

REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE
WEST AFRICAN SORGHUM RESEARCH NETWORK

13-14 January, 1986 - Ouagadougou

1. GENERAL

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee of the West African Sorghum research network took place in Ouagadougou on 13-14 January, 1986.

The following were present in the meeting:

C.M. Pattanayak, Regional Coordinator of the Network

C.E. Ohiagu, National program, Nigeria

A. Moussa, National program, Niger

T. Bezuneh; Regional program, SAFGRAD

A. Kere, Regional program, INSAH

D.S. Murty, Observer, ICRISAT, Burkina

P. Sereme, Observer, IBRAZ, Burkina

After taking note of the absence of the elected representatives from national programs in Mali (M. Konaté) and Ivory Coast (K. Attiey), the Committee concluded that the quorum was complete and that the business could be taken up. The following agenda was accepted:

1. The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee.
2. Review of the recommendations adopted in the first and second workshops.
3. Identification of priorities, mechanics, and plan of action of the West African sorghum research network.
4. Visit ICRISAT's off-season sorghum research activity at Kamboinse.
5. Group travel of sorghum researchers during 1986 crop season.
6. Any other item.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee considered the presentation of the Network Coordinator explaining the historical background concerning the committee and the suggestions regarding the terms of reference. The following terms of reference were concluded:

1. The Advisory Committee will play a key role in guiding the network activities.
2. The Advisory Committee will monitor the execution of recommendations adopted by the general assembly in the workshops.
3. The Advisory Committee will propose for discussion in the workshop new themes/ideas of interest to the network and related plan of action.
4. The Advisory Committee, through the network Coordinator, will send a report of its decisions to all the members of the network. This report will be a subject of discussion in the workshop.

III. REVIEW OF WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS.

The discussions brought out certain aspects of recommendations which necessitate clarification.

The clarifications are:

1. The recommendation on training must cover all aspects of research on sorghum.
2. The Director of ICRISAT Sahelian Center is an ex-officio member of the Advisory Committee. This means that he has no capacity to vote.

As regards the recommendations adopted in the first workshop it was pointed out that there was a proposal for the establishment of a regional germplasm bank for the eight member countries of CILSS. For the remaining nine non-sahelian countries of the network, the Coordinator was asked to explore the possibility of utilization of the germplasm preservation facilities being established at the ICRISAT Sahelian Center in Niamey. It was further observed that each national program can and should maintain working collections.

VI. PRIORITIES - MECHANICS AND PLAN OF ACTION OF THE NETWORK.

The Committee, after examining different possibilities for the execution of the recommendations, considered that the network must start its activities first in the area where there are better expertise and experience and gradually take up other research programs, as the network gains strength. It was thus decided that sorghum crop improvement is the area better understood.

Sorghum crop improvement will comprise certain activities of base research for the identification of plant material possessing stress resistance traits. Utilizing these materials in the breeding programs, promising materials with good agronomic base will be developed and tested in preliminary trials in a limited number of national programs. Promising introductions from other research programs should also be included in such trials. Finally, the most promising materials identified in these trials will be put in advanced trials and such trials will be tested in all the national programs primarily on the basis of ecological needs in the three agro-ecological zones (north Guinean, Sudanian and Sahelian). The testing of genotypes across ecological zones will also be considered.

A. Base Research.

On the basis of regional importance of stress problems, the following priorities for base research were identified.

1. Diseases: Grain mold, leaf diseases and long smut.
2. Insects : Head bugs, midge, borers and shootfly.
3. Striga.
4. Drought/seedling establishment.

Then the committee considered the choice of locations for the base research problems based on the criteria of (a) favorable environment for the expression of the stress problem ("Hot spot"), (b) level of existing infrastructure, (c) scientific capability of personnel, and (d) importance of the stress problem in the national program.

Two categories of locations were identified for base research:

Category 1: - Favorable environment for the expression of the stress problem.

- Existence of a minimum infrastructure to carry out research study.
- Existence of scientific capability of personnel.

Category 2: - Locations offering atleast the first condition (favorable environment) and where the national government is strongly interested to carry out such research.

It is important to mention that the above classification adopted by the Committee is not rigid: providing reinforcement of infrastructure and training of personnel in a location one can bring it from category 2 to 1. It may also be necessary to appropriately strengthen the infrastructure and training of personnel in the locations classified as category 1 to improve the efficiency of research activity.

The discussants finally prepared the following table:

Subject of Research	Location/Category 1.	Location/Category 2.
<u>DISEASES</u>		
- Grain mold	Farako-Ba (B. Faso) Sotuba (Mali) Bengou (Niger) Samaru (Nigeria)	Ferkessedougou (Ivory Coast) Nyankpala (Ghana)
- Leaf diseases	Farako-Ba (B. Faso) Samaru (Nigeria)	Sotuba (Mali) Ferkessedougou (Ivory Coast) Bengou (Niger)
- Long smut	Maradi (Niger)	Bema (Mali) Kolo (Niger)
<u>INSECTS</u>		
- Head bugs	Farako-Ba (B. Faso) Sotuba (Mali) Kolo (Niger)	Nyankpala (Ghana)
- Midge	Farako-Ba (B. Faso) Sotuba (Mali)	Ferkessedougou (Ivory Coast) Nyankpala (Ghana)
- Borer	Samaru (Nigeria)	Ferkessedougou (Ivory Coast)
- Shootfly	Samaru (Nigeria)	Nyankpala (Ghana)

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Subject of Research	Location/Category 1.	Location/Category 2.
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DROUGHT/SEEDLING ESTABLISHMENT

Cinzana (Mali)	Saria (B. Faso)
Bambey (Senegal)	Maradi (Niger)
Maroua (Cameroon)	Kano (Nigeria)

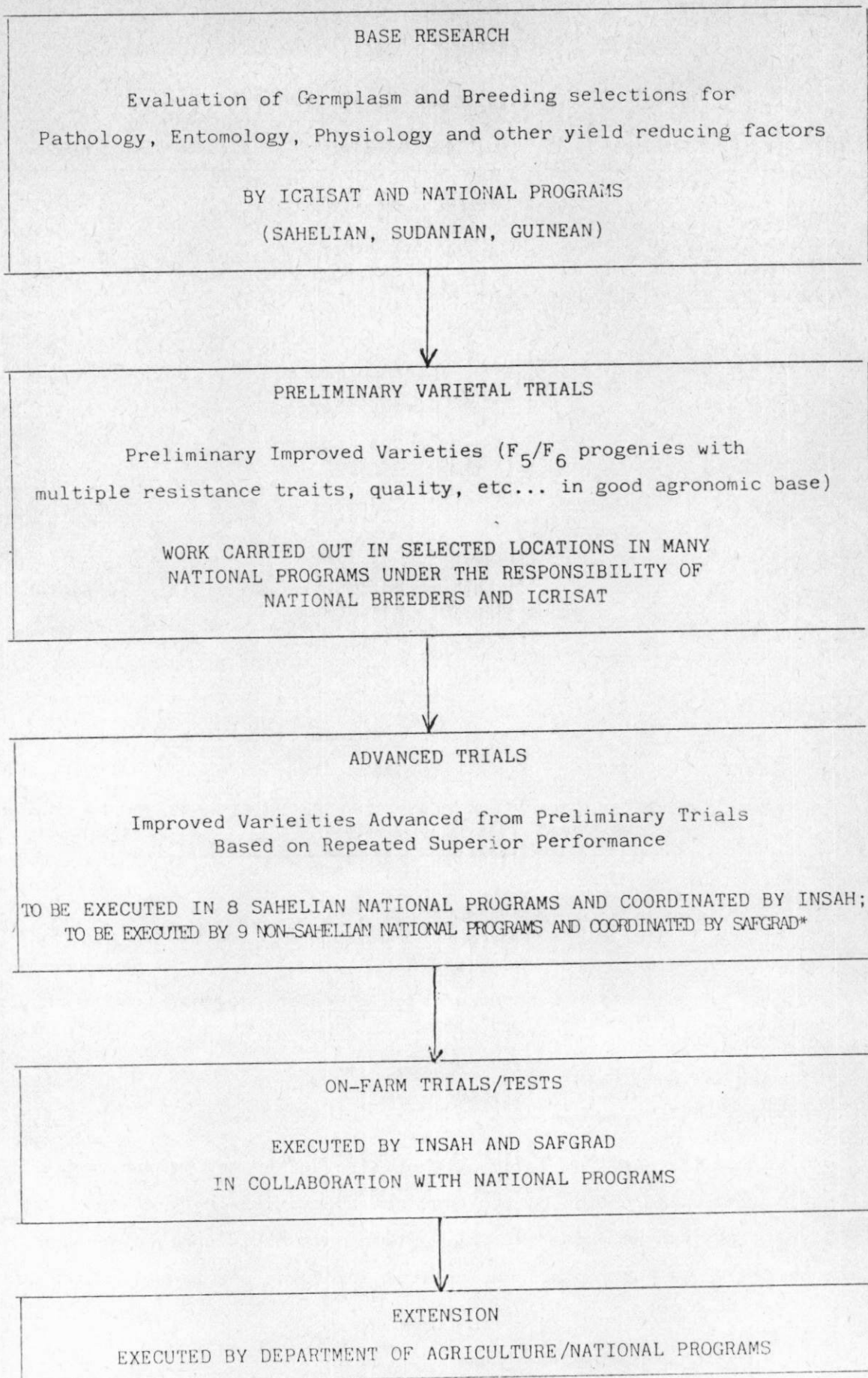
STRIGA

The Striga research on fundamental problems can best be done in the countries having scientific capability but can not be taken up by the network. However, considering the importance of the problem in many countries in West Africa, atleast screening of varieties for resistance to Striga must be considered. For this, ICRISAT should initiate training of researchers and technicians of national programs.

An evaluation mission consisting of the network Coordinator, a representative each from INSAH and SAFGRAD must visit the proposed national programs for the establishment of base research program, to discuss it with the authorities and take note of existing research capacities.

B. Preliminary and Advanced Trials.

The Advisory Committee attempted to define the mechanisms of cooperative action and coordination of the research activities in relation to the evaluation of results of base research. This action must avoid duplication and it is conceived in a horizontal and vertical manner as per the following scheme:



* The network Coordinator will discuss with the Director of Research of SAFGRAD the details on the execution of trials in the 9 non-sahelian countries.

C. Germplasm.

The Committee again underlined the importance of collection, evaluation and preservation of local germplasm. The network Coordinator must contact the national programs to identify the countries where the collection has not been completed. The evaluation of germplasm will provide opportunity to detect stress resistance traits available within the local material. Finally, the question of long term preservation of germplasm in the sahelian and non-sahelian countries were discussed.

D. Hybrids.

The Committee, considering the long term importance of hybrids, agreed to the suggestion that ICRISAT should initiate and spend a reasonable proportion of time on this research. Trials consisting of existing hybrids should be sent to interested national programs.

V. VISIT TO KAMBOINSE

The Committee briefly visited the agricultural research station at Kamboinse. The members were shown off-season activity carried out by the ICRISAT researchers on seed increase of promising material, introduced or developed locally, and new crossing program.

VI. GROUP TRAVEL

As per the recommendation adopted in the second workshop for conducting group travel of national researchers in between two workshops, the Advisory Committee discussed about modalities and related matters.

Considering the cost involved and the difficulty in organising a travel operation, it was decided to limit the number of national programs to be visited and also the number of national researchers to participate. Further more, in such group travels a system of rotation of participants must be followed such that researchers in each national program should have a fair opportunity to see other national programs. It was also understood that each visit must not be for a long period causing interference in the work of participating researchers.

It was thus proposed that in 1986 the national programs in Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Gambia may be visited in September/October. Further, it was proposed that the national representatives from Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, Benin, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Central African Republic and Chad will participate in the group visit. This visit must not exceed two weeks.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. It was suggested that the network Coordinator should contact Integrated Pest Management Project of CILSS for exploring possibilities of fruitful cooperation on base research especially on problems of midge, shootfly and Striga.
2. It was also suggested that there should be opportunities of interaction between sorghum researchers from different regions of Africa. For this, one possible way should be exchange of delegates during sorghum research workshops in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa.

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1986-01

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