

# **Inception Meeting of 'SAWA Leadership Program'**

**17th and 18th January 2018**

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The meeting for the inception of the project was held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in New Delhi. The meeting aimed to bring together project leaders, project in-charge, project coordinator and the donors to discuss and revise the project milestones, activities and schedule. The project was conceptualized in 2016, but there was an exceptionally long delay in obtaining the country clearance due to which an inception meeting was considered crucial for the successful implementation of the project. The meeting served as a platform to revisit the program objectives and to discuss in detail the methods through which the objectives can be fulfilled. The following sections give a detailed account of the discussions.

### **Recruitment:**

- SaciWATERS will do a Skype meeting with the potential candidates before they submit SoPs. This is to ensure that the candidates have a clear understanding of the rationale of SoP.
- It has been proposed that the selection committee should comprise of an external and should be constituted in a way to ensure gender balance.

### **Internship:**

- PIs and SaciWATERS will prepare a list of potential organisations where the students can do their internships.
- SaciWATERS and IDRC will provide recommendation letters to students while applying for internships.
- On completion of internship, the student has to submit a report to SaciWATERS. The report will be a part of the overall assessment being carried out at the institution.

### **Interdisciplinary Mentorship**

- Students will be assigned mentors based on their area of research
- External examiners will be present during mid-term and final assessments of the students.

- A research advisory committee will be constituted. The committee will help the students in preparing the research proposal and also will provide support during the research work.
- Coordinators will identify the potential mentors and will share with SaciWATERS and IDRC.
- It has been proposed that the students must do a joint publication with the mentor.

### **Regional Training Workshop:**

- Proposed time for the workshop: Mid to end August, 2018
- The Resource Persons that have been identified are: Aditi, ICIMOD; Blane from IDRC Ottawa; David Molden, ICIMOD; Floriane Clement, IWMI Nepal
- Drawing experiences from the previous project, the team is keen on exploring the possibility to invite Dr. Peter Mollinga as a resource person to deliver lectures on interdisciplinarity
- SaciWATERS will explore co-funding from UNDP CapNet

### **Common course structure/ South-south learning framework**

- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), gender and water and Integrated Field Research Methodology (IFRM) will be taken up for revision.
- During the common course development, the professors from all the PIs teaching the course will be taken on board. Experts will be identified for reviewing and revising the current course structure in the four PIs. The experts will update the course to ensure commonality across the PIs.
- As a follow up to the above activity, it is proposed that guest lectures will be delivered by experts in the relevant fields. This is to provide handholding support to the PIs at least for two years after the common course content is developed. The international travel and other costs could be used from the funds allocated for 'guest lectures'.

- To ensure a south-south learning, active interaction between coordinators is necessary. Following initiatives have been discussed:
  - Joint Publication:
    - Technical paper on leadership and Capacity Building
    - Workshop documentations
    - Academic publications

### **Review Workshop**

- The workshop will be held at a stage when the students will be ready with the proposals
- It will be conducted virtually via webinar. The experts reviewing the work will be invited to SaciWATERS and the students will be connected via the webinar.
- The review of proposals will be conducted at different times for the 4 PIs. The review for BUET and CWR will be done jointly and the review for NEC and PGIA will be done jointly.

### **Special issue of SAWA Journal:**

- The program proposes to have a special issue of SAWA journal dedicated to the grantees of the fellowship. This issue will be planned at the end of year 2.
- It has been proposed that the supervisors and mentors have to closely monitor the quality of work of the student and should do a joint publication.

### **Inter- university collaborations:**

- Inter university collaborations will be encouraged through joint publications between the coordinators and SaciWATERS and also between the awardees from the four PIs.
- It has been proposed that international internships of fellows with the other PIs could foster inter-university collaboration through knowledge sharing and joint publications.

## **Themes for research**

- Unlike the previous phase, the current program proposes to have a broad theme where the students will have the freedom to choose their topic of interest. Broadly the students are expected to research around climate change, water and gender

## **Timely submission of thesis**

To ensure submission of thesis within 2 years from the commencement of the program, the selected candidates will sign an agreement with the institution and SaciWATERS. The agreement would state the following:

- Fellowship amount of four months will be retained until the submission of thesis
- Failure to submit thesis within two years from the date of commencement of the course, will result in the withdrawal of the fellowship amount of the last four months.
- Only on successful submission of thesis within the period of two years will the student be awarded a certificate of appreciation from IDRC and SaciWATERS and also a letter of recommendation.

Only in exceptional cases such as illness or pregnancy, a no-cost extension for a maximum duration of six months will be given to the students for submitting the thesis. In all other cases the student needs to make the submission within two years from the date of commencement of the course.

### **SaciWATERS monitoring**

- Saciwaters will closely monitor the progress of the students. Apart from the monitoring visits, the project coordinator will closely interact with the PI coordinators and students to monitor the progress.
- SaciWATERS will also arrange a meeting with the supervisors and mentors to take an account of the student's progress.

### **Sensitivity to challenges faced by women**

- The project will grant maternity leave upto a mximum duration of six months. In such cases, the students will be given two and a half years for the submission of thesis