

Highlights and Learnings from the CGIAR Site Integration National Consultation Workshop held in Nigeria



Sandralia Hotel, Solomon Lar way, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria

16-17 November 2015

Background

The national consultation workshop for CGIAR site integration was held in Abuja with the specific objectives of:

1. Understanding the country's ARD strategy and plans for agricultural R&D
2. Understanding how various groups, including CGIAR, are contributing to the R&D goals and targets
3. Developing an integration plan, incorporating national program priorities, harmonizing efforts of CGIAR and those of other partners for realizing the country's R&D goals and targets
4. Developing a plan for tracking progress and assessing impact of the integrated implementation
5. Developing resourcing modalities for implementing the integrated plan
6. Developing a governance structure, communication plans, and coordination mechanisms

Expected outputs/outcomes were:

1. Defined country priorities and actions
2. A site integration plan
3. A progress-tracking and impact assessment plan
4. A governance structure and coordination mechanism
5. A resourcing plan
6. A communication plan agreed upon

To achieve these objectives, a Process Steering Committee was set up to:

- a. Review the objectives in the context of whether they will be attained within the time frame of the workshop.
- b. Guide, revise, and possibly recalibrate the workshop facilitation process so that it drives stakeholders in the direction of the set workshop objectives.

This brief report contains highlights of the workshop process and the learnings that may help/guide future national site integration workshops. It is not exhaustive. A full report will be forwarded to all stakeholders who participated in the workshop by December 4, 2015.

Pre-event Meeting: Evening of 15 November 2015

A Process Steering Committee was formed comprising all CRP focal point representatives including the Director for Humidtropics CRP, Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah; Alfred Dixon, IITA focal point for the coordination and organization of the National consultation and the facilitator of the workshop. A few IITA staff who provided organizational and logistical support for the workshop including the IITA Deputy Director General (Partnerships & Capacity Development), Dr Kenton Dashiell, were also in attendance only for this Pre-event Meeting. Thereafter, the Process Steering Committee met during the lunch break and end of session of Day 1 and during the Lunch break of Day two.

Before the commencement of the workshop, the Process Steering Committee reviewed the agenda of the workshop and tried to envision what the next day would look like. Insights from Dr Atta-Krah on the significance of the workshop in the context of GFAR and the ongoing reforms in the CGIAR system were very helpful. Consequently the outcomes of the workshop were refreshed and reviewed as follows:

Expected Outputs/Outcomes

1. An understanding of what the country wants or needs, and where CGIAR can help.
2. An analysis of what the gaps within the Nigerian country strategy are, and what are the new opportunities.

3. Development of principles that should be considered in creating a framework for country plans.
4. Development of a framework for site integration.
5. Development of a roadmap for site integration.

The refreshed and reviewed **agenda** is presented below.

	November 16, 2015	November 17, 2015
0830	Session 1A: Welcome & opening statements by key stakeholders	<i>Overnight thoughts and recap of Day 1</i> Session 5: Operational aspects of integration – how these will be done differently ➤ 5.1 <i>Resourcing mechanisms</i> – who is funding ARD in Nigeria? What (new) opportunities and options
1000	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>
1030	Session 1B: Introductions, expectations and process Session 2: Current status ➤ Why we are here ➤ CGIAR in Nigeria: What is happening? Where? By whom? ➤ National ARD agenda ➤ Plenary: <i>Towards a common understanding of current status</i>	➤ 5.2 <i>Progress tracking and impact assessment</i> ➤ 5.3 <i>Communications</i> ➤ 5.4 <i>Governance structure & Coordination</i> Session 6: Towards an <i>integration framework</i> for Nigeria
1300	<i>Lunch Break</i>	<i>Lunch Break</i>
1400	Session 3: Gaps and opportunities for integrated implementation Session 4: Definition and Principles for site selection & work integration	Session 6: (Continued) Session 7: Next steps, evaluation and close ➤ <i>Next Steps: From an integration framework to a plan</i>
1600	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>	<i>Tea/Coffee Break</i>
	Session 4 (cont'd)	Session 7: (Continued) ➤ <i>Evaluation & Close</i>

Lesson 1

During the discussions, the Process Steering Committee observed that there could be two levels of integration: (a) Integration within CGIAR, and (b) Integration with the national partners.

Day 1: 16 November 2015

The first day of the conference set the stage for discussions. Goodwill messages and statements were received from IITA DDG Partnership and Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell; Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah (who spoke on behalf of GFAR and CG Consortium Rep), and Atsuko Toda, from IFAD, who spoke on behalf of the Agriculture Development Partners' Working Group.

Engineer Akeju Olagbaju, a director with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, gave the opening address on behalf of the Permanent Secretary. He also presented on the country's efforts towards agricultural transformation.

Dr Alfred Dixon gave an overview of CGIAR's presence in Nigeria. His presentation was a product of a condensed summary of the questionnaire that was earlier sent across to CRP Focal Points.

There was a fair representation of stakeholders cutting across farmer organizations, Women groups, gender specialist, development partners, the private sector, private and public extension actors, CGIAR partners, regional and subregional organizations, the media, and policymakers, etc. About 70 participants attended the consultation.

Discussions in buzz groups or small working on Day 1 brought to the fore the challenges and opportunities relevant for ARD in Nigeria, Africa, and globally. Conversations revolved around defining local or national priorities, articulating and breaking down the concept of “integration”, collectively identifying principles and some general guidelines that could guide site selection and integration.

Day 2: 17 November 2015

On Day 2 of the workshop, each of the CRP representatives below was given the opportunity to discuss what their CRP was doing in Nigeria in the area of agricultural development.

1. Francis Nwilene (AfricaRice-Ibadan) – Rice
2. Frank Place (PIM-IFPRI) – PIM
3. Iheanacho Okike (ILRI-Ibadan) – Livestock and Fish and A4NH
4. Olufunke Cofie (IWMI-Ghana) – Water, Land and Environment
5. Hakeem Ajeigbe (ICRISAT-KANO) – Drylands Cereals, Dryland systems and Grain Legumes
6. Michael Abberton (IITA) – Gene Bank
7. Olapeju Phorbee (CIP-SSA) – Roots and Tubers
8. Stephen Mugo (CIMMYT-Nairobi) – Maize and Wheat
9. Kwesi Attah-Krah (IITA) – Humidtropics

Day 2 also provided opportunities for stakeholders to identify the major ARD issues in the country, identify major ongoing ARD initiatives funded by donors, and plan the beginnings of a framework. A common understanding of the definition of “integration” in the Nigerian context was also reached. One other remarkable event was the presentation by the Agriculture Development Partners’ Working Group which showed an investment of \$1.5 billion in active and ongoing projects in Nigeria.

Lesson 2

The first day of the meeting was on a Monday. Many of the government officials had to report to their offices before coming to the meeting. Consequently, the meeting started one hour behind schedule. In the future, it is advisable not to start meetings like this on a Monday. Also Nigeria has a new cabinet (Federal Ministers), and the Permanent Secretaries have either been dropped in some cases or reshuffled. This development has implications on the meeting as civil servants that attended were cautious in releasing information on the agricultural strategy fearing it might be reviewed or changed. The good news, however, is that Nigeria intends to sustain the trajectory of the past administration on agriculture initiatives, though they might do some fine-tuning.

Lesson 3

Probably, one approach that should have been adopted was for the Project Steering team to have obtained information about the country’s agricultural strategy ahead of time from the different government ministries. These documents should have formed the basis of discussions. Because Engineer Akeju could not present the country’s current national agricultural strategy, he and a representative group were asked to develop Key Elements of the country’s Agricultural Strategy. Although this was developed, it was basically anecdotal and might change depending on future political developments. This would also provide local partners with the opportunity to consult with all levels of stakeholders, including farmers’ organizations and the private sector. It is to be noted that Nigeria probably presents a unique geographical and organizational system that would require a different or very customized approach to integration.

Lesson 4

In the future, country strategies and even regional and continental documents such as that of CAADP should be shared with partners ahead of time to give meeting participants time to understand, synthesize, and provide feedback, and also enable a more robust interaction/discussion.

Lesson 5

The consultations with national partners should be done way ahead of time to give the organizers and participants enough time to study the national documents and articulate the actual priorities. This would help avoid a situation where the Process Steering Committee had to come together every time to tweak the process or adjust some of the workshop approaches. It would also prevent building up expectations on the part of the partners and other stakeholders on what CGIAR can deliver since we would already be able to define our comparative strengths and advantages, and the national partners would also be able to articulate what they really want or need based on actual data or information.

Lesson 6

IITA demonstrated leadership by carrying all partners on board. For Instance, the banner which was developed by IITA with the logos of all invited partners was a good initiative that should be sustained. What is important is to stress that all the stakeholders are coming in as equals.

Lesson 7

Probably, the absence of very high ranking/ top officials was a plus for this meeting, as ministry officials and other stakeholders freely participated in the meeting. This is important for CGIAR as it seeks to better understand the current situations/realities.

Lesson 8

For CGIAR to effectively integrate with the national partners, it must integrate its CRPs and centers and have the same voice. Each and every CRP and/or center (at least in every country) should know what the others are doing, and try to figure out complementarities. Some prior engagement among the CGIAR parties prior to the full meeting with the outside partners would be useful in ensuring common understanding before reaching out to others.

Lesson 9

A good planning framework document for Integration, as well as a clear plan and commitments on how to complete the exercise of developing the full Site Integration Plan would be the outcome of the workshop rather than the draft Site Integration Plan, with all the details spelt out in the Guidance Document.

Lesson 10

Facilitation is clearly necessary in this type of undertaking of national consultations.

Conclusion

The consultation process moved on well to the end of Day 2, despite the many lessons to learn from for future national consultations on site integrations. Planning framework for integration was designed and included:

- A. Identification of R&D issues to be tackled
- B. Project Development
- C. Partners and Partnership

- D. Resourcing
- E. M & E (*adaptive project management*)
- F. Communication (*with special emphasis on nurturing the partnerships*)
- G. Governance and coordination

Details for each component of the framework were worked out in working groups and presented and discussed in plenary sessions with regards to:

1. The specific challenge ‘integration’ presents:
2. Guiding principles for making it work
3. Operationalization steps (and key stakeholders to be involved)

The next steps actions below were mapped out for the development of the site integrations plan for Nigeria:

What	When	Who
1. Integration SC: CGIAR Centres and Stakeholder institutions Focal Points (confirmation)	Today (Nov 17, 2015)	The integration Team (Alfred)
2. Workshop report submitted to Alfred	Dec 4, 2015	Emerge-Africa (Ed & David)
3. Consultation with CG Focal Points – to agree on draft integration plan (what and how)	December – to January 29, 2016	Alfred
4. Share the integration plan with stakeholders, Consortium, CRP Directors and GFAR	January 29, 2016	Alfred
5. Finalize integration plan, share with stakeholders, and submit to Consortium and CRP Directors	Feb 15, 2016	Alfred

CGIAR and in particular IITA was commended by the participants for planning and hosting the workshop. The hotel was good and strategically located, the food was okay, transportation was fine, the staff were accommodating. Logistics were well put together.