



## **CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food**

# **International Forum on Water and Food**

*Synthesising knowledge on livelihoods, water, food and the environment*

Vientiane, Lao PDR, 12 - 17 November 2006

## **Background to the Forum**

### **Introduction**

The Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF) announces its International Forum on Water and Food, to be held in Vientiane, Lao PDR from November 12 – 17, 2006, hosted by the Mekong River Commission (MRC). The CPWF and MRC invite the submission of abstracts. Potential participants should note that this event is a Forum and is designed as a medium for discussion and debate, rather than the presentation of papers. Discussions will be based on a series of short policy briefs drawn from paper submissions. In addition, the best papers from the Forum will be published in special editions of formal, formal, peer reviewed journals, and there will be an opportunity to present posters. Papers submitted and accepted by the Forum will comprise part of the Forum's knowledge pool, and will yield the questions that each of the Forum's sessions will debate. All submissions to the Forum will go through a review process (see the call for abstracts for a description of this process).

The CPWF is arranged around five thematic areas which guide its research work; and a geographical focus on nine benchmark river basins distributed across the developing world. Additional information on these aspects of the program can be obtained from the CPWF's website at [www.waterandfood.org](http://www.waterandfood.org).

The Forum falls about half-way through the first phase of the CPWF and represents a stock-take of where the Program is and where it is heading, bringing together what has so far been learned and then working this knowledge to direct the Program into the remainder of its first phase and beyond. A key part of the CPWF's work is synthesis, a process in which different strands of research are brought together to yield clearly defined areas where policy and development investments and focus will yield positive impact in the field of agricultural water productivity. This Forum builds on synthesis work carried out so far under the Program, debates this knowledge, and extends it into the future.

The CPWF draws on the work of the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (CA), which will deliver its findings at the World Water Week in Stockholm in August 2006. The CA represents a baseline on the state of knowledge in the field of water productivity in agriculture. The CPWF aims to project beyond this baseline, understanding its relevance to its benchmark basins; and developing this knowledge further to identify through research new opportunities for innovation, policy change, and development.

## The Forum Concept

The Forum has four key parts:

- ▷ *The basin context:* The benchmark river basins are the ‘living laboratories’ where the CPWF identifies its research problems and derives empirically-based solutions to these. The benchmark river basins anchor the CPWF in the real world, and provide its focus on real world questions of food productivity in agriculture. Participants will be offered field trips within the Mekong Basin to see how the CPWF’s theme areas have relevance at the basin scale, grounding the forum in real life. A film will be shown to participants exploring the CPWF’s theme areas in its benchmark river basins. The MRC will highlight and explore the issues raised from this film within the context of the Mekong River Basin, and describe the ways in which it expects to deal with these problems.
- ▷ *The knowledge pool:* this pool represents new knowledge that builds upon and articulates the findings of the CA; and/or the embellishment of the CA’s findings with case study material from the CPWF’s benchmark river basins. It is knowledge focussed on improving water use in agriculture, and has direct relevance to development practitioners, policy-makers and for future research foci. The knowledge pool will be submitted to the Forum as full papers. These will not be presented, but will serve as a basis for discussions in 18 topic sessions. All participants will be provided with a two-page brief for each paper, summarising the paper, and tailored to answer the questions that each session poses. Papers must identify the questions or issues they seek to address and highlight the key message that they wish the session to consider. At the beginning of each session, Conveners will make a short presentation, summarising the papers (and therefore the knowledge), to set the tone of the session and to provide it with context.
- ▷ *Expanding the knowledge pool:* building on the knowledge pool, participants in each session will be led in an exciting, interactive way through a set of session questions by an experienced facilitator (who is not the Convener). The idea is to draw together the lessons and points raised from the knowledge pool, and synthesise these into a coherent outcome that tells us where we are in our investigations and thinking, and how social, technical and scientific ideas are connected in a coherent knowledge base.
- ▷ *Projecting the knowledge pool:* the Forum is not intended to be a static moment, but aims to extend the lessons gained from the previous two knowledge components into the future. What does the knowledge we have mean? How will it help us to identify clear development interventions or policy directions? How do we deal with controversial questions? Where do we go from here? Again, facilitators will lead these discussions, and aim to develop a clear understanding of direction.

The Forum is designed around five guiding questions, derived from the CPWF’s five thematic foci, which inform the sessions proposed and the outputs it seeks:

- ▷ How can water productivity be improved, through technological and managerial innovation, at the farm level?
- ▷ How can water management in upper river catchments be improved, and how best can people benefit from such changes?

- ▷ How can fisheries and aquatic productivity be managed, sustained and improved through research on environmental water requirements, the valuation of ecosystem goods and services, and policies, institutions and governance?
- ▷ How can research inform the development of innovative institutional arrangements and decision-support tools and information that can help with the establishment of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at the basin level?
- ▷ What is the impact of climate change, globalization, and macro and sectoral policies on water and food security and what kinds of investments and financing for water development can alleviate these impacts? How can transboundary and other water policies and institutions enhance water and food outcomes?

The CPWF Forum is aimed at gauging the extent to which research (both CPWF and non-CPWF) has brought us closer to answering these questions.

## Objectives of the Forum

### **Overall objective**

The CPWF Forum will highlight research achievements in the field of water productivity in agriculture, expand on this knowledge, and recommend future areas for research and development investment.

### **Specific objectives**

- ▷ To add value to water productivity research advances carried out under the CPWF, and complemented by other (non-CPWF) sources.
- ▷ To use CPWF benchmark basins, especially the Mekong, as case studies of the issues covered by the CPWF.
- ▷ To showcase the CPWF and its partnership structure as a means to identifying problems and delivering solutions to improving water productivity in agriculture, including the cooperation between the CPWF and the MRC.
- ▷ To recommend areas for research and development investment in the field of water productivity in agriculture, and to show how water-productivity research results can be better translated into positive development impact.
- ▷ To provide information about the CPWF as the leading research for development program in the field of water productivity in agriculture.

## Outputs of the Forum

- ▷ Publications in special issues of international journals of the best papers. Posters, along with papers not accepted for submission to journals, will be posted on the CPWF website.
- ▷ Synthesis products: the Forum will contribute di-

### **The Forum Position Paper**

Each session will yield contributions to the Position Paper. Amongst other objectives, each session will aim to identify those areas where the policy and development world should focus investment based on what is already known; and, secondly, where current trends and problems suggest the need for research investment in the future. The Position Paper will form the basis for a statement from the research world regarding issues that the policy-making and development world should know about water productivity in agriculture. It will show how the knowledge pool can be projected to achieve positive impacts in the field. A draft summary of the position paper will be presented at the end of the Forum.

rectly to the CPWF's research synthesis process, by show-casing its findings, and supplementing these from other (non-CPWF) sources.

- ▷ A Forum Position Paper (see box).
- ▷ Publicity, including press releases.

## Forum schedule and sessions

The CPWF International Forum on Water and Food is primarily concerned with showcasing ideas, research results, identifying positive interventions with high impact probability and opening up new areas for discourse, policy and research; and moving these ideas forward. The CPWF recognises that many of the best ideas in improving water productivity are advanced and developed through dialogue, interaction and debate. In these ways, ideas are honed; arguments refined, and target areas for research, development and policy opened up. This rationale forms the basis for the organisation and structure of the Forum.

*A key point to note is that this Forum will have no paper presentations.* Contributors will be asked to submit paper drafts for consideration to the organisers. If accepted, these will be made available at the Forum for participants, and will also be published in special journal issues. Authors of accepted papers will be asked to submit a two-page briefing note, which will form the basis of discussions in the Forum sessions.

*Day 0: 12 November.* The intention of these trips is to demonstrate the relevance of the Forum's guiding questions. Each field site will tease apart and enrich these areas of study, showcasing the Mekong as one of the CPWF's living laboratories within which they obtain relevance and visibility. The sites are real-world examples of why the questions are important.

*Day 1: Monday 13 November.* After welcoming addresses, a film will set the scene of the CPWF at the global scale, drawing on experiences across its Benchmark River Basins, revealing the relevance of the CPWF theme areas in these basins, and what CPWF projects are doing to address them. Next, a series of supported, imaginative presentations will be delivered, highlighting the relevance of the Forum questions to the Mekong River Basin, as an example of other basins, how the Mekong River Commission plays a part in their solution, and how research can assist the agency to better address these problems, highlighting the relationship between the MRC and the CPWF. In the afternoon, a series of presentations will be made reporting back on the five field trips from the day before, refining the questions the Forum will address, and giving them 'real world' relevance and texture. In the evening, a cocktail function will be held during which time posters will be viewed. The first three discussion sessions will be conducted in the afternoon.

*Day 2 - 4: Tuesday 14 – Thursday 16 November.* Discussion sessions. In these sessions, facilitators will run workshops based around the briefing notes, and on a series of 3-4 specific and carefully crafted questions that the session will debate and answer. These sessions are intended to be animated, lively and implemented in an atmosphere of openness. Each session seeks to deliver three broad outputs (a) an understanding of how knowledge has advanced in its focus area since the publication of the CA's findings; (b) to identify which findings are most relevant for policy and development attention, and which are most likely to contribute positive impact in the field of agricultural water productivity; (c) to identify vital gaps in knowledge. After each set of six sessions has been run, an 'open forum' will be held to discuss the findings of each session in plenary, to refine these, to identify any possible short-comings and to tease out key messages that will con-

tribute to the CPWF Position Paper, its synthesis work, identifying research gaps, the future directions for the CPWF and issues that non-CPWF agencies would be better placed to address.

Session descriptions are as follows:

Block 1: Amongst crops, fields and water

- Session 1: *The future of irrigation*: this session explores the relative merits and costs of large-scale irrigation against small-scale irrigation. It explores the rationale for developing nations to implement large-scale irrigation schemes in a globally competitive environment. And finally, it addresses the question of whether or not large supplies of irrigated outputs necessarily translate into better food security for the poor.
- Session 2: *Water productivity at the basin level*: this session considers the sense in measuring water productivity at the basin scale by drawing on experiences that demonstrate that there are specific managerial gains from doing so. It aims to identify the utility of water productivity indices, and explores methodologies that can be applied in data-poor basins.
- Session 3: *Matching land-use ecologies*: many development initiatives mismatch land-use types with ecological systems in target areas by, for example, promoting crops that use a great deal of water in arid and semi-arid zones. In so doing, land can be substantially degraded. This session considers ways in which understanding local agroecosystems can help develop production systems that produce more food with the available water, today and in the future, while conserving the soil.
- Session 4: *Greening upper catchments*: this session explores the tensions between the environmental needs of upper catchments, particularly suggestions for their greening; and explores its relation to downstream demands for water.
- Session 5: *Gender, resources management and local institutions*: this session critically examines the ways in which gender concerns articulate with natural resource management initiatives. A central question to be explored is whether the creation of local institutions translate into empowering and realistic benefits for women – or may instrumentally make use of women’s involvement only to meet program-defined resource management ends. The intent, therefore, is to articulate possible win-win outcomes and scenarios.
- Session 6: *Multiple-use systems (MUS)*: this session considers how best these systems might work, and considers, for example, whether or not such systems are compatible with the kinds of intensification envisaged under most water productivity improvement proposals.
- Session 7: *Integrating fishing and farming*: new ideas, new directions: this session is concerned with an old field. It draws on historical experiences to propose new ways in which productivity of integrated fish-farming systems can be improved, and new technologies and ideas that might enhance this process.
- Session 8: *The positive management of dam reservoirs*: dams and their reservoirs are controversial, but nevertheless, many countries with hydro-power potential continue to include them as key develop-

ment strategies. Can dams, their operating rules and their reservoirs be put to better use? How can dams be designed to minimise their damage, maximise the ecological benefits they deliver, their fisheries production and their benefit to agriculture?

- Session 9: *Upland agriculture as a provider of ecosystem services?*: The development of modern agriculture has had a profoundly destructive effect on the environment, significantly reducing the capacity of ecosystems to provide the supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural functions that sustain human life. There is a growing body of evidence, however, that suggests that the impacts of agriculture on ecosystem services may not be uniformly negative. It may not be agriculture per se, but rather specific land management practices within agriculture that are harmful. Many of the practices in so-called sustainable agriculture can, especially if applied over large areas, have positive effects on biodiversity, carbon stocks, and catchment hydrology. The implications of agriculture as a provider of ecosystems services could be important, especially in developing countries facing difficult tradeoffs between food production, poverty alleviation and environmental conservation.
- Session 10: *Integrating the unusual*: IWRM often fails to integrate potentially substantial water use sectors into its purview, such as livestock and peri-urban agricultural systems arising from growing cities in the developing world. How can IWRM then be re-aligned to take into account these factors? Should it at all? And if so, why? Will this yield management systems that are practical or over-complicated?
- Session 11: *Landscapes and land uses*: the session examines why it is that resource management should be understood at the landscape level. It considers the complexity of land uses within a landscape, their interactions, and the associated problems of untangling and analysing these. Is it possible to develop practicable management guidelines for whole landscapes?
- Session 12: *Water poverty at the basin scale*: water supply is often not factored into understandings of livelihood vulnerability and success. This session aims to consider why 'water poverty' should be factored into understandings of livelihoods dynamics, and considers ways in which such poverty can be measured at the basin scale.
- Session 13: *Water as a source for international cooperation*: water use is often a basis for tensions among communities and, indeed, nations. How, then, can water become an inspiration for cooperation? What kinds of incentives reside in cooperation over water management sufficient to inspire, foster and strengthen integrated water management systems?
- Session 14: *The political ecologies of water management*: because water use is characterised by multiple, competing, claims, its use is highly politicised. This session is mainly concerned with small-scale water use and allocation, and seeks to explore how such political systems function, how they can be manipulated to generate positive outcomes, and how such solutions can be scaled up to have catchment or basin-scale relevance.
- Session 15: *The capacity to manage water and agricultural productivity*: managing water is a complex business, and requires considerable ca-

capacity. The task of managing water is multi-faceted and requires input from multiple disciplines. This session considers what capacity is required to gain the best possible water productivity dividends, and how these can best be obtained and implemented.

Session 16: *Up and out: scaling up and across basins*: this session is concerned with how local level experiences can be scaled up to have basin-wide relevance and, indeed, cross-basin relevance. It considers why this is important, and proposes methodologies to achieve this.

Session 17: *The global economy and water outcomes*: as the global economy gains momentum, this session considers the ways in which this will impact water productivity at basin and more localised scales. It aims to identify the adverse and positive impacts from globalization on water and food security and identify ways to mitigate negative and to further enhance positive outcomes.

Session 18: *Global water policies: inert or inspiring?* This session worries as to whether it makes sense to develop global water policies given current levels of global cooperation. It considers what should be focussed upon at the global policy level, why this is so, and how nations can benefit from such policies.

The sessions will run as follows:

Sessions will end on Thursday. On this day, we will run an 'open space' (not to be confused with an 'open forum'). In this facilitated session, participants will have the opportunity of considering topics that they have discussed in more depth. Participants can propose a theme for discussion, and others also interested in exploring it can gather with them, and debate these issues further.

*Day 5: Friday 17 November*: Based on the discussions in the sessions and open spaces, the facilitators and convenors will finalise the main points of the Forum's position paper, and present these in open-space. This paper will identify the ways in which the CPWF feels that the issues raised and discussed in the Forum's sessions can best be addressed.

Next, a representative of each basin will each make a short presentation on these findings, relating those conclusions to their own basins, revealing their 'real-life' relevance, and exploring the potential for positive changes in water productivity as a result.

The Forum will close with speeches from the MRC's CEO and the Chair of the CPWF Consortium.

## **Draft Programme (as of October 10, 2006)**

### **Day 0: Sunday, November 12, 2006**

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#### **Forum field trips**

The Forum field trips aim to reveal the relevance of the CPWF Thematic areas to the Mekong River Basin. We have arranged three such trips. At the time of going to press, trip arrangements are still being finalised. You will be informed of the trips once you register, and can then sign up for any one of them.

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**Day 1: Monday, November 13, 2006**

<b>0800</b>	<b><i>Blessing</i></b>	<b>SR 2</b>
<b>0830</b>	<b><i>Welcome and Forum orientation</i></b> Kim Geheb, Forum Convener and the Facilitators	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>0930</b>	<b><i>Opening address</i></b> His Excellency, Mr. Khamlouad Sitlakone, Lao Minister and Chairman of the National Mekong Committee	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1000</b>	<b><i>CPWF film presentation</i></b> Living Laboratories	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1100</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>1130</b>	<b><i>Report back from field trips</i></b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1210</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>
<b>1330</b>	<b><i>MRC Presentations</i></b> The Mekong and the CPWF	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1500</b>	<b><i>Sessions</i></b> Session 1: Future of Irrigation Session 4: Greening Upper Catchments Session 7: Integrating Fish and Farming	<b>SR 1</b> <b>SR 2</b> <b>SR 3</b>
<b>1730</b>	<b><i>Posters, cocktails and speeches.</i></b> Olivier Cogels, CEO, Mekong River Commission Frank Rijsberman, Chair, CPWF Consortium Steering Committee	<b>SR 1</b>

**Tuesday, November 14, 2006**

<b>0830</b>	<b><i>Sessions</i></b> Session 2: Basin Level Water Productivity Session 5: Gender, Resource Management and Local Institutions Session 8: Management of Dam Reservoirs	<b>SR 1</b> <b>SR 2</b> <b>SR 3</b>
<b>1100</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>1130</b>	<b><i>Open Forum</i></b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1300</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>
<b>1430</b>	<b><i>Sessions</i></b> Session 3: Matching Land Use Ecologies Session 6: Multiple Use Systems Session 9: Upland agriculture as a provider of ecosystem services?	<b>SR 1</b> <b>SR 2</b> <b>SR 3</b>
<b>1700</b>	<b><i>Basin and Theme interaction</i></b>	<b>Basin &amp; Theme Area</b>

**Wednesday, November 15, 2006**

	<b>Sessions</b>	
<b>0830</b>	Session 10: Integrating the Unusual (Livestock)	<b>SR 1</b>
	Session 13: Water as a Source for International Cooperation	<b>SR 2</b>
	Session 16: Up and Out: Scaling Up and Across Basins	<b>SR 3</b>
<b>1100</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>1130</b>	<b>Open Forum</b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1300</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>
	<b>Sessions</b>	
<b>1430</b>	Session 11: Landscape and Land Uses	<b>SR 1</b>
	Session 14: Political Ecologies of Water Management	<b>SR 2</b>
	Session 17: The Global Economy and water outcomes	<b>SR 3</b>
<b>1700</b>	<b>Basin and Theme interaction</b>	<b>Basin &amp; Theme Area</b>
<b>1900</b>	<b>Banquet</b>	<b>Chowon Korean Restaurant</b>

**Thursday, November 16, 2006**

	<b>Sessions</b>	
<b>0830</b>	Session 12: Water Poverty at the Basin Scale	<b>SR 1</b>
	Session 15: The Capacity to Manage Water and Agricultural Productivity	<b>SR 2</b>
	Session 18: Global water policies: inert or inspiring?	<b>SR 3</b>
<b>1100</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>1130</b>	<b>Open Forum</b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1300</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>
<b>1430</b>	<b>Open space</b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>World Dance</b>	<b>Luna Night Club, Don Chan</b>

**Forum Programme: Day 5: Friday, November 17, 2006**

<b>0830</b>	<b>Forum position paper presentation and Report back from the Policy and Practise Panel</b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1030</b>	<b>Participant evaluation of the IFWF</b>	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1100</b>	<b>Break</b>	
	<b>Closing remarks</b>	
<b>1130</b>	His Excellency, Mr. Sitaheng Latsaphone, Lao Minister of Agriculture and Forestry	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1200</b>	<b>Moving forward: translating the Forum into Practice</b> Jonathan Woolley, CPWF Coordinator	<b>SR 1</b>
<b>1230</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> Floor</b>
<b>1400</b>	<b>Vientiane Site-seeing trips</b>	

