

Highlights and recommendation from the CGIAR Site Integration National Consultation Workshop held in Ethiopia



Lalibela Auditorium

International Livestock Research Institute

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Background

There have been significant developments in the agriculture sector in Ethiopia recently, and the CGIAR is in the process of developing a second phase of its CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). As part of this process, the CGIAR centres have decided to come together with their national partners and key stakeholders to discuss the national priorities and goals for the strategic agenda for agricultural research and development, and related nutrition and health linkages.

As part of the process of exploring opportunities for partnership, alignment and improved cooperation with national partners in Ethiopia, CGIAR centres are seeking to improve their understanding of what the various stakeholders and partners will be doing to meet these priorities and goals. To this end, ILRI together with other CGIAR centres organized a national consultation meeting on 11 December 2015, the outcomes of which will also contribute to the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD3) process.

Objectives

The national consultation workshop for CGIAR site integration was held in Addis Ababa with three specific objectives to:

1. Improve understanding of the national priorities and goals for agricultural and related nutrition and health research for development;
2. Present CGIAR work in Ethiopia (major thematic areas, partnerships and geographic location); and
3. Identify major opportunities to align activities across actors around specific themes, including reviewing modalities for country collaboration.

This 11 December 2015 meeting was part of a wider process of coordination and alignment between CGIAR centres and programs and their national partners in six 'priority investment' countries—Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Tanzania and Vietnam. The process is intended to showcase what CGIAR centres and CRPs—and their partners—can achieve as a result of improved collective action (see <http://gcard3.cgiar.org/national-consultations> for more information on this process).

Once this meeting report has been finalized and reviewed, a country working group will move this agenda forward. In addition to feeding into the third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD3), the recommendations will guide mechanisms for better alignment, coordination, collaboration and strengthening of the Ethiopia-CGIAR partnership going forward. This report also contains lessons that could help the organizers of similar country collaboration processes and events.

Agenda

08.30 Welcome and introductions

09.00 Opening speech—(Ministry of Agriculture (MoA))

09.15 Introducing the national agricultural and related nutrition and health priorities

- [Presentation by the Agricultural Transformation Agency - Growth and Transformation Plan I and GTP II](#)
- [Presentation by the Ethiopian Institute for Agricultural Research \(EIAR\) on its agricultural research strategy](#)
- [Presentation by the Rural Economic Development and Food Security \(RED&FS\) sector working group about their activities and priorities](#)

Q&As

11.00 *Break*

11.20 Introducing the CGIAR research activities in Ethiopia

- [Overall presentation of CGIAR activities \(Strategy and Results Framework\) globally and in Ethiopia](#)
- Presentation of CGIAR research programs (major achievements, lessons learnt and ways forward)

12.20 Making sense of key opportunities for collaboration (intervention areas: WHAT to work together on)

13.00 *Lunch*

14.00 Reviewing modalities of country collaboration

- Cases and examples of good and improvable practices
- What we need to do to avoid bottlenecks about national-CGIAR country collaboration

15.00 *Break*

15.20 Reviewing effective options and modalities for collaboration (HOW to work together)

16.30 Final recommendations and next steps towards better cooperation

17.00 Close

Overview of the presentations

The meeting began with Siboniso Moyo, Director General's Representative in Ethiopia of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), welcoming all those who attended and outlining and explaining the objectives of the meeting.

While thanking those who had taken the time to attend the meeting, mainly from the government sector, she committed the meeting to finding ways of engaging with representatives from the private and NGO sectors, particularly those representing young people and women. Before handing over to the State Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, HE Gebregziabher Gebreyohannes who delivered the opening remarks at the Ethiopia-CGIAR meeting, Dr Moyo with the help of a short video, [CGIAR agriculture research for a food-secure future](#), briefly outlined the objectives of the CGIAR system (reducing rural poverty, boosting food security, improving health and nutrition, and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems), and its activities.

[State Minister Gebreyohannes](#) underlined the importance of sustained investment in agricultural research to deliver poverty reduction, achieve food and nutrition security, boost raw material for industries, and push up export earnings. An increase in production and productivity and developing a drought resilient agriculture, he argued, cannot be sought without strong research support. Thus, national and global research institutions are expected to fill technological gaps and must position themselves to respond to emerging challenges, transforming the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

[Dereje Biruk of the Agricultural Transformation Agency](#) provided an overview of the Agricultural Transformation Agency and that of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) I and II, exploring the key pillars and programs and the deliverables for each selected program area. Biruk explained how the agenda has been developed around interventions (deliverables) to unlock systemic bottlenecks identified through: the development of sub-sector strategies, the identification of transformational interventions that address the systemic bottlenecks; and the aggregation of prioritized deliverables across the agriculture sector.

Based on learning from GTP I, the four pillars of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda for the GTP II were developed. They include increased crop and livestock production and productivity; commercial orientation of smallholder agriculture and market development; environmental sustainability and inclusive growth and national food security; and enhanced implementation capacity. Biruk explained transformation deliverables have already been defined for 16 program areas, including seed supply and distribution, livestock breeding and genetic improvement, market-orientated extension. However, there are still 15 program areas for which transformation deliverables require further consultation/analysis, including rural finance, market services and infrastructure, and food safety, quality assurance and traceability. Ending his intervention, Biruk emphasised that there was plenty of room for collaboration with others in the areas of capacity building, problem solving, technology generation and piloting of innovative ideas.

[Gary Robbins, of USAID](#), explained that the Rural Economic Development and Food Security Sector Working Group (RED&FS) is the government-donor coordination platform for agriculture, natural resource management and food security. Committed to mobilization and alignment of resources to government priorities, RED&FS seeks to harmonize and coordinate the effective and rational use of the resources of development partners to address gaps and avoid overlaps.

Reflecting the importance of agriculture to the Ethiopian economy and the complexity of the sector, RED&FS is the most evolved and complex of all the SWGs. Its various sector and sub-sector platforms allow direct engagement and dialogue between government and development partners through an executive committee and four technical committees: agricultural growth; sustainable land management; livestock development; and disaster risk management and food security, encouraging a coordinated approach through programs for agricultural growth, sustainable land management, productive safety net, and drought resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

The secretariat provides broad support to the entire sector and works at building partnerships. This program approach allows efficient alignment, harmonization with minimum administrative costs and demands on human

resources. About 65-70% of total investment is through the major flagship programs. This structure offers plenty of opportunities for CGIAR centres to engage with government and other key policy makers and actors.

[Fentahun Mengistu, of the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research \(EIAR\)](#), outlined that the research priorities of the institute have been shaped by agricultural-industry sector goals of industrialization; climate resilient; the Ethiopian objective to be a middle-income country by 2025; and the role of agriculture in growth. He explained that there were a number of rural socioeconomic and environmental dynamics affecting R&D activities, including aggressive NRM strategy; agricultural productivity increase, seen as business; input use and management practices; technology change/ demand. Moreover, there were a number of obstacles hindering the transfer of technology, including yield stagnation, knowledge related to improved breeds, biotic and abiotic constraints, irrigation etc.

According to the EIAR representative, there are many opportunities for improved collaboration with the 11 CGIAR centres present in Ethiopia, including increased government commitment to agricultural R&D, a strong national agricultural research system (NARS), and the successful experiences and impact of past CGIAR-NARS collaboration. However, there are also a number of bottlenecks which need to be overcome, including a lack of CGIAR alignment with national priorities, overlap of activities, a lack of focus on capacity development of NARS, and inadequate mobilization and allocation of funds to NARS. Fentahun proposed four areas for future collaboration: germplasm enhancement and exchange; more collaborative NARS-CGIAR research; help adopting/ adapting technologies; capacity building from CGIARs; and adequate and transparent mobilization of funding for NARS research.

Discussion

Following two brief sessions in which participants were offered opportunities to put questions to the presenters, and to representatives of the CGIAR centres, they identified three opportunities for CGIAR/ national collaboration relating to seed systems, commercialization and agribusiness, and a focus on bio-technology. Participants identified a number of stories of successful collaboration including capacity development and training of farmers, information and knowledge sharing, timely delivery of quality seed to farmers, diversified food consumption, disease management and community-based breeding program. In response to why these activities were successful, participants highlighted: alignment with government policy, appropriate coordination and structure, technological support, M&E, defined roles and responsibilities, sufficient resources and the right people, MOUs, demand-driven collaboration.

Based on an exercise in identifying the ingredients of the worst possible collaboration scenario and those which are currently happening, participants set out concrete steps to ensure CGIAR-country collaboration improves. The suggested measures included:

1. Improved coordination, communication, and shared objectives (aligned with the GTP II)
2. Identification of stakeholders / taskforce empowered to lead process
3. Identification of specific areas and research questions
4. Agreement on the coordination function and mechanism
5. Joint work planning (financial, reviews and investment, scalability, etc.), fundraising and implementation
6. Monitoring and evaluation
7. Engagement of national partners from the beginning, broad consultation and transparency
8. Enhanced dialogue between donors, CGIAR and national government
9. Development and application of MoUs
10. Review best centre CGIAR-wide experiences of collaboration
11. Identification of workable modalities and institutionalize for mutual accountability (agriculture, livestock, forestry, water)
12. Assigning of staff time, budget and facilities.

Recommendations

In the last working session of the day, participants came back to some of the ideas identified that morning, to flesh out a work program. They were asked to document the key insights of their conversation and some concrete next steps or recommendations going forward.

Five topics were identified, which also drew upon the collaboration principles put forward in the site integration guidelines provided by the Consortium Office. They included the:

1. Establishment of a joint CGIAR-national agriculture research system collaboration and communication mechanism;
2. Development of joint research proposals (fundraising)
3. Sharing of equipment and resources between CGIAR centres and national partners
4. Streamlining of policy engagement, and
5. Improvement of opportunities and modalities of capacity development.

Establishment of a joint CGIAR-national agriculture research system collaboration and communication mechanism

This mechanism, it was recommended, would establish a permanent secretariat for joint planning, sharing of findings, and monitoring and evaluation. Improved coordination and collaboration of the second phase of CGIAR research programs (CRPs), it was argued, will largely take place at country level where research outcomes are more likely to be achieved at scale when they are closely linked to national agricultural and related nutrition and health development priorities and initiatives.

Development of joint research proposals (fundraising)

The participants also recommended more joint research proposal development, focusing on a systems, rather than sectorial approach, with common objectives linked to national goals.

Sharing of equipment and resources between CGIAR centres and national partners

This recommendation highlighted the need for the development of protocols on shared facilities, equipment and germplasm.

Streamlining of policy engagement

The key recommendations identified by the participants included: engaging in existing platforms in Ethiopia (technical committees of RED&FS, national research council, Agricultural Development Partners Linkage Advisory Council); establishing a CGIAR CG internal coordination mechanism for Ethiopia; mapping work projects in relation to the program areas of the GTP II and identifying future potential research areas; increasing visibility of CGIAR activities in the country; and exploring opportunities for engagement as identified (seek a place for the CGIAR on the executive and technical committees of the RED&FS).

Improvement of opportunities and modalities of capacity development.

In terms of capacity building opportunities and modalities, participants focused on the need for both more formal, short-term and on-site training (joint research) training for national partners, and support in out-scaling for CGIAR centres. They also highlighted the need to facilitate access to laboratory facilities. These goals could be achieved through enhanced joint research implementation and supervision, and publications, linkages with international universities and research institutes and staff exchanges.

Next steps

In the very last session of the consultation meeting, Frank Place (IFPRI/PIM) was invited to enumerate a series of next steps that will help implement some of the ideas and recommendations put forward by the participants.

- Country plan to be ready by mid-February and to feed into the next round of the CRPs by 31 March 2016
- Circulate the proceedings for review
- Review of/input into the final CGIAR-Ethiopia collaboration documents

- Country/ site integration team needs to be empowered to bring in more stakeholders for CRPs and CGIAR centre work, e.g. regional organizations, like IGAD, FAO, etc.
- Articulate how CRPs will contribute to the development of Ethiopia (e.g. GTPII)
- Present findings to GCARD3.

Lessons learned on the process

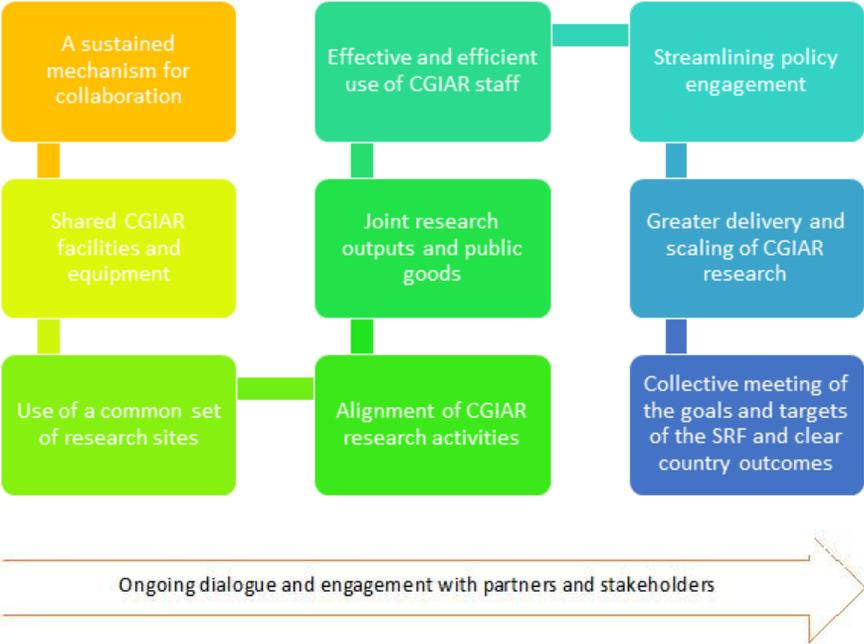
Lesson I: Collaboration is at two levels: CGIAR-wide and with the national sector

In most countries, CGIAR centres and CRPs have much to do to improve their collaboration with the national system. However, there is also a lot of scope to improve collaboration among CGIAR institutions. While this consultation process rightly focuses on the former, it should have been preceded by greater interaction between CGIAR actors to go into this event with a more unified voice.

Lesson II: Collaboration principles suggested by the CGIAR

The CGIAR collaboration principles are a useful starting point to consider the basis for a site integration plan. However, the coordination team needs to continue to deliberate and clearly articulate how these key elements of site integration will be adapted and applied in the Ethiopia situation. The good thing is that some of these were also suggested by the different stakeholders during the group discussions as possibilities. Some are already in use and need strengthening.

1. A sustained mechanism for collaboration
2. Ongoing dialogue and engagement with partners and stakeholders
3. Collective meeting of the goals and targets of the SRF and clear country outcomes
4. Alignment of CGIAR research activities
5. Joint research outputs and public goods
6. Use of a common set of research sites
7. Shared CGIAR facilities and equipment
8. Effective and efficient use of CGIAR staff
9. Greater delivery and scaling of CGIAR research
10. Streamlining policy engagement



Lesson III: Build on a longer-term collaboration plan, not an ad hoc meeting

If the fruits of this event are to be used in the future and put into action, this meeting needs to be part of a wider process of collaboration between CGIAR centres and the national system. Whether it is the first step of that longer-term process, or just another step on a longer-term path, it is clear that an isolated event would make little sense. There are, however, clear time and cost implications to bear in mind.

Lesson IV: Focus on the ‘how to make collaboration happen’ rather than on ‘which (thematic areas) to collaborate’

In Ethiopia, the participants highlighted some potential areas of collaboration, but most actors were rather interested in exploring the deeper reasons behind this CGIAR-national collaboration. Therefore, the participants decided to park the definition of thematic focus areas for the time being, as it was agreed that there were also many ‘entry points for CGIAR into the national agenda’. They, therefore, focused on ‘how to make this process work’ for the greater benefit of all. Details of thematic areas could also be explored during the focus group consultations by the different CRPs.

Lesson V: Use the positive stories of collaboration

The session on successful examples of collaboration between (or sometimes within) CGIAR and the national system was really good and revealed to all participants that despite challenges and gaps there are also building blocks upon which to mobilize CGIAR-national collective efforts. This focuses on the good work the participants want to continue doing and developing further.

Lesson VI: Refine meeting objectives or hold a two-day meeting

This consultation meeting was complex and complicated. It brought together many actors who have not had many opportunities to sit around the table together, and who approach the issues from many different perspectives. Moving this agenda forward together will require time and a greater degree of mutual trust. The CGIAR-Ethiopia event was a one-day meeting, too short to do everything that had been anticipated. With hindsight, getting the most out of the participants would have required a two-day meeting.

Lesson VII: Identify the participants carefully and invite them early on

Due to the amount of other activities taking place at the same time, too little time and resources were available for the organization of the Ethiopia national consultation meeting. This, and the lack of available financial resources, meant that it was not possible to invite some of the regional institutions, farmer organizations, NGOs and the private sector stakeholders. In the future it would be advisable to begin this process earlier on and to consult the GCARD secretariat which stakeholders should be invited.

Lesson VIII: Focus on a CGIAR-wide event

In the absence of one presentation from CGIAR presentation, one collective position, with references to how centres cooperate with each other and on what issues, there is a structural tendency for each centre to emphasize its own work. A one-CGIAR approach would really benefit everyone, as demonstrated by the recommendations from non-CGIAR participants for ‘one CGIAR liaison/focal point’ to deal with the national system as a whole.

Lesson IX: Involve facilitator(s)

The complexity and complicated nature of these consultation workshops indeed requires robust facilitation, as was also highlighted in the Nigeria case.

Lesson X: Quick follow-up

As with any engagement process, this workshop will require prompt follow up. A small taskforce should take it upon itself to continue this work based on the recommendations and action plan emerging from the meeting.

Lesson XI: Connections with other country processes/ cross-fertilization

It helped to have someone who has participated in other national consultations, like Frank Place ((International Food Policy Research Institute/Policies, Institutions, and Markets CRP), who had been to Nigeria and Tanzania meetings. It makes it possible for these individuals to share their experiences and perspectives with the organizing committee and participants.

Lessons XII: Funding mechanisms

It is important to budget sufficient resources for these meetings. Otherwise, it puts additional pressure on the organizing committee, lead CGIAR centre and CRPs to find the resources at the end of the year.

Lessons XIII – Time and commitment

Organizing meetings is time consuming and requires adequate time and commitment from the organizers over and above other demanding tasks. This should not be underestimated during the planning process.

Lesson XIV: Setting the right tone

Inviting a State Minister to make the opening remarks at the meeting and spell out what the government expects from the CGIAR was an excellent opportunity, as it emphasised to the CGIAR and its partners how important this event was to the host country.

Lesson XV: Timing of the meeting

It is important to select a date for the meeting when most key invitees are available. There are a lot of meetings in Addis Ababa in December and unfortunately, many CGIAR-centre country directors, three out of eleven, and CRP representatives, two, were unable to attend the meeting due to prior engagements.

List of participating organizations

1. African Development Bank
2. AfricaRice
3. Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) CRP
4. Bioversity International
5. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
6. Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)
7. CGIAR - Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research Mega Project
8. International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
9. Center for International Forestry Research
10. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)
11. International Potato Center (CIP) Ethiopia
12. Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
13. Delegation of the European Union to the African Union
14. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale (GIZ)
15. Dryland Cereals and Legumes Agri Foods Systems CRP
16. Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research Mega Project
17. Ethiopia Strategy Support Program (ESSP)/ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
18. Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute
19. Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources
20. Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI)
21. Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
22. Ethiopian Ministry of Environment and Forest
23. Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Technology
24. Ethiopian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
25. Ethiopian Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
26. Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy
27. Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
28. Ethiopian National Agricultural Research Council
29. Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA)
30. European Union
31. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
32. Gene Bank CRP
33. Holeta Agricultural Research Center
34. International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
35. International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
36. National Agricultural Research Council -NARC
37. World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
38. International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
39. International Fund for Agricultural Development
40. International Food Policy Research Institute
41. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture - IITA
42. International Livestock Research Institute - ILRI
43. International Network for Bamboo and Rattan - INBAR
44. Irish Aid
45. International Rice Research Institute
46. Italian Cooperation
47. International Water Management Institute
48. Livestock and Fish + Livestock CRP

49. Policy Institutions and Markets – PIM CRP
50. Maize Agri Food Systems CRP
51. Roots, Tubers and Bananas Agri Food Systems CRP
52. Sasakawa Africa Association
53. Save the Children
54. SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
55. Swiss Development Agency
56. Tufts University AKLDP
57. UNICEF
58. USAID
59. World Bank Ethiopia
60. Wheat Agri Food Systems CRP
61. WLS and Eco Systems CRP