

Towards a Strategy and Results Framework for the CGIAR

Report No.1 on process and progress of the “Strategy Committee”

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Introduction

- The Committee was appointed on April 8, 2009. The Committee’s tasks are defined by a detailed terms of reference, approved by the Alliance of CGIAR Centers.
- The CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), based on the already defined CGIAR Vision and Strategic Objectives, will describe how the CGIAR can most effectively use its resources to contribute to this vision.
- Developing the CGIAR SRF and Mega Programs requires an iterative process of analysis and consultation. The process will be used to develop the SRF of the CGIAR for the next six years.
- The process and methodologies used will be well documented and replicable so that it can serve the Consortium Board in future years as the strategy and results framework is revisited and the programs expanded.

1. Objectives, tasks and approach

A. CGIAR mission, vision, and strategic objectives for framing the Strategy and Results Framework

A world free of poverty and hunger, supported by healthy and resilient ecosystems is the vision that the CGIAR holds for a better world. The CGIAR must contribute to achieving this vision, along with partners and stakeholders and potential beneficiaries. The committee will base its work on the CGIAR “visioning paper” of June 2008. The committee will not revisit the “visioning” and will not come up with a new Mission, Vision, or new Strategic Objectives). The three Strategic Objectives (SOs) of the CGIAR, as stated below, start from a recognition that the CGIAR focuses on people, especially the poor, women and the marginalized:.

FOOD FOR PEOPLE Create and accelerate sustainable increases in the productivity and production of healthy food by and for the poor

ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE Conserve, enhance and sustainably use natural resources and biodiversity to improve the livelihoods of the poor in response to climate change and other factors

POLICIES FOR PEOPLE Promote policy and institutional change that will stimulate agricultural growth and equity to benefit the poor, especially rural women and other disadvantaged groups.

¹ Meredith Soule provided substantive contributions to the Committee and to this briefing note

It is recognized that the Strategic Objectives can only be achieved with the contribution of other partners and government actions and policies. The Strategic Objectives were designed to address the key development challenges facing the poor where the CGIAR has a comparative advantage.

B. The role of the SRF and positioning Mega Programs (MPs) in the system

A results framework is a methodology used for planning, management and communication. Given that the CGIAR is a research organization, an appropriate adaptation to the characteristics of research, i.e. uncertainty of success, is necessary.

The MPs are an integral part of the Strategy and Results Framework and are located at the intermediate objective level and are tied to the SOs through a cause and effect logic. The MPs can also be understood as the key delivery mechanism for the outputs of the SRF.

The MP portfolio should constitute a coherent agenda, integrating food, environment and policy issues in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and the CGIAR's key development challenges. Each MP will be designed as part of the integrated portfolio, with explicit linkages with other MPs. Gender issues and capacity building will be fully integrated in the portfolio. The MPs will show the quantifiable outcomes with pathways to the ultimate impacts that the CGIAR can deliver and having co-responsibility for impacts, all with a range of partners.

C. Mode of operation and timeline

The Committee is in regular communication by email, weekly teleconferences and plans its first face-to-face meeting on May 3-4th in Washington

The Committee will consult relevant documents, including those listed in the Terms of Reference.

The Committee will liaise with relevant groups both inside the CGIAR (Science Council, various committees, such as team working on the 'mock up MPs') and outside the CGIAR (private sector, Global Partnership, GFAR, development investors, and others)

D. Timing

- Progress updates will be provided in PowerPoint form and a draft paper for discussion by the Alliance at the 11-13 May meeting.
- A revised version for the CGIAR June 2009 Executive Committee meeting as 'work in progress' will be produced.
- Analytical quantitative and qualitative work will be guided and evaluated by the committee (in cooperation with CGIAR Centers and partners).
- Consultations with partners and stakeholders will take place.
- A report will be prepared for the Alliance by August 31 which may be a basis for wider consultation with the research and development communities.
- Revisions and presentation of the draft final document will be made at CGIAR events in late 2009 and 2010.

2. CGIAR strategy context

The context for the CGIAR's strategy includes both challenges and opportunities. Therefore, analysis is needed of what the world might look like in the coming decades. The SRF needs to build on "foresight" regarding the food situation and emerging technological and institutional change.

The world is ever changing due to interactions between biophysical factors including climate change, water scarcity, land degradation, population growth (especially in the poorer countries) and a wide range of market forces which together determine the current and future distribution of the poor and hungry. A critical need is for the CGIAR to be able to predict the potential consequences of such change and to use research to provide effective responses in terms of adaptive management strategies and options for policy responses that maintain and increase food production and sustain the natural resource base and environment. These factors establish the overall context of the CGIAR's SRF.

A regional perspective of the diverse needs in the different regions will also be required.

Analysis and consultation are required to understand where the CGIAR's investments can make the most difference. On the supply side, the most effective contributions of the CGIAR are dependent partly on its historic strength and past impacts and its current core assets and comparative advantage as a research organization developing international public goods.

The functions of the CGIAR help to define the role the CGIAR should play within the evolving global agricultural research and knowledge system:

- Conducting research for development.
- Conserving core collections of germplasm and related knowledge.
- Sustaining the natural resource base of agricultural production
- Catalyzing science and its applications.
- Institutional innovations, development and testing
- Evidence based policy making.
- Capacity development.
- Raising awareness, including anticipation/foresight.

The Committee will consider the CGIAR's assets and dynamic comparative advantages over the coming (10) years in view of challenges and alternative providers.

3. SRF and portfolio of Mega Programs – the Concept

Building a results framework is a collaborative process. The design of a results framework provides an opportunity to build consensus and ownership around shared objectives and approaches to meeting those objectives.

The Strategy Committee will rely on the three approaches and criteria as described below to screen and rank possible research opportunities as well as to settle on a critical portfolio of Mega Programs for achieving the Strategic Objectives for a first 6-year phase (2010-2015).

Approach I [“trust in models”]: Strategic program options will be derived analytically from global and regional challenges (based on analyses of development challenges, and qualitative and quantitative risk and opportunity assessments).

Bases: quantitative analyses and modeling (with alternative / competing providers)

This approach will require starting with a good understanding of current and likely future global and regional distribution of poverty and hunger and relation to commodities, production systems, environmental problems, governance etc.; analyses with modeling, refined with sensitivity analyses; analyses with common scenario assumptions across a number of agricultural, integrated assessment, and general equilibrium models. The approach will employ various models: “HarvestChoice” spatial analyses; Center data bases and analyses; triangulation with various models; cooperation with the UK Foresight agriculture and food futures project; the EC futures project; and other ongoing assessments. The scenario assessments will be used to assess the potential impacts of a range of research opportunities, using input from Approaches II and III below to help define the underlying assumptions and drivers for the models.

Approach II [“trust in wisdom”]: consultation with science leaders, stakeholders, and partners

Bases: formal assessment surveys, Delphi, etc. on research opportunities

Delphi surveys among leaders in the professions and stakeholders (including. GFAR, regional fora, and other partners and experts). The systematic and interactive approach of the Delphi method will be used to develop forecasts of difficult-to-measure parameters for which data is not readily available.

Approach III [“trust in frontline research leaders”]: projection options defined bottom up by scientists’ driven innovation

Bases: the science leaders in the CGIAR define programs with partners of their choice; intensive peer reviewing; large space for “blue sky” innovation in broadly defined MPs, with appropriate milestones and clearly defined results.

The committee will reassess the “best bets” survey of Centers (2008) and additional structured surveys among science leaders in the CGIAR Centers and beyond. The survey will assess expert opinion on expected benefits of research by research activity, crop, livestock, fisheries, forestry and agro-forestry, policy and natural resource research, by region.

Mapping the landscape of concrete possible Mega Program topics

Research opportunities will be screened and ranked through the approach described above, draw on the landscape of concrete opportunities already in existence from the Center survey (in the CGIAR Best-Bets Paper), the February 2009 CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs Workshop, the Working Group 1 paper, Table 2, FORAGRO priorities, APAARI Priorities, and others. These topics can be clustered under the three SOs (Food for People, Environment for People, Policies/Institutions for People) including cutting across the SOs and will be taken into consideration in the analysis.

Aggregation and comparative assessments by the committee:

The committee will combine in an iterative manner the three approaches.

Allocating investment across the three strategic objectives is complicated because the results and impact of each do not have a common metric. Thus priority setting across the strategic objectives may use expert choice systems to elicit stakeholder and expert input to evaluate the qualitative and quantitative aspects in developing relative priorities across the various goals.

Aggregation needs to be combined with criteria that reflect sense of urgency, i.e. what things first, second, and third. For instance the long-term neglect of productivity enhancement may need to get significant priority in a first set of Mega Programs. Table A provides an initial indication of possible criteria for selecting among competing Mega Programs.

Table A. Potential Criteria for Selecting Among Competing Research Opportunities and Eventually Among Mega Programs

Scientific Merit	Scientific objective and significance Potential for new discoveries and understanding
Social Benefits	Contribution to poverty and hunger reduction in developing countries Contribution to benefiting women Contribution to productivity growth for food Contribution to enhancing sustainability International public goods
Programmatic Concerns	Alignment with Vision and Strategic Objectives Feasibility and readiness with a given timeframe Scientific logistics and infrastructure Comparative advantage vs. alternative suppliers Contribution to capacity building Building partnerships Cost of proposed initiative

The following steps will be followed to construct and narrow down the possible MPs:

- Review priority research opportunities for synergies—where research on one would reduce the cost of research to others
- Cluster research opportunities into Mega Programs that maximize synergies and that fit criteria identified above for Mega Programs
- Review tentative portfolios of Mega Programs in terms of potential overlaps and duplication, notional budget envelopes etc and iterate toward a draft portfolios. Refine the global Strategy and Results Framework and portfolio based on development impacts
- Consultations with Centers, partners and stakeholders on alternative portfolios of MPs One or several SRF and MP development workshop(s) – virtual and real – are envisioned, engaging stakeholder groups (e.g. GFAR, other research communities and Centre research leaders) for "Mapping the Landscape" and narrowing the research opportunities.

The approaches and methods described above can be summarized in Table B as a framework for developing and presenting the MP portfolio. Few MPs may largely concentrate their work within one SO, while probably most will be cross-cutting. The SOs determine the main criteria by which the MP topics will be judged (e.g. poverty reduction, etc.), but additional criteria, as described above, shall also be applied. The final determination will depend on weighing the

criteria and applying expert choice, consultation, etc. and ultimately enters a policy process beyond the scope of this committee.

Table B: Framing Priority Areas and Mega Programs theoretically and conceptually

Mega Program FOCUS AREAS	SYSTEM OBJECTIVES			RESULTS FRAMEWORK (criteria for choices)
	Food for...	Environment for...	Policies for...	
on Food for...	XXXXXXXXXX	X	X	Poverty reduction Productivity growth Sustainability enhancing Risk reduction Gender
on Environment for...	X	XXXXXXXXXX	X	
on Policies for...	X	X	XXXXXXXXXX	
cross-cutting	XXXX	XXXX		
cross-cutting	XXXX		XXXX	
cross-cutting		XXXX	XXXX	
cross-cutting	XXX	XXX	XXX	
Aggregation to strategic priorities and actual MP options and choices with time lines (next 10 years)	MP 1.1 MP 1.2 MP 1.N	MP 2.1 MP 2.2 MP 2.N	MP 3.1 MP 3.2 MP 3.N	Weighing of criteria (Committee, e.g. aided by “expert choice “ or other such decision aiding computer programs; partner consultations)

System-wide impact targets and impact pathways

The SRF will include an indication of the targets, methods and partnerships for each MP that will feed into the achievement of the SOs. To deliver on the SOs and MP targets, for each MP, these need to be defined with...

- 1) Realistic, measurable, and regionally disaggregated and gender disaggregated impact targets, national or regional indicators, specific targets and impact pathways;
- 2) Strategic partnership approach; Goal: strengthen strategic partnerships along the impact pathways; build on current partnerships and define principles for selecting new strategic partners; The MPs may need to include the strengths of decentralized systems.
- 3) Comparative/collaborative advantage of the Consortium and its partners on delivering on these targets;
- 4) Research needs to be complemented by other functions to achieve the potential of impact pathways (outreach, communications, capacity-building, strategic partnerships, etc.);