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Issue Brief

Improving the Annual Work Plan and Budget Development Process

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CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food secure future. The CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish aims to increase the productivity of small-scale livestock and fish systems in sustainable ways, making meat, milk and fish more available and affordable across the developing world. The Program brings together four CGIAR Centers: the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with a mandate on livestock; the WorldFish Center with a mandate on aquaculture; the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), which works on forages; and the International Center for Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), which works on small ruminants.

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The issue

The Consortium Office has requested that CRPs submit Annual Plans of Work and Budgets (POWB) at the beginning of each calendar year (mid-February). This is intended to facilitate Consortium-level planning, but is also important for consolidating our internal CRP planning processes as well. We have organized the development of the POWB as a bottom-up process by Theme, which is then consolidated at CRP level.

The process for the 2013 POWBs started in December 2012 with a request from the Management Team to Centers and Theme Leaders to develop these documents based on the template circulated by the Consortium Office. Initial budget allocations to centers were agreed at the PPMC in December and confirmed as additional information about W1/W2 funding arrangements became known. Based on the instructions in the Consortium template, Theme Leaders and Centers were also requested to aggregate their activities into larger groups using \$250,000 per annum as a dollar-value guideline.

The Management Team provided two templates to facilitate this process (see Annexes):

- a. A lower level Work Plan and Budget template that, it was suggested, the focal points in each Center use as they worked with their teams to identify the deliverables they would commit to for the year (Annex 1) consistent with the agreed logframe previously developed by each Theme. The template was intended to help make an inventory of the resources they will have available to ensure the feasibility of what was promised and as a way of ensuring they saw how various bilateral or CG Fund-funded activities contribute to the Livestock and Fish Program. It was not intended as a report that they would have to necessarily submit to the Theme Leaders or the Management Team, though it is clear that this can facilitate cross-center planning.
- b. Based on the above planning exercise, the Theme Work Plan & Budget template that summarizes the key information is completed (Annex 2) so that the Theme Leader can see the larger picture of how the various Center activities contribute and what resources they are committing. That spreadsheet allows the Management Team to set the Activity Plan as the amendment to the PPA for the year. The Theme POWBs are then joined to form the CRP POWB for submission to the Consortium Office.

The process was delayed this year in part due to the difficulty in defining appropriately scaled milestones and activities as the basic reporting unit. The POWB for 2013 are not yet complete.

What lessons have we learned for ensuring a timely process in 2014?

Analysis

1. Obtain your feedback on the POWB process
2. Obtain feedback on the usefulness of the templates.
3. Jointly agree optimum start and finish dates for the POWB process.
4. Agree review responsibilities and turn-around times.

Annex 1: Individual Activity Work Plan and Budget Template

CGIAR Research Program on Livestock and Fish Implementation Plan 2013 Work Plan and Budget

This form provides the information needed to identify each CG Partner's commitments to deliverables contributing to the Livestock and Fish CRP, and the resources required. It is meant to provide sufficient detail to justify the aggregate budget being requested and to allow the reasonableness of the match between the level of effort and deliverable proposed to be judged. It is also intended to ensure oversight of the degree of alignment between the proposed deliverables and the CRP outputs, and to identify where there may be opportunities to improve that alignment through synergies across Themes and Centers. The deliverables and budget agreed through this process become the basis for the annual PPA between ILRI and each CG Partner and the internal ILRI agreement with each ILRI Research Theme.

The deliverables to be reported in the table on the following page are based on preliminary planning within each CRP Theme led by the Theme Leader in consultation with the CG Partner focal points. The deliverables generated by activities contribute to the agreed Theme outputs and milestones as defined in the recently revised Theme logframe. The Theme deliverables are expected to then link back to individual work plans in terms of time allocation and individual-level tasks and deliverables, and to CG Fund and restricted project budgets. The Theme activities are the basic planning unit that will be aggregated to derive each ILRI's Theme and CG Partner's work plan and budget for 2013. The deliverables are the evidence that the activities have been achieved.

CG Center:				Center Program:			
Livestock and Fish CRP Component:							
Component Output:							
Component Milestone:							
2013 Activity							
Short title:							
Description:							
Tasks:							
Deliverables:							
Research Staff							
Name	Post/ Grade	Total time allocated		Time by funding source			Specify project (1 row per project)
		Unit (Days/%)	Number	CG Fund Core	CG Fund Subsidy*	Restricted project	
*CG Fund Subsidy refers to any staff time that has been committed to a restricted project as counterpart funding or is deemed needed to deliver the restricted project outputs but is not supported directly with funding from the restricted project.							
2012 Budget (in US Dollars)							
	TOTAL	CG Fund Core	CG Fund Subsidy	Restricted project	Specify project (1 row per project)		
Personal							

Research						
Administrative						
Collaborator costs – CG Centers						
Collaborator costs – Other						
Supplies and Services						
Consultants						
Workshops/training						
Operating expenses						
Operational travel						
Depreciation						
Sub-total of Direct Costs						
Indirect Costs						
Total – all Costs						