

ILRI/CGIAR and EIAR partnering together – experience sharing workshop



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List of acronyms

ACGG	African Chicken Genetic Gains
Africa RISING	Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation
BecA	Biosciences eastern and central Africa
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
ECSA	Eastern Central and Southern Africa region
EIAR	Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HOPE project	Harnessing Opportunities for Productivity Enhancement of Sorghum and Millets in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
LIVES	Livestock and irrigation value chains for Ethiopian smallholders
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
ODK	Open data kit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SI	Sustainable intensification

Acknowledgements

This report was compiled from a workshop held on 7 August 2019 organized by the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) at EIAR campus, Hiruy Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Executive summary

EIAR has made substantial structural and operational changes over the last one and a half year in an attempt to deliver outputs that are align with its mission, objectives, duties and responsibilities. In line with these changes, a significant number of new-blood young leaders have been brought on board as center and sector directors and program coordinators. In order to equip these leaders with proven leadership skill and expertise EIAR with ILRI/CGIAR organized experience sharing workshop at EIAR headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 7 August 2019. The one-day workshop brought together scientists with different areas of expertise from ILRI and other CGIAR centres and 53 participants drawn from EIAR headquarters in Addis and its research centers. Twenty eight percent of the participants from the EIAR were female researchers, the majority of whom EIAR aspires, will shortly assume leadership positions of different capacities; while some of them are already at leadership positions.

The objectives of the workshop were to strengthen the partnership between EIAR and ILRI/CGIAR and to exchange ILRI/CGIAR's experience with EIAR staff. The workshop consisted of several presentations, plenary discussions and groupwork exercises.

Welcome, opening remarks and introductory session

EIAR and ILRI organized the workshop to strengthen the partnership between EIAR and ILRI/CGIAR and to share and exchange ILRI/CGIAR's experience with EIAR staff. The workshop was held at the EIAR headquarters in Addis Ababa on 7 August 2019. There were a total of 53 participants (see Annex 2) from EIAR and six staff (research and support from ILRI and CGIAR).

Welcome and opening remarks

Dr Chilot Yirga, Deputy General Director for Administration and Capacity Building, EIAR made a welcome and opening remark representing Dr Mandefro Nigussie, General Director, EIAR as he got a last-minute engagement. He thanked all participants and referred the meeting as a family gathering considering both institutions as family. He further mentioned that EIAR management team have visited different research centers, spoke with researchers as well as support staff and identified lack of management skills as one of the constraints to meeting EIAR's mission. From that assessment, the institution has organized a leadership and management course for researchers at different levels. He also noted that the timing was good as they approach the new financial year. There was a general feeling that EIAR has not exploited ILRI to its full potential, although EIAR staff have informally interacted with ILRI staff and thanked ILRI and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the support they have made so far and in the future.

Introductory session

The workshop was planned and organized around potential areas of partnership between ILRI and EIAR experience sharing on specific topics of research findings presented by staff from ILRI and CGIAR (For details of the program, please see Annex 1).

During the introductory session, participants introduced themselves, highlighting ILRI/CGIAR activities that they know of.

Some of these activities and projects participants mentioned included:

- The Africa Chicken Genetic Gains project (ACGG) in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Nigeria where ILRI has the main center of excellence for adaptation and selection of different lines in breeding poultry
- Farm mechanization and intensification by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)
- Fava bean and barley work of International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
- Capacity building on bioinformatics and biotechnology work of ILRI's Biosciences eastern and central Africa (BecA) Hub.
- ILRI's works on livestock research in collaboration with national researchers.
- ILRI works on technology promotion and capacity building e.g. on gender (together with CIMMYT) and policy guidance.

Some of these activities and projects participants mentioned included: (Ctd.)

- ILRI's global collaboration on feeds.
- CIMMYT's research on maize and wheat e.g. wheat rust resistance and stress-tolerant
- Nutrition enhanced maize developed by CIMMYT
- Research on pulses (e.g. chickpea), iron and zinc enhancement by HOPE project of International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
- ICARDA's works on pulses
- ILRI works towards improving the livestock sector, developing technologies on animal health, feeds, genetics, markets, and value chains.
- ILRI's socio-economic surveys and impact assessments, working with national agricultural systems.
- The Livestock and irrigation value chains for Ethiopian smallholders (LIVES) project implemented by ILRI collaborated on value chains and irrigation for smallholder farmers to enhance their income
- Germplasm enhancement in maize by CIMMYT and sustainable intensification of maize and other crops.

Presentations

ILRI/CGIAR in Ethiopia

Key messages

Moyo Siboniso ILRI Director General's representative in Ethiopia gave a comprehensive presentation about ILRI and the CGIAR. She highlighted ILRI's Direct General commitment to strengthen partnerships in countries where ILRI operates and that ILRI's aspiration for a food secure future. She further elaborated that CGIAR has 15 global centers working on different commodities where four of the centers have head offices in Africa and contributing to three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – reduce poverty, improve food and nutrition security, and improve natural resources and ecosystem services. In Ethiopia, CGIAR contributes to Growth and Transformation Plan II. She also highlighted, the increasing demand of meat to 2 million tonnes by 2020 and the need to develop strategies to meet this global demand and that ILRI is lucky to be in a country where livestock matters to the economy.

She also mentioned ILRI' different projects and units and further emphasized the potential areas of collaboration with EIAR like gender in livestock, communicating science, ICT in agriculture, local campaigns during the livestock week or World Food Day, information management and biosciences through ILRI's BecA Hub.

Questions and answers

Questions	Answers
Livestock feed is the biggest challenge in Ethiopia, but which one of the issues mentioned is the most important? What strategy do you advise the country to pursue - genetics, health or feed?	All are important but it's important to focus on the breeds. As a breeder, I am biased toward breeding. There are breeds that perform well even with minimal resources. We need to increase milk production and shift from two liters per day to eight and beyond. The whole value chain including markets is very important. We need good markets and shifts to commercial production. We are also experiencing the greenhouse gas emission problem. We need to reduce our livestock size to reduce the livestock footprint and need to push forward an integrated approach.
Chicken is the cheapest animal-sourced food in Ethiopia. Do you think we have done enough to enhance chicken production in Ethiopia?	One of the flagship projects is ACGG to generate improved poultry breeds, and also improve local breeds. There is a long way to get to where we want to be. It's one sector with the potential for export outside Ethiopia.
Is the Africa Biosciences Challenge Fund (ABCF) still on?	It is still on but with limited funding. We are looking for more funding (response from Wellington).
How do you evaluate your impact on livelihoods?	Every project has the means to monitor and evaluate its impact. The LIVES project did an impact evaluation and demonstrated to have made changes to people's food and nutrition security from meat, milk, and eggs among others. We have to be intentional when designing our projects so that we measure the impact. We are called upon by donors to demonstrate impact. As researchers we do pilots but we need to demonstrate impact at scale. We cannot do this alone. We need the partners with the end line delivery system including extension and NGOs
According to your experience, what is the trend of partnerships – functional partnerships?	This depends on programs. We have started working a lot with universities. We are being called upon by the ministry of agriculture to work on large projects funded by the World Bank or IFAD and other large grants coming to government. There are areas where we need to revisit partnerships with EIAR. We have moved out of on-farm research to working with farmers in the communities. There are corners where it is working, and areas that need to strengthen and find areas where we can improve. We run on projects. That is the only way we get funding and that is why we ask for your CVs.
Ethiopia is the second most populated country in Africa and with a high livestock population. But none of the CGIAR centers has headquarters in Ethiopia. What is the reason?	All these centers were established 50 years ago and they established the locations then. If new centers come up, we can negotiate. Moving a center e.g. IITA from Nigeria to Ethiopia is a political move. We can have the CGIAR headquarters for Africa here.

Sustainable Intensification (SI) in Agriculture

Key messages

Kindu Mekonnen and Million Getnet from Africa RISING project of ILRI made a presentation (<https://www.slideshare.net/africa-rising/cgiar-eiar-partnering>) on the importance of SI and the experience of Africa RISING on SI in the Ethiopian highlands. They further highlighted how to determine if the technologies from African RISING are of interest and are moving in the direction of SI. They also elaborated on lessons from the field and multi-stakeholder engagement on how to reverse the role of extension in the research process. There were discussions around the importance of SI in the Ethiopian agriculture and the competencies required to be able to undertake the SI arena.

Participants commented on the importance of mapping the impact pathway for projects to be able to measure the outcomes, determine partners that need to be involved and their contribution along the path and the need to know the path that a project will take to achieve its outcomes.

Questions and answers

Questions	Answers
How do we measure sustainability?	These are measures that are still being tested and the thinking begins from previous work.
When you develop an SI intervention, limitations might come unless compatibility is defined at a prior stage. Some of the components are very distant. One component could be aggressive on others? How do we tell the compatibility of technologies? Was it measured?	Most of the interventions are from research institutions, we validated them with farmers through the action research process. The validation was intensive, and research has shown compatibility amongst the technologies. The five SI domains can help to assess technologies.
How do you quantify the share of resources left for the future? I think it's something that can be understood through evolution.	We are still working on these issues. Most of the research requires long term research.
We are talking about natural resources degradation, hunger in this country but it's just increasing since the 70s. What model has worked globally that we can learn from? What is the best entry point for partnerships?	<p>The current government initiative on water shade management is very important to address the issue of land degradation and natural resource management. But this needs to be done carefully with knowledge base and partnerships. We need to bring partners together and work together and bring about impact. It's a challenge but the approach initiated by the government on landscape management is good. It addresses issues of food security, collective action, etc.</p> <p>The entry point for partnership is finding common interests. If the issue is not relevant for one partner, they will not be engaged. So we need to find a common agenda to initiate partnerships.</p> <p>There will be partnerships at different scales from farmers' levels to the national or global levels. There is a need to identify different partners at different scales. You have to know which scale and what partners we need e.g. in SI. Activities will also differ from farm to landscape. Africa RISING provides the opportunity to try the applicability of this framework.</p>
Do innovation platforms or Multistakeholder Platforms survive after projects? If I were to visit the sites after five years, will I find them?	There is a need for involvement of extension in research. We do not have the brokering organization to do the linkage for us to the end-users. The innovation platforms might not exist after the project. The question is whether they can help a project achieve its goal.

Using ICT for participatory variety selection, seed deployment, and exchange

Key messages

Yosef Gebrehawaryat from Alliance for Bioversity and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) introduced participants to the ICT software used to collect trial data for seed multiplication i.e. the Climmob app and Open data kit (ODK). Other concepts that participants were introduced included the seeds for needs: theory of change and crowd-sourcing or citizen science.

The research team is currently developing a seed stock software to help farmers know the availability and access to preferred seed. It is an application where all seed companies record available seed and in what amount. Men and women farmers are currently testing different varieties of seed and use the app (guided by extension staff in case the family is illiterate) to report performance and preference to the researchers.

Questions and answers

Questions	Answers
<p>Do you have data on the nutritional composition of the varieties selected by farmers? Do farmers know the nutritional composition?</p>	<p>This is participatory research. There is information that we might not know as researchers but get it from farmers and there is information that we have and provide to the farmers. The nutritional composition is provided to farmers.</p>
<p>Is this technology accessible to the remote farmers for them to be entrepreneurs?</p>	<p>The platform accommodates households with literate and illiterate members. Nonetheless, some farmers might not access the platform. Development agents assist the households to record and access information. Households can also use their educated children to access the platform. Increasingly, farmers' capacity is improving with improvement in the ICT infrastructure. The challenge is how to transfer seed from the seed company to the user.</p>
<p>How do we strike a balance of staying in touch with farmers in the field and using ICT to improvise our work?</p>	<p>The beauty of our work is, we work with both conventional and innovative methods. That helps to keep the balance. We work with farmers, conventional breeders, and technology at the same time. This has been a challenge, not just for us but globally. These are people who do not normally work together.</p>
<p>I have been involved in participatory research. The philosophy of participatory research is theoretically appealing but when it comes to practical plant breeding, we need to optimize our approach. Knowledge of farmers is limited. Farmers' selection criteria and breeders criteria are often similar. Farmers in different geographical contexts have different crop choices. It's practically impossible to cater to the needs of each location when you have different choices. That is why we did not institutionalize PVS. It's also expensive. Community mobilization is expensive. I advise that you establish one criterion and adopt it in your variety protocol? What are other countries doing? Is this approach an imposition from the developing world?</p>	<p>The model to follow should address local thinking. If you are short on everything then it's a disaster. If you have very little knowledge, it is dangerous. A shortage of resources is a big problem. In Ethiopia, we are not detached from our culture and we are not in the western sphere as well. We do not have much information about ourselves and how others are developing. We need to use our own knowledge and resources to uplift ourselves. We need to develop our own models. We do not have to wait for Europeans or Americans. What are the criteria that farmers are using to select varieties? We use this information as breeders to breed for the preferred traits.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Are you working on released varieties or landraces? Have you considered the country's criteria for releasing varieties? Farmers should not be given landraces because there is a risk of the spread of diseases. When giving seeds to farmers, they are free to grow them the way they like. Are we getting information from small plots managed differently? The information that farmers are giving might be dictated by what they encounter on the ground. Is there any country that has tried this and is successful? We are assuming that seed is a commodity like any other commodity like shoes or dresses.</p>	<p>We provide them with a buffet of varieties from different research centers and those produced by farmers and provide different combinations of seeds to farmers. Farmers can compare the newly released varieties with the local one and select what to take up. Farmers may use different practices and soil types may vary among others. This is taken care of by the number of repeated tests in different environments. As you increase the number of counts you increase the precision.</p>
<p>Every year we evaluate very many varieties. Farmers also get confused. If I incorporate farmers' preference in a breeding protocol, what is the add-on?</p>	<p>We need to know the communities where we work. What works for them? We are working in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. We will extend to southern Africa as well.</p>

Gender-responsive organizations

Key messages

Annet A. Mulema from ILRI presented (<https://www.slideshare.net/ILRI/eiar-ilri-annet>) on gender-responsive organizations with the objective of increasing participants' knowledge of their understanding of gender dynamics in their own organizations and beginning thinking of actions to take towards a more gender-responsive organization. The key themes discussed included the reason for gender-responsive organizations, what a gender-responsive organization looks like and a case study was analyzed to determine the key elements of a gender-responsive organization and ways to make an organization gender-responsive.

Participants shared the current situation in their organizations. EIAR recently hired over 100 female staff, and more female staff are being promoted. Another participant shared the dominance of female staff in the top leadership position within the organization and wondered whether this was biased or the right thing to do.

Growing research leadership in AR4D: Experiences from National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in Eastern Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) region

Key messages

Wellington Ekaya ILRI's head of capacity development unit facilitated the session involving the use of visuals to elicit discussions around leadership and team building. Results from previous studies were presented to help participants relate to their experiences. Principles of good leadership (soft skills) were shared and participants were urged to reflect and develop the soft skills further and mainstream them in their work. Other aspects discussed included strategic partnerships and teamwork/collective responsibility and visioning.

'Change brings challenges out of our comfort zone and we may not be ready for changes and the consequences and we often are not well trained to manage the changes that we are assigned to manage' he said. He also elaborated on mainstreaming soft skills and that these are skills out of our technical training, such as time management, writing skills, managing change, work ethic, leadership, negotiation, problem-solving, humility and patience, interpersonal skills, communication, team building, agility. He also highlighted on strategic parentship and partnership management.

Questions and answers

Questions	Answers
Who is a leader?	
Do the research leadership publications have a gender perspective?	Yes

Closing remarks

Siboniso Moyo made closing remarks, stressing the need for using facilitators for effective workshop facilitation and find a mentor and mentor other, embrace our role as leaders of research. 'There is need to determine what you want to do and the skills that are needed to be successful , if not you will be weak in all the things around you' she said. She finally concluded by thanking the donors USAID, UK-AID and Bill and Malinda Gets Foundations among others.

Annex I: Workshop program and objective:

ILRI/CGIAR and EIAR partnering together – experience sharing workshop, 7 August 2019

Venue: Hiruy Hall, EIAR, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Objectives:

- To strengthen the partnership between EIAR and ILRI/CGIAR
- To share and exchange ILRI/CGIAR's experience with EIAR staff

Program	
08:30	Registration
09:00	Welcome remarks – Dr Chillot Yirga, Deputy Director General for Administration and Capacity Building, EIAR
09:15	Objectives, agenda and participants introduction, Tsehay Gashaw Knowledge Sharing and Web Communications Officer (ILRI)
09:45	ILRI/CGIAR in Ethiopia, Siboniso Moyo, Director General's representative in Ethiopia, ILRI
10:00	Coffee Break
10:30	Sustainable intensification in Agriculture – Presentation and group work Kindu Mekonnen (ILRI) and Million Gebreyes (ILRI)
11:15	Using ICT for participatory variety selection, seed deployment and exchange – presentation and Q&A (Yosef Gebrehawaryat, Alliance for Bioversity and CIAT)
12:15	Lunch
13:15	Gender-responsive organizations – presentation and group work (Annet Mulema, ILRI)
14:15	Growing research leadership in AR4D: Experiences from National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in Eastern Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) region – facilitated group discussion (Wellington Ekaya, ILRI)
15:15	Closing remarks
15:30	Close

Annex 2–List of participants

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