

ORCA discussion forum - Week 3 Summary

A focus of our third week was on the selection criteria and selection process, including priorities for ORCA funding.

The following suggestions were made:

- ORCA should prioritize centers in the tropics as these are under-represented in existing institutions.
- Certain topics, such as soil and water management, should be included in the selection process.
- We should name specific institutions that could take on roles as centers so they can be involved in the ORCA design phase.
- There should be a fund for developing human resources capacity in developing countries.
- A priority should be on knowledge transfer and capacity-building.

There was also a continuation of previous discussion topics:

- It was suggested that ORCA have a strong capacity for monitoring and evaluation.
- In addition to soils, one participant felt there should be focus on pests and diseases in each agroecological center.
- Suggestions were made for specific types of experts to be included on the facilitation board.
- There was a proposal for a participatory planning workshop for ORCA to fully identify the needs of the organic agriculture community. – It is our hope that this forum can in a small way serve a similar purpose.
- One participant questioned whether ecological centers should really be geographic areas of interest.
- A suggestion was made to elevate the issue of climate change – should that be brought into each center, should it become its own center, be moved to the Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems center, or is it appropriately located under Coastal and Small Island Ecosystems?
- One participant suggested use of computers, cell phones, radio and other technology to disseminate OA knowledge in remote areas.
- As in previous weeks, some noted that sociological considerations are lacking. How can social sciences best be integrated into the ORCA design?

As we move into the final week of our discussion, we ask that all participants join the conversation. Many of those registered for the forum have yet to comment. Our goal in organizing this Forum was to provide open access to discussion of ORCA and allow for participatory design. We know each and every one of you has valuable experience to share. The list of fundamental questions has many ripe topics for discussion and we are certain there are many more topics worthy of dialogue.