Capacity development (CapDev) is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial part of agricultural development. In the CGIAR Strategic Results Framework (SRF), CapDev is included as a ‘cross-cutting issue’ and as a strategic enabler of Research for Development (R4D) impact for CGIAR and its partners. It goes far beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills through training, and cuts across multiple levels.

Recognizing the importance of CapDev, the SRF established a dedicated Intermediate Development Outcome (IDO) on CapDev, targeting the enablement of national partners and other beneficiaries.

Capacity Development in Systems - Practice Brief # 1

Capacity Development in Agri-Food Systems

A Series of Briefs about Developing Capacity Across Individual, Community, Organizational and System Levels

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Recognizing the importance of CapDev, the SRF established a dedicated Intermediate Development Outcome (IDO) on CapDev, targeting the enablement of national partners and other beneficiaries.
There are four sub-IDOs associated with CapDev:

- Enhanced individual capacity in partner research organizations through training and exchange;
- Increased capacity for innovation in partner development organizations and in poor and vulnerable communities;
- Increased capacity for innovation in partner research organizations;
- Enhanced institutional capacity of partner research organizations;

The SRF reflects the notion that CapDev requires the strengthening of competencies across individual, community, organizational and – eventually – systems levels. These levels are nested, or embedded, which implies that they interact and influence one another. CapDev therefore requires coherent actions across different levels, so that individuals (representing different stakeholders, genders and age groups), who have acquired competencies, are supported to enact them within their community or organization, and challenge inequalities and constraints that hinder CapDev in the system.

Similar notions are found in the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org).
In the SDG framework, CapDev is referred to as:

- “Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending” (SDG 9.5).
- “Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries” (SDG 17.16).

This series contains eight briefs about CapDev across individual, community, organizational and system levels, and is intended to help research and development organizations identify entry points for investment in CapDev. The initial set of briefs is listed on page 4, and other briefs may be added in the future.

This set of briefs highlight tools, products or approaches that can support agricultural research and/or development projects and programs. The products or approaches can be applied on their own, or as part of a multi-level CapDev package, but the framework and modules provided are neither exhaustive nor exclusive and other approaches or tools can be aligned with the SRF.
Acknowledgments:

Capacity development (CapDev) has been identified in CGIAR’s Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) as a strategic enabler of impact for CGIAR and its partners. It goes far beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills through training, and cuts across multiple levels.

This CapDev brief is part of a series of ‘Legacy Products’ developed under the CGIAR Research Program on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics (Humidtropics – www.humidtropics.org) to help CGIAR Research Programs integrate key ‘capacity development in systems’ concepts into their work.

We would like to acknowledge Humidtropics and the CGIAR Fund Donors for their provision of core funding without which this work would not have been possible. For a list of Fund Donors please see: www.cgiar.org/who-we-are/cgiar-fund/fund-donors-2.

These CapDev briefs have been developed by representatives of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Wageningen University (WUR), and the CGIAR System Management Office.

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