



CCAFS Capacity Enhancement Strategy

Introduction

Agendas and priorities around climate change are developing quickly. There is increasing attention to how climate change will happen rather than whether it will happen, and allocation of resources to adaptation as well as mitigation. Such shifts in perceptions of climate change and its impacts require new capacities among individuals, households and institutions – to deal both with incremental change and, more demandingly, with the major transformations in institutions and practices that an uncertain future climate will bring.

In agriculture, recent emphasis has been moving from “hazard-based” adaptation to “vulnerability-based” adaptation. By positioning capacity enhancement as a core activity, CCAFS will contribute to a further shift from “vulnerability-based” towards “capacity-based” adaptation, putting capabilities and competencies at the centre of our global approach to managing food and farming systems under climate change.

Capacity enhancement is thus a central priority for CCAFS. There is strong institutional support for this prioritization in the mandates of the ESSP, which has an explicit strategy agenda to make sure that capacity enhancement is more than just a tool for implementation of scientific research, and the CGIAR, for which collaboration and capacity enhancement are likely to have a high profile within the post-reform agenda.

What is capacity enhancement?

Capacity enhancement means a person or organization increasing their own ability to achieve their objectives effectively and efficiently. This usually involves building internal capacity: the skills and knowledge of an individual, or the systems of an organization. Improved capacity may be a set of behaviours (ability to ask the right questions, ability to interpret, ability to learn) rather than a set of information or manuals for action.

Enabling people to enhance their own capacity is likely to be more effective than attempting to “deliver” capacity development. This is especially important for less empowered stakeholder groups, such as resource-poor farmers, who have considerable capacity on which to build, sometimes unrecognized or stalled by institutional barriers. Stronger internal capacity might not be enough where extrinsic factors, such as inadequate capital or entrenched power relationships, are limiting. Therefore capacity enhancement in its fullest sense needs to address both internal competencies and wider institutional capacity.

Objectives of CCAFS capacity enhancement

Arguably the whole of CCAFS is a capacity-building program, designed to raise regional and global capacity to understand and deal with the impacts of climate change on agriculture and food. The fundamental aim of the CCAFS capacity enhancement strategy is to build capacity among different stakeholder groups to achieve the goal of CCAFS (to overcome the additional threats posed by a changing climate to achieving food security, enhancing livelihoods and improving environmental management) and its two sub-goals:

1. To identify and test pro-poor adaptation and mitigation practices, technologies and policies for food systems, adaptive capacity and rural livelihoods.

2. To provide diagnosis and analysis that will ensure the inclusion of agriculture in climate change policies, and the inclusion of climate issues in agricultural policies, from the sub-national to the global level in a way that brings benefits to the rural poor.

Building on the intent of these two sub-goals, there are two related areas in which CCAFS needs to raise capacity:

1. Researchers' capacity **to generate knowledge** on managing food systems, adaptive capacity and rural livelihoods under climate change.
2. Decision-makers' capacity **to demand, critique and use this knowledge effectively** to work out policy options, and to evaluate and adjust these policy options and related actions.

Traditionally, the capacity enhancement programs of research bodies play to the comparative advantages of these organizations by concentrating on raising research capacity among staff, collaborators and students. CCAFS will seek to raise not only the research capacity of researchers but also the capacity of others to demand and use that research effectively. At the very least the aim here is to enable farmers, policy-makers, researchers and donors to be better users of knowledge, but ideally CCAFS will pursue the more ambitious agenda of enabling these users of knowledge to become better agenda-setters – more effective in their abilities to interrogate current knowledge and priorities around climate change and food security, and to develop convincing alternatives.

Challenges to CCAFS capacity enhancement

Capacity enhancement for climate change is a growth industry. Capacity enhancement for agriculture is similarly being revitalised in the wake of the “food crisis” of recent years. The main challenges in designing and maintaining a capacity enhancement strategy for CCAFS are to make an *effective and original* contribution within a crowded field of strong, well articulated, well targeted capacity enhancement initiatives. A further challenge is to successfully involve or influence the broad set of direct and indirect stakeholders, particularly those who have not been well included in other capacity enhancement initiatives. These include small-scale farmers and the range of small and large businesses involved in farming systems and food systems (from input suppliers and food wholesalers through to insurers and information service providers).

Principles of CCAFS capacity enhancement

As articulated above, the challenge for CCAFS is how best to draw on the strengths of the program, while recognising limitations, to make an effective contribution to a busy capacity enhancement arena. Six practical principles to guide resource allocation, activities and partnerships are proposed below.

Enhance existing capacities

1. Allow people and organizations to define their own capacity needs and opportunities with respect to climate change, agriculture and food security, and to build on these.
2. Design all capacity enhancement activities explicitly to lower the institutional barriers (e.g. competing demands on time, low status, ephemeral funding) that prevent people's and organizations' full realization of their capacities.
3. Target capacity enhancement at those who are currently less advantage, particularly women and those working in low-income countries.

Add value through partnership

4. Contribute ideas, expertise, networks and funds to existing capacity enhancement initiatives, through partnership, rather than establishing new independent programs.
5. Identify modes of partnership and joint activities that build on comparative advantages and provide

mutual benefits (i.e. activities that deliver CCAFS objectives alongside partners' capacity enhancement programs). Ensure a neat and productive fit between any capacity enhancement activity and one or more of the CCAFS themes.

6. Concentrate primarily on capacity enhancement within the selected regions and work as far as possible with capacity enhancement agencies based in the regions rather than with external trainers and experts.

CCAFS capacity enhancement activities

To recap, the two related areas in which CCAFS needs to raise capacity are (1) generation of knowledge on managing food systems and farming systems under climate change and (2) stakeholders' capacity to demand, critique and use this knowledge effectively to work out and use policy options in a dynamic environment. Capacity enhancement activities within these two areas can be guided by the six principles above to help ensure a holistic but pragmatic contribution by CCAFS.

Workstream 1: Capacity enhancement in generation of knowledge

CCAFS will work with partners to raise capacity of researchers in the regions where CCAFS is active. In line with the principles above, CCAFS will aim to work with partners to provide opportunities for researcher capacity enhancement in ways that also contribute to the research goals of CCAFS. For example, the CCAFS themes can provide a study focus (topic, site, contacts) for post-graduate students and career scientists and provide them with additional support and outlets for their research, while at the same time providing extra data and analysis for the CCAFS research program.

Current capacity enhancement initiatives in climate change, agriculture and food security include several scholarship, fellowship and work placement schemes in place to build researcher capacity. A gap analysis coupled with analysis of CCAFS strengths and prior successes, suggests the following areas in which CCAFS can work with partners to make an effective and original contribution to stronger capacity for knowledge generation:

1. Create opportunities in the form of research projects, internships and exchanges for students, early- and mid-career research scientists, and research-oriented decision-makers within the CCAFS themes and regions.
2. Share models, tools and methods pro-actively to enable more effective use by a wider range of researchers and policy-makers.
3. Provide for greater integration between different across disciplines, particularly between the global environmental change community and its large-scale modelling approaches and the localised agricultural and livelihoods research communities, for example through cross-disciplinary group projects or workshops within or across the CCAFS themes. Similar integration across food systems might also be valuable, or between more technical and more institutional aspects of climate change adaptation.
4. Help individual scientists, particularly women, overcome some of the extrinsic barriers that limit their contributions to research, for example by helping to relieve their teaching or childcare time.
5. Establish one or more student networks to enable sharing of methodologies, experience and equipment and, if possible, to collect data in standard formats across different geographic contexts.

Given the limitations of CCAFS, certain activities, such as developing curricula and materials, running new training courses and managing full scholarship or fellowship programs, will likely not be taken up as primary responsibilities of CCAFS Theme Leaders and Regional Facilitators. CCAFS can however support partners in any of these activities by providing support and backstopping, for example in the form of comments on their approaches, curricula and materials, joint funding proposals, and promotion of partners' initiatives within CCAFS networks and channels of communication.

Workstream 2: Capacity enhancement in demand for, critique of and use of knowledge

The CCAFS objective is to build capacity not only among researchers, but also among decision-makers at all levels to develop knowledge-based policy options and to evaluate and adapt these options. CCAFS will work strategically with partners to reach this wide spectrum of stakeholders. Given the constraints on CCAFS resources, it is inadvisable that CCAFS attempts to work directly with large numbers of farmers and businesses to build capacity – we are unlikely to be able to manage the necessary scale and repetition for effective impact. Instead CCAFS should aim to work with umbrella bodies, such as large-scale farmers' organizations, existing community-based adaptation networks and industry organizations.

A gap analysis coupled with analysis of CCAFS strengths and prior successes, suggests the following areas in which CCAFS can work with partners to make an effective and original contribution to multi-stakeholder capacity enhancement in application of knowledge to policy:

1. Provide opportunities, in the form of access to networks, knowledge and tools, to partners that are working directly with farmers and farmers' organizations.
2. Support links and knowledge sharing within and across different stakeholder groups, particularly where these links are absent. Relevant groups may farmers' organizations, civil society organizations working in agriculture, civil society groups working in food security, small-scale enterprise associations, and community-based adaptation networks.
3. Facilitate progressive development and analysis of future scenarios with strategic stakeholder groups at regional level. Work with these stakeholders to structure and respond to expectations of uncertain futures.
4. Respond to self-defined needs of specific stakeholder groups to improve capacity in specific areas, for example around prediction and analysis of climate trends, agricultural trends and market trends that will shape future policy.
5. Work with partners to develop better means of communicating information and tools on climate risk to small-scale businesses in the three regions, and engage in strategy processes and one-off events among large-scale businesses that link agriculture with food security, particularly agribusinesses and finance/insurance providers – the rationale being that these companies are typically undertaking serious reorientation of business strategy in recognition of the material impacts of climate change on current and future business, but do not yet connect environmental issues with the social impacts and opportunities (e.g. small-scale suppliers, labour, urban consumers).

Management mechanisms for capacity enhancement

Each of the CCAFS themes will dedicate approximately 10% of its budget to capacity enhancement outputs and milestones that are integral to the outputs funded by the other 90% of the budget. Specified capacity enhancement activities, outputs and outcomes in workplans will be checked against the CCAFS principles to ensure that they enhance existing capacities, with positive discrimination towards the currently disadvantaged, and add value in an integrated manner to existing initiatives. The CCAFS program coordinating unit will provide coordination and support to Regional Facilitators and Theme Leaders to make capacity enhancement as effective as possible. All themes and regions will report on capacity enhancement milestones, outputs and outcomes.