflected upon social learning.

On the first day they were introduced to the focus theme through this [whiteboard video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pKaoD5sGjw) and reflected collectively as to how it relates to the CCAFS system level outcomes (SLOs) and intermediate development outcomes (IDOs), how their personal experience of social learning relates to the CCAFS work and how it could support CCAFS more strongly, what the constraints and opportunities of social learning are generally.

On the second day, the climate change communication and social learning (CCSL) team introduced a number of initiatives started in 2012 such as the [CCSL sandbox](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/Sandbox) and a handful of other [projects](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCSL+projects) and [resources developed](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/Social+learning+resources#CCSL resources). They worked in parallel side sessions around the following topics:

* [Vulnerability and safety nets](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_JVEtten-ANewsham.docx/415093104/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_JVEtten-ANewsham.docx) (J. van Etten & Andy Newsham)
* [Assessing impacts across scales: mixing methods to frame research questions on the future of households and communities](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_MRufino.docx/414751744/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_MRufino.docx) (M. Rufino) combined with... [The response of agricultural systems to climate and integrated assessment across spatial scales](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_SRidaura%20-%20ELB%20-%20AJC.docx/417253242/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_SRidaura%20-%20ELB%20-%20AJC.docx) (S. Ridaura et al.)
* [Developing metrics to evaluate the impact of adaptation interventions across food systems on food security, livelihoods and ecosystem services](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_PEricksen.docx/414751756/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_PEricksen.docx) (P. Ericksen)
* [Scalable technologies and practices: Identifying transferable climate-smart technologies for donor investment](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_TRosenstock_16Mar13.doc/417253256/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_TRosenstock_16Mar13.doc) (T. Rosenstock)
* [Connecting, Engaging and Learning with CCAFS Innovators](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_CJackson.docx/414751734/CCAFS%20Science%20meeting%202013_SideSession_CJackson.docx) (C. Jackson and E. Le Borgne)

Finally, they worked in five regional groups to identify how to potentially achieve SLOs and IDOs better through social learning approaches, where it could help around concrete activities and what would be initial steps to gather early wins and to scale up successful social learning approaches further down the line.

## Insights and results

**In terms of content**:

The science meeting brought up a number of good reflections on: [Enablers and barriers to social learning](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Reflections about social learning enablers and barriers), on the various side sessions and on the parallel group work sessions, as well as more general reflections on how social learning can help CCAFS. These insights would be too many and too specific to report here. The next steps section summarizes a number of important action points that derive from these insights however.

**From a** **process perspective**: Looking back at the event, and judging from the [meeting evaluation feedback](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/Evaluation.xlsx/423144570/Evaluation.xlsx), the science meeting was successful in letting participants network and meet new and old faces, in getting concrete in parallel and regional group work sessions and in achieving high interaction and engagement. It could however have been much more effective if it had featured more science, clarified what social learning means and what it looks like and had perhaps given more time for parallel sessions and more guidance for participants to take social learning forward.

The participant profile survey that was sent prior to the meeting and filled by roughly 50% of the participants was used to design the meeting and indicated that most people (who responded) were familiar with social learning. It turned out that the other half was in fact not so cognizant of social learning and would have enjoyed much clearer guidelines on what it is, how it manifests itself.

Despite these shortcomings, on average participants found the meeting ‘satisfactory’ to ‘very good’ and some concrete action points are on the table for future CCAFS work. CCAFS also showed that it is serious about integrating social learning in its approach, which is a bold step in CGIAR.

## Decisions to be endorsed?

**From the parallel sessions**:

* (Vulnerability) Identify a set of actors, perhaps for the meantime within the CCAFS initiative, working on vulnerability from different methodological perspectives, and perhaps to write a research proposal around the idea of methodological integration, with a view to seeking funding from interested donors or other research funders. *This idea is further elaborated on in this side session’s* [*final report*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/file/view/CCAFS%20science%20meeting%202013%20vulnerability%20analysis%20session%20report.docx/423147272/CCAFS%20science%20meeting%202013%20vulnerability%20analysis%20session%20report.docx) *and also* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Parallel sessions-Vulnerability and safety nets (J. van Etten & Andy Newsham) - See the final report of this group)
* (Impact across scales)
  + Provide examples of climate resilient farming activities
  + Learn from farmers' historical knowledge (social learning element)
  + Continue to collaborate on cross-scale thinking.
  + Put a visual face to scenarios so we can better communicate with different stakeholders (social learning element)
* (Developing metrics for impact) – *further elaborated* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Parallel sessions-Developing metrics to evaluate the impact of adaptation interventions across food systems on food security, livelihoods and ecosystem services (P. Ericksen))
  + Measure successful adaptation looking at novelty, interactions and networks, and the selections or choices actors make (reference the “innovation ecologies” approach of the AAS CRP.
  + Monitor whether these choices are leading to positive or negative adaptation….
  + Develop an index for these short term outcomes.
  + Using M&E to foster adaptive management: Allow for learning and change, using the outcome pathway and adjusting if your indicators go “off target”. We have to connect to the slower change variables eventually and know where we are in the process.
* (Scalable technologies) – *further elaborated* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Parallel sessions-Scalable technologies and practices: Identifying transferable climate-smart technologies for donor investment (T. Rosenstock))
  + It might be good for CCAFS to develop and compile a portfolio of tools to screen and prioritize investments in climate-smart agriculture
  + We would like to develop a learning platform that ensures and enables further interactions on this topic
  + Linking with climate investment partners is a clear impact pathway- there is mutual benefit and CCAFS is not the only research organization working on climate change.

**From the regional group work sessions**:

A lot of the decisions and suggested actions here are around documenting existing and ideal social learning processes, engaging with partners from the start and throughout the process, developing capacities, sharing experiences and connecting with conversations/networks/organisations that matter.

East Africa: *More details* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Regional group focused conversations-East Africa)

* Use outputs from partnerships as part of the performance appraisal
* Map the learning environment—who is working on what
* Reflect on and learn from the past (and keep doing it)
* Unpack success: What has worked? What can we learn from?
* Document what have been successful pilots that can inform scaling up

West Africa: *More details* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Regional group focused conversations-West Africa)

* Document social learning processes and develop solid evidence: what are the good stories coming out of the processes and evidence
* Capacity development at national government level to influence learning platforms, guide and drive priorities by using a portfolio of tools/approaches to bring stakeholders around a table
* Sharing information, database, tools, methods, etc.
* Regional priorities” outcomes, big winners outcomes to guide the process between CG centers, national and regional stakeholders
* Reinforce regional strategy on CC by regional stakeholders (FARA, CORAF, CILSS, ECOWAS, etc.) – share the vision
* CCAFS to get donors together, regional stakeholders learning and sharing platforms between donors, development partners involved in climate change – (how though?)
* For upscaling: Exposing stakeholders to the SLOs, IDOs, to drive engagement, commitment and buy-in around these (with other partners non CGs)

South Asia: *More details* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Regional group focused conversations-South Asia)

* Keep building upon existing initiatives (e.g. farmer feedback on climate analogs, South-South learning workshops
* Keep involving all relevant stakeholders from the onset
* Write a blog post on social learning in the South Asia program

South East Asia: *More details* [*here*](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Regional group focused conversations-South East Asia)

* Look at CG activities in the region; try to piggyback or replicate
* Look for partners that do the kinds of things we need to do at the different levels e.g. spend time with a few key NGO’s and really understand what and how they are approaching, say, adaptation
* Carry out a network mapping exercise
* Engage with older people retiring and setting up their own NGO’s (ex-gov’t) and with youth groups
* Show some good examples; show us how it is done! (e.g. a case study)
* In order to scale up try to reach DG’s and convince scientists with good examples (e.g. CPWF’s examples)
* Make sure History/lessons of ILAC are written up

Latin America: more details [here](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Regional group focused conversations-Latin America)

* Start itinerant courses for university professors on subjects such as meteorology, agronomy, land planning, etc. learn from the process and disseminate CCAFS products and data bases.
* Use farm models in some agronomy and ecology courses where climate change scenarios are given to students and they are asked to manage farms or landscapes and come up with sustainable plans.
* Find new ways to connect people; for instance, crowdsourcing, and the use of ICT in general.
* Fill the extension gap in LAC by working with NGOs and other partners (university students) and on cross-CRP collaboration will be very important.
* For scaling up: Go beyond agriculture with the ideas described above, e.g. Ecology, business schools; create synergies with many SL experiences in LAC (e.g. PCCMCA is a useful platform in the region and has served for 50+ years to bring agronomists together); Work on transformation from a rights-based perspective (see inspiration [here](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=12853)). Choosing strategic partners will be crucial in LAC where there is a need to show value for money. These partners could stem from the private sector and large NGOs. Joint forces among CGIAR is a must.

**From the main session**:

* The Whiteboard video [has been critiqued](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Feedback about the whiteboard video 'Transformative partnerships for a food secure world') during the meeting and should be developed in other ways by the CCSL group.
* A series of practical guidance outputs should be developed: crisp definition of social learning, clear set of practical and concrete examples of social learning, glossary of terms and lexicon about social learning, perhaps a practical guide e.g. ’50 tips to make social learning work’.
* Finally, the meeting evaluation – summarized [here](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013#Agenda-Meeting notes-Evaluation of the meeting) – also revealed a number of possible improvements for next year’s CCAFS science meeting which should be looked into by next year’s organizing committee.

***All documentation about the CCAFS Science Meeting 2013 is available*** [***here***](http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/CCAFS+Science+meeting+2013)**.**