

# **The Context of this Workshop**

---

**Arnold van Huis**

*International coordinator*

The Ambassador,  
Doyen of the University of Abomey-Calavi  
and  
the CoS-SIS Community

The half yearly meetings of CoS-SIS have always been an extremely useful exercise. The programme follows a process approach. This means that objectives, workplan and activities are continuously being evaluated and adjusted. We aim at a moving target, and therefore we need to be flexible and creative. Each workshop is a fresh reflection about our work and provides new guidelines on how to proceed.

In June 2009, the exploratory studies of the Research Associates were presented during the large international workshop in Elmina, Ghana. This provided guidance into the identification of entry points for research and development. In 2009 this was followed by a small international workshop in Wageningen in October 2009 where Research Associates, PhD students and Wageningen supervisors focused on these entry points.

The programme of this workshop will take two days in order to evaluate what happened until present, while the last two days will focus on what need to happen next.

The objectives of the workshop are in particular the deepening of the reflections on the research design- and the implications for the way forward.

The first days the students will report on the progress of the diagnostic and baseline studies, while the Research Associates will report on the progress of the Concertation and Innovation Groups. We also hope to be able to identify cross cutting issues for the whole programme.

The last day will also enable us to discuss critical issues between PhD students, between Research Associates and between supervisors. The Scientific Coordination Committee will meet with the national Programme Coordinators.

The students have almost spent a whole year in Wageningen (February 2009 till March 2010) except two months (July and August) in which they carried out some scoping studies in their home countries. This means that the students would have to return September 2012 for the last half year in Wageningen. It will now be explored whether the budget would allow for a prolongation of the field studies up till the end of December 2012 which will then imply an extra 4 months of field work. The half year period in the Netherlands would then be from January till the end of June 2013 after which the dissertation should be ready.

In May 2010 the SCC visited the three countries and wrote a very critical report of which the findings were discussed during the small international workshop in Bamako in June 2010. One major issue was the functioning of the CIGs. The concept of the CIG proved to be difficult to comprehend. However, we are coming to a better understanding of the CoS-SIS research process. Therefore, this publication of the proceedings of this workshop is titled: *Consolidating the CoS-SIS Research Agenda*.