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Issue Brief

Development Partnerships Methodology

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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 centres: the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with a mandate on livestock; WorldFish 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. http://livestockfish.cgiar.org

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Development Partnerships - Methods and Approaches

The Livestock and Fish CGIAR Research Program partnership strategy paper has laid out a rationale for multi-stakeholder learning across value chain systems as a basis for framing engagement with value chain actors and with development partners. In this section, approaches and methods to make this happen are defined.

The complexity of value chain systems is a feature of multivariate dynamics where social, political, economic and physical facets interact in unpredictable ways. To build partnerships, it is critical that we find better ways to understand what is going on, for it is around issues that make sense that partnerships are to be formed. Our methods and approaches will therefore examine ways and means of stimulating the right action by the right people in the right place at the right time.

Given value chain system complexity, this is difficult to get right in a deterministic manner, and our approach here will be to form relationships with other actors and value chain actors and with them, probe and respond to system dynamics. The act of probing is stimulated by discovery of new understanding that will be accompanied by action to test such understanding.

As we seek to achieve positive sustainable change at scale, methods and approaches of engagement must be able to make sense of multiple strands of action within complex dynamics. On the basis of this systemic analysis, we must then be able to intelligently engage across systems, taking actions with others to address priority issues.

The Frierian notion of action research describes a process of building consciousness and learning among system actors. This seeks to engage the participation of multiple actors in value chain systems to analyse, develop theories of change, plan action, take action and assess the effect of such action. At this point that we can first ask “given what we know are we still heading in the right direction” and secondly “if we are, is this still the best way to get there?” When conducted across multiple enquiry strands within a value chain system, this builds a basis to learn and change course as we go.

The understanding that we, other development actors and value chain system actors have at any point is uncertain, and requires testing. There is a danger of backing the wrong horse with too much investment without adequate assessment of uncertainty. Wynne 92 makes some useful distinctions between types of uncertainty where he defines four types as follows:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th><strong>We know the odds.</strong> We can talk authentically about risk when system behaviour is reasonably well known, and the chances of different outcomes can be defined and quantified.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td><strong>We don’t know the odds;</strong> When we know the important system parameters but not the probability distributions, we can talk in terms of uncertainties. There are sophisticated methods for estimating these and their effects on outcomes. These uncertainties are recognized, and explicitly included in analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td><strong>We don’t know what we don’t know.</strong> Ignorance increases with increased commitments based on given knowledge. By definition, ignorance escapes recognition. This is not so much a characteristic of knowledge itself, as of the linkages between knowledge and commitments based on it - in effect, bets on the completeness and validity of that knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminacy</td>
<td><strong>Causal chains or open networks;</strong> Indeterminacy exists in the open-ended question of whether knowledge is adapted to fit the mismatched realities of application situations, or whether those (technical and social) situations are reshaped to ‘validate’ the knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across a value chain system, levels of uncertainty will vary according to actor. Scientists will be able to bring understanding about the technical dimensions of critical innovations and be able to plan to mitigate technical risk in deployment. They will however be uncertain or ignorant with respect to contextual system patterns, and consequently be tempted to act in reliance on supposition. Likewise, value chain actors will have various levels of understanding about local social, political and economic dynamics that enable them to plan to mitigate certain risks.

First stage methodologies must offer ways and means of stimulating cross value chain system learning and collaboration that prompts action, reflection and adjustment, and seeks to reveal contextually appropriate innovations that are owned, evoke enthusiastic action and lead to adoption. The first alliances are formed at this stage between ourselves and development actors.

Second stage methodologies must then offer ways to build on a growing groundswell of contextually appropriate action and locally owned innovation to either stimulate widespread practice change within value chain systems, or to change system dynamics in ways that enable innovation and effect to spread. In the first instance, we will seek to help position value chain actors exploit opportunities. In the second instance, we will seek to break dysfunctional patterns such as gender inequity, and remove system blockages that prevent value chain advancement. This second stage requires the establishment of more profound relationships with whom such action can be facilitated and undertaken.
I. **First Stage Methodologies**

1) **Initiate Processes and Structures to Identify and Stimulate Collaborative Action Around Potent Value Chain System Issues**

Hall et al 2009, describe an innovation systems perspective where focus is placed on innovation rather than research in a bid to shift emphasis away from the production of knowledge and technology to its application. This requires processes whereby research-based knowledge and context-specific knowledge are combined for the development of solutions that actually work in a specific context. The capacity for such innovation must include a system or network of multiple nodes of expertise. They cite users of new products and services such as farmers and consumers, as being prominent nodes in their own right. In this paper, I expand this to include a wider group of system actors who are able to engage such nodes of expertise, and facilitate their participation, formation of network relationships, and learning capability. It is from this wider group that CRP L&F seeks to engage partners.

The partners we seek to engage are those who are active in facilitating innovation in livestock value chain systems, or who are demonstrably willing to be active in the same within countries of operation.

Achieving change at scale is a very different concept from rolling out interventions at scale. This distinction is vital in selecting partners. Sustainable scale comes from processes that either change intervention practices to enable innovation to better exploit existing system dynamics, or change system dynamics in ways that enable innovations to spread and adapt. This is at the heart of value chain systems transformation. It takes thoughtful, precise and well-targeted interventions to see system dynamics, and engage in ways that unlock value chain system blockages.

By contrast, many development actors operate on the basis that sustainable scale emanates from massive effort. This Big Push approach seeks a threshold effect when intervention “is substantial enough, and lasts long enough . . . to lift households above subsistence.” While there may be moments where Big Push thinking seems to be achieving scale, there are strong criticisms of the approach. It is criticized for emphasising a balanced push, as opposed to an imbalance in growth that in turn stimulates forward and backward linkages that generate widespread investment and growth. It is accused of encouraging aid dependency and relying heavily on macroeconomic stability. Its technocratic and prescriptive character has been seen to neglect the role of institutions and governance in sustaining economic development.

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2 Andy Hall, Rashid Sulaiman, Tesfaye Beshah, Lias Madzudzo and Ranjitha Puskur, 2009; Tools, principles or policies? Agricultural innovation system capacity development; Capacity.Org
4 Cabral L, Farrington J, Ludi, E; The Millennium Villages Project – a new approach to ending rural poverty in Africa; ODI, Natural Resource Perspectives 101, August 2006
In seeking value chain systems transformation, we must engage multiple nodes of system expertise, and work with those that do the same. This requires a set of criteria against which we can map out development actors are, what they are doing, and whether there is potential to engage them in value chain system transformation work.

Hitherto, efforts to map potential partners have been based around listings and SWOT analysis. This approach, although useful in creating an inventory of sector actors, does not define any qualities that are being sought in development actors, nor does it differentiate between those who are value chain system actors and those who are value chain system facilitators. The methods proposed here build on the inventory but take the subsequent assessment towards an analysis of value chain system and development actor responsiveness to articulated value chain issues.

A. Mapping Value Chain System and Development Actors

In any value chain, it is important to find out who is there and what they are doing. The first stage of this process lists known actors and categorises them according to the impact that they are having on the value chain system.

This is followed up by a further categorisation of their competency to fulfil their current functions with respect to effective value chain system function.
**a) Inventory of Value Chain System and Development Actors**

In the following table, Value Chain System and Development Actors are listed with a short description to explain why they are high or low impact actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors According to the Nature of their Activity in the Value Chain System</th>
<th>Perceived <strong>HIGH IMPACT</strong> on the Value Chain system</th>
<th>Perceived <strong>LOW IMPACT</strong> on the Value Chain system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Value generation</strong> (production, processing, trading etc.)</td>
<td>Critical VC actors who add significant commodity value or volume in any locality</td>
<td>Marginal VC actors who add modest commodity value or volume in any locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Business Development Service (BDS) providers</strong></td>
<td>Critical service providers to VC actors. High market volume and trust in many localities</td>
<td>Marginal service providers to VC actors. Low market volume, restricted to locality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Policy and regulation</strong></td>
<td>Policy makers mandated to enforce anywhere in the value chain system</td>
<td>Informal interest groups who articulate VC actor or segment agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Investment</strong></td>
<td>Substantial investors in significant value chain system processes</td>
<td>Small scale investors in local value chain operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Consumption</strong></td>
<td>Concentrated purchasers of significant volumes of value chain products and services</td>
<td>Diffused purchasers of small to modest volumes of value chain products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Markets and trade</strong></td>
<td>Institutions and traders that channel significant value chain products. Have substantial ability to affect prices and standards</td>
<td>Small and often informal institutions and traders that enable or enact local transactions. Often linking in to centralized high volume markets and market players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Development actors</strong></td>
<td>Significant national and international development organisations recognized for their ability to substantially influence value chain system actor function. Funding is stable and may be large. By and large, known and trusted for their function by value chain actors</td>
<td>Small and often local NGOs with variable quality services. These may have significant local influence, but not across the whole value chain system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this stage, it is important to note that aggregation possibilities may exist for low impact actors, where this may transform low impact actors into high impact coalitions.
b) Competency Assessment of Value Chain Actors

Value Chain system actor and development actor have influence that emanates from various sources. In some cases, this comes from their potency to solve value chain constraints and stimulate positive change. However more often than not, such influence comes from a wider set of relationships that have little bearing on their functional utility within the value chain.

In the case of development actors, power and influence may relate to global relationships with donors. In the case of influential national actors, political patronage may play a role. In this exercise, we seek to further categorise actors and their influence according to the credibility that they secure from value chain system function. This can be loosely described as their track record of successfully responding to resonant issues that exist in the value chain. It describes the extent to which they are supported, valued and trusted by value chain system actors. This in turn is directly contingent on the level of understanding that they have of specific value chain dynamics.

In the following table, actors are further grouped according to their overall influence as defined at (a) above, and the source of such influence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Good track record of response to resonant issues</th>
<th>Supported and Trusted by Value Chain System Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of understanding and knowledge of value chain system dynamics</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key influential VC actors, demonstrably engaged in multiple areas of the value chain system, and consistently active. Known and trusted for their roles throughout the VC system.</td>
<td>Influential actors who seem to operate within a limited agenda. Are often seen as partisan and capricious. Public trust is often an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizens and small businesses in and around VC systems. Smart actions observed in and around discrete value chain segments. Locally respected, but functionally unknown beyond locality.</td>
<td>Weak and vulnerable VC actors. High rates of business failure, low value chain function. Often disillusioned and frustrated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This first exercise of listing and sorting by competency will give an initial sense of who the important actors are that we should engage with. High power organisations that derive substantial legitimacy from being responsive to value chain issues will be able to enable substantial change. Low power organisations that are responsive and cognisant of value chain system dimensions will be important for interventions that seek to increase their capability, and support the development of their understanding.
2) **Convene value chain system and development actors into learning and action sets:**

Equipped with an assessment of key value chain actors, the next stage of the process is to form value chain system learning and action sets with those that are interested. It is important that such organisation is stimulated and framed around an enthusiasm that comes from interest that in turn is strong enough to stimulate action.

CRP L&F is seeking to initiate multi stakeholder processes around livestock issues that are important to each value chain system. While CRP L&F might have good empirical reason to propose a range of livestock interventions and innovations, these must be tested for their ability to generate interest and enthusiasm for action. This first principle of ownership and enthusiasm is required to endorse contextually appropriate innovation. However, most innovation is not contextually appropriate. When this is the case, methodology must combine research-based knowledge and context-specific knowledge to adapt innovations to work in that context. This in turn requires ownership of the issues that innovations seek to address. Methodology must therefore identify value chain issues that matter for many, and identify the actors that are eager to engage to address these issues. With this, CRP L&F is able to engage clusters of enthusiastic strands of work, and insert scientific knowledge. This creates conditions for science to play a significant role and to adapt to local context.

In each of our value chains a situation analysis and a value chain assessment has been completed. These documents have been created by CRP L&F staff or commissioned researchers, and reflect the findings of empirical study. Each contains analysis that highlight a range of key issues that researchers have found to be important.

**Starting the action learning group**

Using the list of identified actors from the process above, value chain coordinators should convene a 2 day meeting and invite actors to attend. The meeting should be crafted around a high level agenda question that is designed to attract. Examples of these might be

"Why is it that smallholder producers cannot make money out of pigs?"

or

"What will it take to make dairy farming commercial in Tanzania?"

Offering participants an opportunity to engage in a conversation around a subject matter that they care about is attractive, so it is important to find a topic that is capable of attracting a range of different interests that relate to this. It is wise to test the question with some actors before settling on this.

At this stage it is important to invite representation from as much of the value chain segments as is possible.
It is unwise to offer financial incentive for to do so, runs the risk of enthusiasm being crafted around incentive, as opposed to around interest. If there is no interest, either the question is unattractive, or there is very little interest in the subject matter. In this latter case, there should be a profound reflection as to whether there is scope to continue.

The first meeting of the action learning group should be held in a semi-formal venue. Here, producers, value chain actors, scientists, government, and development actors etc. should feel at ease. This means that expensive hotels should be avoided.

The agenda should focus on

- Presenting the findings of the value chain assessment and the situation analysis
- Stimulate a conversation that explores
  - The elements of the analysis that ring true
  - The elements of the analysis that do not ring true
  - Elements that are missing
  - Elements that need further understanding
  - What assumptions and suppositions have been made in this analysis

This creates a questioning that alternatively endorses and challenges the findings and opens up a first conversation that creates a sense of convergence on presented and introduced issues.

- Based on the findings of this, invite participants in plenary to identify key issues that are causing dysfunction in the Uganda value chain. This is a “quick and dirty” generation of a listing of key issues that immediately seem to matter.
- Conduct a mapping exercise around these issues in small groups where participants are invited to identify
  - What gives rise to the main issue
  - Who are the actors involved in causes and consequences
  - Relationships between actors, between issues, and between actors and issues
  - Key facts
  - Inherent assumptions that are being made in about relationships between elements
  - Dominant narratives, alternative narratives, conflicted narratives and where possible, hidden narratives.
Following presentation of these maps, ask participants to identify key issues that seem most important to
- Poor value chain system actors
- Value chain system actors at large
- Potential investors in the value chain system.

Ask participants to identify key areas of action that they would want to do of their own accord, and the involvement they would like of others in this process.

Propose to meet again and review the findings of actions, and process these to generate new understanding and a new round of action.

Not everyone that attends will identify actions and not all will return for a follow up meeting. Those that do however are critical for they will have demonstrated a desire to act for change. This forms the basis of the first value chain action and learning set.

At successive one day learning and action group meetings, CRP L&F staff would seek to stimulate a collective review of what is working and what is not.

At each meeting, value chain actors would prepare a simple poster that would describe
- What they did
- What happened
- What they are considering next

CRP L&F staff will also have been part of this action set and will be able to report on the progress of scientific work. Likewise, development actors will be able to report on progress on their action sets.

Conduct a resonance testing exercise to explore where common themes are becoming apparent
- What events or elements occur several times in different narratives
- Are there new actions that can be crafted to address these
Is there scope to converge some action sets to explore their agendas around resonant themes
- Ask participants to identify key areas of action that they would want to do of their own accord, and the involvement they would like of others in this process

3) **With value chain system actors, conduct value chain system enquiry processes that stimulate action**

Following two or three learning and action group meetings, a critical mass of value chain actors will have become apparent. During the period between these meetings, it is important to visit some of the value chain system actors to find out what they are doing and how they are getting on.

From among the development actors that attend, it is often the case that one or more of these identify action sets that involve supporting value chain actors in action learning and research. This often manifests as a desire to support group formation, or to convene local platforms. Where appropriate and possible, seek to engage these development actors in processes that support action by value chain system actors. For example, CARE, SNV and VSO have all become involved in following up various value chain actor support processes, this becoming the basis for a wider alliance.

Different actions will by now be happening in different sites. Here there will be site based value chain actors testing out different ways and means to address identified issues. In each site, with a development partner, over a three day period

- Convene a meeting of key site actors including those who were part of value chain learning and action group, and other site actors that they nominate or are able to engage
- With site actors, identify issues that are being worked on
- Conduct a field walk through elements of the value chain at the site that epitomize these issues
- Construct site based value chain system maps (as above)
- Identify areas where
  - actions are beginning to show promise
  - scientific support is required
  - actors are converging around resonant issues

4) **Engage specific value chain actors to take successful innovations to scale within the site**

Where resonant themes are discovered, a critical mass of interest emerges, and where action to address such issues by some actors is having a desirable effect, there is potential for increased focus. This is the point where best-bet interventions that seem to fit can be tested by a number of actors.

Key development actors that have engaged in the process up until this point will likely be interested to take a leading role. From their perspective, they exist to bring development
solutions and are rewarded for so doing. From CRP L&F’s perspective, this is a moment to put innovation technology into play.

Here, Collaborative Research and Development Agreements will be crafted with development actors around specific pieces of work. This is the first stage of formal partnership. The essence of such an agreement is that the development partner

- Assumes a leading role in facilitating ongoing action enquiry around best bet innovations
- Aligns part of their organisation’s work space to offer programmatic stability
- Agrees to explore joint funding to try to take innovation to scale

5) **Engage specific actors to experiment with innovation adaptation for better solution fit**

Most innovations do not go to scale without them being contextually appropriate, enthusiastically owned and adopted. This means that within the process of taking innovations to the first stage of scale, there will be need for adaptation.

As part of the process defined at (4) above, and in collaboration with selected development partners, CRP L&F will specifically work to support value chain system actors to make sense of their experiences with innovations. While much of this will be carried out at site and value chain action and learning groups, CRP L&F staff and Development Partner staff will engage in periodic field observation exercises to see how innovations are being used, how effective they are, how affordable they are, and the changes that are being made to them by actors.

Informed by such observations, CRP L&F value chain staff will document these and advise CRP L&F technology flagship scientists, and where necessary arrange for in-depth examination of salutary adaptations.

II. **Second Stage Methodologies**

Second stage methodologies build on a growing groundswell of contextually appropriate action and locally owned innovation to either stimulate widespread practice change within value chain systems, or to change system dynamics in ways that enable innovation and effect to spread. In the first instance, we will seek to help position value chain actors exploit opportunities. In the second instance, we will seek to break dysfunctional patterns such as gender inequity, and remove system blockages that prevent value chain advancement. This second stage requires the establishment of more profound relationships with whom such action can be facilitated and undertaken.

1) **Form Site and Country Tactical Partnerships for Collaborative Initiatives**

At I.4 and I.5 above, specific Collaborative Research and Development Agreements (CRDA) with development partners will have been defined around scaling and adapting specific best-bet interventions. These are areas of convergent action that are showing success, and work with local groups to strategically commit to the development of these lines of work.
At this point there will be a growing body of evidence and an experience of alliance that forms a level of trust and deliberate movement in line with shared vision, towards the creation of shared value.

Porter and Kramer 2012 define the concept of shared value. Shared value can be defined as policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates. Shared value creation focuses on identifying and expanding the connections between societal and economic progress.

Although defined by Porter and Kramer as a concept for profit making companies, the notion of competitiveness applies equally well to public organisations. By engaging with CRP L&F in collaborative partnerships, development actors and private sector companies must be able to see their own competitiveness increase through the advancement of value chain system function.

In this spirit therefore, within value chains, CRP L&F will seek to form sets of collaborative alliances that work as a group around signature issues to enable value chain improvement. These alliances will define a collective Memorandum of Understanding with CRP L&F and with one another with the purpose of:

- Strategically aligning a substantial amount of effort towards the enablement of equitable livestock value chains that serve the poor
- Jointly designing fundable livestock value chain transformation initiatives
- Jointly seeking investment for value chain initiatives
- Facilitating value chain transformation in specified national value chains
- Agreeing to commit to lines of value chain facilitation work for the duration of the MoU
- Agreeing to conduct adaptive research around technological, economic and social dimensions of value chain transformation.

The way in which such collaboration sets are formed will be context specific and value chain coordinators will need to conduct this exercise in accordance with the defined principles of AR4D partnerships, namely that they should be formed around development issues, should operate as teams to engage across whole systems, should emerge and learn as they go, and be grounded in action.

The Program Head of Development Partnerships will engage in the process to provide guidance and will liaise with the head agreement holder, ILRI, to formulate appropriate partnership agreement mechanisms that are agile to enable a multi partner arrangement.

6 Mobilizing AR4D Partnerships to Improve Access to Critical Animal Source Foods; Notes from a GCARD 2 Pre Conference Meeting; Punta del Este, Uruguay, 27 October 2013; Ballantyne, Randolph, Dalsgaard, Worsley
Collective MoUs and CRDAs in each country will define roles and functions that link innovation discovery with value chain system facilitation work that aims to deliver defined IDOs.

2) **Form Strategic Partnerships for Scaling**

Across several countries, there will be collective collaboration partnerships where trust and comfort have been established, key innovations adapted and adopted and national scale sustainably achieved. Within these experiences, work will have been undertaken across whole value chain systems to reveal successful and unsuccessful actions that have either worked to exploit existing system patterns or will have engaged to break and change deleterious system patterns.

Whereas the former will require changed practices within existing patterns, the latter will have entailed changed system dynamics. While the former represents successful achievement of national scale, it is unlikely that changed practice will carry over into other countries. With the latter however, value chain system transformation will have been achieved. This lies at the heart of sustainable scale, and for this, the program seeks to document proof of concept.

Achieving transformative change and sustainable scale beyond national context will require an examination of experiences to draw lessons about the processes and methodologies employed and the practices developed.

Following the formation of several country based multi partner action alliances, CFP L&F will conduct (or commission) a series of analytical studies, convene a regional and/or global partner and value chain review colloquium, and with our partners

- Determine the processes and methodologies that have worked well and not so well
- Determine common system patterns that have given rise to value chain system issues
- Define research and program areas that require additional discovery attention
- Form new work areas that require concerted attention
- Establish global alliances designed to invoke strategic action to spread action beyond CRP L&F focus countries

On the basis of this, CRP L&F will engage in new strategic partnership alliances that seek to promote value transformation programs around the world.
3) **Provide Facilitation and Knowledge Services to National and Transnational Processes**

During this process, CRP L&F will develop a range of value chain system and partnership methodologies designed and tested to bridge the research to development gap. These methodologies will require a set of academic partnerships to explore how technology is created, tested, adapted and adopted by development practitioners.

On this journey of discovery, we will work in collaboration with centres that specialise in action learning and research, whole value chain system facilitation, innovation systems, multi stakeholder engagement and knowledge development, networking, brokering and management.

Likely allies here include Wageningen University (WUR) in The Netherlands and the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, UK.