ISC Vetting discussion on 28 June 2017

Ramni

- No harmonize way to transmit the information
- Discrepancy of the information between center finance and FP leader
- What does the mapping mean to donors? How to we portray it so that it is meaningful for them?
- Should we have a process to share this info and make it visible to our donors
- What is the incentive and what are the gaps with this information
- Huge transaction cost to go through all this information? How do we deal with this? Grands management offices can help FP leaders?
- Are we exploiting beyond the sum of the parts? Identifying opportunities for joint proposals is happening at minuscule levels.
- How to map joint bilaterals to different FPs and CRPs, needs to be sorted out.
- Mapping sometimes is done by finance people and FP leaders do not know
- If the grants are approved, they are mapped by osmosis, but no organized process
- There is not much happening at the level of junior scientists?
- Finding ways to make communication with team more effective
- Purpose of CRPS is about cross center collaboration
- Does everything needs to be mapped to a CRP?

Christopher

- No ownership currently of the research.
- Depends on us FP leaders making this happen. Depends on funding for the superstructure.

AMI

- Do you want to continue to be a CRP on paper? Or do you want to engage in joint planning and joint execution amongst partners? Or do you want to include?

Pablo

- FTA is not a CRP on paper. People work because they share common objectives and targets. We have lost a lot of people.
- There will be less incentives to be part of the program. Choice to map projects? How many benefits can you get from being mapped to a CRP or another? How strong is the social capital to be part of a program?
- Keep transaction cost low, tight approach on the process.
- Keep project mapped above a certain size
- Portfolio management and reporting is

- Process should be based on trust and rely on management structure.
- Issue is how to map projects to FPs. We are not fully aligned with the FP outcomes and targets
- Mapping is to be linked with prioritization and fundraising.

Peter Minang

- No problem in ICRAF. ICRAF is saying what is mapped to FP leaders.
- The problem is more on reporting.
- Looking at portfolio is better than project?
- We did not prioritize groups around the science. We have not involved the scientists.
- Incentive should not be financial, be part of a bigger group, that gathers
- Incentive is about social capital.
- How right or wrong is mapping to A or B? Business of CoAs to understand what they have as projects? Where are the gaps, what are the synergies areas that we produce, opportunities for cross joint works?

Peter Holmgren

- Need to have more interest and self-incentive to drive the collaboration. We are pampering researchers.
- Incentives should not be about providing DSA to get to meetings.
- It is for this group to create the value to be part of the program

Fergus

- It is a two-way process.

Pablo

- Incentive is not for monitoring

Fergus

- Existential question is whether I am in FTA or not
- Problems:
  - o Information gaps at different places within FTA: scientists are not aware that projects are mapped and therefore this has influence on how we project ourselves outwards
  - o Reporting issues/implications
  - o No clarity about the added value of being part of FTA.
  - o There has to been sufficient finance to enable connection amongst people, for committmemt
  - o No boundary conditions for what is collectively part of FTA or not

- o Branding issues
- All this might lead to missed opportunities (partners, impact, funding)
- Action:
    - o What should be the criteria and process (criteria by whom?)
    - o Should not be difficult , efficient / low transaction costs
    - o Needs to be streamlined across FTA
    - o Knowledge management role that we're not doing well at the moment.
- Criteria:
    - o Has to have some research
    - o Minimum size
    - o Clear fit with ToC
    - o Linkages with IPGs
    - o Can include subcontracts (no need to be leader of a project)
    - o Project needs to have capacity to deliver (might be at project level?)

Fergus

Need for synthesis at CRP level: what is the need for synthesis on key issues

Flagship program performance assessment

AMI:

- How much is a FP progressing towards the realization of the impact pathways? How is it contributing to the ToC of the CRP? Without too many transaction costs? With a very strong feedback loop which is the learning dimension?
- Why do we need performance assessment ? to learn?
- What do we think makes sense in terms of performance assessment and management at the FP level? Performance management is the context in which we need to have performance assessment. The ultimate objective is to increase the performance of the CRPs.

Brian

- Scientist feel loaded with a lot of extra responsibilities : higher level outcomes? Is the structure OK to deal with this?

Fergus
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- Analyzing problem: PA&M. what are we measuring and assessing the performance of?
    - o CRP, FPs, regions (place based)? partners, office bearers, MT, ISC, lead center?
    - o Internal reflection / assessment versus external evaluation / change?

- o ISC has a performance assessment in place
- o Self assessment of portfolio management by the MT to be done.
- o Management system will look at FP performance against indicators
- o For office bearers (FP leader, CCT, CRP director): CRP director feeds into the partners' HR assessment system. annual
- o Process required if a problem arises, there is a need for a process
- o Need for an explicit set of rules and engagement. There are PPAs, but no effective document on what it means being a partner.
- o Need to assess partners as well, at FP level and CRP level.

- What are you getting in terms of sum beyond the individual contributions, beyond IPGs and impact.

- Indicators: IPGs, outputs, outcomes, impact. Measure against expectations. Issue on how to document the IPG dimension? (IPGs are aggregation of outputs in some ways: it will need to be a narrative). Collection of individual outputs in IPGs is constrainted. Needs to be better articulated in the ToC.

- What is a CRP-level performance? collective level funding (W2), branding, recognition, synthesis across FPs. What is FTA beyond the performance of the flagships?

- Knowledge management system issue, will be central to evaluation, learning. Need to do it adequately and well. Measure against, outputs, outcomes, impact and IPGs. Timeframe and level of ambition.

Christopher

- Objective is also to better bring FTA together: there could be an indicator on program building. How cohesive the program works?
- We should be putting together joint proposals on bilateral funding.
- Move away from a punitive use, towards a more positive and learning role.
- Small sums of money should be used to develop larger proposals, good way to grow the program.
- Cross FP program integration, joint proposal, partnerships.

AMI

Need for a list of categories outputs.
Innovations technologiques
Recommandations de politiques
Publications
Innovation en politiques

Germplasm
Outcome stories

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FP leadership ToRs engagement discussion

Peter Minang

Question : what happens after 2 years ?
How to replace if a FP leader resigns or quits? What a the rules?
Need for a transparent process to ensure legitimacy

Roles of FP leader: science leadership + administrative role
250k/for FP activity
50k/cluster

There are legitimate costs:
- Coordination
- Cluster leadership
- Annual meeting of FPs for collegiality and team spirit

Rest of funding for FPs can be needs based. Costs can be negociated.

Cross FP allocation budget at the level of the director.

ToRs to be reviewed and agreed to at MT level

FP leader role needs to be included in the perf assessment of the staff.

Appointment of FP leaders: MT to decide on criteria, and make the decision. If no consensus, then goes up to ISC.

Candidature needs to be made by a center, together with an engagement to support the FP leaders.

Pablo

Nomination of candidates for FPs: process needs to be transparent, open, rigorous.

Who nominates the CoA coordinators. There are different approaches between FPs. The process should be within the FP but some guidance.

What responsibilities for FP leaders? 25% of time, 3 months is reasonable.

In ccafs, there are program managers to support FP leaders. A few months of persons to help the FP leaders in the coordination. Specific support in communication for the FPs.

Process to evaluate the FP coordinators. CCT leaders should be assessed by FP leaders as well (not only director).

ToR need to include the strengthening of integration between FPs.

Communication – Series of concept notes to integrate the work of the FPs.

Strategic Partners : what are the criteria? MT assessed the relevance… IIASA and Stockholm Environment Institute did also candidate. Managing partners. There is not a common understanding between a PPAs and strategic partner.

Partner nominate a candidate: should it be the merit of the individual, or also the reputation of the center – functional commitment? Pablo: Merit only. AMI: the rules of engagement?

Ravi: below a certain threshold of bilaterals, you cannot be a strategic partner.

AMI: employer to provide support to the FP leader.

Fergus: not all the partners understand what is required… Need to be clear on the commitment on the FP. Criterion needs to be there. Pre-financing, time 25% for coordination, 10% of portfolio (Ravi)… + 50% of time in mapped research. Need to be flexible and be able to answer

Christopher

Selection : leadership needs to come for CG centers. FPs allocated to other (non-CG) partners could generate inequalities. Are FP earmarked for specific partners?

ToRs : no need to discuss this broadly. Many things

Full time position allocation would be ideal. Would need to have huge subsidies for the centers. 25% is a lower estimate given the level of bureaucracy. Including synthetizing elements. Can we put some of the bureaucracy work in the MSU?

FP leaders are also themes leader in their centers. There is no command line with CoA leaders.

Provide more space for what FTA should be doing, which is synthetizing FTA research.

Joint fundraising: FP leaders should make the effort when they have also the hat of them leader for their center.

Priority setting.

AMI: need for shared priorities. Create better buy-in in ==how they fit in something much bigger==.

AMI: What kind of process does FTA need to allocate W1+2 on transparent manner.

AMI: Not to create additional transaction costs.

Seek a process that is concrete, transparent, implementable, as rapidly as possible.. there are as number of assessment and reports that have come up in the past 5-6-7 which explicitly mentioned Forestry, agroforestry, which have assessed research gaps, doing a synthesis of research gaps identified would give FTA a range of programmatic areas.

Question in front of the management team: what is the smallest set that FTA wants to focus on?

The antithesis of what RTB did (ex-ante assessments). They are many ways, no right, no wrong, what is fit for purpose?

Vincent: the process and outcome could be a communication product to FTA, what are the priorities of the program, etc..

AMI: things are more important and more urgent.

Fergus: there are a lot of documents that state what research needs to be done - > global analysis already exist, which identify research gaps. Some of them are referred to in the proposal (at different places). But ISPC questioned where did these research gaps come from.

Peter Minang: prioritizing for fundraising opportunities as well.. Using the knowledge of donor priorities. Developmental challenges..

Need for a synthesis of the global analyses available.

1) Collation of global analysis and research gaps.
2) Apply our comparative advantage
3) Apply knowledge of donor context and demand / priorities
4) Needs a critical path analysis (CPA) given the aspirations to impact.
5) Gives an articulated path of priorities.

Vincent to steer the process involving people in the CRP.
Would confirm what is in the proposal

Output of that process and level of granularity of the document?

Different tiers for the priority:
- new research / cutting edge
- existing research / incremental
- foresight studies, exploratory.
- Placed-based research

Nested priorities

Alain: Foresight needs to contribute to setting the demand.   Research gaps are inside the CRPs.
Use of foresight studies to add a dimension.
Use of foresight studies to add a common view of the future.

There are critical assumptions that are contentious (smallholder farmers).

Process needs to be credible.

Marie de Lattre – strengthen the relation with CIRAD.

Fergus : "feel good moment" → Easter 2018. High level event to launch.

Vincent: need to be reasonable with calendar

Entry points for FP?

Priorities

Ramni

Problem: why? These? How?
Priorities are not converging, they are not focused.
What do we need?

Need some foresight studies. Tools for economic assessment etc..

What do we really need?
1.Impact or visibility…
2. Research. Vulnerability assessment
3. Ex ante impact analysis
4. Feasibility
5. Comparative advantage?

What has CCAFS done: they have used impact model.

MCDA models, APSOM, expert opinion, expert consultations.

What are the key things?

Pathways from flagships, low hanging fruits? + Expert opinion, expert consultations. Selecting the pathways?

FP leaders plus CCT leaders have to pick up the best pathways / products that they want to show up? → Coherence, focus and integration.

Brian: There has been a lot of prioritization in the proposal. The overall portfolio does not respect the priorities of the proposal. ==Difficult to say that a pathway is superior to another== one. Take the current set of the CRP, FPs, CoA, and what is the real core, most important elements? Are they gaps and can we reallocate resources, or put more in other activities?

More an incremental process. New model will not solve it all. Need to do a very pragmatic: what are the most important elements and which part should be trimmed.

Fergus

Pb is that we did not have clearly articulated a mechanism for priorities. There are a lot of global analysis that exist. A lot of research gaps. Filter those, look at our comparative advantage in FTA. Integrate donor priorities.

++> FTA priority research gaps.

Add a critical path analysis with respect to the impacts claims.

+++> FTA priority research investments = nested set of priorities (which will include foresight elements, incremental research, and placed-based operational research = research being used).

+++> Result can also be used to change donors priorities (demand)

--→ note will be used in September.

-→ Director to produce a quick and dirty summary for september

-→ launch FTA priorities at a high level event in May – June 2018. (position paper to be a hot commodity to be published in PNAS or other).

AMI: we were not able to explain to ISPC where the FTA shopping list comes from.

This is to address the current absence of a justified list of priorities..

--- > Application proof of concept

Ravi: what is missing is a coherent explanation of what has been done implicitly. Expert opinion was used. A lot of experts are in FTA. Need to credit and capitalize on the expert opinion that exist in the program. Series of expert consultations in FTA.. description post hoc to provide the rationalization.

Ravi: need to modulate the framework analysis. Where the rationale does come out.

IEA review on FTA..

Vincent: FP leaders to send material

AMI: FP leaders to be consulted on the proposed process.

Summary by Anne-Marie

- Portfolio approach rather than looking at things marginally
- No FP should be a silo
- FTA should have a greater coherence, how things will coalesce.
- Synergies, value added. Social capital will become more tangible.
- We are just a little step away in the grand scheme of things.
- Who is the owner of FTA? Synthesizing the overall significance of phase 1.
- Emphasis on cross learning
- Assessing the performance of programs is in spirit of drawing lessons and improving the performance of FTA.
- How do we make evident that FTA is moving in the right direction.
- W1+2 is extremely low, but there are things we can do to move towards greater cohesion.
- ISC will decide tomorrow to build on the inputs and feedbacks.