The Livestock and Fish CGIAR Research Program: An experiment to improve agricultural research for development

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The Context

• CGIAR reform and CGIAR Research Programs
  – Using capacity across CGIAR Centres more effectively
  – More explicit impact orientation

• Asked to develop MP3: Sustainable staple food productivity increase for **global food security**: Livestock and Fish Component
  – Shift in traditional focus on livestock keepers to consumers and increasing supply
  – Value chain development as entry point
  – Win-win for food security and poverty: By and for the poor
  – Partnership of four CGIAR centres and SLU
  – Implemented 2012-2016

• Approach as improved AR4D model
  – Demonstrate impact orientation
  – Consolidate emerging lessons
  – Began to present as an experiment (e.g. May 2013 ARPM)
How is it an improved AR4D model?

- Bring broad research agenda to bear on focused objective
  - Focus on accelerating intensification to increase production

- Presentations highlighted four other key elements changing ‘the way we do our business’
To address why we haven’t had impact
Is it the piecemeal nature of our research?

Solutions developed for isolated issues in specific settings, but ignoring other constraints in the value chain that discourage uptake

...in Country A

...in Country B

...in Country C

...in Country D
R4D integrated to transform selected value chains in targeted commodities and countries.

Approach: Solution-driven R4D to achieve impact

#1: Addressing the whole value chain
#2: Working directly to design and support intervention at scale
#3: In partnership with development actors
#4 Focus, focus, focus!

Working in 8 target value chains ➔ accountability
Our engagement in a value chain embodies our impact pathway

Approach: Solution-driven R4D to achieve impact

Along the Impact Pathway

Relative degree of involvement

Research partners
- Assessment
- Mobilization
- Best bets

Experiments Evaluation Evidence

Attracting investment

Knowledge partner

Implementing large-scale interventions

Development partners
- Advocacy
- Dissemination
- Attracting investment
- Lessons
- Piloting

Design

Lessons Context

Panel Learning

Evaluation Evidence

Research partners

Year 1

Program horizon in a target value chain

Year 8-12
How is it an improved AR4D model?

Providing urgency, accountability and sharper prioritization:

1. Pragmatic objective to design integrating interventions to facilitate going to scale
2. Longer-term commitment to and engagement in selected value chains (to build trust and get to results)
3. Interdisciplinary value chain teams can understand fuller context and test appropriate solutions (while drawing global public good lessons)
4. Value chain teams offer a better interface to partner with development actors to benefit from their knowledge and capacities and influence their actions
5. Deeper understanding of specific contexts by value chains teams helps define specific challenges to guide upstream research
How was the Livestock & Fish CRP meant to be an improved AR4D model?

Providing **urgency**, **accountability** and **sharper prioritization**:

1. Pragmatic objective of designing integrating interventions to facilitate going to scale

2. Longer-term commitment to and engagement in selected value chains (to build trust and get to results)

3. Interdisciplinary value chain teams can understand fuller context and test appropriate solutions (while drawing global public good lessons)

4. Value chain teams offer a better interface to partner with development actors to benefit from their knowledge and capacities and influence their actions

5. Deeper understanding of specific contexts by value chains teams defines better specific challenges as better guidance for upstream research
Monitoring the experiment: What did reviews tell us?

- Regular internal review by L&F Science & Partnership Advisory Committee

- CRP-Commissioned External Evaluation of the CRP’s Value Chain Approach led by Doyle Baker

- IEA Independent External Evaluation of the CRP
Monitoring the experiment: What did reviews tell us? **Advisory Committee**

- Value chain approach showing promise, but “not yet fully delivering”
- More attention needed to:
  - Publications and information shared around the Value Chain work
  - Working with private sector
  - Articulating and demonstrating how flagship and value chain research relates to achieving the CRP Theory of Change (more explicit M&E)
  - Concentrate scarce resources on fewer value chains
  - Strengthening link between value chains and technology flagships
Monitoring the experiment: What did reviews tell us?  **Value chain external evaluation**

- Performance of value chains R4D meets reasonable expectations
- Strengths:
  - Relatively sound conceptual framework and theory of change,
  - effective and efficient value chain coordination and oversight,
  - mostly appropriate research agendas,
  - sufficient multidisciplinarity
  - appropriate and effective partnerships.
- Weaknesses:
  - Insufficient, uncertain resources
  - Relatively weak synergies between value chains R4D and other thematic research

*Value chains R4D teams had demonstrated roles that R4D can play in supporting value chains development with other partners*
Monitoring the experiment: What did reviews tell us? Independent External Evaluation

- The value chain transformation and scaling approach one of its most appreciated features.
- Impressive investment in institutional relationships and development partnerships as solid foundation for applied research
- But only very partially delivered on potential of approach
  - Core teams too small, funding too little, disruptive funding cuts
  - Teams operate as separate entities, not being managed to create economies of scope and scale
- More attention needed to synthesis and coherence
Lessons learned

• Value chain-based AR4D model is on the right track
• Need to be more ambitious and aggressive
  – Concentrate adequate resources to implement it
  – More rigor in cross-value chain research design, sharing and drawing lessons (including M&E)
  – Strengthen teams to engage with development partners and private sector, exploit interdisciplinarity
• Create better mechanism for linking thematic, upstream research to value chains
• More urgency on getting to business-ready interventions
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.