

Day 1 & Day 2
Operationalising the Development Challenges at CIAT
AAR Recommendations from the Barometer Team

Name of Event:	Operationalising the Development Challenges at CIAT
Date of Event:	November 29 & 30, 2004
One or two sentences giving the background / scope to the experience:	<p>As part of the KS Week, CIAT set out to develop a shared understanding of the Development Challenges and to find ways for staff to contribute to their effective operationalisation.</p> <p>The process of Open Space was introduced to help achieve this objective. It was also chosen as a means to raise awareness of alternative mechanisms for knowledge sharing in which conversations are key and to demonstrate how knowledge sharing tools can help staff in their work.</p>
Key Player - individual(s) who called the AAR:	KS Planning Committee
Key Players/AAR Participants	Nathan Russell, Simone Staiger-Rivas, Doug Horton, Boru Douthwaite, Gerry Toomey, Susan Kaaria, Axel Schmidt, John Connell, Kathryn Laing, Nathan Russell, Edith Hesse, Doug Horton, Allison Hewlitt
AAR Facilitator:	Allison Hewlitt
Key Words: (maximum of 10 that would enable future users to find this learning)	Operationalising, Development Challenges, CIAT, KS Week
Key Dates: (the period of time that the learning was acquired)	September 2004 – November 30, 2004

The session set out to reflect on the KS Week session entitled “Operationalising the Development Challenges at CIAT”. The Barometer Team reviewed what we set out to achieve and exchanged perspectives on what actually happened with a goal of understanding why there may have been differences. The team brainstormed on what worked and what didn’t work so well in order to identify recommendations for improving future performance. As an unintended consequence of the discussion, the team also came up with recommendations for management to address given the perceived lack of understanding on the Development Challenges prior to the event.

Recommendations	Supporting Quotes
Gauging the level of understanding on the theme in order to ensure a common starting point	
Involve more outposted staff in the pre-meeting consultations to gauge their level of understanding on the theme.	<i>“Group wasn’t prepared to go to operationalisation.”</i>
Provide clarity on the theme prior to the session. This could be done in a plenary through presentations.	<i>“We should have done a better job of determining whether people understood the topic well enough to discuss it.”</i>
Ensure consistency in the messages being delivered.	<i>“Two of the three development challenges were presented differently the morning of the presentation. This may have affected the way people participated.”</i>
Exploring alternative themes for next year’s meeting	
Use the Open Space methodology to discuss research topics of interest to staff or how projects fit within the Development Challenges.	<i>“People wanted to talk about their work.”</i> <i>“People seemed to support a fresh approach.”</i>
Improving the process	
Use an iterative process that allows staff to get to know each other over and develop action plans over the week. This could include morning activities focusing on connecting people and afternoons in plenary listening to presentations.	<i>“Staff need more opportunities to connect and to get to know each other; more time is needed before coming together to develop plans; more of an iterative process is needed.”</i>
Allow more time to develop action plans	<i>“Time for action planning was too short.”</i>
Introduce a session where staff can ask themselves what they will do differently as a result of the session.	<i>“Would have been good for people to discuss how their project could contribute to the Development Challenges.”</i>
Allow for more time to develop action plans	
Provide staff with opportunities to build facilitation skills	

Introduce a session where staff can ask themselves what will they be doing differently as a result of the session.	
Increasing Participation of National Staff	
Directive for attendance of National Staff needs to come from Senior Management.	
Identify ways to increase national staff participation during the week.	<i>“Overall, we had great attendance but after many attempts to include national staff there was only a slight improvement over last year in their participation.”</i>
Make National staff participation an agenda item for the meeting.	
Improving Logistics	
Start sessions after 830am, preferably at 900am.	
Use outdoor space when possible but ensure that the speaker system works well.	<i>“People seemed to like the fresh air.”</i>
Schedule a “warm-up” session on the afternoon of Day 1 to deal with the effects of jet lag.	
Find alternative ways to communicate changes in session start times. One idea is to announce at the beginning of the week that we may need to change session times and will notify staff of the changes on a “news board”.	
Explore the possibility of using other venues that can bring all staff together in a circle.	
Encourage staff who travel to arrive earlier, to deal with the effects of jetlag.	

Day 3 & Day 4
Regional and Headquarter Integration
AAR Recommendations from the Barometer Team

Name of Event:	Regional and Headquarter Integration
Date of Event:	December 1 & 2, 2004
One or two sentences giving the background / scope to the experience:	<p>Day 2 & 3 set out to increase integration of HQ/Regional staff and activities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing an opportunity for one-on-one discussions between outposted staff/support services and research park institutions (Session: Knowledge Sharing Fair) and an open time for questions for the Director General (Session: Question Time with the DG) - Working together to identify insights and new ideas that would address key issues related to HQ/Regional relationships (Session: Peer Assist) - Highlight work and opportunities in the regions (Session: What's new in the Regions) - Providing an opportunity for staff to learn more about the Professional Staff Association
Key Player - individual(s) who called the AAR:	KS Planning Committee
Key Players/AAR Participants	Simone Staiger-Rivas, Doug Horton, Gerry Toomey, Axel Schmidt, John Connell, Kathryn Laing, Edith Hesse, Doug Horton, Allison Hewlitt
AAR Facilitator:	Allison Hewlitt
Key Words: (maximum of 10 that would enable future users to find this learning)	integration, strengthening relationships, Asia, Africa, LAC, Headquarters, peer assists, knowledge fair, PSA, professional staff association, CIAT, KS Week
Key Dates: (the period of time that the learning was acquired)	September 2004 – November 30, 2004

The second AAR session set out to reflect on Day 3 & 4 of the KS Week which focused on strengthening relationships between Regional and Headquarter staff. The Barometer Team reviewed what we set out to achieve and exchanged perspectives on what actually happened with a goal of understanding why there may have been differences. The team brainstormed on what worked and what didn't work so well in order to identify recommendations for improving future performance.

Recommendations	Supporting Quotes
Professional Staff Association Meeting	
Include a one hour session for members of the PSA.	<i>“This was a good opportunity for outposted staff to be alerted about health insurance and retirement.”</i>
Research Support & Service Fair and Expo Agronatura	
Organise a fair at the next Annual Meeting for each project to have a presence, as well as support services and Agronatura.	<p><i>“People seemed to get the information that they needed and in some cases got more work done than expected. For one individual, the fair gave him the opportunity to solve a computer problem at the IS booth, finalized a contract with HR people, solve a financial problem at finance stand and obtained relevant info at the library.”</i></p> <p><i>“Visiting scientists who came to help translations said they learned a lot.”</i></p>
Include a booth for Management so that staff can meet with them one-on-one.	
Provide guidelines for booths to be sure they are “client-oriented”.	<i>“No one asked me the question: ‘What do you need?’”</i>
Stimulate participation at the fair by not having all-day parallel meetings	<i>“The Appreciative Inquiry workshop was held at the same time as the fair. Since the workshop require full-time participation throughout the day, there was no time for people to visit the fair.”</i>

Include ways to track fair participants (National or International, HQ or Regional)	<i>“Fair organizers will meet next week to provide a sense of what worked, what didn’t work, who participated and their perspective on the overall effectiveness of the session.”</i>
Question Time with the DG	
All Senior Management should be included in a question time session. This would include the Directors of Finance, Research, Administration and Agronatura	<i>“It was a positive thing that the DG exposed himself to all staff.”</i>
Provide simultaneous translation, as necessary.	
Find ways to improve the Narino (and other) meeting rooms. This could include removing tables and serious interior decorating.	<i>“I would like to take a sledgehammer to those windows. And what about those rugs?”</i>
Peer Assist Session	
Recognise staff for their willingness to be a Peer Assissee.	<i>“It was pretty brave of people to raise personal problems.”</i>
Advertise and market the session to increase participation.	<i>“That was true knowledge sharing.”</i> <i>“We had 35 regional staff participating but only 15 headquarter staff showed up.”</i>
Think about not having plenary sessions for reporting back. Are they really necessary?	<i>“It is difficult for many people to summarize and report back in a short period of time. Do we really need to have a plenary session for reporting back when the topics are so specific?”</i>
Keep the groups small (5 or 6 people per group) to help draw out participants who don’t always participate.	<i>“Strong facilitation skills and small groups can help bring everyone’s voice into the discussions.”</i>

Be sure people understand that the suggestions or solutions help the Peer Assisatee solve his/her problem. They should not be directed to someone else ie. management.	<i>“Some of the recommendations were often measures that the individual can’t implement alone but at least they are now in the public domain. Three months down the line people can now as Douglas Pachico “How’s it going on your issue related to the exclusion of key staff in proposal development?””</i>
What’s New in the Regions?	
Give projects the opportunity to share what they are doing and to identify ways to collaborate. Powerpoint presentations are one way, but a “Project Fair” might also be effective.	<i>“We need some concrete information on research in a more standard format.”</i>
Provide opportunities for staff to improve their presentation skills so that they can deliver their messages effectively.	
Improve the meeting room, or choose one that has more light and fresh air.	
Annual Meetings	
Look at alternative scheduling for annual meetings. Meeting could take place every second year or have only half of the staff participate each year.	
Alternate the venue of the meeting between the Regions and Headquarters.	
Learning to Innovate Session using the Appreciative Inquiry Methodology	
Help clarify the vision of the other Development Challenges using the Appreciative Inquiry Methodology	<i>“Consider using AI approach to move forward on the other development challenges.”</i>

Day 5 & Day 6

Effective Work Planning, Business Process Reengineering, Reflections and Evaluation

AAR Recommendations from the Barometer Team

Name of Event:	Work Planning, BPR, Reflection and Evaluation
Date of Event:	December 3 & 4, 2004
One or two sentences giving the background / scope to the experience:	Day 5 & 6 set out to provide time for project work planning, updating staff on BPR activities and reflecting on and evaluating the activities of the Week through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Meetings - A BPR session - A multimedia presentation - Highlighting recommendations from the Barometer Team - A comprehensive evaluation survey
Key Player - individual(s) who called the AAR:	KS Planning Committee
Key Players/AAR Participants	Simone Staiger-Rivas, Doug Horton, Gerry Toomey, Axel Schmidt, John Connell, Edith Hesse, Doug Horton, Allison Hewlitt
AAR Facilitator:	Allison Hewlitt
Key Words: (maximum of 10 that would enable future users to find this learning)	Open meetings, evaluation, reflection, work planning
Key Dates: (the period of time that the learning was acquired)	September 2004 – December 4 2004

The third and last AAR session set out to reflect on Day 5 & Day 6 of the KS Week. The final day and a half of the week provided opportunities for effective work planning on the part of project teams and collaborators, a session to inform staff on Business Process Reengineering activities, a wrap-up session for participants to reflect on the week through a multimedia presentation and open discussion, as well

as the opportunity for staff to evaluate the week through a comprehensive evaluation. The Barometer Team met quickly to identify recommendations to improve future CIAT Annual meetings.

Recommendations	Supporting Quotes
<p>Maximizing participation by ensuring that ‘competing’ sessions aren’t run in parallel to the main event</p>	
<p>Remind Management of the importance of promoting staff participation in the planned events.</p>	<p><i>“The DG shouldn’t allow parallel sessions such as a Saturday field trip, to compete with the planned agenda. He should say ‘no’ to those organising the events.”</i></p>
<p>Ask the DG or DR to send an email at the end of each day to remind staff of the following day’s activities.</p>	<p><i>“The email sent out by Douglas was a good reminder of the following day’s activities.”</i></p>
<p>Allow staff the opportunity to incorporate sessions or events, such as a field trip, into the agenda before it is set so that we all share one program.</p>	<p><i>“Give staff the opportunity to submit good ideas so that they can be included into the agenda.”</i></p>
<p>Organising Regional Sessions</p>	
<p>Suggest that the regions hold ‘drop-in’ sessions similar to the one organized this year by the Asia team. These should be scheduled following a fair once people have had the opportunity to get to know each other better informally.</p>	<p><i>“The Asia session was quite useful. There should be one for Africa and LAC too.”</i></p>
<p>Wrapping Things Up</p>	
<p>Ask the DG to provide a greater sense of commitment for follow up on the final day of the meeting.</p>	<p><i>“Immediate feedback on the last day would have been useful. The DG could have given staff a better sense of what was promising or insights into ideas that were emerging because of the week.”</i></p>
<p>Finish on Saturday morning rather than Friday evening.</p>	

Identifying recommendations for future improvement (Barometer Team)	
Use a mix of representatives – some from the regions, HQs and national staff – to meet three times during the week to reflect on the sessions and identify recommendations for next year.	<i>“Three times was enough – not too much and not too little.”</i>
Be more strict in time managing the Barometer Team meetings	
Planning for next year	
Hire an external facilitator.	<i>“Allison’s external and neutral facilitation worked quite well.”</i>
Appropriate funds to support the week.	
Announce the knowledge sharing fair at least 3 months in advance.	<i>“Give people plenty of time to prepare for the fair.”</i>