

Leveraging CIAT's expertise

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1. Issue:

- Have an on-going special project
- Some of the activities are funded
- Other activities require additional CIAT staff time
- There is demand from donor for full project output delivery

What steps can be taken to address such a situation?

2. Discussion Group 1

Questions:

- You did not have the required expertise from the beginning? *(Yes)*
- In the project, was this expertise included in the proposal? *(Yes)*
- Did you contact the scientists to request their input? *(Yes)*
- Is the current expertise on the project from outside CIAT? *(Yes, a private MSc student)*
- Do you have an idea of how much expert time needed? *(Yes for my area of speciality and No for the other specialities)*
- Could CIAT have a consultants' database *(Yes, for different expertise)*

Comments

- This happens in many projects, for example, where it involves Impact assessment
- Projects developed by persons in one discipline without considering the need for other disciplines

Suggestions

- In project development, think through from the beginning
- Leave money in budget for contingencies – this has to be phrased correctly and this depends on the specific donor
- Take advantage of partners' expertise (including universities, but bear in mind that students require supervision from CIAT's expertise)
- Find a mechanism for filling in expertise of people that leave the project/institution
- Include in budget, funds for contracting inside/outside expertise (make sure that this does not cause a problem for the donor)
- Prepare a realistic proposal to include what is required for delivery (“do not over promise”)
- Seek help from persons managing at higher level, e.g. regional coordinators
- Projects of action research **MUST** include the following expertise from the beginning:
 - Community development/Education expertise

- Impact assessment and participatory monitoring (PM) and evaluation (E)
- Communications/Diffusion

3. Discussion Group 2

Suggestions

- Make use of Project's Office at HQ for project development template and guide with the following details:
 - Template
 - Guide
 - Sample budget to assist in proposal budget calculation
 - Prepare a more detailed budget than required by donor to help scientists think through
- Make sure budget template includes personnel costs, e.g. the Water Challenge Programme, especially when several partners are to be involved- hard in the beginning but rewarding at the end
- Suggestion for immediate and future action
 - Think constantly on the way project proposal development could be improved to include a multidisciplinary scientific approach and expertise staff costs

4. Summary of main suggestions

- Develop an appropriate project proposal
 - i. Make use of project office at HQ to obtain
 - Template/Guide/Seminar
 - Budget calculation to include personnel costs
 - ii. Action research project proposals MUST include budgets for
 - Community development/education expertise
 - Impact assessment, PM&E
 - Communication/Diffusion
- Seek help from person managing at higher level (e.g. regional coordinator) for 'holistic' view and action
- Take advantage of partners' expertise including
 - i. NGOs/NARS/Private sector
 - ii. Universities
 - iii. Other CG centres

Peer Assist session – CIAT KS Week, 2 Dec 2004

Title: **managing expectations**

Asistee: Ralph Roothaert

Facilitator: Doug Horton

Background:

Since 18 months Ralph has a shared position between PRGA/CIAT and ILRI. His academic background is animal science and forage agronomy, but his interest and experience of the past 5 years is in social science. The position was created because of the common interests and complementarity of ILRI and CIAT. The CIAT Africa initiative 'Enabling Rural Innovation', and PRGA well developed social science activities. ILRI theme 2 'Enabling Innovation' is new but is interested in similar issues. Both CIAT and ILRI have forage germplasm which they want to see adopted and integrated in some African farming systems. CIAT management encourages Ralph to work towards impacts of forages across many African countries. Ralph has an interest in developing better methodologies and partnerships in Africa for participatory livestock research methods, as these methods are very thin on the ground in the livestock R&D sector. ILRI has a rule that research proposals that cut across more than one country in East Africa need to be embedded in the ASARECA Animal Agriculture Network (AAARNET). AAARNET has starting up problems, and the part that has recently started to work provides funding opportunities only for NARES, not for CGIAR centers/staff. Ralph's operational budgets are volatile. Another complicating factor is that CIAT-ERI, PRGA and ILRI Theme 2 have different priorities and philosophies. Unfortunately, PRGA and ILRI supervisors have never met. Over the past 12 months there has been a process of redefining Ralph's ToR, which has greatly stimulated discussion among centers and lead to some agreed expected outcomes for the position. The challenge stated below however, still remains.

Issue: How can Ralph come out of his 'box' (the technical background and expectations) where he is put in?

Suggestions by group 1:

- There seems to be a contradiction of bottom-up and top-down approaches. The position was created top-down, whereas the work is supposed to be demand led.
- Find someone from any organization who can take over some of the technical aspects of the work, and mentor the person.
- Build a team.
- Develop a common workplan with PRGA, ILRI and ERI
- Obtain project funding for a core set of activities.
- Develop pilot projects in 1 or 2 countries
- Have meeting with other CIAT joint appointees.
- Arrange meetings for your supervisors.

Suggestions by group 2:

- Focus on common areas of interest ILRI, PRGA, ERI. Define a niche.

- Go for a bilateral project in one country to build a team and show value of work.
- Core focus: forages, participatory approaches, livestock innovation system
- Plan a communication strategy for community of practice.

Follow up:

The underlined suggestions are the most valued by the asistee. The key to make things work is to obtain operational funding. Selecting only one or two countries would solve the inhibiting factor of AAARNET.

CIAT's Knowledge Sharing Week: Peer Assist Report Scaling Up and Out- Rubyogo, Jean Claude, Facilitator: Allison Hewlitt

Concern: Sometimes promising technologies (varieties, methodological approaches etc.) do not spread faster in areas where they are developed and new areas where they might potentials to be utilized. Therefore, the possibility of partnering with other interested actors is one of the ways to expand promising technologies. However building partnership, stimulate partners and maintaining efficient partnership requires new skills/knowledge and practices.

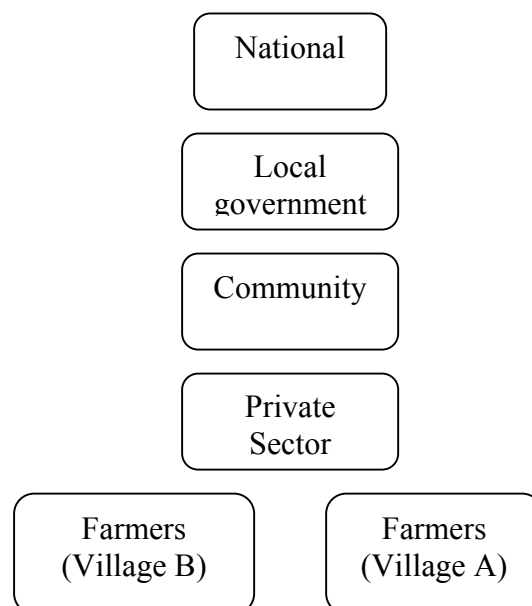
Issue presented to the Peer Assist Group

- How to sustainably scale a good product (new and improved beans) across both end users and institutions with more focus on the ownership of products and process.
- As an example, would like to scale a product that has been successful in Village A to Village B which has a similar agro-ecological situation; Village B is far from Village A and differs culturally and does not share a common language.

Results of the Discussion

Clarity about what is meant by scaling up and out:

- It means different things to different people;
- It was agreed that scaling moves 2 ways – across end users or target groups or across institutions such as NGOs/ or private sectors, farmer associations, government organizations.
- Scaling can also be thought of at different levels - local, national or regional:



Contributions and suggestions from Peers Assist Group

Considerations when scaling:

- Who is responsible for scaling?
- There are other service providers who could help scale but there is a need to make them aware early in the development of the product and process.
- This is a ‘classic example’; there is much experience across the centers related to scaling; There is a need to ensure that what’s been done in one region is doable or applicable in another
- There are different strategies that depend on where you want to scale – to target end users or the institution that would support scaling. Need a strategy to engage other partners to bring/introduce new technologies (governments, NGOs, farmer organizations)
- Help identify what drive success/failure of a technology
- Managing partnership is not a linear process; there is a need for facilitation, common objections and participation from the partners; partners need to be able to contribute their ideas and feel as though they are true partners
- If the technology is good, does it need strong intervention? There was a sense of agreement that “catalyzing” scaling can lead to quicker adoption

Ideas/new insights

- Others’ experiences may be useful to learn more about scaling e.g., Carlos case in Brazil with pasture development in collaboration with Nestle that supported farmers through credit system.
- Need to bring in key partners early on rather than waiting until the technology is developed; this is not necessarily done with an organized strategy but through relationship building and networking with individuals early on in the project; there is a recognition that this kind of early exposure has its difficulties as it exposes the work and results in expectations of only positive results from the start
- Need institutional buy-in so that when partners with similar objectives/interests are involved, they own the process and the product at individual and institution levels.
- If others haven’t been brought in early on, take a shot gun approach using media such as TV or organize a political field day

Peer Assissee Exercise

Issue: Improving the integration of regional scientists in proposal development

Peer Assissee: Tilahun Amede
Systems Agronomist, CIAT-Africa

Facilitator: Steve Beebe, CIAT HQ

Background: As many of his colleagues, Tilahun has been engaged in developing and implementing a research agenda in the area of systems intensification, assisting national partners in capacity building and integrated research approaches, and in creating partnership with government and non-government research and development institutions. As a result of these commitments he was not keen to receive additional responsibilities. He has also limited logistical support due to distance effects from CIAT services. On the other hand, there have been requests from scientists of CIAT HQ, other CG centres and national institutions to assist them in establishing contacts in his working sites, to create linkages and to contribute to project developments and implementations.

The dilemma: He would like to extend his partnership with colleagues in new and evolving projects, but not at the expense of his work plan and agreed agenda. He would like also to see true partnership with colleagues as few cases revealed controversial experiences. The original initiators of projects were sending the concept notes and proposals to him after they are finalized-thus little space to integrate his ideas. In other cases, they did not consider his time in the budgeting and/or may even change sites once the project is approved.

Question to the forum: *What do you advise me to use my time efficiently and strengthen my partnership with others in a transparent way?*

Major outcomes of the discussion:

- ◆ Need to revise and balance his time between research, partnership development and administration responsibilities
- ◆ Developing a flexible work plan that may allow space for creativity
- ◆ Identify and articulate the demand and priorities of the regions that HQ scientists could contribute towards bringing change
- ◆ Preferably link with institutions than individuals to improve transparency
- ◆ Develop mechanisms to minimize cost while linking with HQs
- ◆ Need for development of institutional policy for proposal development, with particular emphasis on sharing responsibilities and benefits
- ◆ Develop expertise database of all CIAT scientists
- ◆ CIAT should enhance information sharing by encouraging face to face contacts
- ◆ CIAT should identify focal points at the HQ to inform competence areas
- ◆ Build outposted participation into project development funds
- ◆ Create opportunities towards sabbatical leave, attendance of HQ staff in regional meetings and develop other complementary strategies

Peer-Assist – 2 December 2004

Peer Assissee: Rod Lefroy

Facilitator: Kathy Laign

Title: Balancing staffing within CIAT Projects (and DCs and CoPs) with donor preferences in order to maintain/expand Regional activities, using the example of Asia

Main issues:

- Current funding in Asia: Core = 1 IRS + 1 NRS, remainder from Special Projects (Not unique – similar, although perhaps less extreme, in other Regions and CIAT Projects)
- Need Special Projects to maintain the presence of CIAT Projects in the regions and to expand to new CIAT Project areas
- Require appropriate staff profiles/expertise within and between CIAT Projects (as well as across Development Challenges and Communities of Practice)
- The more complete the profile, the better the regional team and thus better capacity to (i) have impact, and (ii) attract funds (both within existing CIAT Projects and for new CIAT Projects)
- Special Project cycles are a threat to staff positions and thus a threat to CIAT Project continuity
- Donors vary along the continuum from R → R&D → R4D → D
- Development of Special projects must take into account:
 - donor preferences (geographic, thematic, and R → D mix)
 - CIAT Project agenda
 - Regional activities (and the desire to have a better project mix to achieve a more balanced team)
 - Partner commitments and interests
- Donor funds, and thus the capacity to employ staff, tend to increase from R → R&D → R4D → D

Discussion points:

- Need for bridging fund. Loss of staff = loss of capacity to raise funds. There is a need to maintain a minimal foundation of staff number and mix in the regions
- Ideal: staff are hired for a specific area of work, not tied to one Special Project
- Sometimes, a new person/project is more important for what it does for the balance of regional/CIAT competency rather than for the project (or CIAT Project) itself
- Actively develop special projects with CIAT Projects on the basis of:
 - interests of the CIAT Project, potential impacts of the Special project, and interests of the Region
 - required staff/expertise/project requirements for the regional team
 - Regional experience in donor relations and understanding of partner interests

- Special projects need to be managed jointly by the CIAT Project and the Regions so as to enhance the Special Project, the interests of the CIAT Project, and the Regional needs and aspirations.
- Develop joint and parallel projects with other centers (CG and other) so as to attract broader funds and satisfy more easily the requirements of the institutions, the regions, and the donors
- Donors see the use of core for regional staff as an appropriate commitment by HQ.
- Following the cut in core funding in the mid-90s, the current situation appears to be that core funding provides about 50% of staff at HQ, 3 IRS in Africa, up to 50% in C.Amer, and 1 in Asia. Core funding of staff could be more equally spread, with more in the regions. This reshuffle should be done on the basis of the agenda of the CIAT Projects and the Development Challenges.
- Some constraints:
 - full cost recovery at HQ
 - some large donors do not cover salaries, or cover in full
- Using Development projects to fund staff means that research projects must run in parallel.
- Decision for regions to establish reserves on the basis of FCR, etc. is good.
- HQ model, that NRS are covered by Special Projects when possible, but can return to core when Special Project funds are spent, should be used for IRS and for regions.
- Explore other methods for accessing expertise such as students, associate experts/ junior professional officers, etc.

Possible solutions:

- % of each staff time (5-10%) to be committed to Regional issues and general CIAT issues, thus included in Special Project budget
This “cost” should be offset by inter-project support and enhancement of the regional team
- Establish an effective Bridging Fund
- Redistribute core funds to regions
- Regional Reserve funds from FCR and “profits” on higher overheads.
- Use the strategic research development funds from HQ more effectively
- There is a need to balance Development projects (D or r&D), which can attract more funds, with Research projects (R4D)
- Seek unconventional funding
- Learn how to present basic research as development
- Research the process of taking research through to development

Selected Three Solutions:

- Redistribute of core funds and establishment of Reserves
Reserves to come from: - core substitution

Use Reserve for:

- overhead “profit”
- bridging of salaries on Special Project cycle
- start-up funds for new areas

- % of staff time written into the workplan for:
 - regional issues
 - non-project issues
 - Funding sources:
 - use the mix of research and development funding sources
 - develop non-traditional funding sources:
 - Emergency or relief funds
 - Health related funds
 - Private sector funds and environmental funds
- (e.g. oil companies wanting to be seen to do the right thing

CIAT's Knowledge Sharing Week: Peer Assist Report Building Partnerships for Project Development

The Problem

As CIAT develops a truly global program of research and development, longstanding projects and new ones are challenged to initiate projects in Africa and Asia. A key requirement for success in project development is to have solid partnerships with organizations in those regions, which are interested in taking part and prepared to express their support for the work to prospective donors. For projects based at Center headquarters, building such partnerships in Latin America is a manageable task, but to do so in other regions can be a major challenge.

Among the complications are communication problems, a lack of clarity about who sets the research agenda for the regions and how and who provides the resources to be invested in building partnerships. Too often, project development is initiated from CIAT headquarters without sufficient participation by regional staff and partners or adequate information about donor interests.

Insights and Advice

- Any project development effort should be accompanied by stakeholder analysis, aimed at determining, among other things, who is willing to take action and assume responsibility (or be the *doliente*, as they say in Colombia). This can be accomplished through a workshop with a group of potential partners or individual meetings with key candidates. Such analysis should also focus on the risks versus opportunities involved. This depends very much on having reliable donor intelligence, which in turn requires working closely with regional staff and other local contacts.
- Project development should be programmatic and not just opportunistic. We must resist the temptation to seize every project opportunity that comes along, even when appropriate partnerships are not in place.
- Building partnerships must be a continuous process because of staff turnover and other changes in partner organizations.
- Training is a good entry point for building partnerships.
- Partnerships tend to be local. There are different types of partnerships at different levels (inside CIAT, local, national, regional). It is important to promote complementarity among partnerships.
- To deal with this issue effectively requires that we better define roles and responsibilities. Who does what?
- The main thing we have to do is invest time and resources in meeting with partners and donors, often in relation to existing projects, but with a view to proposing new ideas. To build consensus and measure interest requires considerable time and resources.

- But who makes this investment? We need to look at a range of options, from headquarters staff spending considerable time or actually being posted in the region to selective use of consultants and involvement of regional staff in the effort. For this latter purpose, it is vital that regional staff have a good understanding of what headquarters-based projects have to offer and how it fits in with what regional staff are already doing. Project development cannot be done entirely from headquarters.
- In building partnerships it makes sense to work closely with the CIAT staff and projects already in place. Getting them to buy in to the new project initiative is critical.
- In building partnerships transparency is critical. If no specific funding opportunities have yet been identified, this must be made clear to potential partners from the outset. It is probably a mistake, however, to embark on building partnerships unless you have a reasonable possibility of attracting funding.