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IFPRI's **AFRICA** STRATEGY

TOWARD FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA

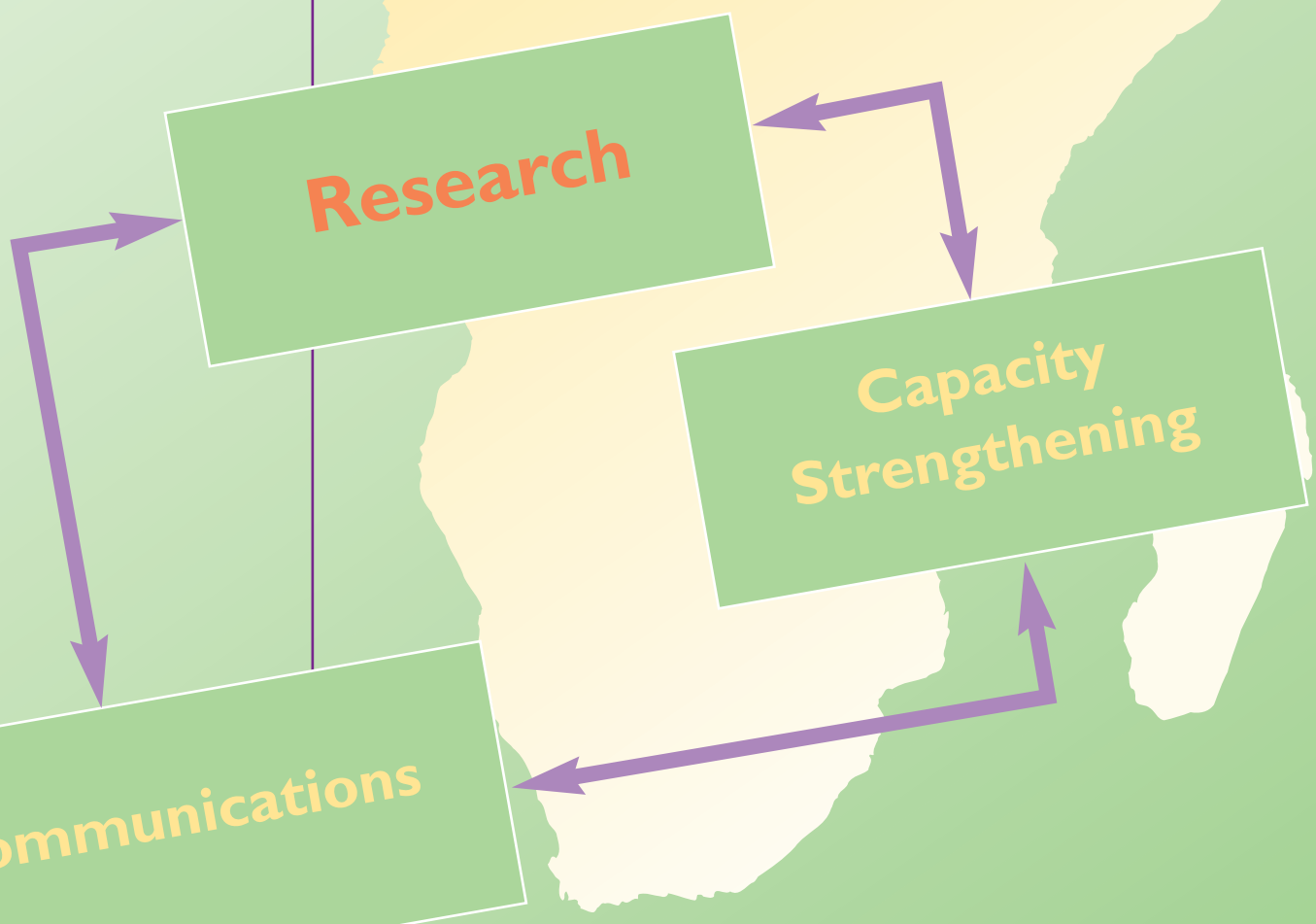
Research and Capacity Building

January 2007

Research

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Communications



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INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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BACKGROUND

Several major initiatives in the past few years have brought renewed attention and commitment to economic development and food and nutrition security in Africa.¹

The recent economic recovery and the new commitment to change among African leaders and development partners indicate for the first time after decades that Africa is poised to achieve real progress toward food and nutrition security. Sustaining and accelerating growth to reach the poverty reduction and nutrition Millennium Development Goals will require clear strategies to guide future policy and investment decisions. Furthermore, these goals seek to only halve the number of poor and malnourished in the next 10 years, something a number of African countries will fail to do. Progress toward food and nutrition security in Africa, therefore, calls for more than growth and requires a greater focus on human welfare improvement supported by adequate investments in health and nutrition safety nets to protect vulnerable segments of the population.

¹ These include the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development; the InterAcademy Council's Africa Report; the UN Millennium Project; the Commission for Africa; and the Conference on Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020.

WHY AN IFPRI STRATEGY FOR AFRICA?

Challenging Food and Nutrition Trends

If current economic and agricultural growth trends persist, at least half of all African countries will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set forth by the United Nations in 2000 (ADB/OECD 2005). While a number of African countries are currently undergoing a process of economic recovery, evidence shows that efforts may fail to induce broad-based improvement in rural areas, home to the majority of poor Africans (Cord 2005). Nevertheless, estimates by IFPRI indicate that better policy and investment strategies leading to higher labor productivity could help African countries meet MDG objectives and even reduce the proportion of undernourished children to significantly below 10 percent by 2025 (Rosegrant et al. 2005). In terms of agriculture, IFPRI estimates that meeting the MDG poverty targets would require average agricultural growth rates of 6 percent among African countries and that an additional 1 percent average yield increase would lift 2 million Africans out of poverty (Fan 2005).

Achieving such outcomes requires real changes in the management of the growth process, particularly in the agricultural sector. African governments have recognized the importance of agriculture's contribution by focusing on agriculture-led growth and poverty reduction strategies. This was highlighted at IFPRI's 2020 Africa Conference in 2003 (IFPRI 2004) and is stipulated in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU/NEPAD 2002, 2005).

A Renewed Focus on Agriculture in Africa

CAADP's agenda reflects a fundamental shift in the way Africa's leadership looks at agriculture and its potential contribution to ending poverty and hunger. The program is the centerpiece of efforts by African countries to achieve growth and poverty reduction in line with the MDGs. The agenda is organized under four programmatic pillars: (a) extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems; (b) improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access; (c) increasing food supply and reducing hunger; and (d) promoting agricultural research and technology dissemination and adoption. The program has ambitious targets and principles. These include pursuing a 6 percent agricultural growth rate, a 10 percent national budget allocation to agriculture by 2008, and

improved sector governance through peer review and benchmarking. As part of the broader efforts under NEPAD, CAADP also adheres to the partnership's principles of good political and economic governance, peace, and security.

The Need to Reassess and Realign IFPRI's Strategy for Africa

Despite renewed emphasis on agriculture and its role in reducing poverty and malnutrition, the need to reverse past trends raises important strategic questions relating to policy and investment decisions in the sector. African countries can still make significant progress toward the MDGs if the right answers to these questions are found to guide the design and implementation of improved strategies.

IFPRI can make significant contributions in the search for sustainable solutions, but, just as African countries will have to improve sector policies and investment decisions, IFPRI also needs to take stock and explore new avenues in response to the perennial and emerging challenges facing African economies. This not only involves reassessing and realigning the Institute's research, capacity building, and communications portfolio, but also rethinking the nature of its partnerships in Africa. This strategy first identifies the changes and adjustments that may be required and then provides guidance for the Institute's future programmatic and operational directions relating to Africa.

IFPRI'S PAST AND CURRENT PORTFOLIO IN AFRICA

Current Programmatic Focus

IFPRI's portfolio in Africa was reviewed by a Task Force established last year to evaluate the Institute's activities in the continent. The Task Force's report indicates that the Institute's portfolio in Africa comprised 124 projects between 2000 and 2004 (IFPRI 2005a).² More than half of these fell within the Institute's priority area *Global and National Food System Governance*, either under Theme 8, "Sustainable Poverty Reduction and Nutrition Improvement," or Theme 9, "Country and Regional Food,

²The definition of a research project is a specific research activity with defined goals, objectives, and outputs, undertaken by IFPRI, solely or in collaboration with other organizations. It excludes general research, such as the IMPACT modeling work, which is funded by IFPRI. The report also considered projects only in generic terms, without differentiation according to size in terms of budget, duration, or breadth of activity coverage. Finally, the Task Force looked primarily at research activities, hence did not focus on policy communications or capacity-strengthening activities.

Nutrition, and Agricultural Strategies.” Roughly 20 percent of the projects in this period fell under IFPRI’s priority area *Global Food System Functioning*, mainly within Theme 2, “Globalization, Retail Food Industries, and Trade,” and Theme 3, “Managing Natural Resources.” One project fell within Theme 4, “Food Systems in Disaster Prevention and Relief, and Rebuilding after Crises.” No projects were carried out under Themes 1 or 6 (“Global Food Scenarios” and “Food and Water Safety,” respectively), although pre-1990s projects had addressed these issues.

Current Geographic Focus

The Africa Task Force also looked at the distribution of the Institute’s research activities across major regions in Africa. It considered the two major regions defined in the ongoing Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) medium-term planning processes—that is, East and Southern Africa (ESA) and West and Central Africa (WCA). Projects that cut across more than one region are counted under each one. The Task Force found that of the 124 IFPRI research projects related to Africa during 2000–04, about two-thirds (64 percent) focused on ECA, 17 percent focused on WCA, and 10 percent focused in North Africa. The balance, 9 percent, consisted of projects relating either to Africa-wide issues or issues not associated with specific countries or regions.

Implications for the Future

The Task Force’s report reveals a relative degree of concentration across individual IFPRI priority themes, as well as individual regions in Africa. IFPRI’s current medium-term plan (MTP) addresses some of these biases, but more efforts will be required both institute-wide and within individual divisions to ensure that the Institute’s research portfolio for Africa reflects adequate thematic and geographic coverage.

IFPRI'S STRATEGY FOR AFRICA

Vision and Mission

IFPRI's *vision* for Africa is the realization of the following goals:

1. that every African has secure access to sufficient and safe food to sustain a healthy and productive life, and
2. that food-related decisions are made transparently, with both consumer and producer participation.

IFPRI's *mission* in this context is to provide locally relevant solutions through scientific research and research-related activities that will enable African countries to reduce poverty and cut hunger and malnutrition. The underlying target is to provide solutions to allow African countries to achieve the MDG's poverty and nutrition targets and then go beyond them to eliminate hunger and poverty. In order to fulfill this mission, IFPRI will focus on

1. identifying and analyzing alternative policies to improve food and nutrition security and sustain the natural-resource base that supports African agriculture;
2. strengthening the capacities of institutions and agents involved in food policy research and analysis; and
3. providing policy communications and facilitating dialogue to inform and improve the design and implementation of food and nutrition policies in and among African countries.

IFPRI's overall portfolio in Africa will more strongly emphasize capacity building and policy communications. Furthermore, the research portfolio will go beyond identifying and analyzing policy alternatives to include explicit advice on how to design and implement effective policy.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for the Institute’s research in Africa aligns with IFPRI’s overall strategy (IFPRI 2005b, 7–9) and is designed to reflect the realities facing Africa today. Figure 1, below, represents IFPRI’s overall strategic framework (Figure 1a), the framework as applied to Africa (Figure 1b), and the specific activities within the food policy research component related to Africa (Figure 1c).

IFPRI will continue to address basic and long-term food policy research gaps to inform and guide regional and national policies (see Figure 1b), including those defined under the CAADP agenda. At the same time, the Africa strategy will align with IFPRI’s primary role of creating and providing access to locally and globally relevant information—as international public goods—to positively influence food policy. In addition, IFPRI’s presence in other regions of the world, particularly in Asia and Latin America, provides the opportunity for comparative analyses, broadening our understanding of the issues and enabling us to devise more comprehensive policy solutions.

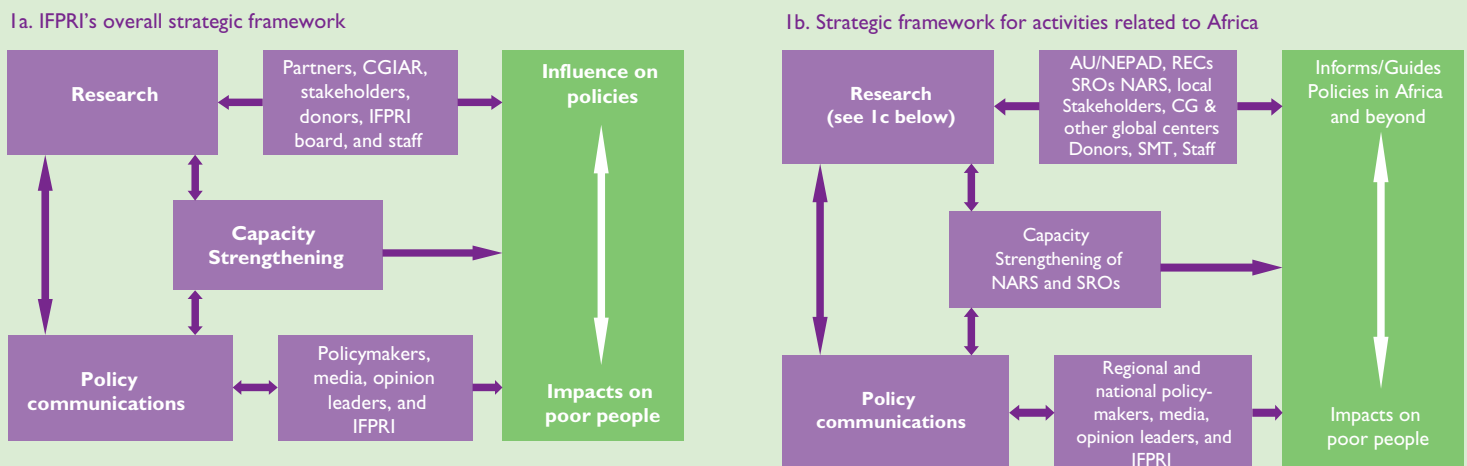
The major institutions and agents to be involved will include AU/NEPAD; regional economic communities (RECs); subregional research organizations (SROs); national agricultural research systems (NARSs); and local stakeholders, such as farmer associations, private-sector organizations, parliamentarians, and local governments (see Figure 1b). Other key agents in terms of research partnerships include CGIAR centers, particularly those based in Africa, and leading international research organizations and universities active in Africa. Major partners/stakeholders in communicating policy and building capacity include regional and national decisionmakers, leading farmer organizations, agribusiness and trade associations, civil society organizations, the media, and other opinion leaders.

IFPRI’s research priorities for Africa fit within the overarching priorities of the CGIAR. They are grouped into three types of activities that correspond to the three types of partnerships and collaborations they engender:

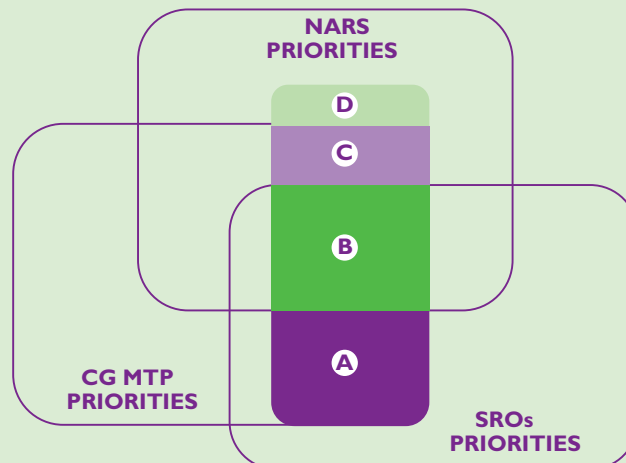
1. activities related to regional priorities with scope for collaboration with SROs (Figure 1c, area A);
2. activities responding to national research priorities and involving opportunities for partnerships with national research systems or NARSs (Figure 1c, areas C and D); and
3. activities involving overlapping regional and national priorities, creating opportunities for joint partnerships with NARSs and SROs (Figure 1c, area B).

In all three cases, IFPRI will establish targeted partnerships with other CGIAR centers, in particular under the CGIAR MTP for the ESA and WCA regions, and with other development research agencies working in Africa.

Figure I. Strategic framework for IFPRI's work related to Africa



1c. Specific framework for research related to Africa



C+D: IFPRI-NARS Partnerships A: IFPRI-SROs Partnerships B: IFPRI-NARS-SRO Partnerships
 A+B+C+D = IFPRI Priorities under ESA / WCA MTP of the CGIAR

Note: CGIAR indicates Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research; SMT, IFPRI's Senior Management Team; NEPAD, New Partnership for Africa's Development; RECs, regional economic communities; SROs, subregional organizations; NARSs, national agricultural research systems; MTP, medium-term plan; ESA, East and Southern Africa; and WCA, West and Central Africa.

SETTING IFPRI'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN AFRICA FOR THE NEXT DECADE

The identification of IFPRI's research, capacity building, and policy communications priorities in Africa follows the criteria that determine the Institute's overall priorities:

1. conformity with IFPRI's mission,
2. focus on emerging issues,
3. alignment with the Institute's dynamic comparative advantage, and
4. responsiveness to priorities of stakeholders and partners.

Points 2 and 4, however, emphasize African issues. They are therefore guided by local institutional and policy developments, including Africa-wide agendas, such as those that form the focus of CAADP and the CGIAR, and priorities set by the primary regional organizations, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA 2006), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS 2004), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC 2004), their member countries, and the related regional research and technical organizations. Maximizing IFPRI's contribution to the efforts underlying these programs—namely, the search for sustainable solutions to end hunger and poverty in Africa—will require the Institute to take a fresh look at old and persistent policy and strategy questions and tackle new and emerging ones.

New and Emerging Food Policy Issues in Africa

The Africa Task Force identified 20 priority research areas. In addition to persistent food policy issues, such as sustainable land and water management, property rights and collective action, and operation and efficiency of domestic markets, priorities address a range of new and re-emerging issues affecting African countries. These include population growth and employment; postconflict and disaster management; governance in the context of increasingly pluralistic and decentralized decisionmaking; aspects of globalization, such as quality information and management systems and safety norms, standards, and certification services; climate change and its implications; and biotechnology and biosafety.

Adjusting Programmatic Focus and Achieving Geographic Balance

IFPRI's 2000–04 Africa portfolio shows that the vast majority of the Institute's projects (84 of 124) dealt with the following five issues:

1. strategies for growth and poverty reduction (34 projects),
2. improving the functioning and efficiency of domestic markets (17 projects),
3. global and regional market access and export opportunities (14 projects),
4. integrated natural resources management (10 projects), and
5. nutrition and health policy linked to agriculture (9 projects).

Most of these are perennial issues. There are, however, other (re)emerging issues that need to be addressed: population growth and employment, biodiversity, climate change, conflicts and rebuilding after crises, food and water safety policies, and information and communication technologies (ICT).

In order to create more focus and scope for synergy, IFPRI has modified its portfolio to target the following eight priority themes according to the Institute's three priority areas (IFPRI 2005b), based on the following criteria: (a) relative importance as a food policy issue among African and other developing countries, (b) perceived size of knowledge gap; and (c) level of IFPRI's comparative advantage.

Priority Area One: Global Food System Functioning

1. Operation and efficiency of domestic and regional markets, particularly agribusiness and export supply-chain development and market access for smallholders
2. Global trade research other than that already carried out at the subregional and country level as part of work under the preceding theme, and, on occasion, analyzing long-term changes of immediate relevance to African countries

Priority Area Two: Global and National Food System Governance

3. Growth and poverty reduction strategies, particularly to improve agriculture-related governance, public expenditure management, infrastructure development, and service delivery in the context of emerging decentralization and political pluralism

4. Institutions and policies for the sustainable management and productivity of natural resources
5. Hunger-related safety nets for disaster and postconflict situations, nutrition policies, and employment creation for vulnerable populations
6. Food and water safety, and health policies linked to agriculture

Priority Area Three: Global Food System Innovations

7. Strategies and policies to improve institutional performance and build capacity in new and emerging areas of science and technology
8. Climate change and its impact on food and poverty

IFPRI will expand and adjust its portfolio in Africa to cover these three priority areas, while seeking the necessary geographic balance to ensure its work in the region has a broad impact. The Institute's approach and analytical tool box will further be adjusted to mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, and other health issues affecting agriculture. Biotechnology and biosafety issues will be addressed as part of work on science and technology institutions and policies, while the relevant aspects of urbanization will be included under the markets and supply chain agenda.

OPERATIONAL EMPHASIS: UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING POSITIVE CHANGE

From a food policy perspective, sustainable strategies aimed at reducing poverty and hunger and improving nutrition in Africa have two requirements: first, access to high-quality information that allows decisionmakers to anticipate and plan for the long term and, second, policy options and solutions that are rooted in the African experience. IFPRI's long-term simulations and projections activities, such as the IMPACT work or occasional analyses of global trade trends (as indicated under the second priority area above) adequately address the first requirement. In the future, these simulations and analyses will be disaggregated to regional and national levels so as to increase their relevance. To satisfy the second requirement, IFPRI's research in

Africa will focus more on learning from what has already—and demonstrably—worked in Africa and on using that knowledge to stimulate broad positive change by identifying options for improving and scaling up these successes. Consequently, in addition to evaluating and understanding causal relationships, the Institute’s research activities will focus more directly on identifying entry points for change, ultimately providing better guidance on strategic and sector-specific policy choices.

Learning From What Has Worked

Recent evidence shows that 28 African countries—accounting for 70 percent of Africa’s population—achieved annual average GDP growth of 3 percent or higher during 1995–2004, and 16 non-oil exporting countries achieved 4 percent or higher average GDP growth during the same timeframe (World Bank 2005). Current estimates also indicate that 5 African countries have already achieved the poverty MDG, while another 10 are on track, and 8 others have recorded reduced poverty head counts (ADB/OECD 2005; World Bank 2005). Furthermore, over the past five years, African countries have recorded higher average overall and agricultural export growth rates than the world average (WTO 2005). Similarly, growth of agricultural exports by volume has been higher in the past five years than at any time since the 1960s (UNCTAD 2005). Finally, a number of commodity-specific, institutional, and technological successes have been identified across Africa (Haggblade 2003; Gabre-Madhin and Haggblade 2003).

A research strategy to encourage and support positive change requires that, in addition to their usual technical inquiries, research projects undertaken by IFPRI help African countries to determine what works, do more of what works, and make what works work better. In other words, projects should also seek to

1. understand and document demonstrated solutions in their area of inquiry based on what has been found to work on the ground;
2. devise packages of options, as well as points of entry, aimed at improving and propagating successes to other sectors and countries; and
3. identify actions to spread benefits as broadly as possible, particularly among the poor and food insecure.

Supporting positive change therefore requires more targeted approaches to research, focusing on learning from successful experiments and experiences on the ground, particularly related to critical success factors, including institutional innovations.

Creating Knowledge Synergies

The extrapolation of success stories is not just constrained by growing complexities in the process of scaling up beyond a certain sector, geographic area, or a group of agents. Constraints often take the form of weaknesses and deficiencies in related sectors that need to be solved. Hence, a strategy of positive change also calls for the creation of knowledge synergies through increased collaboration between IFPRI's research divisions, more direct integration of capacity building and policy communications into research activities, and strategic partnerships to facilitate learning and the transfer and adoption of policy success factors. In part, the need for synergy also explains the clustering of related research issues under a limited number of priority areas in the current strategy. The proposed Africa strategy will ensure that available expertise and experience is systematically integrated into comprehensive policy solutions, thereby enhancing such solutions.

Forging and Deepening Partnerships

Strong operational and strategic partnerships are a critical aspect of the Africa strategy in terms of supporting positive change and the learning and adoption process. IFPRI will seize opportunities provided by the ongoing CGIAR regional MTP processes and the Africa-wide CAADP agenda to forge new partnerships and deepen existing ones. IFPRI already has strong partnerships in East Africa and needs to expand these into West and southern Africa. In addition, partnerships need to be expanded to encompass a wider range of agents—such as those involved in pro-poor agricultural innovation processes as well as the users of policy information—thereby broadening the learning and replication process. Such agents include regional economic communities, parliamentarians, leading farmer organizations, private-sector professional associations, and local governments. The relative weakness of policy research institutions in Africa implies a greater need for policy communications and targeted capacity building, in particular, activities linked to the extension of policy solution models emanating from IFPRI's research.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Successful implementation of the IFPRI Africa strategy, as described in this document, requires certain institute- and division-level actions, as well as actions involving partners and processes in Africa.

Division-Level Actions to Facilitate Thematic, Geographic, and Operational Realignment of Activities in Africa

Division-level activities required as part of the Africa strategy include (a) setting divisional portfolio targets in alignment with this strategy, (b) developing research portfolio pipelines to reach these targets by 2008, and (c) identifying milestones and indicators against which progress toward targets can be evaluated.

Institute-Level Actions to Facilitate Implementation of the Strategy

Institute-level activities required as part of the Africa strategy include (a) establishing an incentive framework to deepen cross-divisional collaboration, (b) implementing a program to improve skills and incentives for team-building and team work, (c) implementing a resource-mobilization strategy to support the necessary divisional fundraising for the new portfolio, and (d) implementing a process to monitor progress.

Actions to Align with Processes and Deepen Partnerships in Africa

Successful implementation of the Africa strategy requires effective alignment with the regional CGIAR MTP processes in ESA and WCA as well as the CAADP implementation processes at regional and individual-country levels. In addition to actions by IFPRI's Africa Coordinator, divisional- and researcher-level involvement is required. This can be achieved by (a) designating a staff liaison, based in one of the current country offices, for each of the ESA and WCA regions, (b) establishing interest or working groups around each of CAADP's four programmatic pillars, and (c) preparing an action plan to solidify and diversify IFPRI's regional- and country-level constituency in Africa for implementation under the direction of the Communications Division. The objective of this last effort is to broaden access to IFPRI's research findings beyond its traditional stakeholder base to include, in particular, parliamentarians, local governments, farmer associations, and private-sector professional organizations, all of which have the ability to influence the decisionmaking process and policymaking agenda.

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