Strategic Options in Communications

Establishing ILRI as a Global Leader by Bridging Excellence in Livestock Research and Poverty Reduction

**Report of the Review Committee of ILRI's
Information and Communications Activities
June 25–July 3, 2003**

Report Submitted on August 29, 2003
Jane Frances Ababa
Robert Stephen (Bob) Day
Klaus von Grebmer (chairman)

Table of Contents

1. Terms of Reference

- Take stock of the International Livestock Research Institute's (ILRI's):
    - Public awareness efforts and priorities for the future
    - Production, design, distribution, and marketing of publications
    - Library and knowledge sharing/management processes
    - Intranet and internet activities
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relevant to communications activities
- Outline a strategic goal
- Develop an action plan on priorities and an organizational structure to achieve them.

2. Management summary and recommendations

To make communication of the findings in this report easier, the Review Panel has summarized the main findings and recommendations in a PowerPoint presentation. It is attached to this report.

2.1 The global context

- Trends: globalization, biotechnology, migration, developments in information and communications technology, multiple players
- Agriculture's return to the development agenda
- Livestock revolution
- Changes in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

2.2 International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

- Two institutes merged into one
- Two historic profiles, especially in the scientific arena
- Persistent "phantom" of the International Livestock Centre for Africa /International Laboratory for Research in Animal Diseases (ILCA/ILRAD), and the growing need for a new identity
- Ever larger and more complex research issues
- Managerial challenges of two campuses and multiple regional offices

2.3 Challenges for ILRI

- Becoming a global player and being perceived as such
- Competing for funds in a more competitive funding environment
- Taking advantage of opportunities offered by the new trust in agriculture [World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and USAID's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA)]
- Identifying stakeholders and new partners
- Developing a new research strategy to establish a focal point for core competencies
- Developing a strategic approach to communications that recognizes that communications is central to increasing the impact of research on poverty reduction and to becoming a global player
- Changing the institute's policies and culture to reflect the importance of communications

  - Internal: Global impact starts with a change in culture at home
  - External: Excellence in external communications results from a strategic focus
- Using communications to change the institute's policies and culture
- Reallocating resources
  - Increasing productivity through reallocation
  - Securing additional resources from core and restricted funds
- Establishing a new look (branding/corporate identity) to support change process

2.4 Key observations

ILRI strengths (Selection)

- Good leadership and an effective management style
- Excellent and skilled staff, many of whom are highly motivated
- State-of-the art facilities and technologies
- Strong Information Technology (IT) department to facilitate communication
- Strong links to advanced research institutes
- Unique niche-producer and broker of global public goods and backstopper for National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS)
- Mandate attractive to both traditional and new donors

ILRI Communications Weaknesses (Selection)

- Lack of clarity about which "global public goods" are ILRI's central territory
- Lack of full internalization by many staff of new corporate policy emphasizing advocacy for the poor
- *Ad hoc* approach to strategic thinking or structure for future research and targets
- View of institute as "an 'ivory tower' institution," dominated by "ex-pats," and closed to the general community
- Inability of rural communities, most importantly subsistence farmers, to "feel" the impact of ILRI's activities
- Weak links to downstream institutes/partners and communities—the outside world is not aware of ILRI's core competencies
- Under-resourced Public Awareness (PA) team that currently targets investors only

ILRI Communications Opportunities (Selection)

- No other global organization is addressing the intersection of excellent livestock research and poverty alleviation
- Most donors are not interested in basic research, but rather have a growing interest in an organization's impact on the poor
- Both the Nairobi and Addis Ababa facilities are world class, as are some staff members at those facilities
- ILRI has the ability to respond quickly and effectively, with partners, to livestock-related crises that regularly arise in Africa and affect multiple countries
- ILRI has the ability to reach "the masses" as well as scientists, recognizing the major issues such communication introduces regarding literacy, local languages, and culture
- ILRI could preserve the wealth of archival material on livestock by digitization, and could help set up national capabilities with partners to do so, given that digitization is an Africa-wide need
- ILRI could and should be helping to set up national livestock/poverty alleviation research facilities that could complement ILRI's research, facilities to which ILRI might also outsource.

Threats to ILRI's Goals (Selection)

- Donor support for basic research is evaporating globally

- Funding streams for strategic poverty alleviation initiatives, though large, are notoriously slow to be finalized, thus ILRI needs to recognize and manage the resultant funding gaps and uncertainties
- Donor funding is directed increasingly to NARS, which could affect ILRI's partnerships and information and communications services
- NARS continues to grow stronger and some might see ILRI as a competitor

2.5 Recommendations

- Senior Management Team should accept vital communications role

    - Task cannot be delegated
    - Important for inner strength (staff is waiting for that: we are good, we should be recognized as such)
- Important for enhancing external presence, as ILRI should be seen as the first stop for information on livestock and poverty
- Provide some seed resources
    - Limited in amount and duration
    - Reallocate from other activities
    - Include new resources
- Quickly fill vacant head of communications position
    - Communications professional
    - Senior-level person
    - Team player
    - Visionary able to motivate others
- Develop a communications strategy as task number one
    - Coordinate various activities
    - Ensure executive team support
    - Ensure acknowledgement by the Board of Trustees
    - Develop Web page as a "business card to the outside"
- Create a public/media event (e.g., ILRI livestock index) periodically to put ILRI on the radar screen of livestock/poverty reduction concerns
- Realign services for the scientific arena (e.g., libraries' services)
- Consider services/products for broader audiences in important and potentially important markets
- Initiate Branding
    - Develop and maintain a strong, recognizable identity for ILRI that reflects the mission, culture, and values of the organization
    - Fully establish the ILRI brand ("phantoms" of ILCA and ILRAD remain)
- Proceed effectively
    - Transform the library into an information center
    - Re-orient the publishing activities
    - Define and differentiate stakeholder groups
    - Attract new skill sets
    - Design the information and communications strategy

3. The Global Context

3.1 Global trends

The world is undergoing profound global economic, technological, and social change. Many of the changes taking place act as drivers that affect the work of research and development organizations such as the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). Some of the global trends that are already influencing agricultural research and development activities are identified below.

Globalization has been identified as both a threat and an opportunity in relation to the rural poor. While on one hand it threatens to concentrate power and increase division between rich and poor, on the other it also contains the economic and technological potential to transform the lives of both the rich and poor alike. Development agencies are promoting *market orientation*, and are placing more emphasis on the importance of public-private partnerships. An increasing orientation to the market exists at both the farm and research level. *Migration from poor rural communities* is increasing the proportion of the population living in cities; some African cities are growing as rapidly as 9–10% per year. Such growth has implications for urban and peri-urban agriculture, including livestock farming.*Climate change* is certainly a global concern and features prominently on the research agendas of CGIAR centers. Rapid developments in *information and communications technologies* are creating new opportunities for access to information and knowledge— even at the farm level—and for support of data-intensive scientific research. *Intellectual property rights* regulations are influencing the flow of information and knowledge. *Biotechnology* offers possibilities for crop and livestock improvement through, for example, better forage crops, better vaccines, and higher quality livestock and crop products.

These global trends have an impact on poverty, which afflicts an estimated 1.3 billion people in developing countries who live on less than US$1 per day. The trends also affect the communication and technology needs of farmers and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector as well as the research and communications strategies of organizations such as ILRI.

3.1.1 Increased support for the agricultural sector

Agriculture is the mainstay of most developing-country economies. In Africa, agriculture provides 60% of all employment, most critically in rural areas, where 70% of the continent's extreme poor and undernourished live. Agriculture is for many countries the largest source of foreign exchange, the largest contributor to GDP, and the main generator of savings and tax revenues. It also provides raw materials for the manufacturing industry. Improvement of agricultural performance has the potential to increase rural incomes and purchasing power for large numbers of people. More than any other sector, agriculture can lift people out of poverty on a mass scale.

Little support has been given to Africa's agricultural sector by African governments and the donor community in the last few decades, despite its huge potential. Over the last decade both external and internal funding for agricultural research and development has declined. For example, during the period from 1992 to 1997 USAID cut agricultural investments in Africa by 57%. This trend is now beginning to be reversed, however. The pre-eminence of agriculture in African economies, and the large number of people engaged in agriculture or related activities, is once again being acknowledged by external funding agencies. Examples of increased funding can be found with the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which has

established agricultural research and technology dissemination and adoption as a pillar of its comprehensive agricultural development program. NEPAD's goal is to double current annual spending on agricultural research in Africa within ten years. NEPAD will support research with an annual investment of up to US$1.6 billion by 2015 in four areas: Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM); Adaptive Management of Appropriate Germplasm; Development of Sustainable Market Chains; and Policies for Sustainable Agriculture. NEPAD will also support scientific capacity building. Another funding opportunity is USAID's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA), which will support research on scientific and technological applications and on global markets that raise the productivity of food and export products and increase the stability and volume of supplies. Several other multilateral and bilateral donors are coming in to support African agriculture.

3.1.2 The livestock revolution

It is argued that livestock, which contributes to the livelihoods of more than two-thirds of the world's rural population and to a significant majority of the periurban poor, has enormous potential to reduce poverty. The poorest of the poor generally do not have livestock. But if they acquire animals, their livestock can help take them on the pathway out of poverty by contributing to food and nutrition, income, transport, on-farm power, manure for maintaining soil fertility, and a wide range of social-cultural roles.

The 2002 ILRI study, "Mapping Poverty and Livestock in the Developing World," showed that the greatest number of poor livestock keepers live in South Asia (SA), particularly in the mixed irrigated and rain-fed agricultural production systems of the region, and in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), particularly in the mixed rain-fed systems. The study also concluded that population growth and climate change will produce substantial changes in livestock production systems over the next three to five decades. The consequent need for technology adaptation and poverty mitigation work will be particularly large in SSA. The study also indicated that in East Africa livestock are not solely a prerogative for richer households, hence affirming the argument that livestock can be a pathway out of poverty.

3.1.3 Changes in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

Efforts are underway to create a truly unified CGIAR system. The aim is to transform the way the CGIAR works by incorporating new information and communications technology (ICT) and knowledge management (KM) practices in order to preserve, produce, and improve access to the global agricultural public goods needed by the poor in developing countries. A unified CGIAR system would also benefit from greater efficiencies and synergy through joint activities, taking advantage of economies of scale in services and purchases, and from exploring how to better share knowledge, best practices, and experiences among the centers. The CGIAR also aims to be a leading knowledge broker, bringing together all actors in an open, inclusive community for global public goods research for development. Accordingly, the CGIAR has developed an Information and Communications Technology-Knowledge Management (ICT-KM) Strategy and Program, which builds upon the CGIAR's traditional sources of excellence. The program's thrust will be based on three themes:

1. *ICT for tomorrow's science*, where high performance informatics and improved connectivity will enable the CGIAR and its partners to benefit from new information-intensive methods

2. *Content for development*, using ICTs to capture and integrate knowledge and enable users to quickly access research information and learning tools
3. *A CGIAR without boundaries*, which will involve strengthening collaboration within the CGIAR and with other global stakeholders.

3.2 The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

History and mandate

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) began its operations in 1995 following a merger of two former centers belonging to the CGIAR—the International Laboratory for Research in Animal Diseases (ILRAD), which was based in Nairobi, Kenya, and the International Livestock Centre for Africa (ILCA), which was based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. While ILRAD and ILCA had their mandates in Africa, ILRI's mandate is global, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

ILRI has a mandate to enhance the well-being of present and future generations in the developing countries through research to improve sustainable livestock production. ILRI's work enhances the diverse and essential contributions that livestock make to smallholder farming. The institute is one of the Future Harvest centers, which are involved in conducting food and environmental research to help reduce poverty and increase food security while protecting the natural resource base.

ILRI's activities are based on the two campuses in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, with the headquarters in Nairobi and offices in seven other countries around the world, including a regional center in Manila, Philippines.

ILRI's vision and goal

ILRI's vision is, *"A world that is made better for poor people in developing countries by improving agricultural systems in which livestock are important."* ILRI believes that livestock systems, if managed properly, play an important part in alleviating hunger and counteracting environmental degradation.

ILRI's research strategy, 2002–2010, identifies the institute's goal thus: "*To reduce poverty and make sustainable development possible for poor livestock keepers, their families, and the communities in which they live by positioning itself at the crossroads of livestock and poverty and by bringing to bear high quality science and capacity building.*"

ILRI has thus positioned itself to contribute to poverty reduction through livestock research and dissemination activities based at its two main campuses, in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, its regional office in the Philippines, and offices in other countries.

ILRI will apply its scientific competencies in livestock research and capacity building to address this rather complex problem of poverty, working in partnerships and alliances with national, regional, and international organizations to achieve its goals. Three pathways out of poverty have been identified:

1. Securing the current and future assets of the poor, the issue on which ILRI spends 42% of its funds
2. Enhancing productivity of the agricultural systems, on which ILRI spends 45% of its funds
3. Improving market opportunities for the poor, which makes up 13% of ILRI's budget

Through promoting high-quality science, with outputs from research that have a demonstrable impact on poverty, ILRI will address problems in five priority thematic areas:

1. Supporting policymaking and priority setting for livestock research and development: the role of livestock in poverty reduction
2. Enabling access to innovation: adapting and delivering technology and information
3. Improving market access: opportunities and threats from globalization and the livestock revolution
4. Securing assets: better livelihoods through the application of biotechnology
5. Sustaining lands and livelihoods: improved human and environmental health

Research focusing on themes 1 and 4 will be based at the Nairobi campus, themes 2 and 5 will be run out of the Addis Ababa campus, and theme 3 will be based in Nairobi and at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, D.C. Since implementation of the work will be project-based, there will be collaboration among the scientists at the two campuses.

Managerial challenges of two campuses, multiple offices, and the "phantom" of ILCA and ILRAD

ILRI's activities are divided mainly between its Nairobi and Addis Ababa campuses, which poses great challenges in managing the institution—particularly in ensuring close communication between staff. ILRI inherited two distinct cultures from ILCA and ILRAD, "sister" organizations in different geographical settings and with different target groups. While ILCA was well known and respected because it worked closely with farmers, ILRAD was a high-tech laboratory research facility hardly known to the local communities. Although the merger of the two groups was justified, the resulting organizational culture issues have not yet been successfully addressed. Hence the two campuses have retained their earlier, pre-ILRI cultures and have continued to work as two separate organizations in many ways, often competing rather than collaborating. These historical factors have not only impeded internal communication within the institute, they have encumbered ILRI's efforts to become better known to its potential stakeholders. In fact, many longstanding partners and stakeholders still identify with ILCA or ILRAD rather than with ILRI.

Ever since its establishment, ILRI has struggled to address the issue of its identity and to break down cultural walls between the two campuses. A lot has been achieved, despite some constraints. For example, the network connecting the Nairobi and Addis campuses (including Debre Zeit station) has improved communication between staff and led to a more cooperative and efficient working environment; ILRInet is providing a mechanism for staff to share and learn from each other's work. Collaborative research projects involving staff at the two campuses and joint activities between units such as the libraries in Nairobi and Addis Ababa have also helped to break down "individual walls" and "institutional isolation." While joint projects, organizational structures, and ICTs do catalyze communication, however, change has to start with the people themselves. With a total of 750 staff members based at two campuses in two countries, a

regional office in the Philippines, and four offices in other locations, management of human resources and facilities is still a challenge that must be overcome if ILRI is to achieve its goals.

Other challenges

Becoming a global player

Recent changes in ILRI's mandate and overall strategy—going from a research to an innovative expertise-brokering institute—pose challenges that the organization must address. In order to become a global player as a broker of science expertise and to be perceived as such, ILRI must change its way of doing business. ILRI needs to proactively promote itself, identify its stakeholders, and develop strategic partnerships with those stakeholders. It is especially important to do so given that ILRI is working with shrinking unrestricted funds (80% of its funding is restricted to projects) and has had drastic staff retrenchments over the past few years. Of paramount necessity is ILRI's need to galvanize its core competencies (scientific, communications, capacity building, and other support areas) to ensure that it fulfills its ultimate goal of improving the lives of the poor.

New trust in agriculture

The renewed trust in agriculture to alleviate poverty, through initiatives such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and USAID's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA), provide opportunities for ILRI to address the challenges mentioned above, but, again, there must be a paradigm shift in ILRI's way of doing business. ILRI's efforts to make institutional changes (including the commissioning of this review of its information and communications activities), its establishment of a Bioscience Centre of Excellence at the Nairobi campus in partnership with other regional research institutes, and its establishment of an INRM Center of Excellence at the Addis Ababa campus are all good indicators that ILRI is facing these challenges.

4. Integral communications: A conceptual proposal

A major challenge in achieving ILRI's goal of being at the "crossroads of livestock research and poverty alleviation" is to bridge the institute's scientific research and policy decision-making functions. The important work that researchers conduct often does not reach policymakers because of inadequate and inappropriate policy communications. Thus a weak link remains between research and decision-making systems. ILRI must develop a strategy outlining how it can reach policymakers and the media to enhance the impact of the institute's findings.

4.1 Internal communications

No policy communications plan is sustainable without effective internal communications. ILRI staff must be fully briefed and must internalize the institute's mission, vision, values, and goals in order to competently and credibly communicate them to external stakeholders.

4.2 Competence in research and communications leads to Impact

Research is not an end in itself. It is financed and undertaken to contribute to the progress of mankind, which can be achieved only if the results of the research are communicated to policymakers and those, such as the media, who influence them. State-of-the-art research needs state-of-the-art communications to achieve impact, and researchers must leave their "ivory tower" for their research to have an impact outside academic circles.

It is important that ILRI focus its communications activities on the institute's key stakeholders in order to use its scarce resources more diligently. An urgent task facing ILRI is to assess, discuss, and define key stakeholders who can help the institute achieve its defined strategic goals. The review team's impression is that the institute has undertaken a variety of scattered attempts to communicate with stakeholders but that these activities have lacked focus and direction. The institute's new strategy provides an opportunity to find answers to the following fundamental questions:

- Who are our key stakeholders, especially outside the science arena?
- What are the interests of these key stakeholders and how can we best communicate and partner with them?

Answers to these questions will guide the necessary organizational and structural adaptations, the use of information and communications technologies, and the allocation or reallocation of resources to fulfill these tasks.

Research on the production, distribution, and consumption of livestock can affect policy action in different ways. Research results can:

- confirm the appropriateness of policy actions
- indicate that policy actions are needed to reduce risks/costs or increase benefits
- predict the probable outcomes of alternative livestock policies
- synthesize information on how other policymakers have coped with livestock issues
- alert policymakers to major threats.

The right information in the right form at the right time

In general, the needs of policymakers are simple: they want the right information, in the right form, at the right time. But what sounds like a truism is difficult and sometimes cumbersome to put into practice. Consumers of research results are not alike; their communication needs can differ tremendously. The right form in which to convey information depends on a policymaker's background, perspective, and political context. Still, policymakers do have a common preference: they are more likely to read research results that are timely and presented clearly and succinctly.

The right time frequently depends on which stage the policymaking process is in. The policymaking process can be divided generally into eight stages:

1. Development of the policy agenda
2. Identification of specific objectives and policy options
3. Evaluation of options
4. Advancement of recommendations
5. Consensus building
6. Legislation
7. Implementation
8. Policy evaluation and impact assessment

Research results that feed into the process during stages 1–4 are likely to have the best chance of finding their way into the consensus-building, legislation, and implementation stages.

Policymakers frequently find published research results indigestible. This is unfortunate but understandable since the results are often written for a different target group? other researchers, for example. All researchers are required to document their scientific research methods in a detailed way; it is their fundamental ethical obligation to rigorously examine and publish the results and methodology of reported research. Relentless double-checking and independent third-party evaluations are the cornerstones of the scientific process.

Most policymakers, however, will not read lengthy research reports, especially when they are written in technical language geared toward other researchers or academics.

An academic institution that is not concerned about policy impact can be satisfied with the publication of a research report, but for ILRI, with its vision to contribute to "a world that is made better for poor people in developing countries by improving agricultural systems in which livestock are important," the challenge does not end with published research.

Research findings and reports must be simplified and condensed in close cooperation with the researchers and presented in a way that appeals to the targeted audience of "insiders." Such insiders might include policy advisers who make recommendations to policymakers, experts in the donor community, and any other group that has a *professional interest* in a research issue. The simplification and condensation process is not an easy task, as many researchers believe that the process threatens the scientific appeal of their published work.

The "translation" process must go even further than simplification when ILRI wants to reach policymakers directly. Policymakers deal with a variety of issues, and hundreds of documents might pass over their desks daily. Thus to attract and hold policymakers' attention in the

competition for their time, issues and findings must be presented well. Research results that are easy to understand, take account of the current political arena, and offer immediate help in pending policy decisions will interest policymakers the most.

Research can influence the policy process if the information presented to the policymaker:

- gives him/her a good understanding of the magnitude and dynamic of the livestock/poverty/development problem at stake
- explains the causes of the problem (e.g., poverty or malnutrition is a function of *x,* or livestock in poor condition leads to *y*)
- recognizes the political context
- outlines the basic actions that can be taken
- indicates the likely outcome.

These are the important elements of "the right information in the right form at the right time." Research results that could improve political decisions and make a tremendous impact in reducing malnutrition and poverty are often of no value once the political process is well underway. As the Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz once stated, "You can conquer back lost land, but not lost time."

When research findings attract the attention of policymakers, those findings are more likely to be integrated into policy decisions, especially if they support political agendas in a timely fashion. Once findings lead to policy action, research has achieved its goal. In the case of ILRI, such research would then have had a positive impact on the poor.

Contrary to the approach that recognizes the policymakers' needs is the "container theory" of communication still followed by some. The container theory assumes an ideal situation: a "sender" packs the information he/she wants to convey into a container and passes it on to a "receiver" who unpacks it and immediately understands the full content. Such an approach has probably led companies whose presidents communicated with their staff in this way to go bankrupt and political leaders who followed these principles to work themselves out of a job. It is important that ILRI research results and the basic concepts behind them be explained clearly and reinforced on a person-to-person basis with ample room for dialogue and discussion with policymakers.

4.4 Reaching out to the media

Another important approach to conveying research results to policymakers is through the media. Once the mass media take up an issue, the likelihood that policymakers will become interested in it increases dramatically. If a policy issue attains a high public profile, dealing with it generally boosts the personal or party profile of the policymakers involved. Since policymakers read and listen to influential news outlets, ILRI research that gets prominent news coverage can potentially reach policymakers it may not have reached otherwise.

Livestock policy issues are not inherently attractive topics for the mass media. Thus such issues must be packaged or presented in a way that makes them attractive or compelling to the media. It should be noted that, in general, the likelihood of getting news coverage increases when information is sensational or counterintuitive or deviates from the norm, and further increases when the information is fresh and media outlets are first in line to report it. Competition among

the media for audiences compels them to search for material that is interesting, surprising, or controversial.

If research results on livestock policy issues are not new or surprising, the likelihood that they will make headlines in the media is low. But even if the research results are new and surprising, thorough marketing is necessary to get them into the media. The issue must be presented in a way that gets reporters' attention, raises their interest in the subject, and sparks their desire to report on it. Therefore, research results must be further condensed, simplified, and put into a media-friendly context; for example, research on livestock issues will more likely make headlines when there is a livestock crisis and heads of state are meeting to discuss the issue. Research on the importance of livestock production in certain countries is not an interesting topic per se. But if it can be placed in the context of, say, the World Food Day, with a brief on how livestock contributes to a balanced diet and improved nutritional status in developing countries, the media are far more likely to pick it up.

5. Findings

This section summarizes the input from seven days of interviews with several levels of ILRI staff, as well as external users and stakeholders at both the Nairobi and Addis Ababa centers. Although the feedback has been condensed for presentation here, the full range of perceptions has been retained, and the participants' own words have been used as often as possible to reflect the spirit of their contributions. This section is intended to convey the perceptions of all participants, thus the authors have not attempted to ensure the accuracy of what was said.

The review panel wishes to make two general comments:

- The external users and stakeholders interviewed were selected based on ILRI's current situation, which remains dominated by its earlier focus on the scientific community. Hence the important insights of potential users and stakeholders from the social development sector (pertinent to ILRI's new strategy) are missing. The panel strongly suggests that these insights need to be gauged in some detail as soon as possible.
- The panel gained an overall impression that ILRI has a skilled, experienced staff that seem to be motivated to work as a team and are prepared to make significant changes in their working practices. The staff identify with the new vision and are developing a level of significant trust in the new Director General and his executive team.

5.1 Executive team

Vision/Strategy

ILRI has identified its new "niche." It wants to be known not only for good science but also for integrating that science with development. The revised strategy of 2002 aims to close this gap by moving ILRI from a "research place" to an "innovation place," noted for:

- Socio-economics of livestock production systems
- Diversity of disciplines and perspectives
- Innovation systems (e.g., openness, partnerships)
- Delegation of research

ILRI is focusing its work wherever poverty issues intersect with livestock—not only in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Asia and South Asia and, to a lesser degree, in Latin America. ILRI is also aiming to become a broker of "science-based change" by encouraging livestock-related research that is relevant to Africa to be carried out in Africa. And ILRI intends to produce "science-based global public goods," but to achieve this it needs to identify which "global public goods" are within ILRI's central territory.

It should be emphasized that ILRI's main role is that of a "research facilitation entity," which has led to very recent changes in the strategy that are not apparent in the 2002 revision:

- Shift 1: From scientists' concern with publications to emphasis on problem solving: "publishing top papers in top journals is no longer enough"
- Shift 2: From being a self-contained institution to establishing partnerships with all relevant stakeholders (local to global) who see ILRI as an "interesting institution to work with," via both excellent science and a "good sense" for development

- Shift 3: From <u>not</u> becoming an extension agent to becoming closer to end users (e.g., farming communities, watershed communities) via research for development resulting in innovations that benefit these communities

Naturally, these changes have significant implications for ILRI's short- and long-term funding streams. ILRI's good name for scientific excellence no longer guarantees donor support, since its strategies are moving beyond "basic sciences" research. This is mirrored in the institute's shift from core (unrestricted) funding to project (restricted) funding. Although ILRI has a well-established and effective science donor system, it is no longer sufficient. ILRI must quickly establish mechanisms and strategies for the funding (especially for the longer term) of poverty alleviation, with major participation from both existing and new partners.

Organizational values/culture and internal communications

In line with the above vision and strategies, ILRI's executive team is aware of the need to translate words into action. The team's highest priorities are institutional values and internal communications.

A strong organizational culture is essential to maintaining ILRI as a cohesive organization. How does ILRI break down the boundaries of its many "little kingdoms?" A "change management team" is already in place to help deal with this issue. ILRI currently is spread out over eight locations. How does ILRI manage a dispersed organization and retain strong ownership? The intranet (ILRInet) is seen as an important new mechanism for managing these issues.

A strong global culture is needed at ILRI, but in cooperation with others, including the private sector. How does ILRI develop these partnerships? How does it ensure that interdependence does not deteriorate into dependence? Staff must develop more diverse and complex skills to be able to address these issues. Which skills are most effectively outsourced?

A coherent information and communications strategy is needed to pull individual parts in a common direction, and to replace the current *ad hoc*, "shotgun" approach. Observations include:

- ILRI's developed world relationships are good, but developing world relationships need much work.
- CGIAR is <u>not</u> integrating well with relevant national African institutions.
- ILRI's information and communications activities are currently seen within the institute as a drain on its resources without producing any income.
- ILRI has done some things conscientiously; for example, its logo and branding now have a simpler and more professional look.
- Is a Chief Information Officer (CIO) needed, and in what role? How could a CIO be prevented from creating another bureaucratic empire?
- ILRI needs to provide media training for scientists.

It has been noted that the Addis and Nairobi centers have been very divisive. But staff exchanges have proved beneficial, and many difficult "hard-liners" have left the centers. In addition, communications between the centers have improved, with Integrated Voice and Data Network (IVDN) playing an important role. Although the executive team believes that ILRI is "over the hump," parity between the two centers remains a major issue.

The review of the Addis campus estimated a low capacity utilization of approximately 60%. A clear message was given, however, that the campus is an excellent asset that must be retained but redirected. The capacity-building and training potential at Addis should be fully exploited, while a specific programmatic theme should be identified.

The executive team understands that there is significant tension between ILRI fulfilling its global role while having a physical presence in only a few countries, including Kenya and Ethiopia. An appropriate balance between its global role and its local activities near its physical installations needs to be found and managed carefully, particularly in light of historical expectations created by ILRAD and ILCA.

5.2 Scientists/upper management

Vision/strategy

This group sees ILRI's future as a science-based global institute researching livestock in the context of poverty alleviation and recognized by all key stakeholders (local and global) as their first port of call because of its excellence and achievements. Staff should "come to work whistling every morning" and work as a dedicated team. Excellent communications, openness, and transparency should ensure ILRI's reputation and credibility externally, making it accessible to all stakeholders (both physically and virtually).

To achieve this, ILRI must move from its previous science-based strategy to a science-based strategy where science serves human development. ILRI is trying to move from having various "pockets of competencies" (e.g., small-holder dairies) to having a more cohesive set of competencies. But the new corporate policy emphasizing advocacy for the poor has not yet been internalized by many staff. There is not yet a shared vision among staff, although the situation is improving, nor is there a common vision with partners. And there appears to be little strategic thinking or structure for future research and targets.

Since ILRI was created from ILRAD and ILCA, there has been a decline in capacity building for African specialists, with the result that even Ph.D. students are turned away. This has had a significant impact in shrinking ILRI's broader network. ILRI should not duplicate what national research facilities are doing, but it should play supporting roles of a more general value, including capacity building and information provision.

ILRI is poorly positioned to intervene in times of livestock-related crises. For example, Rift Valley Fever has caused major problems in East Africa, yet ILRI has not played a central role in addressing the illness. ILRI should have the ability to respond quickly and effectively, with partners, to livestock-related crises that regularly arise in Africa, affecting multiple countries.

ILRI's researchers do have the responsibility to create broader awareness of the benefits of their research and the need for high-level support from donors and key stakeholders. They should also promote greater awareness of the need for early detection of both strategic opportunities as well as pending disasters emerging from all aspects of their research.

Organizational values/culture and internal communications

The thinking of ILRI's staff is too introverted, "too much about ourselves and less about others." Hence ILRI is seen as "an 'ivory tower' institution," dominated by 'ex-pats' and closed to the general community."

Although ILRI staff are becoming increasingly positive in their outlook, there is a "general fear" that people's jobs are on the line. The underlying culture seems to be that "you are doomed as a scientist if you do not bring in money." Scientific contracts last for two to three years, with six monthly subcomponents. This situation has promoted a culture of "short-termism," such that the focus is inevitably on resource mobilization, that is, "get the next project" rather than "fully understanding and communicating what has been done." A related concern is that the best scientists are <u>not</u> usually best at bringing in short-term money.

Scientists tend to be poor communicators for a number of reasons, including lack of time, inadequate communication skills, and an inflexible attitude. The perception is that, "There is very poor information sharing within ILRI." There are many examples showing that even ILRI's own staff is not aware of what expertise/knowledge is available. For example:

- The recent Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) grant of Canadian $ 50 million has not been well communicated, even to senior staff.
- The annual report promotes "bad feeling" within ILRI, rather than enhancing communication and team spirit.
- The proposed "Bioscience Centre" is not well understood <u>within</u> ILRI, let alone outside. It is mentioned on ILRInet (as a concept), but the site is not being updated regularly.
-

Scientists at ILRI do not yet appreciate the value of "lay-friendly" communications. The material produced currently is mainly for scientific stakeholders and is not easily understood by lay audiences. Most money goes into producing scientific reports for donors with little left for communications with other stakeholders. ILRI depends primarily on restricted money—which makes up 80% percent of its budget—leaving little time and few resources for communications activities. Thus delivering the output is very often an afterthought.

There is general consensus that ILRI has very few scientists who can, or perhaps are willing to, write material for non-scientific consumption. Hence incentives and training are needed for communications with other stakeholders, especially the "lay market."

"Them and us" issues caused by the two major centers (Nairobi and Addis) remain a major handicap for internal communications. Scientific interactions are good, but organizational interactions, including the new vision of poverty reduction, need much work. More "people-to-people" communications and interaction are needed. ILRI has much to learn about cross-communication and transdisciplinary interactions. There have been some improvements, however:

- ILRI has a new Director General who has no association with either ILCA or IRAD, thus both camps see him as neutral.
- ILRInet is viewed as a good initiative for improving communications.

External communications

"ILRI does not have a coherent public image and is in search of one." It seems that ILCA was a significant *brand name*, and that it is missed, at least in Ethiopia. ILRI has not replaced it in the perceptions of many stakeholders, especially since ILCA was much more involved in local initiatives. ILRI has not been effective in developing a common message and mechanisms for communicating—except for scientists and donors—with the outside world, which is unaware of ILRI's core competencies.

ILRI has "lived in splendid isolation" and has an image of arrogance among some. Many national institutes and organizations see ILRI as a competitor rather than a potential partner. ILRI does not have the positive image it warrants from its scientific excellence, which in the medium- to long-term may lead to ILRI not being able to attract the best professionals that it needs.

ILRI's researchers do not communicate the relevance, excitement, and quality of their work. In fact, they are underselling it, especially to the development community. The scientific world is informed about the content of ILRI's research, but:

- Investors are not so well informed.
- Other stakeholders are more or less neglected.
- ILRI lacks adequate mechanisms for communicating with the outside world.

Example: Consultants working on an EU project who had asked whether they should consult ILRI were given the recommendation not to do so, since "…they have nothing to offer." Yet, when those consultants did eventually interact with ILRI, they were surprised by the richness of information and knowledge they received.

"The institute should declare that it is committed to allocating the necessary resources" for external communications. ILRI has a small public awareness department that historically has been driven by the need to satisfy donors, and does not yet have sufficient communications resources or the processes in place to target its research products to meet the needs of new customers and stakeholders. A strategy must be designed that integrates public awareness and research, amplifying how scientific findings can contribute to poverty alleviation.

Example: The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and IFPRI are already producing external communications pieces, such as two-page pamphlets/briefs, and are starting to produce such materials in local languages where appropriate. The demand for the materials is growing.

ILRI's scientists should become better communicators themselves as well as work with the professional communicators as a team to produce the required variety of quality, "lay-friendly" material. Neither the scientists nor the professional communicators can do this alone. There seems to be an openness—although with some uncertainty—about this "team-based" approach to producing "lay-friendly" material. Alternative mechanisms and media were enthusiastically suggested to enable rural farming communities to learn from and interact with researchers despite their literacy problems. Suggestions included plays, videos, and multimedia CDs, as well as informal training methods, such as involving a Toastmasters chapter at some ILRI lunch meetings.

The library in Nairobi established itself during well-funded days, serving a narrow field of research with top journals, but it has not adapted to change. It is a traditional library, lacks innovation, and is far from exploiting its full potential. The library is not perceived as being customer-oriented, and many staff members are not aware of the services it provides or could provide.

Traditional users of the library in Addis Ababa, however, still use it for several hours a week, and they believe that the staff provides excellent service despite the apparent reduction in resources and funding since ILRI was formed. Yet it was noted that, "The service is slowly deteriorating, since different levels of access are based on the providers' rules, rather than users' needs."

Although most users think ILRI's libraries are "far from providing integrated information services," they recognize the growing value of, and are increasingly trying to use, the electronic information services that appear to be centered in Addis Ababa. There are the usual concerns, however, regarding information and communications technology (ICT) literacy, access, and bandwidth, which, for example, are thought to be "preventing ILRI from developing multi-media based services." There is a general view that, "ILRInet is great, but that ILRI's web page is an embarrassment."

Two important ICT-related issues were raised:

- There is a need to preserve the wealth of information that ILRI has accumulated by digitizing archival material, particularly the microfiche. Should ILRI do this in-house, or help set up national capabilities given that digitization is a general need beyond ILRI or even Addis?
- Despite its internal problems, ILRI is helping set up a National Agricultural Information System for Ethiopia, primarily via web technology. ILRI is gaining invaluable experience concerning many content issues related to the variety of target markets and audiences.

Middle management (including Administration)

Vision/Strategy

The transformation of the CGIAR, particularly its ICT and Knowledge Management (KM) strategies, is being run by the CGIAR CIO (Enrica Porcari), and $5 million is being allocated for this purpose by the World Bank. The main thrusts of the transformation are:

- ICT for tomorrow's science
- Content for development
- A CGIAR without boundaries.

ILRI is running an aligned process via its ICT & KM Advisory Group, which was established with a new mechanism whereby members are elected/proposed by their respective communities of practice.

ILRI's libraries plan to build partnerships with other organizations that are establishing livestock information resources, and the "Library" site on ILRInet is to be broadened into a full, virtual "Information Center."

An exciting structural innovation is the Knowledge and Information Products and Services inter-disciplinary group (KIPS). The group is intended to tap the synergies in a mix of technical and other skills, resources, and mechanisms from three departments: publishing, training, and information services. KIPS was established as a platform to transfer information and knowledge in response to the overload of poorly organized information. Its activities include identifying potential products and emerging needs, as well as managing and monitoring ILRI's information products. As KIPS has proved to be a valuable mechanism, the current thinking is that the interdisciplinary, cross-departmental concept should not only be retained but expanded.

Organizational values/culture and internal communications

The current situation in the Nairobi library is of particular concern. The library has little interaction with either the scientific or the public awareness staff, and its resources and services cover a narrow field. Yet it is asking for more funds (e.g., to subscribe to the Web of Science), more library staff, and increased interactions with the Addis library group.

External communications

The ILRI libraries see their role as promoting ILRI resources, disseminating ILRI publications on advice from theme leaders, announcing publications in advance to gauge demand, and distributing of publications.

The ILRI information processing group is currently responsible for building bibliographic databases. In the future it intends to work with the public awareness team to produce briefs for policymakers.

The publications group was established to rationalize resources and publish the results of ILRI's multi-locational research. There are problems, however:

- The team lacks marketing skills, agricultural background, and multimedia skills.
- The publishing process is poorly integrated, from material conception to dissemination and marketing.
- A document management system is urgently needed.

5.4 Regional office staff (Philippines)

Vision/strategy

The regional office sees its role as promoting ILRI (particularly the new thematic vision) by developing strategic relationships with national research facilities, but not by developing infrastructure, laboratories, or research stations. Regional staff members particularly focus on facilitating the development of relationships between institutions and researchers that otherwise would not likely happen. They are struggling to find a way to create ILRI's image in the region without overselling its range of products and services (especially in Asia). It was noted that, "We would rather do what we do *better* than do more."

The contribution of the regional office to the creation of global public awareness remains unclear and serious action needs to be taken to develop a strategy and *modus operandi* to ensure

sustainability. The regional office is, however, spreading the idea of its acting as a "media hub" for Southeast Asia due to the positive response from Philippine media professionals.

Collaborating with regional partners is important, since their promotion of ILRI not only gives the institute credibility but also helps to overcome language and cultural issues very easily. For example, a liaison scientist in China has been successfully translating and distributing newsletters in both directions (translating ILRI's material into Chinese and translating ILRI-relevant material for use by ILRI). The regional office, however, has not been successful to date at plugging into the "rice" network of IRRI and hopes that interaction at the Director General level might quickly resolve this.

Organizational values/culture and internal communications

The regional office operates independently for the most part, though within the vision of ILRI's head office, with which it has "a good working relationship." There is ongoing concern, however, about whether ILRI's head office fully appreciates the regional office's activities. Regional staff members see ILRInet as "definitely a step in the right direction" in establishing essential feedback mechanisms. In particular, they have found that making ILRI's new thematic vision relevant in their region has proved to be a useful way of explaining ILRI's global role. The regional staff believe that their feedback has helped ILRI better understand these themes.

Currently, in line with their employment terms of reference, staff activities are directed at specific projects, with only a small component being directed into awareness creation. Staff members are concerned that the proposed new corporate communications role is broader than their project role and that it will require new reward mechanisms. They emphasize that the project-based approach has proved to be very practical and that the rest of ILRI could learn from their experience. They would "welcome closer scrutiny!"

The regional staff would like to contribute more in the future to ILRI's communications strategies. It wants to play "an advocacy role for Southeast Asia to influence the head office," and suggests that:

- Communication strategies should be given more discussion time in the important APM (Annual Program Meeting) forum, which currently focuses primarily on science.
- Work plans similar to those developed for scientific projects (especially those in the Philippines) should be drawn up for all communications initiatives.
- ILRI should learn from their experience in the Philippines, where communications staff members are being successfully used as integral parts of the research project teams.

Regional staff members would welcome adding a public awareness role to their activities, assuming that they would be provided with specialist training and extra resources. An operational model to take the process forward still needs to be established, and all players, especially international staff, should be actively involved. The regional staff suggest that exchange visits are already proving to be very effective at the scientific level and could well work for public awareness. They warn, however, that because of all the recent changes at ILRI, the regional team currently knows much more about projects and their promotion than they do about ILRI.

External communications

The regional office is producing materials to promote ILRI, which is already using the new logo/branding. These materials include a newsletter for each of their two current projects, which are distributed to all stakeholders (e.g., scientists, policymakers, donors) and are being made available on the web as well. The staff aims to better target the materials for more regular distribution. As such a small team, however, the staff is experiencing difficulties in establishing a separate identity in such a large region.

In practice, ICTs are not yet delivering to their full potential in the region, so the regional office continues to rely on older technologies while new electronic information services are being established. There is a wide variety of ICT capabilities among stakeholders in the region, depending on where and who they are. Most have access to email, some have PCs, but few have high-speed internet access. The regional office has developed its own bibliographic databases, referring only to the Addis/Kenya libraries for additional services.

ILRI's current web site is considered to be "embarrassing to use" and is causing "problems for all stakeholders." A significantly improved, much more interactive web site is needed as soon as possible, and is being co-produced by regional webmasters in collaboration with ILRI's head office. ILRI should ensure that these regional webmasters receive training and have a common understanding concerning the look and feel of the site, and that quality methods and consistent branding are used. And it should provide training rather than enforce extra "filtering" layers— with the associated delays— via the head office. In the meantime, the Philippines regional office has set up two alternative project web pages of its own (one for each project), which are also linked to ILRI's web site.

5.5 Support staff

Support staff workers receive little communication from scientists or administrators. They should be given more mechanisms for feedback and suggestions—more general involvement with ILRI's strategic development. Significant improvements would result, they believe, if these issues were addressed.

The support staff feel that they are not seen as an integral part of the "ILRI community" but, rather, are treated as a peripheral support function. They would like the campuses to be more open for their families and local communities. For example, the library could be made more widely available.

Support staff have made some constructive suggestions for improvements (see recommendations).

5.6 External users

Vision/strategy

ILRI is seen as Africa's only center of excellence for research into livestock health and production. It is seen as a prestigious scientific organization of high quality, boasting state-of-the-art facilities. The institute provides vital support for young researchers, both nationally and internationally, and is home to various livestock focus groups (e.g., small ruminants group).

Some recent ILRI publications were highlighted:

- "Livestock Revolution" is seen as the publication having the most impact in recent years, particularly for livestock security. It was called a "breakthrough," particularly because the attachment of value to livestock has changed mindsets internationally.
- "Mapping Poverty and Livestock in the Developing World" has also had a major impact because it addresses the global situation. The lack of distribution to national and international institutions, however, has limited its impact and has been counterproductive to ILRI.
- The "big red book" on tsetse and trypanosomiasis is also described as "a very important book."

There is confusion, however, over ILRI's vision and strategy and what its facilities are for: "Lack of awareness of what ILRI is and what it can offer." The 2002 strategic document is "too vague." There are no obvious mechanisms for stakeholders to use to make strategic suggestions to ILRI, or to know what ILRI is doing. "We know that ILRI is doing research, but do not know what research."

External users generally welcome ILRI's new vision, especially its associated global advocacy role of bridging excellent livestock research with poverty alleviation. To be effective at the grass roots level, users recommend a holistic approach rather than research on livestock in isolation. For example, the relationship between crops and livestock holds great potential. External users urge ILRI to collaborate with the local systems (national institutes), particularly to encourage them to adopt the new technologies and develop the relevant capabilities.

Although ILRI's international work is excellent, the institute should be doing more locally relevant research addressing poverty. ILRI should know about, if not be involved in, all livestock-oriented projects at the local level. Rural communities, most importantly subsistence farmers, must feel" the impact of ILRI's activities. Currently, this is not the case: "Although ILRI is in Kenya, if a decision were made to close it down, local farmers would not object."

ILRI should create a wide range of strategic relationships—a "master list" of institutions. It should elevate collaboration from the individual level to the institutional, strategic level. The institute should improve its interactions with national institutions, establishing a balance between its national and global roles. Instead of competing with or acting in ignorance of national initiatives, it should make itself aware of what local institutions are doing. It should also establish closer, more strategic relationships with tertiary institutions. Although research students are already using ILRI's facilities, a strategic relationship involving teaching staff and administrators could significantly extend this.

Example: Addis Ababa University's chemistry department has a Memorandum of Understanding with ILRI whereby both institutions share, instead of duplicate, each other's facilities. Addis Ababa University would like to strengthen and extend this collaboration to the strategic level.

ILRI could and should be helping with the set-up of national facilities that are related to aspects of its research and to which it may, in time, outsource. For example, in Ethiopia ILRI's excellent testing services are faulted for being too expensive and for setting fees in dollars rather than in local currency. Why not, instead, help Ethiopia set up a national testing laboratory of its own?

External users are fairly negative about the changes they have experienced since ILCA and ILRAD were combined to create ILRI. For example: "ILRI going global has caused many problems for us," and, "We still like ILRI, but we received much more from ILCA." Users especially miss ILCA's "excellent" teaching and learning services, which focused on livestock production.

The perceived decline in the spectrum of ILRI's information services "to save costs" has had a significantly negative impact on others trying to work on food security. The worst affected people cannot afford ILRI's rising costs—only a few free services remain. Users are no longer allowed to freely access books and journals in the physical library, and they complain that some of the most important subscriptions are no longer available either physically or electronically. They recommend that conventional services (mail) should be maintained along with online services until the latter are truly available to all.

Organizational values/culture and internal communications

External users have little insight into ILRI's internal communications. They experience ILRI, however, as having lost its "warm culture" following the merger, and see it instead becoming intimidating, exclusive, and aloof. ILRI is seen as a foreign island, not integrated into African society, and less "in touch" than almost all other similar national and international institutions.

External communications

ILRI is seen as inaccessible and, therefore, underutilized by a wide range of stakeholders, including other research institutions, the public and private sectors, and tertiary institutions: "How many decision/policymakers know about ILRI's latest important findings?" Users recommend that ILRI build relationships with many more institutions, and that they consider:

- Developing graduate courses for universities
- Conducting closer liaison with national and provincial governments
- Conducting outreach to local communities via various technologies, including radio, perhaps by building a relationship with the national broadcaster.

External users believe that there is "not enough media material" coming out of ILRI. For example, the regular newsletter seems to have been discontinued, and there are not enough pamphlets. ILRI should aim to reach "the masses" as well as scientists, recognizing the major issues this introduces regarding literacy, local languages and culture. It should also seek to build a close relationship with relevant government bodies (e.g., Kenya's Agricultural Information Centre, within the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry's technical committees). ILRI has a communications asset in its new Director General, who needs to be seen as the "user-friendly, approachable" face of ILRI.

ILRI's libraries have established good links, mainly with other research and tertiary organizations, and especially in Ethiopia. They are seen as being better equipped and more up-to-date than libraries in other national facilities, and as having the best information on livestock compared with both local and international organizations. In particular, ILRI is seen as an *essential* source of information for animal health research (e.g., quotes from graduate students: "priceless to us"; "only place for us"), especially via its ILRI alert and (SDI) services.

Although external users believe ILRI's librarians are excellent, especially in Addis Ababa, they believe the libraries are under-resourced "in staff, technology, journals" and other areas. They would like many of the "essential" journals that used to be available at ILCA to be reinstated and wonder why information sources available in Kenya cannot also be made available in Ethiopia and other regional countries. Users suggest that better shared access to ILRI's facilities could be achieved by other institutions' libraries working as satellites for the ILRI library, which would also serve to lower potential additional costs for ILRI.

External users suggest that ILRI potentially has a special role in helping countries, such as Ethiopia, that are just beginning to establish national livestock research capabilities. Hence these essential journals and books should be made available by ILRI until the national libraries are established and can take over.

ILRI is among the most advanced users of ICT and providers of online information in the region. The electronic services at ILRI's libraries are far better than at the universities, but only select people are allowed access. Unfortunately, there is not yet much use of ILRI's online services even in the cities, let alone in rural areas, since local dial-up internet services are poor—due to the usual combination of poor bandwidth, poor computer availability, and poor ICT literacy. ILRI librarians try hard to overcome these problems, often by working extra hours to use the ICT on behalf of the users. Users suggest some additional initiatives to improve the availability of ILRI's electronic services:

- ILRI should expand its initiative of experimenting with reaching poor farming communities via ICTs in multi-purpose centers (shared local facilities).
- ILRI should make the internet available to more PC users on campus (one hour is insufficient), perhaps via PC labs or cyber-cafes.
- ILRI should provide and produce more interactive, multimedia CDs.

6. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

Strengths

- ILRI's change from a research to an innovation institution makes it relevant to the clientele that it is mandated to serve.
- ILRI is seen as Africa's only center of excellence for research into livestock health and production.
- ILRI's staff and stakeholders generally welcome its new vision, especially its associated global advocacy role of bridging excellent livestock research with innovative approaches to poverty alleviation.
- ILRI has good leadership and an effective management style that promotes communication and devolution of decision-making.
- ILRI has an excellent, skilled staff, many are whom are highly motivated.
- ILRI has a new emphasis on problem solving, local and global partnerships, and closeness to disadvantaged farming communities. For example, ILRI is helping to set up a National Agricultural Information System for Ethiopia, primarily via web technology.
- ILRI has strong links to advanced research institutes.
- ILRI has a unique niche—to produce global public goods, broker them, and provide a supportive role to NARS.
- ILRI's mandate to conduct both basic and applied research with the aim of alleviating poverty will enable it to attract funds from its traditional donors who support basic research and from new donors who are interested in research for development.
- ILRI's financial position is improving (the institute received a Canadian grant of Canadian$50 million).
- ILRI's internal communications are improving.
- ILRI's executive team recognizes the crucial need for institutional transformation coupled with a holistic communications strategy.
- ILRI has a new Director General who has no association with either one of the earlier institutes (ILCA and ILRAD) and therefore both camps see him as neutral.
- ILRI has a communications asset in its new Director General, who needs to be seen as the "user-friendly, approachable" face of ILRI.
- ILRI seems to have an openness among its scientists and administrators about the team-based approach to producing "lay-friendly" material.
- ILRI has state-of-the-art facilities for research and information/communications in Addis and Nairobi.
- ILRI has a strong IT department facilitating communication across the two main campuses, as evidenced by ILRInet.
- ILRI has extensive information available and an adequate infrastructure in place for communication and knowledge sharing (Internet access, library databases, HR system, Grant Management System, Project Management System, Knowledge and Information Products and Services interdisciplinary group (KIPS), and so on).
- ILRI's library in Addis Ababa still provides excellent service despite the apparent reduction in resources and funding since ILRI was formed.
- ILRI's libraries are seen as better equipped and more up-to-date than libraries in other national facilities, and as an *essential* source of information for animal health research.
- ILRI is among the most advanced users of ICT and providers of online information in the region—and far better than the universities.
- ILRI's regional offices promote the institute (particularly its new thematic vision) by developing strategic relationships with national research facilities.

- ILRI's collaboration with regional partners lends credibility to the institute and helps to overcome language and cultural problems.
- ILRI's regional offices emphasize that the project-based approach has proved to be very practical and that the rest of ILRI could learn from their experiences.
- ILRI's Philippines regional office has set up two alternative project web sites of their own (one for each project), which are also linked to ILRI's web site.

6.2 Weaknesses

- ILRI is not yet clear about which "global public goods" are within its central territory.
- ILRI's new corporate policy emphasizing advocacy for the poor has not yet been fully internalized by many staff.
- ILRI's future research and targets are determined through an *ad hoc* approach, with little strategic thinking or structure.
- ILRI is seen as "an 'ivory tower' institution," dominated by "'ex-pats' and closed to the general community."
- Rural communities, most importantly subsistence farmers, do not "feel" the impact of ILRI's activities.
- ILRI has weak links to downstream institutes/partners and communities—the outside world is not aware of ILRI's core competencies.
- ILRI's Public Awareness (PA) team is under-resourced and currently has a narrow focus, targeting investors only.
- ILRI has a general lack of mechanisms for communicating with different categories of stakeholders; it has no obvious mechanisms that allow stakeholders to make strategic suggestions to ILRI or to let them know what ILRI is doing.
- ILRI still has many cliques, and tends to resist change.
- ILRI currently has eight dispersed installations/locations, complicating communications and teamwork issues.
- ILRI has very poor information sharing within the organization, with staff often not aware of what expertise/knowledge is available to them.
- ILRI lacks experience in developing new strategic relationships and partnerships.
- ILRI is poorly positioned to intervene in times of livestock-related crises.
- ILRI's scientists do not yet appreciate the value of "lay friendly" communications, and very few are able to write material for non-scientific consumption.
- ILRI scientists have inadequate time to get involved in communications activities.
- ILRI management's performance evaluations of scientists is not based on communications work but solely on scientific publishing and resources mobilization.
- ILRI has insufficient human and financial resources for information and communications activities. The public awareness unit is extremely underresourced; funds are available only for scientific reports.
- ILRI's researchers do not communicate the relevance, excitement, and quality of their work, either to the development community or to the public at large.
- ILRI is not yet clear on which tasks it can safely outsource, or to whom.
- ILRI's information and communications activities are currently seen within the institute as a drain on its resources without producing any income.
- ILRI's Nairobi library is underutilized and is not client-oriented.
- ILRI's libraries are far from providing integrated information services.
- Concerns throughout Africa regarding ICT literacy, access, and bandwidth are thought to be discouraging ILRI from developing multimedia-based services.

- ILRI's online services are not yet used very much, even in the cities, and certainly not in rural areas, since local dial-up internet services are poor—due to the usual combination of poor bandwidth, poor computer availability, and poor ICT literacy.
- ILRI's publications team lacks marketing skills, agricultural background, and multimedia skills; the publishing processes are poorly integrated; and a document management system is urgently needed.
- ILRI's regional offices are struggling with finding the balance between creating ILRI's image in the region and not overselling its range of products and services, especially in Asia.
- ILRI's regional offices have ongoing concerns about whether ILRI's head office fully appreciates their activities.
- ILRI's regional offices are concerned that their proposed corporate communications role is broader than their projects role and that it will require new reward mechanisms.
- ILRI's eight campuses/offices in different parts of the world suggest a need for diversity in communication and information needs.
- Support staff feel that they are not seen as an integral part of the "ILRI community" but, rather, are treated as a peripheral support function.
- Support staff receive little communication from either scientists or administrators, especially regarding ILRI's strategic development.
- ILRI does not yet have a holistic culture of electronic communication.
- ILRInet is highly regarded, but ILRI's web site is considered an embarrassment.
- ILRI's well-established and effective science-based donor funding system is no longer sufficient to sustain ILRI's future.
- ILRI receives 80% of its funds on a restricted basis for projects, leaving little funding for information and communications activities.
- ILRI's scientific contracts last for two to three years, with six monthly subcomponents, promoting fears about job security and a culture of "short-termism."
- ILRI's Addis and Nairobi centers have proved to be very divisive. The "ghosts" of ILRAD and ILCA remain a major handicap for internal communications.
- External users experience ILRI as having lost its "warm culture" following the merger, and instead see it becoming intimidating, exclusive, aloof, and not integrated into African society.
- External users especially miss ILCA's "excellent" teaching and learning services, which focused on livestock production.

6.3 Opportunities

- No other global organization is addressing the intersection of excellent livestock research and poverty alleviation.
- Most donors are not interested in basic research, but rather have a growing interest in an organization's impact on the poor. ILRI expects increased funding but there is a need to explore and tap as many sources as possible.
- Both the Nairobi and Addis Ababa facilities are world class, as are some staff members at those centers.
- ILRI should establish and carefully manage an appropriate balance between its global role and its local activities near its physical installations.
- ILRI should make itself aware of what local institutions are doing and improve its interactions with them, instead of acting in ignorance of national initiatives.
- ILRI should develop the ability to respond quickly and effectively, with partners, to livestock-related crises that regularly arise in Africa and affect multiple countries.

- ILRI should aim to reach "the masses" as well as scientists, recognizing the major issues this introduces regarding literacy, local languages, and culture.
- ILRI has an urgent need to preserve its wealth of archival material, particularly its microfiche, by digitization. ILRI could help set up national capabilities with partners, given that digitization is an Africa-wide need.
- ILRI could and should be helping with the set-up of national facilities that are related to aspects of its research and to which it may, in time, outsource.
- The World Bank has allocated $5 million for the transformation of the CGIAR, particularly its information and communications technology (ICT) and knowledge management (KM) strategies. ILRI could collaborate with other CG centers to improve information and communications (knowledge sharing); this could free up resources. Relevant ILRI departments should exploit this opportunity for partnerships
- Several potential partnerships with local and global institutions (e.g., Welcome Trust, KETRI, KARI, KEMRI, universities, government extension departments)
- that are willing to strengthen collaboration with and promote ILRI need to be explored.
- ILRI's Knowledge and Information Products and Services interdisciplinary group (KIPS) has proved to be a valuable mechanism, thus the current thinking is that the interdisciplinary, cross-departmental concept should not only be retained but expanded.
- Better shared access to ILRI's facilities could be organized via other institutions' libraries working as satellites of the ILRI library, thereby lowering potential additional resource costs for ILRI's library.
- ILRI could develop a special role in helping nations that are just beginning to establish national livestock research capabilities by making available relevant journals and books until the national libraries are established and can take over.
- ILRI should expand its initiative to reach poor farming communities via ICTs in multi-purpose centers, or shared local facilities.
- Better and cheaper ICTs are providing new opportunities to communicate (e.g., through tele- and video-conferencing). ILRI could explore the use of open source software available for collaboration or partnerships.
- ILRI should make the internet available to more PC users on its campuses via PC labs or cyber-cafes.
- ILRI should provide and produce more interactive, multimedia CDs.

6.4 Threats

- Donor support for basic research is drying up globally.
- Funding streams for strategic poverty alleviation initiatives, though large, are notoriously slow to be finalized. ILRI needs to recognize and manage the resultant gaps and uncertainties in funding.
- Donor funding is increasingly going to NARS, which could affect ILRI's partnerships and information and communications services.
- NARS is growing stronger and some see ILRI as a competitor.
- ILRI's change from a research to an innovation institution poses a perceived threat to its survival.

7. Recommendations on How to Proceed

7.1 Transforming the Library into an Information Center

The use of knowledge within an organization rests primarily on the attainment of two objectives:

- Effective management of information resources
- Establishment of a learning environment

An integral component to achieving both of these objectives is an intimate understanding of the information flows within an organization. As keepers and disseminators of information within organizations, information specialists make substantial contributions to the successful implementation of knowledge management projects. Special librarians function as change agents, providing the information needed to help their organizations achieve their goals. In addition to identifying and acquiring external sources of information, they help to organize internal sources of information.

Information specialists provide vital information services by:

- Preparing abstracts and indexes of current periodicals
- Organizing bibliographies
- Analyzing background information and preparing reports on areas of particular interest

They are well positioned to monitor the information products and needs of different departments and deserve a central role in the development of processes and policies that harness an organization's knowledge base.

The ILRI library and information center should be closely related to the institute's research and capacity-strengthening programs, and to NGOs and other partners' activities in the development sector. The library and information center's resources should cover all major research areas and issues related to ILRI's ongoing and planned programs and activities. It should enter into a networking arrangement with important institutions dealing with livestock and development and engaged in similar and allied areas of study. The information center should act as nodal agency in this "network" for exchange and sharing of information.

The information center currently being developed to provide online access to information resources in the ILRI library in Addis Ababa is commendable and should be pursued to completion. Remote access to books, journals, and other resources by users within and outside of ILRI will greatly enhance the utility and benefits of these resources.

Furthermore, the Online Information Center should (virtually) integrate the services of the Nairobi and Addis libraries that have up to now been de-linked to a great extent.

The ILRI library and information center also should:

- work closely with the institute's publications department. The existing ILRI publications catalogue should provide a way to request documents from ILRI.
- have an historic collection of ILRI's intellectual products and be prepared to provide physical or electronic access to its researchers and collaborators, if necessary.

- have a role in building the ILRI web site. Information specialists have strong skills related to how users search for information. Providing keywords for the web metatags will ensure that ILRI web pages and publications are picked up by search engines.

In addition, it must provide *customized,* user-oriented services to assist researchers and staff in getting their information quickly, accurately, and comprehensively. It can do this by matching researchers' "profiles" with their information needs. Most of the services currently provided by ILRI libraries address this requirement but will need to be strengthened in terms of aligning them to ILRI's new strategic themes and to the needs of external users. ILRI should determine who those external user groups are and periodically reassess their needs.

Full or partial services that the ILRI libraries provide include:

- An electronic catalogue of the library resources on ILRI terminals
- A computerized circulation and loan system
- A periodicals indexing service, with an annual articles index
- Reference and information services?—query answering, information retrieval and dissemination, data packaging, and compilation of document lists
- Access to Internet and CD-ROM databases and audio-visual resources
- Inter-library borrowing and information interchange
- On-demand selective acquisition of new resources
- Newspaper clipping services
- Photocopying and document delivery services

ILRI needs to review these services to ensure that they match its new mandate, available resources, and user needs and resources. And the sustainability of the services should be a seriously-considered criteria in their review. For example, while free distribution of ILRI publications may be desirable to ensure their broader reach, the mailing list should be reviewed with the view to making it short and considering the possibility of publications sharing among beneficiaries at the institutional level. The availability of full-text electronic documents in the information center should reduce their physical dissemination to users who have access to online documents. Cost-recovery should be implemented, where users are able to subscribe to or pay for electronic versions.

Some of the activities carried out by the library and information center that can directly contribute to ILRI's research activities are:

- Acquisition of new resources and information as per requirements/ recommendations from research staff.
- Preparation of research reports and state-of-the-art reports in response to queries and project support.
- Verification and checking of data, facts, statistics for external and internal reports and publications.
- *Services currently provided through various databases (e.g., FAOSTAT, current contents, time series database) should be made more visible through ILRInet, the ILRI web site, and regular promotion through print media.*
- Identification of staff members' research needs and provision of *guided* reference services through documents and files.
- *The selective dissemination of information service (ILRIAlert), currently being provided, should be reviewed to include new types of users that align with ILRI's new*

mandate/programs. It should also be extended to more key ILRI partners who have expressed disappointment that this service had been discontinued.

- Creation of databases for accessing stored information.
- *Bibliographic, serial, and reprint databases should be made more visible and accessible to internal and external users.*
- Training of staff to enable them to efficiently and cost-effectively use online databases and internet resources.
- Generation of information products, such as reading lists and article indexes, for researchers and external members.
- *Continue providing current content services to NARS, and include new disciplines.*
- Promotion and selling of ILRI's publications to other libraries and networks.
- *Promote and explore the possibility of selling to/exchanging ILRI's publications with developing-country institutions (e.g., universities, NGOs, and networks) that can afford to pay. Explore more developed-country clients that can pay for publications.*
- Customization of the information system with occasional suggestions from research faculty.
- *Scientists should be on information/library management committees.*
- Provision of consultancy services in Information and Communications (IC) skills to other institutions when necessary.
- *This approach has been attempted by the web-based products team in Addis Ababa, which has supported development of a web site for a third party. The value of such an activity in contributing to the sustainability of ILRI's IC services should be assessed.*

The library and information center can save both time and money for the organization by strengthening these activities, as research staff will then not need to waste their research time and funds acquiring the information they need.

Researchers, the established customers of ILRI's libraries, are using the physical facilities less and less, particularly in Nairobi. This is a success story, in part, because it means the researchers are actively using the online services from their office workstations. Some might suggest that the success of online services will eliminate the need for ILRI to have physical libraries, but it is important to remember that not all of the services researchers are using are provided by ILRI's online information center. In fact, some institutions in South Africa have indeed closed down such physical facilities, with significant savings, but also with some regret, as it is easier to close something down than it is to re-establish it.

The review team did not feel comfortable with promoting an "online only" strategy. Nor did it believe that it makes much sense to try to ensure that the physical libraries remain the central point of contact for researchers. Instead, it was determined that the libraries need to create new services, but—most importantly—for a new range of customers. Here are some examples:

- External users, particularly in Addis Ababa, were extremely positive about ILRI's information center facilities. This is an area that could be expanded upon. ILRI needs to balance its global role with building special relationships with the communities where it has physical centers, particularly in Nairobi and Addis Ababa. Extended information centers could be an excellent way of helping to establish and maintain that balance. The review team discussed turning the libraries into cyber-cafes, thus allowing more external users to benefit from ILRI's comparatively excellent ICT infrastructure (the enclosed courtyard in Addis Ababa next to the library would lend itself ideally to such an extension). Such an extended service need not be unacceptably expensive. Local

students made it clear that they would be more than happy, at low pay, to play a supervisory role at the centers during evenings and weekends, allowing the open hours to be significantly extended. And the additional computing facilities would not need to be expensive if the well- established "Linux labs" model is adopted using older PCs.

- Although the development of cyber-cafes could be justified in itself both as a public good and a PR exercise for the local communities, there would be the additional benefit of receiving much more feedback from people much closer to the grassroots level. This is important given ILRI's new vision of livestock research that is of immediate relevance to subsistence farming and farmers. In other areas, getting this close to new customers—especially in areas where there had previously been little communication or mutual understanding—has proved to be priceless.
- In Nairobi, the library would probably have to be moved much closer to the perimeter in order to attract new customers.
- Although researchers and other staff within ILRI seldom visit the libraries for the established online information services, there are other services that could be established to bring staff into the facilities. In particular, these could be services related to *knowledge sharing, facilitated problem solving, and self-study training*. Globally, applied research has responded positively to an active team approach (mode 2 knowledge production). Such teams perform better when assisted in real time by knowledge facilitation tools, e.g., visualization tools, often backed up by asynchronous prototyping tools. Similarly, problem solving
- (whether in a management or a research context) should be team based, and can be assisted by such tools. A good place to test such services is in the libraries. Depending on the services' success, they can then be adopted more widely where appropriate. It should be emphasized that these are ICT-based tools used to facilitate the sharing and production of 'tacit knowledge,' that is, knowledge that is usually not possible to capture formally (e.g., in databases). It is possible to stimulate and coordinate the use of 'tacit knowledge' by the most impressive tool of them all, the human brain.
- Finally, it would be exciting if ILRI could become the venue of choice for external players—local communities, but also international groups of researchers—needing such facilities and tools, either to push their research forward, or to solve pressing problems, or both.

7.2 Re-orienting the publishing activities

Publications offer significant potential for contributing to ILRI's impact and reputation. The strategic approach presented here is designed to exploit the potential for publications to enhance the impact of ILRI's research, to offer new publishing options to ILRI researchers, to reach new audiences, and to take advantage of new technologies.

ILRI can use its publications to disseminate its research results to conventional and new audiences wherever they will have great impact.

We see four main publications audiences, or market segments, for the kinds of research that ILRI does:

1. **The Experts** academics and researchers specializing in the exact livestock or development area treated in the publication
2. **The Insiders** a wider academic market, including professionals in the broader development research community and extension services

3. **The Interested** policymakers, students, and well-educated and socially engaged persons
4. **The Laypeople** the general public, including commercial farmers and subsistence farmers

The current ILRI portfolio[2] gives an overview of the presence of gaps in the various market segments. It goes without saying that publications for the 'experts' and the 'insiders' can be in English, and that communications materials for the 'interested' and the 'laypeople' be in local languages in order to be digestible.

[2] "Closing the Gaps" Matrix for Communications ICER, June 30, 2003 by Susan MacMillan.

A strong and strategically planned publications presence in all four segments is necessary to increase ILRI's attractiveness to donors, to enhance the institute's impact in the global marketplace of ideas, and to make the institute the first source of information for all audiences that are interested in livestock and development issues.

Publications should not be restricted to text-based books, journals, magazines, and brochures. Electronic (digital) publishing broadens the potential for various mediums dramatically, but requires a range of significant new skills. In particular, CD-ROMs allow for the production of multi-media based, highly interactive communication environments that are sensitive to literacy, language, and cultural issues, which is crucial if, for example, subsistence farmers across Africa are to be genuinely engaged.

Researchers need to recognize that it is their responsibility to make the results and implications, or potential benefits, of their research easily understood by all of the above stakeholders, but especially by the most unsophisticated farmers. This is a responsibility that cannot be delegated to a 'communications specialist.' Communications specialists can help the researchers, but the ability to communicate research results to all key stakeholders should be recognized as an essential skill needed by researchers at ILRI. Ensuring that researchers have this skill can be made possible if ILRI management includes communication of research among other criteria for the performance evaluation of scientists.

ILRI's Public Awareness (PA) team should be built up and work in close collaboration with the publications and library teams, and should target its messages to the communities/farmers who are the ultimate beneficiaries of its services. PA activities should be based on planned activities and anticipated breakthroughs. The PA strategy should be finalized and commissioned, preferably as part of the broader Information and Communications Strategy.

7.3 Defining and differentiating stakeholder groups

A stakeholder is broadly defined as a person/group that has, or should have, an interest in the activities of an organization. ILRI's strategic plan would differentiate between key and lower-priority stakeholders.

A communications professional or a team of ILRI staff in a group session could quickly identify ILRI's key stakeholders. From the review team's point of view, a spontaneous listing of the key stakeholders would be:

Internally:

- ILRI associates, from top management to support staff

Externally:

- Current and potential donor organizations
- Leading academics in the fields of livestock and development in developing and developed countries
- Leading policymakers in ILRI's priority countries
- Media[3] (professional and lay media)
    - in host countries
    - with global reach

[3] Use of the media is one of the most powerful ways to reach policymakers and donors. The media can get your research results to people who otherwise might never see your presentations, publications, or web site. Simply by being featured in a news story or commentary, your research has increased credibility. People tend to think "I saw it on TV, so it must be true." More importantly, people use the media to gauge which issues are important. Policymakers understand that media affects the general public, so when an issue appears regularly in the media, they feel pressure to respond. Media is one of the most effective ways to reach policymakers, as they regularly monitor the influential media in their countries. A story on ILRI's work in a major newspaper will often reach policymakers that otherwise might not have known about the research.

- Livestock policy advisers
- Sister centers within the CGIAR, but also African research institutions outside the CGIAR, e.g., the CSIR in South Africa
- Key government officials in host countries
- Key staff in international and supranational organizations (e.g., FAO, WHO)
- Important NGOs
    - with a local/national/subregional/regional reach
    - with a global reach
- NARS
- Students in secondary and tertiary training institutions
- Farmer groups

Because ILRI cannot focus on all stakeholder groups at the same time, focusing on key stakeholders is essential.[4] It goes without saying that once a generic list of stakeholders has been established, ILRI must set priorities. ILRI's strategic goals and the resources allocated to establish and promote communications with the institute's key stakeholders will determine the breadth and the speed of this program; the latter are vital issues that should be dealt with by the ILRI leadership team once the communications strategy has been designed.

[4] For example: Don't try to reach every journalist. Concentrate on a few who will provide you with the most impact and help you reach your targeted audience. If you don't already know, find out which media outlets are the most influential in your region.

A component of strategic partnership or relationship management is relevant here. How does an organization identify the stakeholders (in each category) with whom it should build the strongest

relationships? Clearly, this cannot be done with every relevant organization. The power of 'champions' needs to be recognized in all such categories. These champions will often approach ILRI, rather than having to be sought out. Importantly, they, and ILRI, should ask the question, "What can we do together that will be of mutual benefit?"

Identifying, defining, and differentiating stakeholder groups has a dynamic component; new groups may emerge at any time. Hence ILRI needs mechanisms to act as "early warning systems" of such change. Skilled communications staff have this capability but need to be supplemented. This can be done, for example, by sensitizing all staff to the issue, and particularly by using interactive communications systems (e.g., external web environment) to allow groups to approach ILRI directly in order to identify themselves.

7.4 New skill sets to look for

In the review committee's view the answers to what new skill sets are needed depend to some extent on how much ILRI will want to handle in-house and how much it will outsource. For the "head of communications" position, ILRI has to be sure to hire a professional who has designed and implemented communications strategies, has a track record of achieving results, can articulate a vision for enhanced communications at ILRI, and who knows about development issues—and preferably about livestock as well.

Except for the lack of an agricultural background and marketing skills, staff in ILRI's IC team have the required skills—IT management, library and information management, editorial, web site/network development/management, and PR/advocacy—to communicate with the various stakeholders. The area of information/knowledge management and communications, however, is rapidly changing. Thus there is a need for staff to constantly upgrade their skills through external and internal training and attachments, including exchange visits between ILRI and other CG centers. There is also a need to train scientists in skills such as writing for the lay public and for farmers. Outsourcing some of the skills will occasionally be required. A Development Communications Specialist and a marketing manager, however, will be needed, preferably on a full-time basis to ensure delivery of new technology and information to farmers and wider promotion of ILRI's IC products and services.

In order to reach its goals, ILRI needs to develop a culture of open communications—internal and external. Establishing a culture of open communication and trust is the basis for creating a knowledge organization.

The Director General must be the driver of the organizational culture change, acting by example and being prepared to openly change his own behavior and processes. ILRI's current Director General is a major asset in this respect and has acted as a change agent. In addition, the open attitude of the members of the institute's leadership team, with which the review team had close contact, adds to ILRI's potential to become a genuine knowledge organization.

- Knowledge/communications champions should be identified throughout the organization, nurtured, supported and rewarded. They will be the strongest force in creating and actualizing the new culture.
- A Chief Information and Knowledge Officer—a role very close to the Communications Officer role—is needed as an integral part of the institute's executive office, and would work very closely with the Director General.

7.5 A Framework for the Information and Communications Strategy

The conceptual framework is a strategic design that answers the following questions in a way specific and relevant to ILRI:

- Who do you want to reach?
    - ILRI's key stakeholders
- Why do you want to reach them?
    - They are important to safeguard the financial future of ILRI
    - They can enhance the impact and reputation of the institute
- How do you reach them?
    - By various means, such as
        - Web sites, workshops, books, and journal articles for the "experts"
        - Web sites, discussion lists, summary reports, workshops, and symposia for the "insiders"
        - Short issue briefs, leaflets, web sites, videos, magazine articles, posters, and attractive booklets for the "interested"
        - Posters, videos, press briefings, radio interviews, and web sites for the "lay public"
- What are your main messages?
    - This depends on what ILRI wants to achieve in the target group that it addresses. Main messages can vary by target group but they must be consistent and based on research.
- What are the resources available?
    - A critical mass has to be invested in communications. ILRI executives must decide, together with the head of communications, what the necessary resources are for achieving the strategic goals. Management should be prepared to commit more resources to information and communications activities.
- What is the timeframe?
    - The communications strategy should benchmark the institute's current communications position and outline which milestones should be achieved in a given timeframe with a given stakeholder group (e.g., at least two op-eds in leading international newspapers in the next twelve months, or creating annual, or more frequent, publications that give a high profile to ILRI among academia, NGOs, donors, and the media).

The above framework will ensure that ILRI's communications strategy document spells out target groups, aims and objectives, channels of communication, content and language, and programs and plans with priority activities.

APPENDIX: Slide Presentation of Management Summary

Slide 1

Strategic Options in Communications

**Establishing ILRI as a global leader by
bridging excellence in livestock research
and poverty reduction**

A Summary of Findings and Recommendations of
the Review Committee of ILRI's Information and
Communications Activities
Jane Frances Asaba
Robert Stephen (Bob) Day
Klaus von Grebmer (chairman)
Nairobi, June 25 – July 3, 2003

Slide 2

Terms of Reference

1. Take stock of ILRI's
   - Public awareness efforts and priorities for the future
   - Production, design, distribution, and marketing of publications
   - Library and knowledge sharing/management processes
   - Intranet and internet activities
2. Assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relevant to communications activities
3. Outline strategic goals
4. Develop an action plan on priorities and an organizational structure to achieve them

---

Slide 3

Background

- The global context
  - Trends: globalization, biotechnology, migration, developments in information and communications technology, multiple players
  - Agriculture's return to the development agenda
  - Livestock revolution
  - Changes in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
- ILRI
  - Two institutes that merged
  - Two historic profiles, especially in the scientific arena
  - The "phantom" of ILCA/ILRAD (the growing need for a new identity)
  - Ever larger and more complex research issues
  - Managerial challenges of two campuses and multiple regional offices
- Challenges for ILRI
  - Becoming a global player and being perceived as such
  - Tougher competition for funds
  - New trust in agriculture (WSSD, NEPAD, IEHA) offers opportunities
  - New research strategy to establish a focal point for core competencies
  - Strategic approach to communications to increase impact of research on poverty reduction

Slide 4

Integral communications
Pathway to global impact

- Communications is about increasing impact on poverty reduction
- Greatest impact: when excellence in research is complemented by excellence in communications
- Communications is central to institute's policy and culture change
- ILRI communications: from ad hoc to a strategic focus
- Importance of communications: being a leader and being recognized as such
  - Internal: Global impact starts with a culture change at home
  - External: Excellence in external communications results from a strategic focus
- Identify stakeholders and establish partnerships
- Resources
  - Increasing productivity through reallocation
  - Additional resources from core and restricted funds
- A new look (branding/corporate identity) can support change process

Slide 5

Selected key observations

- ILRI has skilled, experienced staff prepared to make significant changes in working practices to increase awareness of ILRI's core competencies
- New organizational strategy
    - Received very well internally and externally
    - Not fully internalized by many staff
    - Must ensure long term funding (impact on job security)
- New culture: global partnerships and local organizational coherence
- Not yet one ILRI culture (two centers)
- Public awareness activities spread too thin; need more flagship products
- Information and communications technology: exciting opportunities
- ILRI is science leader but not recognized as such
- No holistic electronic communications strategy
    - ILRInet is a good start
    - Web site considered an "embarrassment"
- Researchers do not yet communicate the relevance, excitement, and quality of their work to a broad range of stakeholders
- Libraries have great potential: scope and services to be assessed

Slide 6

Strengths

- Good leadership and effective management style
- Improving internal communications
- Excellent, skilled staff; many are highly motivated
- State-of-the art facilities and technologies
- A strong IT department facilitating communications
- Extensive information available and adequate infrastructure in place for communication and knowledge sharing
- Strong links to advanced research institutes
- A unique niche-producer and broker of global public goods and backstopper for National Agricultural Research Systems
- ILRI's mandate attractive to both traditional and new donors
- Improving financial position

Slide 7

Weaknesses

- Internal communications challenge due to several campuses
- Weak links to downstream institutes/partners and communities
- Insufficient human and financial resources for external communications
- Core competencies not known to a large group of key stakeholders
- Poor internal communications
- Communications skills not adequate
- Library services underutilized

Slide 8

Opportunities

- Growing interest of donors in livestock research for development
- Africa back on the agricultural and development agenda
- Growing cooperation between CGIAR centres
- Local and global institutions interested in partnerships

Slide 9

Threats

- Uncertain funding in an increasingly competitive environment
- Lack of sustained partnerships in a permanently changing environment
- Economic viability of changing ILRI from a research to an innovation institution

Slide 10

Recommendations 1

- Senior Management Team should accept vital role of communications
  - Task cannot be delegated
  - Important for strengthening staff, by recognizing good work
  - Important for external presence
- Provide some seed resources
  - Limited in amount and time
  - Reallocate from other activities
  - Include new resources

Slide 11

Recommendations 2

- Fill vacant position for head of communications quickly
  - Communications professional
  - Senior-level person
  - Team player
  - Visionary able to motivate others
- First task: develop a communications strategy
  - Coordinate various activities
  - Ensure executive team support
  - Ensure acknowledgement by the Board of Trustees

Slide 12

Recommendations 3

- Web page as the business card to the outside
- Create a public/media event (e.g., ILRI livestock index) periodically to put ILRI on the radar screen of livestock/poverty reduction
- Realign services for the scientific arena (services of libraries)
- Consider services/products for broader audiences in current and potentially important markets

Slide 13

Recommendations 4

Branding

- Develop and maintain a strong, recognizable identity for ILRI
- Create and promote an image that reflects the mission, culture, and values of the organization
- ILRI not an established brand
- ILCA and ILRAD are still there
- Develop brand and promote identity

Slide 14

Functions: Head of Communications

- Define a detailed strategy for the delivery of ILRI's communications function
- Set specific, simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound objectives required to deliver the strategy
- Provide progress reports towards achieving the desired strategy and make recommendations for its revision as appropriate
- Stimulate inputs from staff and external stakeholders on ILRI's future directions and activities to ensure its ongoing thought leadership role
- Develop and maintain a strong recognizable identity, and create and promote an image that reflects the mission, culture, and values of ILRI
- Provide team leadership to manage and develop the communications team to successful delivery
- Manage a complete press and media function for ILRI to include preparation of regular press and media reports, provision of media handling advice for senior managers and staff, and the provision of media training and support to ILRI staff as appropriate
- Oversee the production process for ILRI's publications output, including R&D reports and Annual Report
- Coordinate an annual program of ILRI's attendance at conferences, meetings, and workshops

Slide 15

How to proceed

- Transform the library into an information center
- Re-orient the publishing activities
- Define and differentiate stakeholder groups
- Attract new skill sets
- Design the information and communications strategy