CARIAA 2nd Annual Learning Review

The 2nd CARIAA Annual Learning Review brought together over 80 participants from 15 countries for three days in Wageningen, the Netherlands. Under the theme for this year’s event, “Collaboration and Synthesis in CARIAA”, participants brainstormed common themes for research, and discussed ways to improve the systems and processes that enable collaboration and synthesis to take place. The event concluded with a number of concrete proposals for cross-consortia collaboration.

Objective for the Annual Learning Review

The main objective of the 2nd Annual Learning Review (ALR2) was:

To agree on common themes for research, research uptake and synthesis where innovative approaches by consortia have the potential to be taken to scale and to have an impact on vulnerability reduction in the CARIAA hotspots; and to understand how CARIAA can help to better unlock consortia’s potential on such themes.

Beyond this objective, Bernard Cantin (IDRC) and Ken De Souza (DFID) emphasized that the purpose of the ALR2 was to find ways to make CARIAA’s whole greater than the sum of its parts. It was an opportunity to build a culture of collaboration—a key word in the title of the program—through safe spaces for finding new ideas or old ideas that work, thinking outside the box and being experimental, and having fun.

Days 1 & 2: Collaboration and synthesis

The first two days of the event, focused on developing topics for collaboration, followed a diamond shape (see Figure 1). Brainstorming began at the top of the diamond with a few concrete, existing topics (from the consortia updates and enlightening sessions), broadening out to a “messy middle” of a wide range of potential ideas, (including some more experimental and out-of-the-box ideas) at the end of Day 1, and then closed at the end of Day 2 at the bottom of the diamond, with a distilled set of topics and detailed proposals for collaboration on those topics. Day 3 then investigated the enabling environment for collaboration.

Consortia updates

Day 1 started with short updates by the Principal Investigators (PIs) on their consortium’s research progress, initial findings, challenges encountered and lessons learned to date. All four presentations are
available on the CARIAA drive.\textsuperscript{1} Further details of consortia’s research were presented via posters in a marketplace format. Electronic versions of some of the posters are also available on the CARIAA drive.\textsuperscript{2}

During these updates participants were encouraged to note ideas for collaboration that occurred to them on cards. Afterwards, participants shared their ideas in brief table discussions.

Enlightening sessions

Following the formal introductions, representatives from each consortium also presented a short “enlightening” session highlighting innovative work with potential for cross-consortia collaboration. The presentations are listed in Table 1 above.\textsuperscript{3}

ASSAR explored the role of stakeholder engagement in Vulnerability and Risk Assessments (VRAs) in achieving more meaningful and equitable adaptation. In spite of challenges to their ease of use, reliability, and currency, well-designed VRAs remain useful tools that can help researchers to understand the drivers of vulnerability, and ensure relevance and uptake. Through stakeholder engagement, VRAs can become spaces of dialogue, joint analysis and learning that include and empower the most vulnerable, and enable true collaboration.

PRISE introduced value chain analysis for resilience in drylands (VC-ARID). PRISE uses VC-ARID to identify pathways for climate-resilient economic development through vertical and horizontal transformation in semi-arid lands. VC-ARID involves a 3-step approach: 1) mapping the value chain, 2) identifying climate risks, and 3) identifying options for adaptation and private sector investment. Seasonality, informal value chains, and gender are important considerations in this kind of analysis.

DECCMA presented its work monitoring coastal flooding along the Volta Delta shoreline using drones. Drones are a cost-effective way to capture images of flooding and coastal erosion over time, compared to traditional methods of monitoring like satellite imaging. They can also help researchers to identify and assess the prevalence of activities that may be contributing to erosion, like sand mining.

HI-AWARE examined the problem of rising temperatures as a consequence of climate change. Heat wave events in South Asia in 2015 took over 4,000 lives and over a billion people are currently at risk. Air conditioners, while they reduce heat stress, are costly and energy intensive solutions. An integrated solution is needed – one that combines multiple approaches to reducing heat stress (e.g. innovative building materials and urban design), a long-term perspective, and the involvement of local stakeholders.

Themes for collaboration

An adapted Open Space process encouraged participants to select and refine themes for cross-consortia collaboration.\textsuperscript{4} Participants used cards to note additional topics for collaboration that emerged from the enlightening sessions. The cards from each table were then collected and displayed.
on the wall. The word cloud in Figure 2 highlights some of the common topics that emerged.

The cards were then sorted into themes by the participants and facilitators. These included: monitoring and evaluation (M&E), migration, social differentiation and gender, engagement, research into use (RiU), communication, governance, capacity building, collaboration, climate scenarios, pathways to adaptation, and regions.

Participants were asked to volunteer to host a discussion on a topic with potential for cross-consortia collaboration. The topics brought forward included the 16 topics on the left side of Figure 3 below.

After an initial discussion and some consolidation and refinement of topics, most of the topics on the right side of the image were taken forward into Day 2. There were three exceptions: Firstly, for a 17th topic, the Environmental and Economic Value Chain, a simple, concrete plan to convene the group members later in the year for a 1-day meeting was made and the discussion was concluded there, as no proposal was needed. Secondly, the Remittances topic was at least temporarily sunsetted as too few event participants were interested. And lastly, the Climate Finance topic was taken forward to proposal stage and then a natural conclusion was reached.

Through several planning sessions, concrete proposals for collaboration were developed for each of these topics. Some of these proposals are available in a dedicated folder on the CARIAA drive. Summaries of each proposal follow:

The Migration in West Africa proposal sets out three objectives: 1) Identify key stakeholders working on services supporting migrants in CARIAA countries in West Africa, or those working on leveraging and directing the flow of remittances; 2) initiate a dialogue with those stakeholders, with the objective of clarifying their knowledge needs in order to enhance the effectiveness and impacts of their work; and 3) identify how the knowledge emerging from CARIAA can contribute to fulfill these needs, as well as the best modalities for knowledge transfer (including specific opportunities within the life of CARIAA).

The Private Climate Finance group aims to find ways to effectively access public and private finance...
and encourage CARIAA consortia to share lessons learned. Group members from the four consortia have agreed to: develop an inventory of public and private climate finance sources (DECCMA), explore business model development (ASSAR and Hi-WARE), and explore absorption capacity (Hi-WARE).

**Stories of Change** has already obtained funding from CARIAA’s Opportunities and Synergies Fund. In partnership with Euforic Services, the group has developed a guidance document for the development and tracking of stories of change, and is hosting a workshop in Ethiopia in July to discuss the guidance and learn about useful tools.

The **Water Governance** group aims to analyze the elements needed for local water governance to be effective and adaptable in the face of resource variability resulting from climate change. The group will map those elements across all scales, from local to international/transboundary in a number of case study areas. Assessments of effectiveness will be based on biophysical and socio-economic indicators chosen by individual consortia – e.g. gender, health, poverty, stakeholder participation, and environmental quality (including water quality, biodiversity, forest cover, etc.)

The **Heat Stress** proposal is forthcoming. The group plans to begin with a stock-take on data related to health and heat stress linked to climate change. They would then conduct research to fill gaps in currently available information.

The **1.5°C vs. 2.0°C** proposal sets out a plan to develop peer-reviewed inputs to the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 Degrees, on the implications of this global warming scenario for high-vulnerability hot-spots in Africa and Asia including semi-arid regions, glacier-fed rivers, and deltas. The group will undertake a suite of analyses and associated science input activities specific to the 1.5 degrees issue. The analyses will leverage the existing research investments of each CARIAA consortium, to interrogate their results across climate science, biophysical and socio-economic impacts and vulnerability, as well as policy, in light of the 1.5 degrees issue.

The **Traditional Knowledge** proposal specifies the following activities: 1) Characterization of traditional adaptation practices and local innovations in 7 pilot countries; 2) prioritization of the observations and issues; 3) integration of traditional and introduced innovations using participatory action research (PAR); and 4) dissemination of climate smart innovations.

The **Gender and Social Differentiation** group plans to carry out critical explorations of identified themes across consortia using a comparative social analysis/gender perspective. Possible themes include: migration, agro-pastoralism, scale, transformation/complexity of change, and risk. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), the group aims to: 1) develop a typology of gender/social contexts that contribute to adaptation responses/pathways across multiple risk contexts and multiple scales/countries; 2) develop a typology of risk factors and conditionalities that lead to different gender and social equity outcomes; and 3) develop appropriate tools for data collection and analysis.

IDRC is offering several types of support for these collaborations (see Box 1 below):

1. **Technical support:** IDRC has supported the development of the CARIAA Knowledge Management platform and associated Google tools, and continues to support maintenance and improvements.
2. **Facilitative leadership:** the IDRC/CARIAA Program Officers have received training and can be used as a resource for kick-starting work.
3. **Financial support:** through the Opportunities and Synergies Fund (OSF). This fund could help extend collaboration to institutions outside of CARIAA.
4. **Euforic Services support:** can help you to facilitate piloting of knowledge synthesis activities within or across consortia using an action learning approach. This approach will document the process and outcomes, and generate recommendations about these activities for ongoing CARIAA consortium work.

**Box 1. Support from CARIAA**

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**Day 3: The enabling environment for collaboration and synthesis**

The focus of Day 3 was taking stock of each consortium’s—and CARIAA’s—enabling environment for collaboration and synthesis.

**CARIAA’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy**

The day began with a brief review of CARIAA’s MEL Strategy in plenary. The strategy has four elements, as shown at right in Figure 4.
You can revisit the CARIAA MEL Strategy on the CARIAA Drive. The CARIAA Theory of Change diagram is also available separately.

**Synergies between consortia and program level**

Following the MEL Strategy review, a breakout session allowed consortia teams to discuss the alignment (or lack thereof) between their consortium theories of change, M&E frameworks, RIU strategies or impact pathways, and the CARIAA theory of change. In a radio show-style report back in plenary, it emerged that all four consortia have developed a theory of change—most using CARIAA’s as a their starting point, tailoring it to the consortium’s specific objectives. In addition to this synergy, ASSAR has regional-level impact pathways that align with its theory of change; HI-AWARE has an M&E framework that has been mapped onto its theory of change; and PRISE has country-level theories of change and is looking at synergies between them. Participants noted the need to map a CARIAA theory of change from the bottom up, starting either with consortia or the local level.

**Planning for collaboration using the CARIAA MEL framework**

With this understanding of the larger CARIAA monitoring, evaluation and learning context (and the consortia’s place within it), a breakout session allowed consortia to assess their status and achievements in the four learning dimensions of the CARIAA Learning Framework (Engagement, Capacity Development, Iterative Learning, and Challenging Institutions), with respect to what they need for successful collaboration. Cross-consortia learning dimension groups then gathered to consider ways to align relevant consortium systems and processes across CARIAA. Participants brought their learning from these groups back to their consortia, and gathered recommendations for improving their efforts in each learning dimension. A sample of the ideas that emerged across CARIAA is presented below in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Dimension</th>
<th>Planning points</th>
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| Engagement                  | • Improve flow of information from PIs down to masters students and up to CARIAA  
                              | • Build space to learn about and reflect on engagement into engagement platforms—what is working, who is missing  
                              | • Make better use of the tools and processes already available in CARIAA  |
| Capacity Development        | • Align strategy styles (opportunistic vs. forward thinking), formats (Skype vs. Hangouts) and timing (e.g. of meetings) across consortia to reflect on CD  
                              | • Seize external training opportunities  
                              | • Partnerships (and leadership for them) are needed  |
| Challenging Institutions    | • Challenge institutions on time, staffing, cultural diversity  
                              | • Regular communication  
                              | • Changes to increase sharing: annual calendar of activities, data sharing mechanisms, framework for shared learning  |
| Iterative Learning          | • Face-to-face meetings bringing different levels together  
                              | • Frequent reflection for all - voice increased ownership  
                              | • Design budgets that can adapt to delays generated by reflection  
                              | • Use OSF proposal for RIU framework to bring CARIAA together to reflect  |

Table 2. Building an enabling environment for collaboration and learning
Conclusion and next steps

The event concluded with a number of concrete proposals for cross-consortia collaboration and the improvement of consortium processes and systems that enable collaboration. Several next steps have been identified to take these plans forward:

1. Themes for collaboration: groups to finalize proposals, upload proposals to the CARIAA Drive, and begin implementation if they haven’t done so already.
2. Learning dimension plans: consortia to continue planning that was started.
3. Support from CARIAA: Box 1 on page 4 describes some of the support available for collaboration. Please note: If your collaboration group would like support from Euforic Services please email Blane Harvey (blane.l.harvey@gmail.com) and Pete Cranston (pete.euforic@gmail.com).
4. Semi-annual learning review 2016 and ALR 2017: consortia to be consulted on date for the next semi-annual and annual learning reviews.

Evaluation results

The end-of-event evaluation results indicated that participants were overall satisfied with the quality of the event, its relevance and utility for their own work, and the opportunities it provided to find ways to collaborate with other consortia. Detailed results are provided in Figure 5 below.

Endnotes

1. https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxawpM0J8FTszZEVaQmtnJpN0U0.
4. Please see Annex 1 for details on the facilitation techniques used.
5. https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxawpM0J8FTsd39sJNkJRZDZDTQ.
6. https://drive.google.com/a/cariaa.net/file/d/0B9rMWHe0qgc1QrJKNmlRZDZDTQ/view?usp=sharing.
Annex: Facilitation Techniques

The following are some of the facilitation techniques used at the event. All definitions are from the online Knowledge Sharing Toolkit.

**After Action Review:** A simple process used by a team to capture the lessons learned from past successes and failures, with the goal of improving future performance. It is an opportunity for a team to reflect on a project, activity, event or task so that they can do better the next time.

**Appreciative Inquiry:** The art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them.

**Card Collection/Card Sorting:** A facilitated process that involves the use of cards to gather ideas from people, especially where a diversity of answers is expected. Starting with a question, ideas are captured on cards and later clustered based on similarities.

**Dot-mocracy:** A method for collecting and prioritizing ideas among a large number of people. It is an equal opportunity and participatory group decision-making process. Participants write down ideas and apply dots under each idea to show which ones they prefer. The final result is a visual representation of the group’s collective preferences.

**Energizers and time outside:** A short burst of physical activity to get the blood flowing to the brain and wake participants up. Walking outdoors alone or with a partner also stimulates out-of-the-box thinking and frees participants from the confines of the conference room.

**Knowledge Carousel/Englightening Sessions:** Short, snappy presentations provide an opportunity to showcase innovative research.

**Marketplace:** Aims to be a meeting place where exchange can happen informally around an exhibition with technical booths, posters, demonstrations, training sessions and more.

**Open Space:** A method for convening groups around a specific question or task and giving them responsibility for creating both their own agenda and experience. It is best used when at least a half to two full days are available. The facilitator’s key task is to identify the question that brings people together, offer the simple process, then stand back and let participants do the work.

**Talk show:** Encourages participants to share experiences in an informal, fun environment. Because it requires minimal preparation of participants, the chat show can be initiated in a workshop where participants don’t yet know each other or the organisers. The chat show’s open circle layout encourages greater participation than a fishbowl and, due to its informal nature, is less intimidating than a panel discussion.

**Spectrogram:** A group face-to-face exercise to help surface similarities and differences in a group, help people to get to know each other and to do something together that is active. Participants answer a question or give their opinion by selecting a place to stand along a line drawn on the floor, representing a spectrum between two answers/opinions.

**Voting with your feet:** A method for prioritization of issues for analysis in a planning or visioning exercise. Participants first volunteer to lead a group, and then once group leaders have been identified remaining participants decide which group discussions they wish to join. Any topic for which there are no volunteers for leaders, or for which there are few or no willing participants is not taken forward, since the participants voted with their feet not to prioritize it.

Information on other events is available on the CARIAA Knowledge Management Platform. CARIAA is funded by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). The program aims to build the resilience of vulnerable populations and their livelihoods in three climate change hot spots in Africa and Asia.

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