

Capacity Development

The Livestock and Fish (LAF) CRP capacity development strategy will be based on the premise that the CRPs five flagships and Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) along with Theories of Change (ToC) and Impact Pathways (IPs) are the framing context for capacity development work.

The LAF CRP adopts a systems thinking approach to capacity development. The main innovation that systemic thinking introduces is that *rather than prioritizing interventions that need immediate fixing*, emphasis is given to defining the “*issue creating system*”, which is made up of interacting parts, which can be used to better understand reality, problems and the context in which they arise. Practically, systemic thinking can be used in participation with value chain system actors, to identify issues, analyze their boundaries, design strategies and policy interventions, forecast and measure their expected impacts, implement them, and monitor and evaluate their successes and failures.

A systems approach to capacity accounts for contextual factors and system patterns, such as individual constraints, organizational shortcomings, institutional interfaces and regulatory and cultural barriers, which may make efforts to build capacities ineffective. A holistic systemic approach is thus required for designing, implementing and measuring capacity development response strategies (which will be based on assessment methodologies and adaptive management) across three distinctive system levels namely:

- **the enabling environment:** the broader system including downstream/upstream policies, rules and legislation, regulations, power relations and social norms;
- **the organizational level:** the internal policies, arrangements, procedures and frameworks that allow an organization to operate and deliver on its mandate, enabling the coming together of individual capacities for achieving common goals. One of the focus areas under consideration for targeted organizational capacity development at the rural levels are (local) Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) that would seek to outline the full range of actions that the public and private sector can take to support and promote, for example, women’s socio-economic rights and income generating opportunities in the LAF value chains and;
- **the individual level:** the skills, experience, knowledge, leadership and motivation of people.

A systems thinking view highlights that without enhancing capacities across institutional, organizational and individual levels it would be difficult for the CRP (and flagships) to transit from the traditional “research outputs” orientation to a more holistic “development outcomes” paradigm and to measure (capacity development) impact.

Organizational capacities will thus be built through sustained investments made by the different flagships aiming to strengthen organizations and individuals working on different issues in the same chain (parallel action, not aligned), working on the same issues in the same chain (parallel action, aligned) and working together on the same issues in the same chain (convergent action), this will be done through holistically designed capacity development response strategies. These strategies will be based on capacity needs assessment for which tools and approaches will be designed or customized. Such assessments will help focus crowd-in investments in capacity development and provide a benchmark for future monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

The CRP will design and use institutional capacity assessment tools 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).

Development of institutional capacities in the CRP 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.

Capacity development work in the CRP has strong links to the CRPs' gender-related R&D activities. Mainstreaming is reciprocal: gender dimensions will be incorporated into capacity development actions, and appropriate capacity development tools and methods in gender strategies will be developed and used.

The LAF CRP will make its scientific research relevant by fostering the leap from individual and group learning to sustainable livelihood outcomes and – impacts through an integrated enable capacity development approach. This means for example, facilitating and identifying innovations and breakthroughs in learning approaches (gaming, mobile/ICT etc.) through high-quality training packages and collaborations that are aimed specifically for organizational strengthening purposes and which are tailored to the cultural, organizational and institutional contexts in which the new agricultural knowledge is to be applied.

Apart from embedding the capacity development approach into formal organization systems and work processes, the LAF CRP will strive to inspire its staff, internal and external partners to engage fully and play their part in integrating capacity development within the CRPs flagships so that CGIAR and partners, collectively, become a part of a truly sustainable development process. By this, it is meant that the CRP is de facto more looking at working across sectors, with multiple stakeholders and interlinked interventions.

The LAF CRP will ensure the systematic tracking of how capacity development in CRP planning, management, learning and delivery is incorporated, monitored, evaluated and budgeted for. Capacity development will thus be integrated in the CGIAR monitoring and evaluation and learning system, which will allow the CRP to continuously measure and improve the quality of capacity development within its program by methodically testing and integrating appropriate approaches, in the design as well as implementation of in-country projects and new proposal development.

Last but not least, to produce high quality research, LAF researchers must remain on the scientific frontier. This, in turn, requires strong capacities through hiring and developing new cutting edge researchers and to work through strategic partnerships to access the latest technical and scientific expertise. Staff will be encouraged to participate in professional meetings, and visits from scholars will be stimulated; investments will be made available to develop future research leaders through fellowships; staff will be encouraged to seek more integration into global e-networks/Community of Practices and establish long-term collaborations with advanced research institutions and private firms with strong research programs.

Researchers and research managers have to be able to explore new research approaches, such as the use of non-experimental methods to accelerate the generation of scientific information. The CRP will put in place mechanisms to ensure that individual scientists, while focusing on their disciplinary research, are aware of (and proactively consider in their activities) the linkages with other system components researched by other CGIAR centers, partner institutes, or other CRPs.