



Consortium

Compilation of contributions to SRF Consultation Phase 2 from the 'Public Chat Room'

*Consultation on the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework
(SRF) - Phase 2 (3rd-27th February 2015)*

1st March February 2015

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Introduction

In this second phase of consultation on the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), stakeholders were given the opportunity to consider and provide feedback and ideas on how the whole SRF has been revised and is now articulated. This phase of consultation asked people to consider:

“How well does the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework now reflect a good roadmap for effective agricultural research for development?”

Opportunities to participate in this Phase included the following

- submit any responses via email to [partnerships@CGIAR.ORG](mailto:partnerships@cgiar.org)
- have your say and also comment on what others have to say in the **‘public chat room’**
- Join a **webinar in the ‘Call-In Program’ series** – where you can discuss ‘in person’ with other stakeholders and some of those involved in developing the SRF [Note-only 20 seats per webinar and sign up required]

Stakeholder feedback from this second Phase will be used to strengthen the SRF before it goes to the Consortium Board for approval on March 23rd 2015, and then on to the Fund Council for Approval in April 2015.

A ‘Public Chat Room’ (e-consultation page on cigar.org) was set up as one of the channels available for people to participate in the second phase of the consultation on the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework. The compiled results of this channel can be found below. Note that some of the contributions to this channel may have also been made as emails.

Comments posted in the ‘Public Chat Room’ (e-consultation)

How well does the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework now reflect a good roadmap for effective agricultural research for development?

Please share your feedback or thoughts. Feel free to make your own comment and/or respond to comments of others. We will aim to engage with all comments made.

1. Dymphina Andima says:

FEBRUARY 10, 2015 AT 5:42 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

One Response to How well does the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework now reflect a good roadmap for effective agricultural research for development?

The CGIAR strategy and results framework reflects a good roadmap in the following ways;

1. It brings all stakeholders together working in similar interests to create impact at the stakeholder and farmer levels.
2. It helps to project anticipated results in a particular period of time.
3. It is easier to track change based on set targets for improving agricultural research outputs

○ **Nadia Manning-Thomas says:**

FEBRUARY 11, 2015 AT 7:19 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Dear Dymphina, Thank you for your contribution in this consultation. It is very interesting to hear from you how you think the SRF is a good roadmap. With regards to your third point there has been a lot of discussion-including in the first webinar we held today on the Results Framework- about whether targets are needed in the SRF or if they are better set once the next set of research programs and the countries in which they will operate are identified and being developed.

2. Botir Dosov says:

FEBRUARY 12, 2015 AT 5:07 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Initially the CGIAR has derived, from the MDGs and the CGIAR Vision, four system level outcomes (SLOs):

1. reducing rural poverty
2. improving food security.
3. improving nutrition and health.
4. sustainable management of natural resources.

As a result of the consultation and brainstorming on the initial SRF context and GCARD Roadmap conducted in the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) region in 2011 among wider AR4D stakeholders community, three overarching goals of agricultural research were identified and agreed that AR4D system of the CAC should focus joint efforts on:

1. Improving welfare of rural population, particularly vulnerable groups of population, as well as those dependent on agriculture.
2. Guaranteed improvement of the availability and access to nutritious food through the intensification and diversification of agriculture to protect vulnerable and low income population.
3. Rational use of natural resources and mitigating adverse effects of climate change

http://www.cacaari.org/filesarchive/others/cacaari_regional_strategy.pdf

Now, updated SRF highlights three SLOs:

1. Reduce poverty
2. Improve food and nutrition security for health
3. Improve natural resource systems and ecosystem services

It is not surprising that in CAC region the conception of AR4D development is aligned and having similar pace and evolution with global tendencies and transformations happening in CGIAR and GFAR systems. I believe that structure of updated SRF outcomes that drives the CGIAR research agenda are clear and well represents the vision how research in CG Centers as well as CGIAR Research programs (CRPs) will be/ are contributing to SLO. But, the impact would be efficiently and effectively achieved if CG Centers and CRPs will interact and perform as a single and well-functioning mechanism/platform. The principles of well-functioning AR4D system is very well defined in GCARD Roadmap, that are very relevant in the current circumstances when agricultural research requires consistency and coherence among different stakeholders of agricultural research and innovations.

○ **Alisher Tashmatov says:**

FEBRUARY 16, 2015 AT 6:01 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

I agree with Dr. Botir Dosov that the SRF guides and sets the orientation for agricultural research system at global, regional and national systems, setting Priority research areas: i. Genetic improvement; ii. Agricultural systems; iii. Gender and inclusive growth; iv. Enabling policies and institutions; v. Natural resources and ecosystem services; vi. Nutrition and health. In CAC region research priorities are congruently formulated as commodity, technological packages and its combinations. And those priorities were identified before CRPs gained momentum. I think it is time to re-think approaches in setting and articulation of research priorities, as more systemic and holistic topics, taking into account changing challenges, and when CRPs will not be considered by national research institutions as CG research project, but as multi-stakeholder process where CG Centers and national research organizations are working together toward SLOs. The national partners in developing countries are involved in CRPs the more SLOs considered as Global research agenda.

3. Jon Daane says:

FEBRUARY 13, 2015 AT 7:59 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Is CapDev for CRP-purposes also strengthening the broader innovation system?

This comment was originally intended for the webinar on capacity development on 11 February 2015, which I was unable to attend. It elaborates on concerns expressed by Richard Hawkins (director ICRA) and myself on the CapDev draft strategy. It also elaborates on concerns expressed from within the CGIAR, such as expressed by the quote from Peter Matlon on p.40 of the SRF document: "This means it isn't just what the centers will do working with partners, but also how they work in partnerships: in ways that empower partners to expand their responsibilities and capacities, rather than limiting them to secondary, dependent roles." – a true word in my view. And I would even go a step further, by asking the question if and how the SRF ensures that empowerment of partners participating in these CRPs is actually strengthening broader innovation systems.

The point I want to make is the following. By building partnerships, CRPs necessarily draw on resources from partners that are elements in a larger innovation system (where such a system exists) or that should be elements in such a system (where such a system still needs to be built or is incomplete). The CRPs' activities are a sub-system of these larger innovation systems. If all works well the capacity of

these partners will be strengthened through their participation in CRPs and the CapDev that is undertaken within this context. It is often assumed that this also automatically strengthens the larger innovation systems to which these partners belong. But that is not necessarily the case.

From past experience, we know that the CGIAR, by drawing on the best people and other resources within national research systems, have often weakened these (leaving them with the less capable people and with resource allocations that are not necessarily the national systems' priority), rather than strengthening them. This is perfectly understandable where the CGIAR is only held accountable for its "own" activities and programmes and where the impacts on the national systems are externalities that are not taken into account.

Similar risks exist for the partnerships formed by the CRPs and the CapDev activities within the CRPs. If no special attention is paid to their impact on the capacity of the larger innovation systems from which the partners are drawn, these larger systems may be weakened by creating imbalances (e.g., between those elements of the larger system that participate in the CRP and those that do not) and other problems. I do not know if the SRF takes account of such externalities, but in my view, this is crucial as the goal should be to strengthen the larger systems and make them sustainable, rather than strengthening the specific partners and the specific resources of these partners involved in the CRPs. The CRPs and their partnerships are temporary, the strengthened partners remain, but how does the SRF ensure that this strengthens the wider innovation system?

○ **Alain Vidal says:**

FEBRUARY 16, 2015 AT 6:15 PM (EDIT)

Thanks Jon for your detail comment: very good points that touch upon the sustainability of our effort to develop institutional capacities through CRPs.

I think we have tried to approach this at the implementation level through our capacity development framework released several months ago now (<http://www.cgiar.org/consortium-news/supporting-incorporation-of-capacity-development-into-cgiar-activities-a-new-framework-now-available/>).

However, institutional sustainability on the ground is enough important and strategic to be addressed in the SRF. We'll look into that.

4. Simon Maxwell says:

FEBRUARY 13, 2015 AT 8:06 AM (EDIT)

Colleagues,

I have come to this document late, as a member of the IFPRI Board, and do not follow the CGIAR in great detail. However, I've tried to read it with fresh eyes, and also with the eyes of perhaps a minister being asked to sign off on a commitment of maybe \$US 10 bn over ten years. From that perspective, there are four main comments (it goes without saying offered in a personal capacity):

1. First, it seems to me the document needs to do more to convey the urgency or likely impact of international agricultural research (though actually mainly staple food research). The key lines of argument are present, but without stand-out examples or numbers, and without a compelling presentation right up front.
2. Second, the document fails doesn't quite make the case for international public sector research carried out in developing countries, as opposed to (a) national, and/or (b) private sector research carried out (c) in the developed world and/or in both developed and developing countries. The section on the CG's niche is weak.
3. Third, I think it is risky to propose a strategy rooted in the SDGs when those are up for discussion and will be finalised within six months –many hostage to fortune. I don't know how to finesse that, except perhaps to work from the UNSG's Synthesis Report in December.
4. Fourth, there are (to my mind) many issues in the results framework.

To take these one at a time, but briefly on 1-3:

1. As the imaginary minister, I know that the green revolution made an amazing contribution to poverty reduction, and that it originated in research (though supplemented by many other inputs, of course). I know that research has helped keep food production per head stable or rising. I know that the rate of increase in productivity has been falling. And I also know that there are big challenges ahead, associated with rising population, rising urbanisation, natural resource limits, and big challenges like climate change. At the same time, I know that there are fewer and fewer poor countries, that globalisation has changed the way production and trade operate, and that food systems are increasingly integrated. So the challenge is to get the elevator pitch right: 'Minister, there are three reasons why we go to hell in a handcart if we don't invest globally in staple food research . . .'
2. This is linked to (1) but the CG absolutely has to explain why a billion dollars a year has to be spent on a network of global research centres located in developing countries. We don't do this for, I don't know, Apple Apps, electric motors, aero engines, ready meals, solar panels, or come to that coffee/tea/sisal etc . . . Why can't research be done by the private sector, by a network of universities, in greenhouses in developed countries? I know there are answer to this, but they don't leap out, and don't seem to be rooted in science policy. Presumably the authors are familiar with the work of e.g. Mariana Mazzucato? In particular, I don't think it is enough to say that food staple technology is a global public good. After all, vaccines for tropical diseases are global public goods, but we don't have (do we?) a network of global health research centres.
3. This is perhaps a trivial point, but the SDG framework will shape any response on funding. My latest piece on the topic, reviewing the SG's report, is <http://www.simonmaxwell.eu/blog/has-ban-ki-moon-hit-a-six-on-post-2015.html> .
4. Finally, the results framework, pasted in below for ease of reference:
 - a. Why are there three SLOs, rather than two? The SDGs talk mainly about poverty/human development and the environment (though actually sustainable development has three legs, viz economic, social and natural, so there is one missing). Here we have 'reduced poverty', 'improved food and nutrition security for health' and 'improved natural resource systems and ecosystem services'. Where to start?
 - i. It would be useful to clarify what is meant by 'poverty'. Is this an income-based definition, or a human development-based definition, or a multi-dimensional definition? If either of the second two, then ill-health might be considered an aspect of poverty.
 - ii. I would also argue that food security is a component of sustainable livelihood and not an SLO in its own right.

- iii. 'Improved natural resource systems and ecosystem services' is clumsy. Delete 'services'?
- b. The IDO level contains items at many different levels of generality, some of which clearly contribute to others, plus the links to the SLOs are contestable:
 - i. For example, I would say increased income and employment (NB for rural and urban people) and increased resilience to shocks clearly contribute to poverty reduction, as do improved diets and better food safety (which are components of food security, though missing some elements like cultural appropriateness). Enhanced smallholder market access, on the other hand, and increased productivity, contribute to the above, rather than having equal status.
 - ii. If health survives at the SLO level, then it is essential that there be a line linking it to resilience, otherwise food shocks are not taken into account.
 - c. The sub-IDO level contains many useful elements, but would need to be reorganised if the SLO and IDO levels were corrected. In addition, however, there are obvious pathways and elements missing. Where, for example, are prices, affecting urban consumers as well as rural producers and (net) consumers? Where are markets and market agents? Where are value chains? Where is trade?
 - d. A sensible logical framework of this kind of course needs indicators and means of verification (I imagine in the works), but also external assumptions. For example, what assumptions are being made here about long-term relative commodity prices? Or the strengthening of health systems?

Simon

○ **Wayne Powell says:**

FEBRUARY 21, 2015 AT 10:53 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Dear Simon,

Many thanks for these helpful comments. We certainly need to get across the urgency and prowess of research to deliver impact and the added value or value proposition for the CG system. We are in the process of assembling case studies/exemplars to illustrate these points that will be included in a subsequent document to complement the current SRF.

It is also important to identify points of differentiation as you indicate. One such area relates to the policy environment in which research and product development of global public goods is undertaken. This is now far more complex where the utilisation of genetic resources that underpin the development of staple food crops is under far more scrutiny and far more complex than the development of a vaccine. Perhaps this is an area that we need to highlight more particularly with respect to the global stewardship of genetic resources to serve the planet's poorest people.

Best wishes,

Wayne

5. **Guram Aleksidze says:**

FEBRUARY 17, 2015 AT 6:43 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Dear CG consortium and SRF authors,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to draw the global attention and raise the issues that there are unbalanced tendencies in investing to and financing research activities across the regions. The Central

Asia and the Caucasus, and particularly the Caucasus region is continuously are falling out of donor's sight, in light of other countries and regions such as African, where the level of poverty is very high. However, a balanced investments should be fairly allocated for other development countries and regions.

Being rehabilitated for more than two decades after collapse of Soviet Union the agricultural research systems in the Caucasus region still need to be modernized and invested. NARSs are still experiencing and suffers from underinvestment. According to Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) conducted in 2012 , the average across CAC region investment to agricultural research is slightly more than 0.1% of Agricultural GDP, while in BRICS countries this indicator is about 1-1.5%, and about 2.5% in developed countries.

Poor research infrastructure, absence of demonstration of opportunities and potential for both fundamental and applied research, poor and fragmented integration with international research centers, insufficient government attention, and as its implications poor evidences of research efficiency provokes lowering investment attractiveness and reduces the interest of public and private sectors to invest in national agricultural research systems. However, required conditions can be created if sufficient funds would be invested to trigger transforming agricultural research system into innovation system. Thus, present agricultural research system get stuck in a vicious circle: its under-funding does not allow demonstrating of noticeable outcome and hence improving its investment attractiveness, which in turn requires adequate investments. To solve this problem triggering/starting up investments are certainly required to unblock the scientific potential of agricultural research for development. Those facilitative investments in agricultural research at the initial stage will catalyse transformation of agricultural research and innovation system towards result-oriented system and probably increase private and public sectors interest in investing in agricultural innovations.

SRF highlights "Research undertaken by CGIAR and its partners in low-income countries requires access to state-of-the-art infrastructure. Such infrastructure is critical for the delivery of the SRF and includes, among others, things, bio-secure laboratories and glasshouses, genomics and phenotyping platforms, gene and bio-banks, equipment for geospatial analytics and bioinformatics, farm buildings and machinery, communications equipment, office buildings, and staff housing. The scale and cost of the required investments is growing rapidly, requiring prioritization, strategic collaboration and system-wide rationalization. Future investment in enabling infrastructure will be guided".

We hope the Consortium will take into consideration the poor research infrastructure in CAC region, and will guide future investments to support research system and infrastructure, labs, capacities in the regions, which survives only on commitments of scientists to contribute to improving the livelihoods of millions.

With sincere regards,
Dr. Prof. Academician Guram Aleksidze
President of the Academy of Agriculture Sciences of Georgia

6. **Botir Dosov says:**

FEBRUARY 18, 2015 AT 4:16 AM (EDIT)

Priority research areas in SRF are overlapping and they should be so. However, I would like to stress on the role of “Market and value chain”, which is not mentioned as priority research area. Though SRF mentions the importance of ‘market’ – 29 times, along with ‘policies’ – 34 times, institutions – 30 times, markets are not considered neither in IDO and Sub-IDOs level. However, markets are critically important factor influencing at least in SLOs: 1st-Poverty, and 2nd-Nutrition. “Rural households have diverse livelihood strategies, encompassing a range of activities. For most, agriculture is a key element of their strategy; however, many are also engaged in non-agricultural activities, including microenterprises (agro-processing, trading and other off-farm occupations).” – Promoting market access for the rural poor in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, IFAD (2003). I should note that “Improved access to markets, or enhanced market opportunities” might not necessarily be considered as research results, but avenues of research on “Market and value chains” structured into SRF would be useful for ensuring systemic approach in achieving SLO. To my view, though markets are considered as part of “policies and institution” and well-addressed by CRP PIM, anyway it should be highlighted within SRF either as one of the research priorities, or IDOs, or cross-cutting issues, and it should be considered from both “economic”, “institutional”, and “social value” perspectives, as we are doing agricultural research for development.

7. Michelle Kovacevic says:

[FEBRUARY 19, 2015 AT 5:31 AM](#) [\(EDIT\)](#)

First of all, I welcome the CGIAR’s initiative to consult youth regarding the 10-year research strategy.

However, upon reading the strategy, I was disappointed to note that the words youth and young people are mentioned only a handful of times and only as beneficiaries of CGIAR’s work.

In the countries where the CGIAR operates, young people make up anywhere between 20-60% of the population. Agriculture is still the leading employer of young rural people. The CGIAR’s system level outcomes – poverty, nutrition and NRM – are arguably more critical for young people than any other demographic at this point in time.

And yet we have insufficient data available on young people in rural development, in agriculture, in forestry – what obstacles do they face, how do we create enabling environments to overcome staggering rates of youth unemployment, how do we foster intergenerational learning to better manage land? When this age disaggregated data is available, it is often not specifically analysed or published.

If we don’t understand the needs of such an important demographic, how is it possible to design effective development programs and projects? As someone who has been working in the youth space for 12 months now, this is a question I ask myself everyday.

Not so long ago, these same questions were posed regarding gender – what obstacles do women face, how do we create enabling environments for women to pursue careers in agriculture? Resources were poured into gender strategies and gender research, creating a body of evidence in this area.

If we can be gender sensitive, why can’t we be more youth sensitive?

CGIAR is one of, if not the most well placed consortium to be leading the world in rural youth research.

It's starting to happen, CRP Drylands is putting together a youth strategy and has allocated 7 percent of its budget to gender and youth research.

Youth are key to a food secure future. We need to see youth play a more central role in the SRF—commitment to a youth research strategy, a push for more age-disaggregated data, youth analysis embedded in the system's research portfolio, the development of tools, methods, and data sets that will strengthen our understanding of the role young people play in development.

8. Prof. S Mahendra Dev says:

FEBRUARY 20, 2015 AT 2:16 AM (EDIT)

This is a contribution from Prof S. Mahendra Dev, Director (Vice Chancellor)- Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and Member of the Board of Trustees of IFPRI

This comment was sent to partnerships@cgiar.org and we were asked to post this on his behalf for others to see.

Dear Colleagues,

I am member of the Board of Trustees of IFPRI. I have some comments on draft of the Strategy and Results Framework. My comments are given below.

(1) 'Inequalities' is missing in the document particularly in results framework and theories of change. Inequalities affect outcomes and impact of all the three SLOs.

Poverty reduction will be higher/lower with low/high inequalities

Food, nutrition, health will be higher/lower with low/high inequalities

Natural resource and eco systems sustainability will be higher/lower with low/high inequalities

All over the world, there is lot of discussion on inequalities. The document says the focus of CGIAR is on poor and vulnerable. Without reduction in inequalities improvements in SLOs and IDOs can't be achieved.

(2) 'Macroeconomic and non-agricultural policies and SLOs/IDOs': If poverty reduction is the objective, sometimes macro economic policies and policies on industry and services would have much more impact on poverty than agriculture policies per se. Farmers and agricultural labourers also get half the income from non-agricultural sector in rural and urban areas. But the document do not seem to be aware of macro and non-agricultural policies and impact on SLOs.

(3) Gender : Gender is given as cross cutting theme and important for achieving all SLOs. However, in reality it is not followed throughout the analysis. Sometimes gender is presented separately at the end of the analysis. Document has to emphasize that it is really cross-cutting one and it has to be considered throughout the analysis.

One more thing on women is that we want all the problems of poverty, nutrition and environment have to be solved by women. It puts them double or triple burden on them. What will the men do putting all the burden on women?

(4) We have to wait for SDGs to be finalized.

(5) Also the case for international public sector research has to be made much more than in the draft now.

(6) Technology: The document is silent on GMOs. Is it deliberate? GMOs can have positive impact on poverty, nutrition and environment. Agricultural incomes could rise further when technologies such as herbicide-tolerance, drought tolerance, nitrogen efficiency etc. are introduced commercially. Losses that occur due to droughts, floods, salinity, biotic and other abiotic stresses also need to be eliminated decisively through the adoption of GMO technologies which have great promise. Thus, GMOs have potential to improve natural resource management.

(7) other comments on Results Framework

——SLOs

(a) First SLO 'Reduction in poverty' is fine. It is better to keep it as 'income poverty'. If it is multidimensional, the other two SLOs health and environment come under poverty. Therefore, it is better to say the first SLO is income poverty.

(b) Second SLO: "Improved food and nutrition security for health". It is better to say "improved food and nutrition security and health". This will put emphasis on nutrition apart from health.

(c) Third SLO: the word 'services' can be removed from 'ecosystem services'. Green revolution strategy helped achieving food security in 60s and 70s. In fact, without intensive cultivation at that time, damage to environment would have been much higher with extensive cultivation by cutting forests.

Now we have to change the approach with less input and less resource intensive for sustainable development. In other words, efficiency has to be improved in agriculture and natural resource management.

——IDOs and sub-IDOs

(i) Social Protection policies: They are not appearing anywhere. Good social protection policies like cash transfers and other programmes can have positive impact on SLOs poverty, nutrition and environment.

(ii) for nutrition, apart from diversified diets, safe drinking water and sanitation play important role. They do not figure in the framework.

(iii) Governance Issues: You can have good research and policies but if governance is bad in terms of implementation, it can adversely affect all the three SLOs. Focus on governance in the document is important.

8. Other Comments including minor

p.5. 'CGIAR is aligned with the international community's commitment to end hunger completely by 2030'. Some UN documents say it is 2025 and not 2030. Which one is correct?

p.7. "In many areas rapid growth in agriculture is accompanied by changes in farm structure, with large and medium-sized commercial farms appearing where small farms formerly dominated". I do not know whether it is happening. In fact, the number of holdings under small farms is increasing. For example, In India, 85% of holdings are small and marginal.

p.10. It gives a pull-out quote which says “International agricultural research conducted by CGIAR contributes to about 56% (or 1.3 million) of the total poverty reduction impact of agricultural research in the region” Arega Alene and Ousmane Coulibaly, IITA. This is a substantial impact. Similar studies can be done for Asia about the impact of CGIAR on Asia particularly poverty in South Asia.

p.12: Our vision: “A world free of hunger, poverty and environmental degradation”. Where is nutrition here? hunger does not include malnutrition.

p.18: Table 1 has to be revised. For poverty, they can give numbers on poverty in terms of recent 2011 ppp instead of 2005 ppp.

p.19. In principles, it says “A modest amount of funding will be set aside to support high risk/high return research, respond to emergencies and explore new areas where research could add value”. What is this high risk/high return research?

p.39. “Achieving Impact at Scale”: Here it can be examined whether CGIAR research has impact on policies adopted by different countries.

Funding: Is there funding Blue sky research? whether CGIAR encourages Blue sky research? This is not mentioned in the document.

CRPs: The document says it does not deal with the future CRPs. Some idea can be given how the topics for CRPs will be selected

Demand driven research: Much more can be written on demand driven research so that it will not look like supply driven.

regards,
Mahendra Dev
Member, Board of Trustees, IFPRI

○ **Dosov Botir says:**

FEBRUARY 20, 2015 AT 2:28 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

I have the same concern as Prof S. Mahendra Dev wrote: “(4) We have to wait for SDGs to be finalized.” As SDGs will be updated soon, will SLOs be reconsidered accordingly? At what scale?

9. Kevin Henry says:

FEBRUARY 20, 2015 AT 9:46 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Dear colleagues,

As someone who has worked in sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa and South and East Asia for more than 30 years (primarily with the INGO CARE International) and interacted with many CG centers and CRPs over time, I would like to offer some comments for consideration as the SRF is

finalized for approval in the coming months. The essence of my comments is two-fold: 1) The draft SRF has much going for it and represents important progress in many ways over previous iterations; and 2) There are several major gaps and blindspots which, if not addressed, will undermine the sort of reforms necessary for CG system effectiveness.

1) On the positive side, I think that the results framework, with its three SLOs, ten IDOs, and four cross-cutting issues, is sound. I think that all four cross-cutting issues are critical, but would recommend broadening the “youth and gender” theme to address underlying issues of social inequality more broadly. (As a side note, I was struck by the document’s use of “gender equity” as opposed to “gender equality” and wondered how much thought had gone into this choice of words.) I also think that the initial discussion of the impact pathways for each SLO is sound, but obviously much more work will be needed to develop and test these impact pathways and the larger “implicit” theory of change underlying the SRF.

There is a lot of great insightful and aspirational language in the document. Recognizing both the positive and negative legacies of the first Green Revolution is important for the CG system as it charts its strategy for the next ten years. Promoting approaches that focus on sustainable use of soil and water resources, avoidance of over-use of toxic chemicals, promoting more diversified systems vs. monoculture should really be the way forward for the CG system, and tapping into the movements building around “climate-smart agriculture” and “nutrition-sensitive agriculture” can help the CG system leverage its impact.

Here are some of my favorite passages:

“The objectives of a renewed and expanded research effort must therefore include not merely higher yields from improved varieties and practices, but also greater emphasis on new themes such as climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, faster adoption of new technologies, high profitability from the small farm and food processing sectors, better opportunities for women and marginalized groups, greater resilience to economic and environmental shocks, and better stewardship of natural resources— all of which imply more emphasis on building effective partnerships with a broader array of organizations.”

“As a result, it is critical for CGIAR research to reflect the complexity of poverty dynamics. No single pathway to poverty reduction will hold across all settings. Indeed, technological innovation does not always reduce poverty; under some circumstances, it even has the potential to exacerbate inequality, creating, for example, widespread structural change in farming systems and increased urban migration.”

“The great gains made in food production over the past 50 years have often come at a high environmental cost: degraded land/soils, polluted water, depleted marine fisheries and forest cover, and greatly reduced biodiversity. Now climate change threatens to accelerate this damage, for example, by forcing the production of key crops into new, previously uncultivated forest and highland areas.”

“Another essential ingredient here will be to ensure that agricultural systems are diversified in ways that protect soils and water— two vital inputs that have often been compromised by past approaches to intensification, which have led to erosion or to deteriorating soil structure and to the inefficient use of scarce water supplies, often accompanied by pollution. As well as helping to control soil erosion and improve soil organic matter content, increased above- and below-ground biomass will be essential for storing carbon and hence for mitigating climate change.”

"More efficient use of agricultural resources by smallholders and other user groups involves a shift away from such practices as slash-and-burn agriculture, a contributor (though far from the largest one) to deforestation, and the adoption of zero tillage and other resource-conserving systems and practices in addition to greater efficiency in the use of fertilizers and other chemical inputs."

2) Despite all that I see that is positive in the draft SRF, there are several points that are very worrying. I summarize my major concerns below under the inter-related headings of: a) Where are the farmers?: b) Participatory approaches; and c) Partnerships.

a) Smallholder farmers, either as individuals or organized in various forms of collectives, are almost completely absent (apart from a reference to farmers' organizations in the section on program level accountability) from the SRF except as passive "targets" of CG interventions. There is no "farmer first" thinking evident in the strategy, and farmers and their organizations are not main actors in story the SRF tells. While there are small nods to local or indigenous knowledge, there is no hint of farmers as potential researchers, innovators, and leaders;

b) Related to the first point, there are no references to participatory approaches to research and extension or "farmer-led innovation." Indeed, implicit throughout the SRF is knowledge generation and transmission as a one-way process— from those that have it (CG system and research partners) to those that don't have it (farmers and "non-research partners"). One example: "This section describes how CGIAR could contribute research outputs (evidence, knowledge, policy advice, best practice, technologies) which, when taken up by farmers or development partners, could contribute to each SLO." This is really an outdated way of thinking. Of course, the CG system IS a repository of and generator of knowledge, but learning and impact requires a two-way iterative process, which is lacking in the SRF; and

c) Similarly, the thinking around partnerships really needs to be deepened. While there is quite a bit of language in the SRF on partnerships and rhetoric regarding the need for "equality" and open and consistent dialogue, it is less obvious in practice that there has been a change in CG system thinking on how to engage non-research partners beyond using them as an implementation mechanism.

These points all go back to the heart of the critique of the CG system's impact that led to the reform process. If the CG system is to remain true to the spirit of reform, changing how it interacts with farmers is central, as is how it engages with partners, especially "non-research partners." The CG system needs to see itself as less the center of its own AR4D universe and more as a key actor in a diverse network, and it also needs to mainstream participatory research and extension processes (successfully piloted in pockets already) through the system and the strategy. Of course, central to the thinking behind the reform process is also a need for more effective collaboration and resource-sharing within the CG system. While the CRPs are designed to overcome the siloed and competitive nature of the CG system, old habits die hard, and evidence of continued duplication of effort and turf battles between CG centers and between CG centers and CRPs is easy to find. Some of these issues, including duplication of effort across CRPs, should be addressed in the second generation of programs now under design.

I hope these comments are useful. As noted, there is a lot that is positive in the draft SRF. But the shortcomings are also telling and suggest the need for deeper socialization of the reform process and more fundamental changes in organizational culture and mindset, which are always the most difficult changes to make. I look forward to seeing the final document that emerges from this second phase of consultation and congratulate you for opening up the process to comments from "outsiders."

Best regards.

Kevin Henry
Visiting Fellow,
School of Global Environmental Sustainability,
Colorado State University

10. Ann Waters-Bayer says:

FEBRUARY 23, 2015 AT 8:30 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

I very much support Kevin's comments about the role of so-called "non-research" partners – including smallholder farmers – as innovators and co-researchers.

Here are a few more comments – some underlining what Kevin wrote:

- In two places ("Partnering for impact" in Section 4 and "Partnerships for impact" in Section 6), I would have expected the CGIAR to include farmer organisations, but these seem to be missing in the current list of partners.
- The partnerships should not be primarily for "delivery of impact" but rather for more effective innovation and development processes, in which formal researchers are one set of actors. Perhaps the word "delivery" makes the process appear so one-way.
- The SLOs with their IDOs and sub-IDOs are well explained in the text. Please give the same attention to the text for the cross-cutting issues; otherwise, you give the impression that these issues are not so important. Because they are cross-cutting, they should be important everywhere – and should appear everywhere under the SLOs. But there are reasons for including the particular IDOs and sub-IDOs that are under the four cross-cutting issues – and these deserve explanation.
- In the sub-IDOs under the crosscutting issue Capacity Development in Figure 2, I suggest "Enhanced capacity for innovation in research partner organisations, development partner organisations, and poor and vulnerable communities" combined – which could perhaps be shortened to "Enhanced system capacity to innovate" but it may not be bad to make it clear on which actors within the agricultural innovation systems the CGIAR is focusing. There are, of course, many more actors than only these ones. Would it be unrealistic to see a role for the CGIAR, through its research on agricultural innovation systems, in producing international public goods on how such systems can be enhanced for the benefit of the poor and vulnerable? If this would indeed be an objective, it might fit better under Policies and Institutions, to replace "Increased capacity of beneficiaries to adopt research outcomes".
- The part on "Achieving impact at scale" reflects again the old paradigm of technology transfer from research to recipients. It will not be only and perhaps not even primarily through dissemination of technology that the CGIAR and its partners will achieve impact at scale but rather through collaboration in changing methodologies, approaches, institutions and policies.
- Throughout the paper, I suggest using the term "good practices" rather than "best practices" as the latter gives the impression that a small number of top practices can be disseminated blanket-style. This is not realistic in diverse smallholder farming systems.

- The pull-out quote by Bob Ziegler sounds rather odd, as it refers to “a healthy environment” as a “problem” alongside poverty and hunger. Maybe he would like to reword what he said?
- Small typo: In Table 2, it should be “combining” (not combing) social and ecological research.

All in all, this is a much improved SRF over earlier versions. I do hope that our additional comments will also be taken on board.

11. Dave Wood says:

FEBRUARY 25, 2015 AT 10:12 AM [\(EDIT\)](#)

SLO Improved natural resources systems and ecosystem services capital
 IDO Natural capital enhanced and protected especially from climate change
 Sub-IDO Increased genetic diversity of agricultural and associated landscapes

Genetic diversity should be ‘enhanced’ – in the sense of higher quality – rather than ‘increased’, in the sense of yet more diversity. The work of the CGIAR over half a century has been to strongly select genetic resources and to give farmers higher quality biodiversity. In particular, in pursuit of this higher quality biodiversity, the CGIAR has contributed strongly to a major ecological feature of traditional agriculture: the adoption of crops and trees from other continents. This allows crops and trees to escape their co-evolved pests and diseases and is so successful that 70% of crop production in both Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa is grown from introduced species (originally from other continents) [Wood, 1988]. Note that this escape from ‘bad’ biodiversity is ‘agroecology’ par excellence but currently ignored by recent, regressive, confectionary of agroecological thinking by academics in US universities, of little value to developing countries.

SLO Improved natural resources systems and ecosystem services
 IDO Enhanced benefits from ecosystem goods and services
 Sub-IDO Enrichment of plant and animal biodiversity for multiple goods and services

Unless better defined, ‘enrichment’ is even more suspect than the use of ‘increased’ above. It gives the impression that species-rich ecosystems are somehow better at delivering ecological goods and services. This ignores the ecological success and important services provided by species-poor (to the extent of species monodominance) of natural ecosystems. For example, ecological theory and research – after a period of dispute – now accepts that “A ‘mass ratio’ theory proposes that immediate controls are in proportion to inputs to primary production, are determined to an overwhelming extent by the traits and functional diversity of the dominant plants and are relatively insensitive to the richness of subordinates and transients” ... “claims of immediate benefits of high species richness to ecosystem functions arise from misinterpretation of data.” [Grime, 1998] Grime also warned with some force: “Vapid, abstract theorising about supposed general benefits of high biodiversity may bring temporary consolations to those worried about food security, declining resources and dwindling populations but they are no substitute for systematic development and testing of ecological theories of wide ambit ...”. As Grime is an experienced plant ecologist, the CGIAR would be wise to show caution in accepting the dogmatic claim of the benefits of high biodiversity related to ecosystem services both on farm and off. There is also a relevant Science Council comment on the notion of biodiversity [Science Council, 2009, p. viii]: “Favouring high levels of biodiversity is ideologically appealing to many interest groups but the

empirical evidence to support its supposed benefits is weak.”

From my own experience in tropical ecology, in benign environments (for example, most tropical rain forest) any several of a multitude of species can control ecosystem services. In important contrast, in challenging environments one specialist species is dominant and provides the greatest part of goods and ecosystem services. This is particularly so in marginal environments (strand or mudflats with monodominant turtle grass, mangroves and beach vegetation; in seasonally flooded areas with Phragmites and other monodominants, including *Oryza coarctata*; edaphic stressed vegetation with *Pemphis* scrub on oceanic islands; *Shorea* peat swamp forests; and *Gilbertiodendron* tropical forest – and very many more). As these involved the filtering of biodiversity to give the best single species available for particular environments they could be good models for monoculture fields. It should not escape notice that agriculture – the tilling of fields – is specifically designed to make the agroecosystem marginal for anything but the crop: in my view a close and deliberate management mimic of challenging natural ecosystems with monodominants (supported by the many records of monodominant vegetation of crop wild relatives – in particular cereals).

As separate points, the CGIAR should place some emphasis on the crop and dietary complementarity between simple field cropping and bio-complex gardens – seen to advantage in rice systems. This would introduce an emphasis on the previously neglected vegetables and fruits. Also there should be a revised emphasis on physical land management for water and eroded silt capture (not all soil erosion is bad!) though terracing and wetland management.

References

Grime, J.P. 1998. Benefits of Plant Diversity to Ecosystems: Immediate, Filter and Founder Effects. *Journal of Ecology* 86: 902–910.

Science Council 2009. Commentary Sixth External Program and Management Review (EPMR) of Bioversity International.

Wood, D. 1988. Introduced Crops in Developing Countries: a Sustainable Agriculture? *Food Policy* 3(2):167-172.

I was Head of the Genetic Resources Unit at CIAT for four years

I was also Director of the Royal Society Research Station on Aldabra Atoll (now a UNESCO World Heritage Centre and also a Ramsar Wetland Site of International Importance)

12. Iroda Rustamova says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2015 AT 1:27 PM (EDIT)

Dear colleagues,

Dear SRF e-consultation facilitators,

As I work in the National Agricultural Research, Education and Extension System of Uzbekistan (NAREES), which a part the Central Asia and the Caucasus region, I would like to comment on SLOs from NARES point of view, as to my understanding, NAREES are integral part of the regional and global Research systems.

SLO 1. Reduce poverty

Enhancing and promoting innovations in smallholders' agriculture, the development and transfer knowledge and technologies towards increase the efficiency and the profitability of farming practices of

small farmers, agricultural households and vulnerable population, are considered as priorities of agricultural research and extension system in the region. This process requires the joint and coordinated efforts not only of NAREES, but also of international development centers, national governing bodies, and many other stakeholders in agriculture.

Additionally, further development market and institutional infrastructure with improved road and transport communications, improved trade and business relations between large and small producers, as well as strengthening public support to smallholders and creating enabling environment at local level are required. Therefore, CG and Research System centers and institutions should closely work with national partners not only in research, education, extension system, but also with institutions and companies in both in private and public sectors, and development agencies. This is to my opinion has to be mentioned in the new SRF.

SLO 2. Improve food and nutrition security for health.

Joint efforts oriented to increase agricultural productivity, the introduction of cost-effective technologies and the diversification of agricultural production and food value chain will influence availability and access to nutritious food. In this process, quality improvement, productivity increase and cost reduction are important terms for an increase in healthy food supply especially to vulnerable groups, women and children.

SLO 3. Improve natural resource systems and ecosystem services

Rational use of natural resources with minimal negative impact on the environment, mitigation of climate change are complex issues whose solution depends on the consistent implementation of activities not only at national but also at sub-regional, regional and global levels. It requires joint efforts to monitor and analysis of all aspects and factors of the use of natural resources: increasing agricultural productivity, reduction of operation costs, conservation of natural landscapes, maintenance of natural diversity, providing a healthy environment, preserving of ecosystems. In addition, there is a requirement for a gradual transition to international environmental standards of production and processing; establishment of a unified system of monitoring of natural resources and of environment; improvement of environmental education and training, and better disclosure of environmental conditions; coordinated activities between national authorities and international bodies and centres for environmental management, as well as implementation of environmental protection programs at global, regional and national levels.

Dr. Iroda Rustamova,

Director of Information and Consultation Centre of Tashkent State Agrarian University, Uzbekistan

Nadia Manning-Thomas says:

FEBRUARY 26, 2015 AT 7:34 PM [\(EDIT\)](#)

Dear Dr. Iroda Rustamova,

Thank you very much for adding your voice to this consultation on the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF). Your comments will be valuable in helping to strengthen this strategy for the next years. And your comments/suggestions that “This process requires the joint and coordinated efforts not only of NAREES, but also of international development centers, national governing bodies, and many other stakeholders in agriculture.” is particularly heard by us from the CGIAR Consortium Office Partnerships Team. It also matches with what we have heard from the webinars on partnering for impact and capacity development-in which we heard strong calls for the SRF to better reflect the variety of

actors which need to be involved to achieve impactful agricultural research for development and the successful achievement of the desired outcomes. It was suggested that we need to follow up on the SRF with a better understanding of the different actors/partners and the roles they play- and to figure out what modalities we can use to engage with these different 'categories' of partners.

It is definitely on our radar.

Thank you again for your contribution and we look forward to engaging with you again in future.

13. Dick Tinsley says:

FEBRUARY 27, 2015 AT 12:33 AM (EDIT)

Please find my comments concerning the CIGAR Strategy

1. Bit of pure trivial on p. 5, shouldn't you include "fiber" in your list of land uses. I believe it is usually included in such a list. I appreciate that the CGIAR does not get involved but I am fairly certain there are still several million ha of land in your host countries devoted to cotton.

2. On p. 12 you mention working for the urban poor, can you do this without it being at the expense of the smallholder farmers your primary beneficiaries. This is largely done by ceiling prices on staple crops, that marginalize the farmers profits and often makes production of that crop un-economical and thus jeopardized national food security. Also, the consumer prices being only a fraction of what they are in the US etc. again forces the smallholder farmers to accept low price with their returns to their labor approaching starvation levels, reducing the work day, extending the time to complete agronomic tasks, reducing the yield potentials and ultimately challenging the farmers food security.<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/FinancialSuppressed.htm> .<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/ConsumerPriceComparison.htm> .

3. The issue come up again in more detail in p. 21 when talking about reducing poverty. However, you do not address the operational needs. This is a major oversight in our program for the past 40 years. All agronomic work does an excellent job of determining the physical potential but say nothing about the operational feasibility for farmers to extend the small plot result across the rest of the field. I just assumes it is not a problem. It is and once you address that operational limits in terms of labor, or access to mechanization that will expedite the basic crop establishment sufficiently to take full advantage the technology to provide the essential food security, much of the crop diversification and value chain impacts will become spontaneous. But as long as the farmers are taking up to 8 weeks for crop establishment the prospects of crop diversification into high valued crops will be limited. Note the poultry/aquaculture development in places like Thailand made possible by the shift for water buffalo to power tillers. The same can be expected in Africa once the farmers get control of their staple crops.

4. P. 23 is my biggest concern. That is the improved food and nutrition security. What is the caloric base for this for the smallholder beneficiaries expected to undertake substantial manual agronomic labor each day? I think this needs to be specified. I see 3 different values. One is IFPRI recent definition of hunger at > 1800 kcals/day. Is that you base consideration before you look at quality of diet? Or are you looking at 2000 kcals/day? That is what is typically looked at from developed country perspective, where obesity is a major concern, not manual exertion. It is also the base for refugee rations for those confined to camps, with little exertion needs. It is also typical of what many smallholder farmers have access to. If

you are expecting smallholder farmers to engage in extensive manual labor that diet needs at least 4000 kcal/day. I think that is considerable outside the expectation. However, anything short of that will result in reduced work day, and delay in completing field task with accompanying reduction in yield potential. Typically I am looking at work days of only 4 hours with half of that devoted to caring for animals and it taking up to 8 weeks for basic crop establishment. That is far too long to effectively utilize most research results with an underlying, but not stated, expectation of only 2 weeks for crop establishment. If this is not clearly stated I am inclined to think the assumption is in the 2000 kcal range and you are expecting smallholder to exert considerable more energy than they have access. If so have you crossed the line and are unintentionally advocating starvation for the smallholder thus their genocide which is a crime against humanity. Now no farmers are working themselves to death, but then neither are the complying with research results.<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.echocommunity.org/resource/collection/62026577-227A-4FB0-8B25-B0838484CED7/Issue121.pdf> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/EthiopiaDiet.html> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/DietPoster.pdf> .

5. P. 32 you address the issue of enhancing host government involvement. Are the financial resources available to do so? As I see most host governments they are operating in a financially suppressed economy as mentioned earlier. One aspect of this is virtually no tax base to fund civil services and thus the government particularly when you look at agriculture support services are financially stalled. The result in virtually all research is reduced to variety improvement in “collaboration” with the CGIAR centers. This is one of the most effective contributions the CGIAR has to host programs. But it also means don't ask government to undertake additional services, you may end up promoting some informal income opportunities, my polite term for low levels of corruption.<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/FinanciallyStalled.htm> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/VarietyImprovement.htm> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/InformalIncome.htm> . http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.echocommunity.org/resource/collection/F6FFA3BF-02EF-4FE3-B180-F391C063E31A/The_Crop_Genetic_Pump.pdf .

6. P. 38 Finally on you mention extension. Is this a continued effort at education without addressing if the technology is operationally feasible, given the limited labor, other operational resources and multiple crop and animal enterprise the smallholder tend to be involved with? Would extension be more effective if concentrate on facilitating access to the additional resources needed to make the recommendations operationally feasible? If not through the CGIAR who should be doing this? Can you clearly state that short coming of the farmers in not complying to recommendations is not optimizing those recommendations to the limited operational base available to the smallholder farmers.<http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/BasicPremise.htm> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/Adoptors.htm> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/Integration.htm> . <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~rtinsley/UsedTractors.htm> .

Thank you,
Dick Tinsley
Professor Emeritus, Colorado State University

14. Paul L.G Vlek says:

MARCH 1, 2015 AT 8:40 PM (EDIT)

This contribution was made by Paul L.G. Vlek, Special Advisor to the Director General ICARDA, via email initially but permission was given to share it in the Public Chat Room:

Dear Partners, Amman, February 12, 2015

I have just joined ICARDA as Special Advisor to the DG with the aim of strengthening the Systems Approach in research at the Center. One of the first documents I was asked to look at was the newest SRF. First let me congratulate the authors of this document. It is concise and spells out with clarity where the CGIAR wishes to take its reform. However, I do wish to signal a serious concern we have with the restrictions placed on systems research.

In previous missions to ICARDA I have tried to get the Center and the CRP DS to define the production systems it sees as within its mandate and where it sees it can make a sizeable contribution. In its first analysis done at an early stage of the DS program the region was characterized into two systems: vulnerable (SRT2) and intensifiable (SRT3). As the previous SRF makes clear reference to production systems as the unit of analysis, ICARDA and the DS dedicated a full workshop to further subdivide the SRTs into: 1) Pastoral 2) agropastoral 3) tree-based systems 4) rainfed cereal-based and 5) intensive irrigated. In fact, ICARDA is strongly recommending making these the flagships of the DS, recognizing full-well that any kind of classification does not do full justice to the complex and transient systems that exist around the dry areas. However, the delineation of these systems allows ICARDA and the DS to define the system behavior and boundaries as well as its interaction with its surroundings such as climate, markets etc. The world-wide nature of the DS CRP would allow cross regional comparative analysis which would provide insights on the effects of socio-cultural context on the performance of these systems and their complex adaptive (innovative) character.

To my dismay, the new SRF would eliminate the first and may be parts of the second of the agricultural production systems that ICARDA has identified, given the text on page 31:

- Agricultural systems: Research in this area will target a limited number of regions and agro-ecologies that are home to high concentrations of the world's poor and that offer significant agricultural potential in the sense that sizeable yield gaps both occur and can be addressed.
- The focus will be on the sustainable intensification of farming systems, including the improvement of social and ecological resilience, ecosystem services supporting agriculture, and the management of tradeoffs.

ICARDA as well as the DS always recognized that its mandate zone includes regions and systems that have limited potential to make huge strides in productivity. However, these areas are important as can be seen from the attached table and map based on a preliminary analysis conducted by ICARDA. The truly marginal area (less than 1 t/ha/yr in potential NPP gain) extends over more than 15 million km² inhabited by well over 200 million people. The better endowed drylands (1-3 t/ha/yr potential NPP gain) cover 6.6 million km² and are home to around 185 million people. The most marginal lands are vulnerable and degrading and if we want to not lose the ecosystem services these regions supply (biodiversity, soil protection and carbon sequestration) nor wish to create a large number of environmental refugees for Europe to cope with, it behooves the CGIAR to work on stabilizing these systems by generating resiliency and improving markets. This is a typical case where the cost of inaction would be very high. I believe the nature of these paragraphs is unnecessarily restrictive. The way the Centers and CRPs are working with the donor community, there will be a more natural way in which a proper balance will be found on the resource allocation between the systems identified. I would propose that the old SRF NOT be changed on this topic.

Thanks for giving us an opportunity to react to this new text and I hope to hear from you in the near

future.

With best regards

Paul L.G. Vlek, Special Advisor to the Director General ICARDA, Amman, Jordan
and Professor, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Div. Ecology and Natural Resources
Walter Flex Str. 3, D 53113 Bonn, Germany

15. John McDermott says:

MARCH 1, 2015 AT 9:28 PM [\(EDIT\)](#)

The contribution to the consultation below was made by John McDermott (A4NH-IFPRI) initially via email but we asked him if we could post it here for others to read his valuable insights and suggestions:

Colleagues,

Some comments, particularly focusing on the human health dimension, which seems relatively weaker than some other parts of the results framework. Thanks for all your work in moving this forward.

1. In the results framework a number of direct measures to improve human health have been offered in both the food safety and improved health associated with good agricultural practice. I think the SLO title needs just a one word change to reflect this – from “Improved food and nutritional security for health” to “Improved food and nutrition security and health”.
2. The text is very weak on the IDO that looks at improved human health associated with good agricultural practice. I was surprised to see that the SLO goal of human health was widened at the IDO level to include animal health. This seems unusual logic. Of course animal health is important for zoonotic diseases of humans and a majority of new diseases of people come from animals but I am not sure that including animal-only diseases is very logical – the same argument could be made for plant diseases. I do agree that the biomedical research platforms (including immunology and diagnostics) and epidemiological approaches provide a common science that the CGIAR has and will continue to use.
3. The public health community is an important audience for what we are proposing on improving health through good agricultural practice. There are some important research issues in agriculture for public health that deserve inclusion in the results framework section. As agriculture intensifies, there are health risks, largely from more intensive livestock production (including in cities and towns) and in more intensive water use (including contaminated water). Public health is very concerned about antimicrobial resistance and a post-antibiotic world. It is an important research topic to see what role antibiotic use in intensifying livestock and fish production play in this. The amounts of antimicrobials used, especially in Asia are very large.
4. On the health side, there are also important diseases, eliminated in richer and more organized countries that persist in poor countries, which have important agricultural elements to their solution. Cysticercosis is one that comes to mind that has benefited from joint agriculture and public health actions in Peru and would be an area for joint effort in Africa.

Best wishes,

John

16. Moh'd Mahmoud Ajlouni says:

MARCH 2, 2015 AT 1:05 PM (EDIT)

The NENA region (Near East and North Africa) is at a crossroad of its destiny, important and even existential challenges have to be adequately addressed at the social, political and economic levels, particularly at the light of the recent events happening in the region. In addition, the NENA region is a singularly defining region for achieving a stable and food-secure future for the world – posing both an invaluable opportunity and an alarming threat. The investment in agriculture development in the region will, therefore, be decisive for the world at large.

On one hand, if NENA's needs for agriculture development are not aggressively met, it could have hugerepercussions for the world in the form of disenchanting youth and migrating populations. The region already has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, with the youth unemployment rate higher than the world average. According to IFAD, the current unemployment rate among young aged 18-29 years ranges from 18% in Morocco to 24% in Egypt, up to an alarming 48% in Syria and 53% in Yemen. NENA is also the largest food importer in the world, a large chunk of it being wheat – a staple diet in most Arab countries. The region was predictably hit the worst in 2008 global food crisis and is rapidly moving toward dangerously food insecure levels with its growing populations.

On the flip side, NENA offers an immediate opportunity for large gains by bridging the wide yield gaps prevalent in the region – a low hanging fruit for boosting self-sufficiency. The case of Syria transitioning from wheat importing to wheat exporting status with the help of technologies and enabling policies demonstrated this potential. Based on ICARDA's years of research with the national partners on the dryland production systems, sustainable increases in food productivity – even with the region's scarce natural resources – is not only well within reach, but also transformative of livelihoods and food security.

While NENA does not have the population density or poverty levels found in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, it is the world's hottest spot of environmental poverty, represented by water scarcity and land limitation, degradation and desertification. The level of poverty in several countries of the region has not globally decreased during the last 20 years, even worst, in some countries it has increased since the 2000s (UNDP & Arab League, 2009).

The NENA region is expected to become one of the main hot spots in terms of changes driven by global warming. The NENA region is the hardest hit by climate changes and is already experiencing frequent droughts, its agricultural systems of production, which are in general lacking resilience, will have to face unprecedented physical, biological and economical shocks. However, the region could be the turning point for CGIAR's contributions to food security and improving livelihoods in the world's dry areas – home to the poorest and most marginalized people, with 16% of their population living in chronic poverty.

Why is NENA marginal dry areas critical for CGIAR's SRF?

- Food security as a stabilizing force: The region is at grave risk of food insecurity as the largest importer of foods in the world, as pointed out above. The imports are estimated to reach \$115 billion by 2020, making these countries increasingly vulnerable to global food availability and price fluctuations – a known trigger point for human conflict and unrest.
- Vulnerable ecosystem at the brink: Climate change has serious implications on the fragile dry ecosystems of NENA, with its already scarce natural resources. Water is the most coveted natural resource in this region as nearly 83% of crop production of the region is rainfed. Irrigation consumes 80-90% of all fresh water used in NENA. With climate change and growing population pressure in the region, water extraction rates are rising and the groundwater levels are falling further down. While the

global average for per capita water availability is 8,900 m³, it's only 1,100 m³ in the NENA region, estimated to drop further down to 550 m³ by 2050 – a disastrous scenario for the region that needs urgent attention. Besides the falling water levels, an increase in the frequency of droughts is estimated from climate change, along with increase in temperatures, which will shorten the growing season and induce new diseases and insect pests.

- NENA- a hotspot for climate-smart agriculture research: The NENA region is known to be the cradle of agriculture and animal husbandry, rich with thousands of years of traditional knowledge and evolved crop varieties and practices – offering an unparalleled hotspot for researching solutions for resilient, food-secure future in the face of climate change. The region's unique wild varieties and land races offer genetic resources highly adapted to adverse conditions which can be harvested for genetic traits that lend resilience to droughts, heat and diseases.

- Agriculture development as trigger for employment: Even if the relative contribution of agriculture in national economy may remain small in some countries, its returns on socio-economic development will have significant impacts and can help anchor the rural populations in this part of the world. Sustainable agriculture development will spin off new opportunities to engage the youth and farmers through agro-industries, ICT, post-harvest handling and transportation needs. Agriculture is the largest job market in NENA as nearly 44% of the population lives in rural area. In Egypt and Sudan, about two-third of the population are rural and in Yemen, rural population accounts for 70% of the total population.

Based on above facts and challenges, marginal dry areas and NENA region needs to be given needed focus and attention by the CGIAR SRF and its underlying research portfolio.

Mohammad M. Ajlouni

17. Georg Weber says:

MARCH 2, 2015 AT 9:23 PM (EDIT)

The “CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016–2025” reflects overall an attempt for a balanced assessment of challenges and opportunities for a large and heterogeneous program. A range of shortages have been mentioned by previous commentators, thus, I try to invite for reflection on a some additional aspects.

Chapter 1 (Global Challenges Drive Change):

A more detailed assessment of social change may enrich the assessment; this may also diffuse the impression of considering people as objects for development and the risk of a deterministic view.

Chapter 2 (Harnessing New Opportunities), in particular p. 11 (Advances in agri-food science):

Statement: “Breakthroughs in satellite imagery and remote sensing, soil and water monitoring and precision farming are also reducing the energy and environmental footprint of agriculture.” – The opportunity and challenge for CGIAR may be to make high-tech information management systems accessible and transferable to local conditions and small-scale farming.

Statement: “Gene synthesis and multi-gene vector cloning are likely to lead to breakthroughs in photosynthesis and nutrient management, such as C4 rice and nitrogen-fixing cereals.” – Another opportunity, relevant for the wide range of diverse local food-farming areas, may be added: “Using

genetic transfer mechanisms for inserting specific resistance or adaptive traits into locally adapted and accepted varieties without compromising rights over local germplasm ownership”.

Statement: “The collation and application of insights from the study of large integrated data sets is starting to deliver benefits across genetics, economics, agronomy, hydrology and soil science. These insights and their associated predictive power have the potential to increase the resilience of food systems and to reduce the risks associated with the management of water and nutrients.” – This is a rather bold statement, and may be stated more modestly as a challenge to work towards over the next decade.

Chapter 3 (CGIAR’s vision, mission, goals and beneficiaries):

A range of terms are used (stakeholders, partners, beneficiaries; the term client is not included), while the modalities and levels of engagement are not clearly differentiated. It is clear that the CGIAR depends heavily on “partnerships” and that these in turn vary widely depending on national contexts. This is again reflected on page 28 and 29 under the Cross-Cutting Issue “ Capacity Development”, where “partners” and “beneficiaries” are mentioned as objects for capacity building. The role of the CGIAR in a diverse and changing research-transfer architecture is not well spelled out, it should at least be spelled out as a key challenge to be addressed over the coming years.

Chapter 4 (CGIAR’s evolving niche):

The SLO, IDO, Sub-IDO hierarchy in Figure 1 (p.17) is useful as a guiding and evolving working matrix. Each single statement provides ample space for discussion and disagreement. However, the robustness of the pathway for impact and the underlying theory of change for two IDOs in particular may need reflection: “Natural capital enhanced and protected especially from climate change” and “Enhanced benefits from ecosystem goods and services”. These are highly complex processes, depending more on nature, policy and participation than on technology from research and transfer.

Some statements in Figure 2 (p.29) on cross-cutting issues and outcomes may need to be rephrased: The IDO statements of “Mitigation and adaptation achieved” and “Equity and Inclusion achieved” should be changed towards processes that can be enhanced, accelerated or strengthened.

Chapter 6, Research Strategy

Site-specificity and Time-frame for research investments and priorities for exploratory research or adaptive research may warrant some clarification for priority setting. These are directly linked to the role of CG-Centers and their respective partnership working modalities. Topics such as “Strengthening the coping capacity of poor people” and “Agricultural systems research” should have a very different notion and role for the CGIAR compared to more generic or horizontally transferable topics. Innovation on climate-smart agriculture has a lot to contribute in terms of tools and methods for analysis and processes to establish early warning systems and to design more resilient systems. However, the pace and type of change in land use and livelihood strategies are location specific and require effective communication, transfer and/or partnership approaches.

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