



INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
sustainable solutions for ending hunger and pov
Supported by the CGIAR

IFPRI's CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING STRATEGY

The vision of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) is a world free of hunger and malnutrition. Capacity strengthening is vital to realizing this vision. Capacity development contributes to agricultural growth, poverty reduction, and economic development. Together with communications, capacity strengthening ensures that IFPRI's research results have impact on the ground.

IFPRI's global research programs and its regional strategies for Asia, Africa, and Latin America include capacity strengthening and policy communications as part of their programmatic activities. Guided by the needs of its stakeholders, IFPRI will focus on strengthening the capacity of (i) research collaborators to engage in evidence-based analysis of food policies and identify problems, solutions, and interjection points; (ii) higher education institutions to facilitate learning and enhance the quality of education and policy research, and (iii) IFPRI partners and policymakers to make effective use of food policy research results. In addition, IFPRI will explore how to involve new actors and players in shaping development polices through food policy research. Bringing new actors into this process will require innovations in capacity-strengthening approaches.

IFPRI can strengthen capacities for policy research through the broad base of partners it has throughout the developing and developed world. Other organizations, including universities, development organizations, and other CGIAR centers, have also recognized the importance of developing capacity. Becoming a key player in capacity strengthening therefore presents opportunities to partner with many organizations in a united drive to develop policy research capacity.

VISION AND MISSION OF IFPRI'S CAPACITY- STRENGTHENING STRATEGY

The vision and mission of IFPRI's capacity-strengthening strategy are derived from and support the broader IFPRI strategy, which sets out IFPRI's future directions. This grounding in IFPRI's

overall strategy is crucial to ensuring the relevance and success of its capacity-strengthening efforts.

VISION: To strengthen the capacity of IFPRI partners to contribute to achieving a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

MISSION: To enhance the institutional environment for improved global food security and poverty reduction by developing the capacity of organizations and individuals involved in food and agriculture policy research, analysis, advocacy, education, and strategy development.

OBJECTIVES OF IFPRI'S CAPACITY- STRENGTHENING STRATEGY

The overall objective of IFPRI's capacity-strengthening strategy is to improve human, organizational, and institutional capacity and knowledge systems for providing solutions to food policy issues. This overall goal includes the following specific objectives:

1. To provide research-based knowledge on the role, constraints, and mechanisms of capacity strengthening in food policy research, analysis, advocacy, education, and strategy development and implementation.
2. To implement capacity-strengthening activities within IFPRI's global research themes so that collaborating organizations and individuals undertake similar research and outreach activities.
3. To develop the capacity of individuals and organizations through national, regional, and global collaborations so

that they can effectively address food policy issues through research, analysis, communication, institutional transformation, and organizational management, in order to increase the impact of food policy research in developing countries.

Guided by these objectives, IFPRI researchers will help develop partners' capacity needs in identified areas through joint research and learning activities designed for specific participants.

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

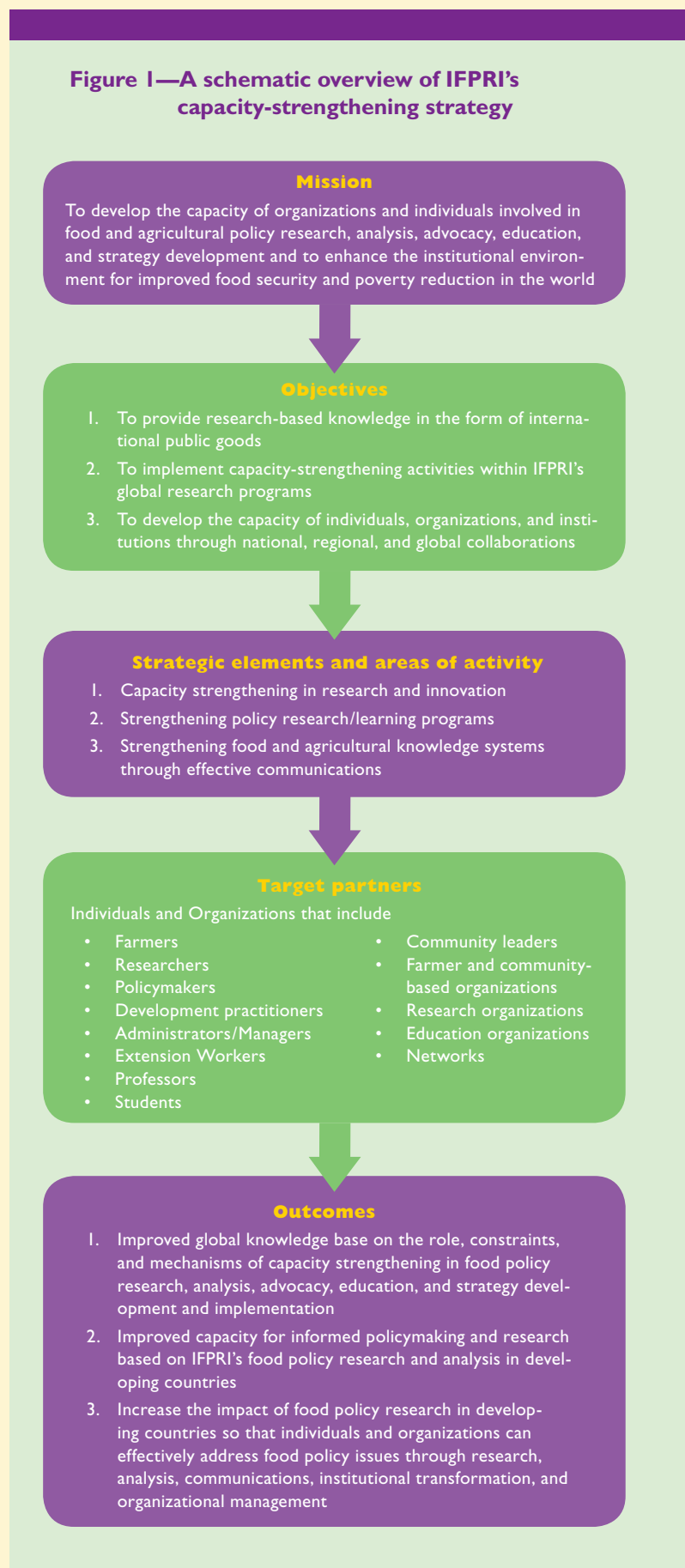
IFPRI's capacity-strengthening program will achieve its objectives through three strategic activities:

- capacity strengthening in research and innovation;
- strengthening policy research through research and learning programs; and
- strengthening food and agricultural knowledge systems through effective communication.

Capacity strengthening in research and innovation. IFPRI's Learning and Capacity Strengthening Program will pursue a research and innovation agenda that focuses on needs assessments; curriculum development; instructional methodology; tools, methods, and approaches that best address capacity-development needs and opportunities; and the impact of capacity-strengthening activities. It will identify opportunities for innovation in the methods of designing and delivering learning programs. The Program will also develop appropriate collaborative research projects that are interdisciplinary and responsive to stakeholder needs, and will track the development of the food-policy capacities of its national partners and target audiences and will help to guide IFPRI's food policy capacity-strengthening activities.¹ For example, it will use innovative concepts such as the Agricultural Open Curriculum and Learning Initiative (AGROCURI) to help strengthen academic institutions to produce sustainable numbers of policy and development practitioners who can address agriculture and food-security issues. Innovations using advanced information and communication technologies to share knowledge through thematic portals will form a major part of these efforts.

Strengthening policy research through research and learning programs. The Learning and Capacity Strengthening Program will establish a learning platform to be integrated into all projects across IFPRI divisions. The program will develop and execute demand-driven and learner-focused programs. It will develop learning materials in collaboration with researchers and communications experts within and outside IFPRI. Activities may include graduate curriculum development; student advising; graduate thesis supervision, and hands-on capacity development through joint research projects, publications, survey instruments, design and implementation (data collection), formal and informal workshops, and targeted short courses.

Figure 1—A schematic overview of IFPRI's capacity-strengthening strategy



¹IFPRI's partners include a wide range of individuals and organizations ranging from farmers' organizations to members of parliament. See Figure 1.



© 2009 Elias Zerfu/IFPRI. Learning workshop in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Other activities will include creating and ensuring access to technical learning materials that can be used by individuals and organizations in developing countries.

Strengthening food and agricultural knowledge systems through effective communication. Using its learning-by-doing model, IFPRI's Learning and Capacity Strengthening Program will provide activities and opportunities that allow organizations within the agricultural knowledge system in developing countries to be a better resource for policymakers. Through the Program, IFPRI will also initiate and participate in relevant discussions and programs that will affect developing countries' knowledge systems. To this end, the Program will collaborate with other IFPRI divisions that are closely aligned with current global priorities such as biodiversity, climate change, the environment, water, sustainable development, food security, and nutrition and health.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

IFPRI's capacity-strengthening strategy emanates from the Institute's research agenda and will therefore be linked to its research programs. IFPRI plans to implement its capacity-strengthening strategy through the following measures:

- A program dedicated to capacity-strengthening research, outreach, and communications activities;
- Effective coordination of IFPRI-wide capacity-strengthening activities through the establishment of an institute-wide capacity-strengthening committee; and
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan, complete with performance indicators.

A program dedicated to capacity-strengthening research, outreach, and communications. Within the Knowledge, Capacity, and Innovation Division (KCID), the Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program will be specifically dedicated to implementing capacity-strengthening activities and overseeing their implementation throughout the Institute. Thus, the Program will be centrally located, while specific activities

remain decentralized. Having the program and strategy centrally located will facilitate cross-divisional collaboration and development of an appropriate network of partners. Centralization will ensure a critical mass for capacity strengthening and also facilitate greater efficiency. The decentralization of activities through divisional collaboration will allow for more effective use of staff members with specialized skills who are better able to disseminate specific policy concepts and methods. Centralization will ensure that a repository of capacity-strengthening products can be maintained and easily made accessible for reporting purposes and use by the learning community and other CGIAR centers.

The Program will provide strategic linkages to other CGIAR centers through system-wide programs. The impact of CGIAR centers depends on strong national systems of agricultural research. While strengthening the individual and organizational capacity of the national systems, the Program will collaborate with other CGIAR centers to strengthen their capacity for research priority setting, organization and management, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment of agricultural research.

The Program will be responsible for developing strategic collaboration with all IFPRI divisions. IFPRI's medium-term plan and global research programs provide the basis for identifying opportunities for capacity-strengthening activities at the divisional level. While global research program leaders will be responsible for the development and implementation of the research programs, the Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program will include a collaborative conceptual stage to identify a set of capacity-strengthening strategic activities that can enhance the impact of the global research programs in developing countries. Further implementation of the capacity-strengthening activities will be jointly organized according to the methods and results generated by the research programs. The outputs of such strategic collaboration with research divisions will include learning materials and case studies that will become global public goods and have additional impact through learning and higher-education programs. A central repository will be developed to build a capacity-strengthening knowledge base that includes the learning materials produced by the global research programs. The Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program will be responsible for identifying opportunities to develop the learning materials in light of new research, tracing, value addition, and joint production of the learning materials through interdivisional collaboration.

Three stages of collaboration in the implementation of a research program are envisaged. In the early stage, researchers would devote time to identifying and organizing capacity-strengthening activities within a research program. Then, during the implementation stage, the Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program will work with research program leaders and outreach teams to implement capacity-strengthening activities. During the last stage of the research program, efforts will focus on generating long-lasting global public goods that are effective in strengthening policy research and decision-making capacities in developing countries. These global public goods—learning materials prepared from research results—will be used for other learning activities. The assistance of the Communications Division will be vital.

Thus, the Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program will become a focal point for all IFPRI staff interested in identifying

topics for policy dialogue with partners. The Program will also design workshops that will assist partner organizations to better understand organizational structure and function, as well as science and development policies.

Effective coordination of IFPRI-wide capacity-strengthening activities. The second element of this strategy is effective coordination of capacity-strengthening activities among the IFPRI divisions. To this end, an institute-wide capacity-strengthening committee has been established. The committee includes representatives from each of IFPRI's divisions, so as to provide ready access to capacity-strengthening plans, activities, and outputs. The committee, appointed by the director general, is chaired by the director of the Knowledge, Capacity, and Innovation Division and meets quarterly. Committee members are the primary contacts for their divisions; they provide information and submit reports to KCID related to their division's capacity-strengthening activities, and facilitate collaboration, avoid duplication of efforts, and ensure efficiency.

The committee's activities include

- providing advice to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on capacity-strengthening activities to be undertaken within IFPRI;
- reviewing the attention given to capacity strengthening in the medium-term plan, in general, and IFPRI's global research programs, in particular;
- facilitating transdivisional cooperation in capacity strengthening; and
- reporting to the SMT once a year on capacity-strengthening activities within IFPRI.

To assist the capacity-strengthening committee in its reporting responsibilities, the Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program is responsible for the coordination of capacity-strengthening activities within IFPRI. It monitors, evaluates, and reports on the outputs, outcomes, and impact of IFPRI divisions in their capacity-strengthening efforts.

Monitoring and evaluation of IFPRI-wide capacity-strengthening activities. IFPRI recognizes that its mission of making food policy research a global public good depends on its ability to teach others—to engage, train, and demonstrate through practical examples. IFPRI also values sound communications as essential to achieving food security and reducing poverty. Indicators should therefore be developed to show the extent to which learning occurred, knowledge increased, the number of those informed increased, technical information was available and used, and technical information influenced policy. To ensure that appropriate and necessary internal mechanisms

and processes are in place, a monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed for tracking outputs and outcomes of capacity strengthening in IFPRI by means of a set of performance indicators. The capacity-strengthening component of IFPRI's medium-term plan contains a summary of impact pathways and role contributions that could serve as the starting point for assessing the attainment of goals and stakeholder impact. The specific indicators for IFPRI's activities will vary from division to division based on project activities, but overall general indicators are necessary. Therefore, general indicators will be set by the central coordinating program.

The monitoring and evaluation of IFPRI's capacity-strengthening activities will serve two major functions. First, it will serve as a learning tool to help make on-course corrections during the implementation of the medium-term plan goals related to capacity strengthening. Second, the information gathered as part of the monitoring exercise will be useful in evaluating the process, as well as documenting the outputs, outcomes, influences, and impacts, of the capacity-strengthening activities through a set of identified performance indicators. For example, the indicators of a capacity-strengthening activity's outputs include the number of learning events undertaken, learning materials prepared, and research methods and outputs converted into global public goods. The outcome indicators of a learning activity will include the total number of participants in the activity. Using tracer studies, it is possible to document the influence that the outputs and outcomes are having on the policy and educational process. The number of documented cases of learners of the capacity-strengthening activity making use of the learning in their jobs to influence policy and improve teaching materials, and the number of curricula and course contents that use IFPRI products as learning materials, would indicate the influence.

POSTSCRIPT

This capacity-strengthening strategy identifies a set of objectives and activities that are in line with the broader IFPRI strategy, and has outlined a plan for carrying out these activities. The strategy is a living document and will change in line with the larger IFPRI and CGIAR strategies. It will treat capacity strengthening at IFPRI as a business and will be translated into a business model. The Learning and Capacity-Strengthening Program is expected to play a vital role in the proposed mega-programs of the CGIAR. It will also provide system-wide support to efforts to strengthen policy research and analytical and communications capacity within the CGIAR.

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