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The “Green” to “Blue” Water Continuum

Green” to “blue”, another way of saying from rainfed to full irrigation. Who are the principal players in the semi-arid tropics? The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) India Regional Office and the host center ICRISAT, are working towards a closer collaboration on this issue. The primary focus of joint research in India during 2002 will be on watershed management (WM) and development. Since this area is a priority with both ICRISAT and IWMI it is envisioned that similar collaboration will be built in other regions like Africa and Southeast Asia.

In India, an investment has been made by the farmers, the Central and State governments, and NGOs to develop watershed-based land and water resources, particularly in semi-arid areas. Various approaches to WM have been devised, revived and implemented. But there are lingering concerns about the outcomes for the livelihoods of the rural poor, the institutions charged with asset management, and the environmental resource base.

ICRISAT has been at the forefront of soil and water management, crop improvement and adaptation, and socio-economic and policy-oriented approaches to WM in the Indian SAT. IWMI approaches watershed resources (including irrigation, its previous exclusive focus) from a river basin perspective where upstream and downstream linkages are emphasized. The two perspectives, when complementarily merged, set up interesting and creative possibilities for research and future watershed investments.

The collaboration will review the existing policy and institutional aspects of integrated soil and water management research and the different models of WM in India. By preparing an inventory of successful technologies, the project will identify potential beneficiaries and livelihood impacts on the community and help design future technologies.

IWMI will emphasize upstream and downstream tradeoffs and scaling up issues in water-use and land-use intensification resulting from different WM approaches. Similarly, ICRISAT will focus on assessing and identifying factors behind the success or failure of the different WM approaches with emphasis on biophysical factors and socioeconomic constraints at different levels.

Finally, the initiative will identify knowledge gaps and suggest priority areas for further research for private and collective investments in soil and water management resulting in resource use intensification. An additional outcome will be an assessment of whether suggested research investments generate sufficient international public goods benefits and how best CGIAR centers address these issues and promote sustainable intensification of agriculture in the SAT.

Joint proposals will indicate further research and will be assessed at an annual meeting of key researchers from both centers.

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