



Strengthening capacities for ARD and enhancing efficiency of the innovation chain

CIPCAD/GCARD final statement and Action Plan

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Capacities' Montpellier Action Plan (CAPMAP 2010-2020)

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The International Workshop on *Challenges & Innovative Processes for Capacity Strengthening in Agriculture for Development* (CIPCAD) was organized as a pre-meeting prior to the GCARD 2010 by AGRINATURA, ICA, CTA and Agropolis International, with the participation of stakeholders from the ARD Regional Platforms, the CGIAR centres, Universities from the South (Africa, Latin America, Asia) and from the North, Research organisations, NGOs and Farmers organisations. This was followed by the *Global Conference for Agricultural Research for Development* where a larger audience could review both the assessment made of the current situation and the solutions that can be envisaged.

During the CIPCAD and the GCARD, some sessions looked at the increasing demand for higher (post graduate and doctoral) education, which puts pressure on higher education institutions' human resources and infrastructure, affecting quality of education. Other sessions focused on less conventional capacity strengthening through continuous education, life-long learning and social learning in multi-stakeholder innovation platforms. Participants could take stock of experiences in the renovation of agricultural education systems, pooling and rationalizing limited resources, leveraging on south-south or south-north partnerships to implement joint and collaborative post-graduate training. They also reviewed effective results in building capacities in and for integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D), assessed achievements and charted the road ahead if enabling environments for rural innovation are to be created.

Significant progress has been made. What is now needed is to up- and out-scale efforts. Participants believe that:

- Integrated strengthening of national capacity building systems in agriculture is a key milestone to address the challenges discussed during the GCARD.
- The recently increased attention to higher education and strengthening the capacities after many years of neglect is welcome, but many institutions for this purpose are in the South are still weak.
- Funding, partnerships, leveraging, and long-term two-way commitment are required to strengthen the capacity of local institutions, while Universities and training centers, on their part, need to demonstrate their commitment to both upstream and downstream development needs.
- Research, education and development must be well-connected to keep education relevant. Research however Research need to be end-user oriented and universities need to strengthen their engagement in the innovation process.
- Multi-stakeholder platforms are important and necessary as both capacity building and innovation fora. The facilitation of such processes, recognized as a public good, should be funded by government and other donors.
- Farmers, traders, transporters, processors, and all those involved in the innovation process, are important stakeholders in deciding agendas and contributing knowledge to research and development endeavours.
- All stakeholders could serve as catalysts for long-term programs that are jointly-owned and implemented instead of short-term ones.
- A shift in mindsets is necessary for these efforts to be made.

Capacity strengthening

Our first premise is that holistic capacity development plans at national and regional levels can be built from the assessment of the current institutions and training systems and with the mobilization of all the actors of the current innovation chain into development plans. Our second premise is that capacity strengthening goes beyond simple training in IAR4D, to create enabling environments to learn from joint experience and implement changes. Capacity strengthening is implicit in partnership building. Finally, policy reforms are needed, but they should also be combined with concrete actions and practical innovations on the ground.

Capacity building issues need to be included in clear and coherent policies for research, education, rural development. They need to be part of any programme, not only for target groups but also implementing institutions. Internal quality assurance mechanisms need to be embedded into learning systems at all levels of the chain, based on qualitative indicators.

IAR4D capacities can only be strengthened through:

- Recognition of stakeholders' existing competencies and skills
- Reviewing and harmonizing university policies to enhance collaborative training and education.
- Institutional analyses to support demand-driven and tailor-made learning packages (fit-for-purpose) to optimize action.
- Learning from practice, by "getting the field to the 'class-room'" and vice-versa, in processes combining learning from experiences, reflection and documentation
- Recognising and rewarding equally the involvement of staff in both research (applied and basic) programs and in R&D
- Combining different methods relevant to the context and needs (graduate and postgraduate trainings, seminars, coaching and e-learning, work-based learning, etc)
- Specific emphasis on facilitation skills, with training of local facilitators and their coaching.
- Strengthening universities' efforts to develop ICT infrastructure and e-learning facilities to manage joint degrees and enhance research and networking

Renovating Capacity Building Systems and Building Platforms for Collective Learning and Innovation

A large programme for the renovation of the capacity building systems for IAR4D should be launched.

Exhaustive diagnosis of more institutions and systems in more countries are needed, considering the huge needs for professional training in agriculture for the future, and based on the lessons learned from the successful previous experiences. Important needs of capacity building required by the challenges can only be fulfilled by putting all

stakeholders into active partnerships, including academics, private sector, NGOs, successful agriproducers and smallholders. In the Universities, curricula should be reformed to emphasize non-technical capacity development like value of social and human skills, communication and negotiation skills and leadership competence. Finally, there is still a need for reviewing and harmonizing university policies to enhance collaborative training and education. New partnerships between Northern and Southern Universities should be extended, such as offering joint degrees, sandwich programmes and conducting joint research. Efforts should be strengthened to develop ICT infrastructure and e-learning facilities to enhance research and networking.

Several IAR4D learning platforms exist, e.g. those created by FARA in the framework of the Sub-Sahara Africa Challenge Programme. Their experience, once fully documented and analysed will provide useful guidelines for other projects. In the context of IAR4D, multi-stakeholder platforms are important in establishing value chains, identifying and analysing needs pertaining to:

- Complex problems affecting their members
- Exchange of experiences and joint learning
- Advocacy for institutional, policy changes and funding
- Resource mobilization
- Capacity strengthening.

Four broad cross-cutting and inter-related issues have been discussed that need attention if we are to support effective institutional reforms and build effective platforms:

- Capacities, especially those of trainers and facilitators, to enhance members' learning
- Governance issues of power, responsibilities and decision making within institutions and among platform members;
- Documenting best practices: making inventories of existing innovative experiences and the lessons to be drawn from their experiences;
- Sustainable funding: finding ways to make higher education and professional training less donor-dependent.

Effective and efficient training institutions as well as Multi-Stakeholder Platforms are a critical element in the success of the Mega Programmes and in “what is new” in the CGIAR. Considerable experience exists with capacity strengthening of such systems. However, much of this experience is with organisations outside the CGIAR. The envisaged CG “Platform for Capacity Strengthening, Learning and Knowledge Sharing” is therefore strongly encouraged to form partnerships with the concerned non-CG organisations in the new spirit of the CGIAR. The greatest added value of this CG Platform would be in mobilising this non-CG experience for providing capacity strengthening support to the Mega Programmes and in promoting learning between CG and non-CG partners on the “how to” of capacity strengthening.

Recommendations for Priority Programmes : the Capacities' Montpellier Action Plan (CAPMAP 2010-2020)

In order to help up-scale present capacity strengthening experiences at the scale required in the envisaged Mega Programmes, and well beyond, it is proposed to launch:

- ✓ **A GCARD-2010 Montpellier initiative : *Building Capacities for Capacity Building, to launch a vast programme of support and development of regional Poles of excellence in ARD*** in each of the sub regions as defined by the regional platforms (APAARI, AARINENA, CACAARI, FARA and FORAGRO) in the next 3-4 years.
- ✓ **A GCARD-2010 Montpellier Multi-Stakeholder Platform Programme (MMSPP)** to set up and strengthen the capacity of 150 MSPs – 30 in each of the regions covered by APAARI, AARINENA, CACAARI, FARA and FORAGRO in the next 3-4 years.

These programme should be based on:

- Broad complementary partnerships between organisations with experience in Higher education and MSPs
- A participatory assessment of the existing capacity building systems in agriculture in a number of priority countries.
- Capitalising on existing successful experiences, lessons learnt from these and good practices, and experimenting with these approaches in different environments (political, social, cultural, environmental, geographical).

- Redefining the role of all the actors of the innovation chain in agriculture, research and extension, public and private.
- Engaging these actors in the agricultural innovation value chain in learning platforms and lifelong learning processes.
- Use of competitive grants schemes to promote stakeholder initiative in catalysing the reform of HEI and the development of new multi-stakeholder platforms and increase space in existing competitive grant schemes to provide similar incentives.

Milestones for looking at the progresses of CAPMAP 2010-2020

Planned events and meetings will be used to assess the progresses made in the implementation of the CAPMAP 2010-2020:

- Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Africa, 15-19 November 2010, Kampala, Uganda
- The 7th Global Conference of GCHERA : *Universities of Agriculture: Key players of sustainable development*, June 29 to July 2, 2011, Institute Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais, France
- GCARD 2012 , 2014, 2016 and 2018