



Consortium

Draft Capacity Development Guidelines

**Prepared by the CGIAR Capacity Development
Community of Practice ahead of the 2nd round of CRPs**

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Executive summary

Capacity development is regarded by CGIAR as an effective vehicle for sustainable development, when embedded within broader CGIAR Research Programs (CRP). This document offers guidelines on how CGIAR and boundary partners (or those partners who take up and adapt research results for the next level of users) can successfully develop and implement strategies which support this process of integration. These guidelines indicate the key advantages that an integrated approach to capacity development can bring to CRPs, centers and partners, and examines the requirement for both an appropriate capacity needs assessment before any strategies can be outlined, as well as comprehensive research, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development throughout the process.

Nine elements of capacity development are identified and defined, underlining its complex and multifaceted nature, with an exploration of how these can be considered as part of the overall capacity development process. While not all the elements may be required or relevant to the needs of a particular CRP, a minimum set should ideally be used as a developmental foundation – the criteria for these will be elaborated later this year based on consultations with Centers, CRPs and other stakeholders. Ultimately, a holistic strategy will be required, and appropriate levels of investment by CRPs will be needed, as well as the identification of key partners, for the effective implementation of a capacity development process that supports the Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) of the CGIAR.

Value proposition

Capacity development is a crucial and strategic enabler in the journey from research outputs to development outcomes. Successful capacity development programs enhance the ability of both CGIAR and its boundary partners to navigate the complex reform process. It occurs across multiple levels – individual, organizational and institutional - and covers a wider scope than the mere transfer of knowledge and skills through training. CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) currently vary in their extent and approach to capacity development, which is not always well articulated, partly due to a low internal capacity or inadequate consultation with those who have the specialized knowledge and expertise.

CRPs must now make the leap from individual learning to demonstrating livelihood outcomes and impacts, by making science relevant and accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. This requires effective assessment and strategy formulation to implement capacity development activities, tailored to the cultural, organizational and institutional contexts in which new knowledge needs to be applied. Capacity development will only be effective as a vehicle for sustainable development if it is embedded within the broader systems and

processes i.e. CRPs' Theories of Change (ToC), Impact Pathways (IPs) and National Agricultural Research and Development systems that provide the unambiguous context and strategic framework for its implementation.

Assessing and addressing CRP capacity development needs

As much as capacity development should be an integral part of the CRPs' impact pathways, the identification of capacity needs across all levels and CRP ecosystems is the critical pre-requisite for designing capacity development strategies and interventions. A capacity needs assessment, including the process of identifying performance requirements and the disparity between what knowledge and/or capacity presently exists and what is further required, is a core part of both the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate (ADDIE) framework, and the adaptive management approaches that underpin many of the capacity development elements elaborated later in this paper.

These guidelines on capacity needs assessment can assist CRPs in several ways: they equip practitioners with a background understanding of the core capacity issues to focus upon; they highlight the importance of these capacities, and also show how CRP and partner efforts can be enhanced by external partners, achieving their research for development (R4D) goals by successfully deepening and implementing capacity. As well as supporting capacity development, these guidelines can also offer direction for mainstreaming CapDev into the programming and operations of CRPs.¹

Several detailed guidelines and methodologies on capacity needs assessment, published in the last decade by reputable organizations (e.g. UNDP, FAO, etc.) already exist, and we do not suggest duplicating efforts or creating new guidelines for the CGIAR. Instead we propose facilitating access to existing guidelines and creating quick reference guides, adapted to the context of the CRPs, to help apply best practice and ensure need assessments are embedded into any capacity development plans of CRPs. Further resources will be described in the section entitled 'Tools, Resources and Contacts', below.

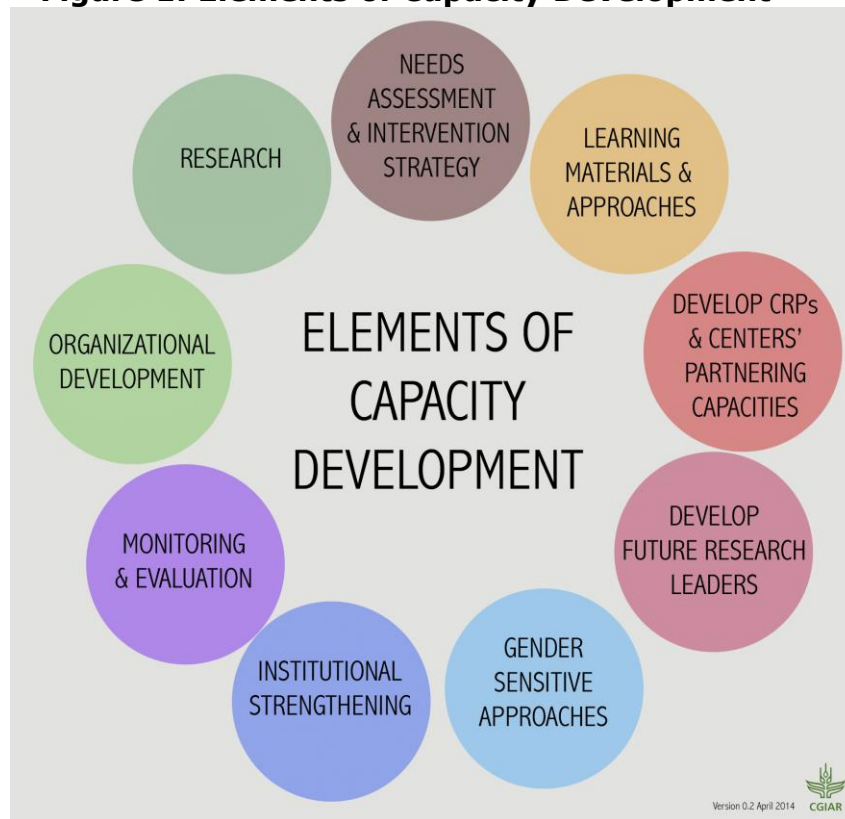
Elements of capacity development

CGIAR has adopted a systems thinking approach to capacity development. The main innovation from this is that emphasis is placed upon defining the system as a whole, which is made up of interacting parts. It is also about recognizing complexity and knowing that one cannot always predict outcomes so have to have the capacity to learn and adapt along their impact pathways. Capacity development is hence a multifaceted process, combining elements across several dimensions, which can be adapted to the particular setting of each CRP. These guidelines propose nine key elements of capacity development, illustrated in the diagram below. While CRPs do not have to include all nine elements in a capacity

¹ UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology - User's Guide, May 2007

development strategy, it is advised that a minimum set of elements should be applied to convincingly achieve expected outcomes.

Figure 1: Elements of Capacity Development²



1. Capacity needs assessment and intervention strategy design

- Identifying the right interventions for the right audience, in the right formats
- Focus investments and leverage other resources

CRPs should develop strategies and interventions for capacity development based on CRP ToC and Impact Pathways, and partners’ emerging needs and opportunities. Capacity needs assessment tools and approaches, customized for CRPs, need to be designed or adapted from existing models (or both). These assessments will help to attract and target appropriate investments, leverage other resources available for capacity development and provide benchmarks for future monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

2. Design and delivery of innovative learning materials and approaches

- Content development
- Adult learning theory and instructional design

² Figure 1 is not intended to infer a strict order, sequential process or hierarchy of elements involved in capacity development. The nine discrete elements are interchangeable and the emphasis placed on each may vary according to the CRP involved. The section below presents the elements in alphabetical order, and the figure follows the same sequence.

- Harnessing technology for CapDev initiatives

CRPs need to invest in innovative content development and knowledge sharing mechanisms, which are firmly anchored in learning and instructional design theories (including use of ICTs), to make research outputs more suitable, accessible and appealing to a wider range of users.

3. Develop CRPs and Centers' capacity to partner

- Identifying and brokering appropriate partnerships models
- Assessing and developing partners' capacity

Though there is a widespread assumption that everyone can successfully create and sustain effective partnerships, some individuals and organizations are adept at collaboration, while others are less so. An additional challenge that CRPs are facing is moving from research partnerships to strategic and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for impact. Specific methodologies therefore need to be developed or applied to enhance CRPs and centers' identification of the "right" partners based on CRPs outcomes and Impact Pathways. The capacity of current or potential partners is also of crucial importance and needs to be assessed systematically.

4. Developing future research leaders through fellowships

- Convergence of policies and procedures within and across CRPs
- Strategic focus of investments to fellowship programs

The policies and procedures governing fellowship programs across CGIAR require harmonization. CRPs must improve links with advanced research institutions and NARS engaged in CRPs which offer fellowships, to significantly raise the opportunities for scientists to develop capacities in key areas that directly support achievement of outcomes. Fellowship initiatives from CRPs and Centers need to strategically focus and leverage investments for fellowship programs.

5. Gender-sensitive approaches throughout capacity development

- Provide expert capacity development input into CRPs' gender strategies
- Ensure gender dimension is incorporated into capacity development activities
- Leadership & women-entrepreneurship development

Capacity development has strong links to CRPs' gender-related R&D activities. Gender mainstreaming is reciprocal and the capacity development and gender communities can work hand in hand to capture synergies and share resources: incorporating gender dimensions into capacity development actions, and using appropriate capacity development tools and methods in gender strategies.

6. Institutional strengthening

- Institutional assessments to inform policy design and reform
- Facilitate and engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues

- Develop capacity of decision makers to use research outputs

CRPs need to design and use institutional capacity assessment tools and communication methodologies to identify appropriate partners and interventions, and prioritize capacity development interventions at the institutional level (including but not limited to improving legal frameworks and the functioning of markets and policies). Development of institutional capacities may include advocacy and policy dialogues through and with multi-stakeholder forums, advising decision makers on legislation and innovation programs, and establishing action research projects to test and adapt new institutional arrangements, in order to hasten the uptake and use of research results. This may require collaboration with communication experts to synthesize and adapt research results for use by policy/decision makers or as strategic advocacy tools.

7. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of capacity development

- Integrating capacity development into monitoring and evaluation systems across the CRP ecosystem
- Capturing lessons learned for replication and scaling out

All CRPs and Centers are developing M&E frameworks. However, traditional capacity development indicators based on training alone are insufficient as they are restricted to counting the number of (gender disaggregated) trainees. CRPs should foster collaboration between the capacity development and M&E functions to explore different approaches. These can include (but are not limited to) experimental and quasi-experimental trials, mixed-methods approaches that focus on rapid feedback loops, and action research.

8. Organizational development

- Developing CRPs organizational capacity to move along the R4D process.³
- Enhancing NARS research and research management capacity
- Strengthening boundary partners for research uptake

Many national agricultural research systems with which CRPs and Centers collaborate lack strong capacities in and around research. Similarly, the organizational capacity of rural advisory service providers and other boundary partners who adapt research results for the next level of users, may be weak and constrain the up-scaling of research. CRPs need capacities to better engage with NARS and boundary partners in identifying and addressing such weaknesses, so that innovations are more widely adapted and taken to scale. This is more likely to happen if these boundary partners are involved at the

³ Organizational capacities are the abilities of an organization to achieve results compatible with its goals. These capacities include skills, knowledge and competencies of individuals, incentives, operating routines, budgeting and investment procedures, foresight capabilities and organizational cultures. A particularly important capacity is the ability to develop new capacities in response to emerging needs and opportunities.

beginning of the process and participate from the project inception phase, including the needs assessment.

9. Research on Capacity Development

- Learning what works in what context
- Action research

In order to develop more effective approaches for capacity development, CRPs and centers will need research on capacity development to learn what works in each context. This multi-stakeholder action-research should enable adaptive iterations through scanning trends, monitoring changes in capacities, action-research approaches and cross-CRP exchange of experiences. Research on capacity development will help project teams to continually examine, fine-tune and improve management processes. This in turn will contribute to a more effective project and ultimately to achievement of outcomes and impacts. There is a need to remember that capacity development is a process and CRPs need to learn through reflecting on how it is or is not working.

Indicators of successful Implementation

The successful design and implementation of a CRP's capacity development strategy, building on the elements outlined in this document, will require adequate levels of investment at a sufficiently long time scale. CRPs should track and analyze how capacity development is incorporated and budgeted in annual and mid-term plans, against the back-drop of agreed ToC and impact pathways.

To facilitate organizational learning and improving capacity development across the CGIAR, the Centers and CRPs will need to monitor and evaluate these investments and reflect on, analyze and exchange lessons learned across CRPs. This would contribute to better-managed organizational change and continuous improvement of their research for development approaches.

Due to its novelty and complexity, CGIAR's monitoring and evaluation of capacity development will require attention. It must integrate traditional indicators (typically, gender-disaggregated counting of short- and long-term trainees) with new metrics and procedures, some of which have already been used by several CRPs, public organizations and private firms. Accordingly, several Intermediate Development Outcomes of the CGIAR highlight capacity development dimensions.

The Capacity Development (CapDev) Community of Practice (CoP), will facilitate the implementation in several ways. Modalities for financing capacity development will be devised over the coming months, in dialogue with CRPs and Centers. A common platform should be developed where data and information on various capacity development processes, results and indicators can be documented and retrieved.

Tools, resources & contacts

A tools, resources & contacts section will be prepared and posted shortly – meanwhile, we welcome any feedback you may have on this draft by email to Dr. Iddo Dror at i.dror@cgiar.org

Annex 1: About this document

Capacity development is already regarded by CGIAR as an effective vehicle for sustainable development, embedded within broader Center and CRP strategies. A high level SRF review meeting was recently held in Wageningen, where Capacity Development was (re)affirmed as an important element for the CRPs, and one that needs to be incorporated into the planning and pre-proposal phases for the 2nd CRP call (point 9). These guidelines are therefore intended to support that process and have been drafted as a high-level strategy document to guide CapDev at systems, CRP and Center level.

Although referred to as a “guidelines” document, it does not describe a prescriptive “how-to” process, it is rather an outline guidance paper, intended to foster dialogue which enables centers and CRPS to incorporate capacity development into their planning.

The document offers recommendations on how CGIAR and boundary partners can successfully implement strategies for CapDev and highlights the key advantages offered by CapDev to CRPs, centers and partners. It emphasizes the requirement for both an appropriate capacity needs assessment before any strategies can be developed, as well as comprehensive research, monitoring and evaluation throughout the implementation process.

The Capacity Development (CapDev) Guidelines for 2nd round of CRPs was initially drafted by members of the CGIAR CapDev CoP, at a Writeshop held 7-9 April 2014 in Montpellier, France. The current version is a result of peer-reviewed by the CapDev CoP members during May 2014. It is being shared with Center DGs, CRP Directors and other internal and external stakeholders for feedback in June 2014. A revised document will be prepared in September 2014 after the next CapDev CoP Annual Meeting.

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