

CGIAR Research Programme on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)

ISC Roundtable Workshop with Flagship Leaders

28 June 2017, FAO HQ, Rome

D R A F T Minutes (V1)

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FTA: Ramni Jamnadass (RJ, FP1 Leader), Fergus Sinclair (FS, FP2 Leader), Pablo Pacheco (PP, FP3 Leader), Peter Minang (PM, interim FP4 Leader), Christopher Martius (CM, FP5 Leader), Brian Belcher (BB, MELIA Leader), Monika Kiczakajlo (MK, FTA Management Support Unit).

Apologies: Joyeeta Gupta (ISC member)

On 28 June 2017, the ISC Chair invited the 5 FP Leaders and the MELIA Lead to a series of roundtable discussions with the ISC, to know their views and suggestions on four key topics: 1) bilateral projects mapping mechanism, 2) performance assessment within FTA, 3) rules of engagement of FP Leaders and CCT Leaders, and 4) priority setting process.

This note summarizes the discussions, including a list of decisions. It includes the reports written by the Rapporteurs of the break-out sessions.

The four topics were discussed sequentially, each including parallel break-out groups discussions to improve interactivity and the harvesting of more views. Each break-out group contained at least one FP Leader, who reported back to the plenary group. Each topic was discussed on the basis of questions laid down in the ISC Chair invitation note and of the background documents.

The ISC Chair noted that there was no expectation initially how this session would evolve and that it actually proved to be extremely useful, very open and constructive. The ISC was impressed by the willingness of FP Leaders to engage intellectually. The FPs Leaders comments throughout the day highlighted that more effort should be directed to integration among FPs and CCTs. There was also emphasis on cross learning, drawing lessons and improving overall performance of FTA.

1) Bilateral project mapping

The discussion resulted in a better joint understanding of the nature of the “mapping” problem, current practices within FTA, and points needed to be solved. The current procedure (which would lead to all mapping decisions being made by the D/FTA after a review by MT) has never been enforced. Also, it lacks clear guidelines and criteria, and there are still different mapping approaches within FTA’s FPs.

FP leaders emphasized that mapping has important reporting implications, and there is no clear value-addition for a FP leader of mapping a project to FTA. As a result, there is currently a lack of consideration to FTA from the part of project investigators, and a lack of ownership of being part of FTA. This leads to missed opportunities in fundraising and leveraging program –level value added.

There was a consensus that the mapping process is to be revised to provide more ownership and also more control on what ends up being “in the CRP”, and to ensure a “portfolio of projects” approach. It is up to FP leaders to “make this happen”, so that the program is not only happening on paper.

Finally, participants expressed concerns about the decreasing financial incentive, in terms of core funding being available to flagships and partners, of being part of FTA. FP leaders agreed they should feel concerned about the need for collective action to trigger appropriate funding for the superstructure of the program

Decision:

ISC6/Workshop/D1: The ISC requested FTA management to revise the note on the mapping process, taking into account the points that arose from the roundtables. This is to be presented to ISC for further discussion and approval by virtual means.

2) Performance assessment within FTA

The discussion identified the main reasons why performance assessment is needed, and why a collective motivation should emerge to support it: continuous performance improvement and learning, better program integration, enforcement of program engagement rules, promoting a feeling of accountability, fairness and transparency. However, scientists feel loaded with a lot of extra responsibilities *vis-a-vis* performance, especially towards reaching higher level outcomes: is the structure helping researchers to deal with this?

A consensus emerged that the performance assessment process should not be financially punitive nor should it be backwards looking. Rather it should be a forward oriented tool which effectively leads to performance improvement. Performance assessment should not be seen in isolation but as part of performance management. It should reward and incentivize integration activities (such as joint proposals etc..) and cross learning (between parts and components of the program), and the generation of International Public Goods (IPGs). Better performing FPs and/or partners within FTA could receive an advantage in the prioritization mechanism when deciding on future POWBs.

The way FTA should revise its set of indicators, and how it should or should not be linked to the set of indicators at CGIAR portfolio level, was also discussed. There was consensus that FTA’s knowledge management system will be instrumental to performance assessment and management. For this, there is a need to adequately set measures for outputs, outcomes, impacts and IPGs.

Decisions:

ISC6/Workshop/D2 : The ISC requested FTA management to finalize with FP leaders the harmonized set of FTA POWB indicators, for further discussion and review by ISC.

ISC6/Workshop/D3 : The ISC requested FTA management to revise the performance assessment note, refining the proposed process given the discussions in the workshop, for further for further discussion and review by ISC.

3) Rules of engagement of FP leaders and CCT leaders

Participants discussed ownership of FPs and agreed that recruitment of a FP leader should be open and transparent, and that all partners should be invited to nominate candidates.

The desired full time equivalent engagement of FP leaders was discussed. 25% was perceived as a minimum, knowing that in practice the task is much more time demanding. The partner employing a FP leader must guarantee that it pre-finances the position, as program-level resources to cover staff time can be disbursed to the partner only late in a calendar year. Participants agreed that a FP leader should *in addition to the time as FP leader*, have a minimum of 50% of his/her time dedicated to research in the CRP.

The ToRs of the FP leaders were discussed. FP leaders thought the ToRs should put more emphasis on integration between FPs, as well as on their responsibility to stimulate collective fundraising initiatives.

The evaluation of the performance of FP leaders was discussed. It was agreed that their role as FP leader needs to be included in the ToRs given to them by their employer, and included in the employer's staff performance assessment, to which the D/FTA should be invited to contribute (for the part related to the role of FTA FP leader). The principle of an appointment of FP leaders for 2 years, with their extension conditional to a positive performance evaluation (as per the current ToRs), was criticized by FP leaders.

The appointment decision of a FP leader could be done by consensus at the level of the Management Team of FTA, and arbitrated by the Director in case of lack of consensus in the MT. This could be inserted in the ToRs of the MT, that will need to be reviewed after the new ISC ToRs are approved by CIFOR's BoT.

Participants agreed on the need for guidelines for the selection of Cluster of Activity (CoA) coordinators since there is not a common practice and different approaches among FPs exist.

Decisions:

ISC6/Workshop/D4 : ISC requested FTA management to revise the ToRs and Rules of Engagement of FP leaders taking into account outcomes of the round table discussions, for ISC approval. The new rules will be used to appoint the new FP leader of FP4. The employing centers of the other FP leaders will be asked to formally agree to conform to the new rules of engagement.

ISC6/Workshop/D5 : The ISC requested FTA leadership to revise the composition and ToRs of the Management Team, for ISC approval, given the discussions in this workshop and the new ISC ToRs and RoP.

ISC6/Workshop/D6 : The ISC suggested that FTA should elaborate guidelines for the recruitment of CoA leaders, for approval by FTA's MT, as these will not need formal ISC approval.

4) Priority setting process

Participants discussed the rationale for using W1+2 funds and the mechanism to decide upon priority uses. The disadvantages of the current absence of a clear and transparent priority setting process, requested by ISPC, were discussed, including the fact that it gave the impression of a program solely driven by bilateral resources. Participants stressed that during the write-up of the proposal, expert opinion was used to identify priorities, but that indeed a coherent and explicit justification of why something was a priority was missing.

Participants discussed a process by which priority themes could be selected. The process should also help select the set of bilateral projects "mapped" to FTA (see discussion item 1).

The two break-out groups proposed as follows:

- One group suggested the use of decision tools and models, such as the IMPACT model, to identify priority areas for research investment. The idea of quantitative ex-ante assessments was challenged in plenary discussions, as it has been used by other CRPs and has not proved particularly effective, whilst it is very costly to develop and implement (in terms of scientists' time). Also, there are many such models, all with an arbitrary component linked to the assumptions made in the different models.
- The other group suggested that priorities should be based upon four elements:
 - i. a forward looking review of the main trends and challenges that bear on forests, trees and agroforestry, their role and potential towards ensuring food security and nutrition, addressing climate change and fostering sustainable development,
 - ii. a review of the associated knowledge and research gaps as identified in relevant major international scientific assessments and foresight studies,
 - iii. a review of the demands and priorities of countries and stakeholders, as expressed in key agreements at international and national level, including development gaps,
 - iv. the identification of FTA's comparative advantage.

These four elements should be synthesized and woven together and this synthesis will constitute a first prioritization level for 'big' priority themes, probably spanning across FPs.

Work/activities under each big theme would then be further prioritized by assessing how they would comparatively perform as part of the key impact pathways of FTA through a "critical path analysis", and against the dimensions of quality of research for development.

The whole process should lead to the identification of the highest quality and most impactful set of activities over time.

In terms of implementation, participants also highlighted the need for an incremental process, taking the current set of activities in FTA as starting points, and to decide, based on priorities, what is the most important part of it, and which part should be trimmed.

The prioritization process would lead to the emergence of priority themes (e.g: restoration) in the framework of the proposal. It would lead to understanding how the priority themes link to the different FPs, and to the definition of an actionable set of activities.

Participants discussed the challenge of operating a large program with limited “core” resources, at circa 10% of program-level resources when at the creation of the portfolio CRPs were meant to operate with approximately 30% of core. W1+2 resource should serve three purposes:

- i. leadership, coordination, including providing the means for scientists to collectively (i.e. across FPs and partners) and strategically orient the offer of bilateral projects portfolio,
- ii. program-level cross cutting activities, and,
- iii. implementation of a short list of substantive strategic research themes and activities (possibly transversal to many FPs) of high priority to FTA.

The sharp decline in program-level resources (from USD 28m in 2014 to a finplan of 8.8m in 2017) creates significant challenges for management and coordination, and diminishes the levers towards program-alignment and value added. This reinforces the need to apply these resources as strategically and wisely as possible to enable the program to work as a program. However, participants warned about the risk of creating a big machinery to do so, as it would grieve transaction costs, and could lead to perverse effects in terms of efficiency.

The financial implications of what has been the practice for funds allocation within FTA was also discussed: it leaves two partners, CIFOR and ICRAF, with a much greater share than others. Participants noted that this was not necessarily a problem to correct, as this reflects differentiated responsibilities in the program. Other noted that for CIFOR, it reflects the specific, additional responsibilities of being the lead center, needing among others to bear the costs of the MSU.

Finally, participants expressed the views that the priority setting process should not only serve for the allocation of program-level resources, but also to guide collective fundraising opportunities as well.

Decision

ISC6/Workshop/D7 : The ISC requested the FTA management to work on a draft of the proposed prioritization process based upon the discussions in the workshop, which reached a consensus about the way forward. ISC will discuss and approve said process so it can be used in the preparation of the 2018 POWB

REPORTS FROM THE RAPPORTEURS OF THE BREAK-OUT GROUPS DISCUSSIONS

1) Bilateral projects vetting mechanism

Problem Statement

ISC approved last year a general approach for vetting bilateral projects into FTA. Participants were asked to discuss how this process is working, whether it needs improvements to ensure alignment of the vetting process with the priority setting mechanism. How to conduct bilateral projects mapping in an effective manner and without creating transaction costs?

1.1 Break-out Group 1, Rapporteur Ramni

- Discrepancy on project data between Center Finance vs FP Leaders: no harmonized way to transmit the information;
- There is no organized process for mapping grants. If they are approved to be part of the FP, they are mapped to the CRP by “osmosis”, there is no organized process for this.
- Sometimes a FP Leader is not even aware that grant was mapped to his/her FP as mapping was decided by someone else, e.g. finance unit; This can lead to discrepancy of information between center finance, FP leaders, and MSU.
- What does the mapping mean to donors? Should we have a process of sharing this info and making it visible and meaningful to donors?
- There is a huge transaction cost to go through all this information. We need to find ways to facilitate gathering the information at a Center level or FP level, to lower this cost, e.g. engage Grants Management Units at center level, to support FP leaders;
- How to map joint bilaterals to different FPs and CRPs? Currently no criteria;
- Have overarching CGIAR Quality or Research for Development/ QoR4D framework (of which FTA supported the elaboration) as a guiding document;
- Finding ways to make communication with teams more effective;
- FTA happens at leadership level, science happens on the ground;
- People are often not aware they are part of FTA, but it is not problem with mapping. Bring scientists together (last science meeting three years ago). Important to ensure FTA is not just program on paper, but real global research program with joint meetings, planning, concept notes writing etc.
- We should remember that the purpose of CRPs is about cross -center collaboration, and mapping should take this into account;
- Is it necessary to map all grants to a CRP?
- Identifying opportunities for joint proposals are currently happening at minuscule levels.

1.2 Break-out Group 2, Rapporteur Pablo

- FTA has been called by some a “program on paper”. But it is not, as people work together as share common objectives and targets; however some FP leaders emphasized that they had 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? would it still be beneficial to be mapped at all to a CRP?
- Lower the transaction costs, map only large projects.
- Problem is not mapping but portfolio management and reporting;
- 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;
- Process of mapping should be related to prioritization and fundraising;
- Looking at portfolio is better than looking at projects - to adopt portfolio approach;
- No need to spend effort on grants/scientists that are not interested in belonging to FTA portfolio. Need to have more interest and self-incentive to drive the collaboration. We should not be pampering researchers. Incentives should not be about providing DSA to get to meetings. The set of FP leaders should have for objective with the Director to create value to be part of the program;
- It is important to have incentives, they don't need to be financial. It could be being part of the group that meets, social capital is important;
- CoAs should understand the projects they have, what areas they cover, synergy areas in terms of what is produced and gaps addressed, what is the rationale of mapping, and if to why to A or B?
- There should be space for cross-proposal analyses;
- How mapping is done at ICRAF: ICRAF informs FP Leaders what is mapped to their FPs.

1.3 Break-out Group 3, Rapporteur Fergus

Problem

- There are information gaps at different places within FTA e.g. scientists not aware their projects are mapped to FTA. One of consequences is not associating themselves and projects deliverables with FTA;
- The mapping has important reporting implications, and there is no clarity of the value added value of a project belonging to FTA?;
- There has not been sufficient funds to enable connections among people and create commitment;
- There has not always been sufficient resources to operate a flagship;
- Issue of criteria and boundary conditions, what are the rules to be in/out?
- There is lack of awareness of being part to FTA and associated lack of branding;
- All these issues may lead to missed opportunities in fundraising, partnership, making collective impact.

Action:

- More efficient streamlined mapping system across partners;
- Knowledge management role (that we're not doing well at the moment) and links to information gaps;
- Reduce transaction costs and make them transparent.

Criteria:

- Projects should focus on research, if they are purely development (no research component) they should not be mapped to FTA;
- Should be aligned with FTA ToC;
- Should have minimum size;
- Should include IPG element;
Can include subcontracts, no need to be leader of the project to be mapped;
Clearly managing capacity through time – project should have capacity to deliver.

2) Flagship program performance assessment

Problem statement

How can FTA assess the performance of each FP in a transparent and equitable manner? The process used in 2016 was a transitional process and has been criticised by two key partners as not sufficiently transparent. FTA needs such a process, which should reflect a common understanding of expectations within the CRP. If possible, progress on a set of FTA indicators that are aligned with FTA's research for development priorities and that will also be used for the POWB and in FTA's Annual monitoring reports to the SMO.

Introduction by the ISC Chair

- How much is a FP contributing to Theory of Change (ToC) of FTA?
- How much is a FP progressing towards the realization of the impact pathway? Can we capture that? Can it be measured without creating high transaction costs?
- Why do we need a performance assessment? The first objective of performance assessment is to learn, and the ultimate objective is to increase the overall performance of FTA.
- Cross-FP program integration. Objective is also to bring FTA together: there could be an indicator on program building. How cohesive the program works? FPs to be developing together joint proposals on bilateral funding.
- Move away from a punitive use towards a more positive and learning role.
- Donors are interested in performance improving dimension. If we have good way for managing performance with the purpose to improve the overall performance of FTA, it should make possible to sell it to donors and system.

- Distinguish performance assessment and performance management, which is the overall frame within which we need to have a performance assessment process.

2.1 Break-out group 1, PM, RJ, FM, BB, AMI, CM, MK, Rapporteur: Christopher

Problem:

- We want to be able to demonstrate FTA performance to the CGIAR, and we want to steer/guide how FTA works internally;
- Donors want to compare performance of CRPs;
- ISPC process to define indicators delayed, there is the objective to define 15 indicators common across CRPs at portfolio level;
- Flagship programs as parts of CRP is the target of this exercise;
- IEA coordinates ex-post CRP assessment;
- ISPC is currently reflecting on the criteria for research-for-development;
- Donors want to emphasize FP level decisions, want to micromanage and cherry-pick FPs;
- It will not go away, there is no pushback opportunity; we cannot change it, but we can “game” it or “outfox” it and maybe also inform it, to improve it.

Solutions:

- We have to make FTA more cohesive to safeguard against FP targeted interventions (e.g. removal of one or several FP)
 - Joint products, outputs/outcomes, branding, proposals development;
 - Cross FPs integration, cross learning, FPs not to function as silos;
 - There is an observation that more and more joint outputs are being produced across several CRPs;
 - 180 million W1/2 is available for the portfolio: what does it mean for the performance assessment?
 - Current indicators inform nothing about integration;
 - Characterizing value added by CRP, joint products, authorship;
 - Comparing CRPs will be really complicated. We cannot say don't compare us, but “compare us on these grounds”
 - We have an indicator on program building (#12)
- Developing a better way of putting together joint proposals is needed, and doing so could become one of the criteria
 - Need clear programmatic priorities;
 - Reviewers do not always understand the assumptions behind indicators
 - Small sums of money should be used to develop larger proposals, good way to grow the program.
- Achievements that are beyond the lifetime of any program or project (CapDev across the CGIAR over the last 40 years). Leverage of impact is often achieved through bilateral grants;

- Cross flagship program integration, partnerships, cross learning within FTA;
- Need more detachment from center.

Quality and “intelligence” of indicators

There will be indicators FTA would need to deliver on. We need to be aware that donors will use the RBM and indicators performance against targets to justify W1/W2 allocations.

- Reach: No. of ha under XY land use, No. of practices, policies and products informed Etc. -> not very informative and does not enable to compare CRPs with each other;
- FTA could take lead role on developing indicators;
- Intelligence of indicators: No. of beneficiaries instead of asking the more existential question: we want to decrease poverty, decrease gap between rich and poor, if you measure increase of farm income you are not capturing that;
- Role of policy processes in democratic systems: decisions are not always subject to how well you worked with partners, they can be subject to parliamentary decisions.

FTA to develop an experimenting and learning culture around indicators that promotes deeper understanding of impact instead of “blind” application of “flat” numerical indicators. Any such discussion very quickly moves into a philosophical argument around indicators.

What distinguishes FTA from other CRPs in terms of capturing performance? One fundamental difference could be that FTA, given its mandate, addresses among others the forest margins and hence, the most vulnerable. Could be a strong distinction (exception could be A4NH). Can FTA credibly claim that? We believe it can (PEN data) - ASB, PEN evidence.

Performance assessment vs. performance management. ISC may need to engage with the system to move into the latter. More people working on the ground of the CGIAR are worrying that CG system is not supportive but becoming very punitive. Manage for better performance instead of manage for puniton. Decouple performance assessment from allocation of W1/W2 funds.

2.2 Break-out group 2, FS, PP, YK, VG, AB, Rapporteur: Fergus

Problem: Performance assessment and management. What are we measuring and assessing the performance of?

- CRP, FPs, regions (place based research, like CCAFS does), office bearers, leadership (Center, CRP Leaders, MT, ISC)?;
- Internal versus external evaluation/assessment
- Self-assessment against targets set. ISC has a performance assessment in place, MT self-assessment in FP, D/FTA by centers HR assessment system;
- Self-assessment of portfolio management by the MT to be done;
- SMO will look at FP performance against indicators; Conducted annually;
- Process required if a problem arises, so we should have a process;
- Need for an explicit set of rules and engagement. There are PPAs, but no effective document on what it means being a partner;

- Need to assess partners as well, at FP level and CRP level;
- Need for **indicators** of performance management system.

Indicators need to be related to IPGs, outputs, outcomes, impact.

- Issue on **how to document the IPG dimension?** IPGs are aggregation of outputs, it will need to be a narrative. There may be many outputs but few IPGs. IPGs is not a count of scientific papers. IPGs includes scientific knowledge created as well as capacity building.
- If no indicator can be found, it can be description/ explanation. What has been the improvement and explanation will go to prepare for the synthesis.
- Indicators must be based on our system, not waiting for the set that SMO would develop. What is a CRP-level performance? Collective level funding (W2), branding, recognition, synthesis across FPs. What is FTA beyond the performance of the flagships? The knowledge management system will be central to evaluation, learning. Need to do it adequately and well. Measure against, outputs, outcomes, impact and IPGs.

There is a need for a list of categories of outputs:

- Germplasm
- Technological Innovations
- Policy innovations
- Policy recommendations
- Publications
- Outcome stories, etc..

3. Rules of engagement of Flagship Program leaders

Problem Statement

Participants were invited to provide feedback in particular:

on the draft ToRs and RoE for FP leaders (Paper 4b)

on the introduction of such ToRs and RoE for CCT leaders (Paper 4c)

on proposed minimal time requirements for the positions.

on the proposition to introduce competitive calls amongst program partners for the selection of FP leaders and CCT leaders

3.1 Break-out Group 1, CM, PH, YK, RP, Rapporteur Christopher.

Problem

- Allocation of FP leader role to a partner: is the leadership of a FP earmarked for a specific partners?;
- Historic or functional perspective: this is a CG program, and leadership should come from CG centers; Otherwise this could lead to inequalities.

- CRP funds were originally used for centers to do high quality science. Flexible money. This has largely disappeared;
- Different partners have access to different funding sources e.g. INBAR with access to China funding, so they put this on the table, but it cannot be distributed freely to other partners;
- FTA needs funding for value added research, otherwise it's just a collection of bilaterals;
- CIFOR and ICRAF have a mandate in the FT&A area, this is essential for us. Others need to bring own funds into it;
- More partners also add to transaction costs, so be careful about purpose to add more centers that contribute little, like small shareholders, cannot have as much influence as the larger contributors;
- FP leadership therefore needs to be tied to (\$\$) role in projects.

Solutions

- OK to discuss ToRs but current ToRs are not a big problem. It is good to have ToRs. No need to fix what is not broken;
- This can be over engineered and there might be misunderstanding of how the FP Leaders positions relate to the role each partner plays in the consortium;
- Full time position of a FP Leader (and covered as such by W1+2) would be desirable but resources are not available for now, or this would need excessive subsidies from supporting centers. You are able to exert different roles in parallel. Already with 25% of time investment for each FP leader (3 months) probably their effective time investment is much larger;
- Need to emphasize more the synthesis products, could we deviate communication funds to produce high level products? Extra effort is needed beyond blogs, for something more advanced.
- FP Leader exert soft power which is built on trust.
- Joint fundraising: FP leaders should lead the effort when they have also the hat of theme leader for their center.

3.2 Break-out Group 2: PP, RJ, FM, AB, Rapporteur Pablo.

- Criteria for selection of FPs leaders have to be open, rigorous and transparent;
- All partners should be able to propose candidates to FPs when positions are open;
- Nominated candidates will be selected by the MT, based on merits and other criteria;
- FP leaders should dedicate 25% of their time (3 months) to the coordination tasks;
- It would be desirable to have some management support: In PIM and CCAFS, full time program managers support the FP leaders.
- There should be guidelines for the selection of CoA coordinators since there is not a common practice and different approaches among FPs exist. The process should be within the FP but some guidance would be needed;
- Performance assessment has to be conducted to FPs leaders, likely a 360 degree;
- FP leaders have to provide inputs to the evaluation of performance of CCT leaders;
- FPs ToRs should also integrate tasks on integration and collaboration;

- FPs should do together fundraising, e.g. livelihood improvement, timber, value chains, restoration etc., but connected to how you prioritize.

Ravi:

Selection and time allocation- not that transparent. What “skin on the game” partner puts. CGIAR sharing tangible money with other partners. Many new players, who don’t understand strategic implications. Where is value added coming from? When you open the position outside CG, they need to bring money. It has to be common interest based on trust. Shareholder principle, if you bring your share to the table you get the seat. Below a certain threshold of bilaterals, you cannot be a strategic partner.

3.3 Break-Out Group 3, PM, FS, AMI, VG, BB, Rapporteur Peter Minang.

Questions

- What happens after two years (cycle of evaluation of FP leaders)? Are two years an appropriate period? Does it correspond to FTA cycle?
- How to replace a FP leader that resigns or quits? What are the rules? Need for a transparent process to ensure legitimacy;

Recommendations

- Role of FP Lead consists of both science leadership as well as administrative;
- Leadership, coordination and administrative costs for leading a FP are at around 200k, and at around 50k for CoAs. Legitimate costs include coordination, CoA leadership, and annual meeting that is essential for the FP for collegiality and team spirit. The rest of funding for FPs can be needs based and such costs can be negotiated.
- There should be a cross FP allocation budget at the level of the Director.
- ToRs reviewed and agreed to at MT level;
- Dialogue between D/FTA and a Center on performance assessment of FP Leader to see if his/her role is sufficiently included in ToR of the scientist with its employing Center. FP leader role needs to be included in the center’s staff performance assessment.
- Candidature needs to be made by a Center, together with an engagement to support the FP leaders.
- Non-CG Partners can put forward a candidate, but should really understand the requirements of FP lead role and time commitment (25% but in reality, more). Partner Center should be prepared and able to cover the cost of this position and take the financial risks.
- Appointment of FP leaders: MT to decide on criteria and make the decision. If no consensus, then ISC is consulted for resolution.

4) Priority setting

Problem Statement

What programmatic priority setting mechanism does FTA need for allocating W1+2 resources in a transparent and effective manner (i) at CRP level among FPs and (ii) within FPs? How FTA can set priorities in a credible, transparent and implementable manner (as rapidly as possible)?

Introduction by the ISC Chair:

A common understanding of the roles of W1-2 funds in FTA would be a strong asset for the programme. It would allow FTA to be clear and have a shared understanding about what additional work would be put in motion with an increased W1-2 allocation, and by extension, what work would be postponed with a decrease in W1-2. Such a priority-setting mechanism has been requested by ISPC, which considers that the approved proposal for phase 2 is too driven by bilateral resources, as well as by ISC which considers that programmatic priority-setting is a must for a large programme to be strategic and effective.

An imbalance between funds allocated to CG and non-CG partners is currently manifest, with 2 centres receiving 80% of W1-2 and non-CG partners receiving very small percentages of these funds. A transparent allocation of funds to FP based upon FTA's research for development priorities and upon the performance of each FP would help remedy the situation. The process should also create better buy-in internally, to how projects and FP research fits in something much bigger.

To perform its review of priorities, FTS shall not reinvent the wheel but base its process on the legitimacy and credibility of recognized assessments. There are enough international scientific assessments, e.g. the millennium ecosystem assessment, IPBES, IUFRO, biodiversity assessments, IPCC reports, HLPE reports, etc., many of those having assessed research gaps... There are also many documents or international agreements identifying priorities for action and policies, expressing the need of stakeholders and countries. This would need to be crossed with FTA's comparative advantage, in an ex-ante priority assessment.

So, the questions are: what kind of process does FTA need to allocate W1+2 on transparent manner, and without creating additional transaction costs, and that is concrete, transparent, implementable, as rapidly as possible? How to get to the smallest set of priorities that FTA wants to focus on?

4.1 Break-out Group 1, RJ, PP, RP, FM, JK, BB, Rapporteur: Ramni

Framework

1. Priorities (why level)
2. What (FTA level)
3. Where

4. With whom
5. How – tools, such as economic tools etc.

Establish hierarchy (which questions you need to tackle in priority, to find an answer first)

1. Impact on key problems
2. Research, cutting edge, upscaling
3. Ex ante impact analysis, that tells us what the potential could be, but need feasibility, not only potential, feasibility of achieving impact.
4. Feasibility
5. Comparative advantage exploration
6. Foresight- big issues
7. Scenario planning

Vulnerability- who will be impacted

- Let's not reinvent wheel- cf CCAFS, who used impact model
- Tool: impact model (using modelling tools)
- Modelling/beyond CB
- MCDA (multi criteria decision analysis), APSOM, expert opinion, expert consultations.
- Decision support tool

Who? There are people working on that, doing the models.

Nr of tools you may put in the framework and then decide on the tools which to use.

- Expert opinion very important in priority setting
- Info Opportunity and comparable advantage (foresight)
- Ex ante-what can we achieve if we go this way...

We are going to learn along the way, as we move forward we will use number of tools, we will look at opportunity that arise.

We are missing :

- Coherence.
- Focus
- Integration
- Geographic rationale (SL should have provided it, but didn't so far)

Mechanism:

FPs would sit together and come out with some pathways, making case, choosing the tools.

Purpose to be cost effective or leverage effective

4.2 Break-out Group 2, FS, AB, AMI, VG, PM, CM, Rapporteur: Fergus

- At FP and CoA level the priorities are clear;
- But problem is that we are not articulating clearly the priorities at CRP level;
- There are various global analyses we should use in order to identify research gaps. Some of them are already referred in the proposal, however ISPC questioned where the research gaps came from..
- Integrate donors' priorities. Influence through foresight analysis;
- How we tackle these priorities to make the impact?
- Add critical path analysis for impact claims;
- Set of priorities need to be classified, distinguishing between cutting edge, incremental research, that you need to and place based operational research that you need to do research to show impact. There must be differentiation.

A possible process could be :

- 1) Collation of global analysis and research gaps, including from foresight studies.
- 2) Apply knowledge of donor context and demand / priorities
- 3) Apply our comparative advantage
- 4) Needs a critical path analysis (CPA) given the aspirations to impact.
- 5) Gives an articulated path of priorities: Priority setting document which has the set of FTA priorities. Document in published in PNAS. Opinion piece in Nature/Science.
- 6) Publication and launch "Feel good moment"

The Director could steer the process. In the end, it would lead to confirm what is in the proposal.

We would also need a mechanism to update the process (especially step 2).

AMI: We identify research gaps at FP level, but we don't have articulation at FTA level (Program), we are unable to answer specific request of ISPC to explain where our list comes from, whether it has scientific robustness. This is to address the current absence of a justified list of priorities.

RP: FTA is missing is a coherent explanation of what has been done implicitly. Need to credit and capitalize on the expert opinion that exists in the program (many experts in FTA and series of expert consultations in FTA).

Possible Calendar:

- September to have first draft of prioritization framing note, process and entry points for FPs
- For the priority framing note, one should also use the external evaluation of FTA, the IEA review, CIFOR strategy review etc. FP Leaders also to send material.
- Draft priority framing document to be ready for December 2017 in order to be useful for POWB 2018.
- January-May: internal process (with external consultations)
- The publication of FTA priorities could take the form of a position paper launched at a high-level event in May – June 2018

BB: Some prioritization was done in the proposal, but what is missing is coherence. Overall current FTA project portfolio doesn't reflect the priorities of the proposal. But it doesn't mean we don't have priorities, but that they were not followed by portfolio creation. It is difficult to say that a pathway is superior to another one. If we take the current set of the CRP, FPs, CoA: what is the real core, the most important elements? Are there gaps and can we reallocate resources, or put more in other activities? We need more an incremental process, taking the current set of CRP and FP activities and decide what's the most important part of it, and what to allocate resources to certain activities. We need very pragmatic approach and decide which part should be trimmed.