Evaluation of Results-Based Management in CGIAR

Vol II - Annexes to Final Report

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CGIAR

This evaluation has been commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR.

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Correct citation: CGIAR-IEA (2017), Evaluation of Results-Based Management in CGIAR– Volume II, Annexes to Final Report. Rome, Italy: Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR

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ANNEX A – Revised Evaluation Matrix

System design and adaption of RBM for CGIAR's unique research context [relevance]			
1. What were the drivers and objectives of CGIAR's RBM approach(es) and do they align with a) the needs and priorities of the CGIAR System, b) the working conditions of CGIAR staff and partners; and c) current global approaches and policies?			
Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources of Data	Method of Data Collection
Motivation and purpose 1.1 What was the motivation ("the drivers") to introduce RBM in CGIAR, and do these drivers remain relevant today or have they changed?	1.1.1 List of drivers articulated by the System	Internal documents	Document review
	1.1.2 Extent to which these drivers are felt to remain relevant today by the System and its key funders	Key informants Center, CRP, System, governing bodies, funders	Key informant interviews (KIIs)
	1.1.3 Level of congruence between objectives of CGIAR's RBM approach(es) and experiences of good practice elsewhere	Internal and external documents, IDRC reference study	Document review plus comparative analysis
Conceptual understanding 1.2 How was the RBM approach(es) conceptualized by the System Organization for the unique research context in which it works?	1.2.1 Existence of one or more conceptual models or narratives (e.g. logical framework, theory of change, conceptual narrative) that explain how the RBM approach was expected to enhance organizational effectiveness and impact	Internal documents (plus external documents as technical cross-reference), and key informants	Reconstruct conceptual model(s) that capture reform vison and confirm via internal consultation
	1.2.2 Degree of clarity as to what the RBM approach is expected to achieve in CGIAR	Key informants Center, CRP, System, and funders	Key informant interviews and comparison of views
Consensus across partners 1.3 Was the purpose for introducing the RBM approach(es), and the operational way in which this was done, part of a shared vision, values, understanding, and efforts among key stakeholders?	1.3.1 Extent to which the original vision for adopting a RBM approach was shared by CGIAR System Partners, and most notable, by its member Centers	Key informants Center, CRP, System	Key informant interviews
	1.3.2 Extent to which the latest System Organization vision and objectives for using a RBM approach (Phase II) are supported across member Centers	Key informants from Centers and CRPs	Key informant interviews
	1.3.3 Extent to which the introduction of RBM raised expectations among Center and CRP staff, and degree to which these expectations are being met	Key informants from Centers and CRPs	Key informant interviews

Adaptation by System 1.4 Has CGIAR Sytem's concept of RBM been adequately adapted for CGIAR's unique type of business (support of research) aligned with the needs and priorities of the Centers and CRPs?	1.4.1 Extent to which there has been room for adaptation of RBM as general approach, and for application in specific context in which CRPs operate.	Key informants from Centers and CRPs	Key informant interviews and analysis of alignment
	1.4.2 Number of practical and accepted innovations and adaptations to the RBM approach that have been introduced by the System Organization (2010 to present) to assure its relevance to CGIAR's unique research mandate	Key informants Center, CRP, System, and funders; plus, internal documents	Key informant interviews plus document review, then parsing to create comprehensive list
Lessons learned from piloting the RBM approach by CRPs [relevance and efficiency]			
2. Did the CPR pilots of RBM implementation provide relevant learning for the CRPs themselves and for CGIAR?			
Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources of Data	Method of Data Collection
2.1 Do the CRPs that piloted RBM provide a representative cross-section of CGIAR research and therefore a valid and relevant "experiment" in the application/adaptation of RBM in the CGIAR context?	2.1.1 Extent to which these pilots are representative of the 15 CRPs based on a set of comparative criteria	15 CRP proposals plus pilot proposals	Document review and comparative between pilots and the rest
	2.1.2 Level of investment (financial and human resources) made by the System and the Centers for the RBM approaches piloted by the CRPs	KIs at Center, CRP, System; plus, pilot CRP reports	Key informant interviews (KIIs) plus document review as part of detailed case studies
	2.1.3 Extent to which the pilots successfully addressed each of the identified dimensions of RBM	KIs at Center, CRP, System; plus, pilot CRP reports	Key informant interviews (KIIs) plus document review as part of detailed case studies
2.2 Did managers of these pilots feel that the pilots provided valuable learning on RBM?	2.2.1 Extent to which CRP and Center managers directly involved in the pilots felt that these pilots were valuable learning opportunities	Key informants from Centers and CRPs directly involved in piloting	Key informant interviews as part of detailed case studies
2.3 What key lessons were learned and disseminated by the CRP pilots on how best to implement an RBM approach?	2.3.1. Number of relevant key lessons learned (with explanation) from CRP pilots of RBM implementation	Key informants a) Center & CRP, b) System; plus, pilot CRP reports	Key informant interviews plus document review as part of detailed case studies
	2.3.2. Extent to which lessons learned across the technical, human and organizational dimensions of the RBM approach were analysed and shared by the CRP pilots and across CGIAR	Key informants a) Center & CRP, b) System; plus, internal documents	KKIs and document review to collect and count specific examples

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Management systems support an enabling environment for RBM application [efficiency and effectiveness]			
3. Did support at CRP and Center management levels facilitate successful implementation of RBM?			
Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources of Data	Method of Data Collection
3.1 What support and systems (e.g. M&E, data and research management processes, incentive and rewarding mechanisms) that have been put in place, help or constrain CRPs and their related Centers implement RBM?	3.1.1 Examples of support (with explanations) provided in the following areas: a) theory of change, b) M&E frameworks, c) use of indicators and target setting, d) data management systems, e) independent results-based evaluation, f) reporting templates, g) HR needs assessment, h) results-based performance agreements, and i) other	Key informants: Centers, CRPs, System; plus, internal documents	KKIs and document review to collect, cross-reference, and summarize examples for each listed HR and organizational change area (plus, possibly a FGD if this can be practically arranged)
	3.1.2 Extent to which Centers and CRPs consider themselves sufficiently resourced for RBM without jeopardising priority research work	Key informants: Centers, CRPs, System	KKIs plus FGD
	3.2.3 Extent to which instructions for Phase II proposals concerning RBM are perceived by Centers to be sufficiently comprehensive, clear, and practical	KIs a) Centers and Phase II proposers; plus, proposal instructions	Key informant interviews, document review, and FGD
	3.2.4 Extent to which CPRs have developed more effective management information systems, processes and practice	Key informants: Centers, CRPs, System	KKIs plus FGD
	3.2.5 List of other key factors (with explanations) that have constrained implementation of RBM	Key informants: Centers, CRPs, System	KKIs plus FGD
Refined applications of the RBM approach to support rolling-out across CPR portfolio [effectiveness]			
4. Reflecting on the experience of introducing and mainstreaming RBM so far, how can this approach optimally be used to help CGIAR contribute to its research mandate and expected system level outcomes?			
Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources of Data	Method of Data Collection
4.1 Is the RBM approach, as currently conceptualized and implemented, likely to contribute to CGIAR's delivery of results	4.1.1 Extent to which CRP proposals are becoming more aligned with key principles of RBM approach	Phase 2 CPR proposals in similar research programming areas and suitable earlier planning documents	Document review noting evidence of key principles featured and qualitative comparison

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from research towards CGIAR's SLOs?	4.1.2 Extent to which the Centers have embraced their own tailored RBM approaches, and their own organizational reforms, to apply RBM	Same as for related indicators above	Meta-analysis across all data collected
	4.1.3 Extent to which stakeholders believe the RBM approach, as currently conceptualized and implemented, is likely to contribute to CGIAR's delivery of results	Key informants: Centers, CRPs, System	KKIs plus FGD
	4.1.2 Extent that the RBM approach used so far is perceived to have helped CGIAR more effectively contribute to research outcomes related to CGIAR's system-level outcomes	Same as for related indicators above	Meta-analysis across data collected for all plus FGD
4.2 Considering CGIAR experiences, plus relevant RBM experiences elsewhere, how can RBM optimally help CGIAR contribute to its identified system level outcomes?	4.2.1 List of RBM support initiatives (with explanations) recommended by the evaluation team once all evidence is gathered	Various across all indicators noted above	Meta-analysis by evaluators across data collected for all indicators; plus, FGD with key internal stakeholders; plus validation workshop

ANNEX B – List of people interviewed

SURNAME, NAME	Position	Organization	Interview purpose
Abreu, David	Knowledge and Data Sharing Coordinator for CCAFS	CIAT	CCAFS case study
Ampaire, Edidah	Project Coordinator for the CCAFS Policy Action for Climate Change Adaptation (PACCA) Project	IITA	CCAFS case study
Arouna, Aminou	Impact Assessment Economist	AfricaRice	GRISP case study
Attah-Krah, Kwesi	former Director of CRP on Humidtropics	IITA	FGD
Attiogbevi-Somado, A. Kafu-Ata	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	AfricaRice	GRISP case study
Baccioni, Enrico	Initiative Manager	Bioversity	General inquiry
Bernhardt, Michel	Research Advisor	GIZ	General inquiry
Bertram, Robert	Chief Scientist in USAID's Bureau for Food Security	USAID	General inquiry
Bonaiuti, Enrico	M&E, Program Coordinator.	ICARDA	General inquiry
Bouman, Bas	Director, CGIAR Research Program on Agri-Food Systems	IRRI	GRISP case study
Brooks, Karen	Director for CRP on PIM	IFPRI	FGD
Castillo, Perla	Monitoring & Evaluation	CIAT	FGD
Cavalieri, Tony	Senior program officer (agriculture research & development)	Gates Foundation	General inquiry
Cramer, Laura	Program Specialist	CIAT	CCAFS case study
Davies, Bethany	Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment Specialist	CIFOR	General inquiry
Dixon, Busie	Crop Utilization Specialist	IITA	RTB case study
Douthwaite, Boru	Independent consultant, former AAS	n/a	Inception phase
Elluil, Philippe	Senior Science Officer, SMO	CGIAR	General inquiry
Gardiner, Peter	Senior Advisor	CGIAR	Inception phase
Gitz, Vincent	Director, CRP on FTA	CIFOR	General inquiry
Hareau, Guy	Impact assessment (IA) specialist	CIP	FGD
Hubert, Bernard	Senior scientist	INRA	General inquiry
Hughes, Karl	Impact evaluation specialis	ICRAF	General inquiry
Izac, Anne Marie	Head of FTA Independent Steering Committee	Independent scientist	General inquiry
Johnson, Nancy	Head of SPIA	CGIAR - ISPC	Inception phase
Jost, Christine	Senior Livestock Technical Advisor	USAID	CCAFS case study
Kikulwe, Enoch	Banana – BXW management	Bioversity	RTB case study
Klaver, Rogier	Team Leader Program Management and Coordination	CIFOR	General inquiry
Kommerell, Victor	Programme Manager, WHEAT	CIMMYT	FGD

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Koper, Eric	former Program Manager of CRP on Humidtropics	n/a	FGD
Labarta, Ricardo	Senior Scientist & Impact Assessment Research Leader, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	CIAT	GRISP case study
Läderach, Peter	Researcher, CCAFS contact point	CIAT	CCAFS case study
Lokossou, Joiurdain	Agricultural Economics	ICRISAT	GRISP case study
Mayne, John	Independent consultant	n/a	General inquiry
Palenberg, Markus	Independent consultant	n/a	General inquiry
Parker, Monica	Scientist	CIP	RTB case study
Place, Frank	Senior Research Fellow	IFPRI	FGD
Powell, Wayne	Principal and Chief Executive	SRUC, former CGIAR	General inquiry
Pramod, Joshi	Director for IFPRI South Asia.	IFPRI	CCAFS case study
Prioetti, Claudio	Program management - CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas	CIP	RTB case study
Randolph, Tom	Director, CRP on Livestock	ILRI	FGD
Rider Smith, David	Performance Assessment & Evaluation	IWMI	FGD
Schulte, Elmar	Leader of CIP's Seed Potato for Africa Program	CIP	RTB case study
Schütz, Tanya	Independent consultant	n/a	CCAFS case study
Shephard, Keith	Principal Soil Scientist	ICRAF	General inquiry
Stevenson, James	Agricultural Research Officer	CGIAR SPIA	General inquiry
Stoian, Dietmar	Banana – BXW management	Bioversity	RTB case study
Thiele, Graham	Director of CRP on RTB	CIP	Inception phase
Thoennissen, Carmen	Program Manager Regional Program Southern Africa	SDC	General inquiry
Thornton, Philip	Flagship Leader & Principal Scientist, CCAFS	CIAT	Inception phase
Tollervey, Alan	Adviser	DFID	General inquiry
Totin, Edmund	Research Scientist	ICRISAT	CCAFS case study
Visnyei, Katalin	Deputy Programme Manager	DFID	General inquiry
Waldock, Jane-Lee	Monitoring & Evaluation	CIAT	FGD
Webber, Hope	Senior Scientist Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	IRRI	GRISP case study
Weise, Stephan	DDG	Bioversity	General inquiry
Witte, Eric	Agricultural International Affairs Specialist, Agriculture Research and Policy Office, Bureau for Food Security	USAID	General inquiry
Yamano, Takeshi	Impact Assessment Specialist	IRRI	GRISP case study

FGD= Focus group discussion

ANNEX C – CGIAR's ToC for Embracing RBM

Developing a Conceptual Model of Desired Change

The evaluation team noted that the introduction and promotion of RBM in CGIAR has not been guided by a comprehensive policy document or action plan, nor has it been explained by an explicit theory of change (ToC). In Figure 1, we offer a plausible ToC for RBM. It has been developed parallel to the inquires that were part of this formative evaluation. This model, or picture was influenced by our reading of relevant literature, and our combined experience as evaluators. It was developed as a conceptual framework, aligned with CGIAR's circumstances, to help us understand and assess how RBM has unfolded in CGIAR since 2009.

This ToC was drafted as an independent and external effort. Theories of change are most effective when they are developed through a participatory process in which key stakeholders come together to discuss and describe context, brain storm around expectations, and move towards consensus on key assumptions and pathways of change.

Our ToC describes how CGIAR might expect operational change to unfold with the introduction of RBM, and how management adjustments and early operational outcomes are expected to contribute to CGIAR's effectiveness. The ToC suggests an iterative, circular, ongoing change process: review and feedback loops inform early experience and encourage adjustment to the drivers of change, and to five separate but related pathways of change.

The momentum for change is initially powered by "drivers" that overcome resistance to change and support innovation.[1] A key driver since 2009 has been CGIAR's vision and follow-up commitments to the last organization reform process. CGIAR's aspiration to be more results-oriented has other drivers and enablers which are more fully explored in the body of this evaluation report.

A CGIAR System as the Sum of its Research Programs and Centers

CGIAR is a set of outcome-oriented programs, implemented by Centers. In Figure 1, the Centers, the CGIAR's independent research Center signatories, appear prominently at each level of the ToC. They help push and energize the overall drive for system-level change, and have their own unique RBM causal pathways and operational outcomes. Each Center is an independent legal entity in transition of some kind as it deals with its own context, and drivers of change. Each will have its own unique pathways of change managed by respective governance bodies and capable senior managers. Each Center can resist, observe, or actively engage as the CGIAR System learns to embrace RBM. In short,

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[1] Dannemiller and Jacobs (1992) "formula for change" suggests three factors must be present for meaningful organizational change to take place: D x V x F > R. The factors are:
- D = Dissatisfaction with how things are now;
- V = Vision of what is possible; and
- F = First, concrete steps that can be taken towards the vision.

If the product of these three factors is greater than R = Resistance, then change is possible. Because D, V, and F are multiplied, if any is absent (zero) or low, then the product will be zero or low and therefore not capable of overcoming resistance.

the role of the Centers, through CGIAR's portfolio of research programs, is fundamental in each stage and with each iteration of this larger system-level ToC.

Five Causal Change Pathways

In this ToC, we have identified 5 distinct pathways of change[2]. Each has its own unique set of activities and expected RBM-related products and services as outputs. Although each pathway of change is distinct, overlap and synergy across all 5 is expected: each only becomes fully realized and effective when they are worked at together. An underlying assumption of the evaluators is that though CGIAR has its own characteristics, evolution towards RBM is likely to correspond roughly with this set of universally applicable pathways.

The explicit division of RBM efforts to CGIAR, CRPs and Center layers, as shown in Figure 1, acknowledges that RBM is encouraged by the System but is also being led "from below" with key staff within CRPs and Centers knowledgeable and leading the way. Centers are not laggards. On the contrary, they are hubs of RBM innovation. Most projects implemented by Centers that are bilaterally funded are structured for RBM compliance. In other words, Centers are piloting RBM on a continuous basis and that experience permeates into their organizational culture and their overall strategic planning and performance management approaches.

Figure 1 acknowledges that each Center will move through these pathways differently as they embrace RBM. Centers participate in varying number of CRPs, and each Center and CRP has a different set of organizational realities. For some Centers, improved governance and organizational structure may be an urgent focus. Other Centers may be ready to provide advanced leadership and innovation to develop an management information system in which many CRPs and other Centers can participate. A coherent move though these pathways by the Centers will be more efficient then each going its own way. The CRPs – guided and encouraged by the System Council and System Management Office – provide an opportunity to practise coherence around well-structured, outcome-oriented, 6-year research programs, and around a single strategic results framework (SRF) owned by the whole consortium.

Change Pathway 1 – Improving governance and organizational structures

CGIAR – The extensive reform of the CGIAR organization is meant to support more streamlined and coherent decision making around collaborative research programs and platforms. Creation of the CGIAR Consortium as a joint venture between 15 research Centers to implement outcome-oriented CRPs, revised organizational arrangements for program appraisal and impact assessment (ISPC) and evaluation (IEA), and recent revisions to the System Charter are part of this change pathway.

Centers – CGIAR organizational reform and change continues. Simultaneously, each Center that embraces RBM will want to review its own organizational structure and priorities, partnerships, strategic framework, expected results, M&E plans, and reporting templates. Unleashing innovation,

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[2] Here the evaluators have divided the obvious work that needs to be done into different sets of activities. This led us to identify 5 key change pathways generated by 5 identifiable sets or types of operational activities.

and encouraging risk taking, and adaptive management often requires initial changes at this structural level.

Change Pathway 2 – Providing consistent leadership and changing organizational culture

CGIAR – Like all reform processes and new management approaches, RBM requires champions. Sustained, visionary leadership is a prerequisite for RBM's success. This is especially true in the CGIAR System where leadership is diffused across the System Organization, the CPRs, and the Centers. Building and sustaining leadership consensus requires ongoing effort. Along with leadership is the organizational culture shifts (values, systems thinking, shared vision, mental models, trust) that a results-orientation requires.

Centers – Identified RBM systems-thinking champions within each Center are required to build support, encourage staff through difficult transitions, negotiate effectively with partners and donors, and consistently look for collaboration to achieve desired outcomes.

Change Pathway 3 – Developing helpful policy, guidance, tools, and MIS systems

CGIAR – Having CGIAR research programs (CRPs) aligned with a single SRF helps structure CRP proposals, and can bring a strategic focus and clarity around vision and mission. The System Organization needs to facilitate the production of RBM-related goods and services (e.g. a SRF and compendium of SLO and IDO statements with aspirational targets, guidance on proposal writing, technical guidance on how to use ToC to help develop programs, clarity around practical System-level reporting needs and formats, an agreed RBM strategy and policy). IT support for management information systems that help CRPs and Centers talk to each other, and help CGIAR collate performance information for improved reporting is part of this pathway. These types of support can help build momentum for the RBM approach.

An important issue for policy and guidance is to define where management authority resides. If RBM works well at the operational level, donors will find it easier to support management decisions about programmatic changes, and they will be enabled to make stronger cases for supporting well-performing components.

Centers – While RBM guidance from the System is important, below the CRP-level, each Center is already deeply involved in producing RBM-related goods and services for use by its myriad of partners. Centers can draw on their existing RBM knowledge, and on their training, mentoring, and coaching capacity to improve RBM-related goods and services. Ideally this is done in collaboration with other Centers structured by the CRPs. Working collaboratively across Centers and CPRs to develop management information systems (MIS) that can support CGIAR is a work in progress.

Change Pathway 4 – Evaluating, monitoring, measuring, and reviewing performance

CGIAR – This is the most active and resource demanding change pathway. And perhaps the most conceptually challenging. Here the CGIAR System, the CRPs and the Centers struggle to apply RBM principles: align research programs with a single SRF, use indicators that can help track performance, develop and use monitoring frameworks that bring indicators to life, collect and analyse performance

data, produce compelling performance reports, and support learning and accountability through the evaluation function. Consolidated consortium-level reports and communication products are an important product.

In this pathway, distinguishing System-level requirements and decisions and CRP and Center operational-level management is important. There will be complex questions to answer between these levels. The question of who manages, research managers or central decision-makers, will be one of the trickiest parts of putting RBM in place. At System level, process indicators miss the holistic nature of research, and outcome indicators used by individual CRPs are too broad and long-term for the specifics of research implementation.

Centers – The Centers have their own challenges with this pathway when working directly with their partners and projects. Through the CRPs, Centers are directly involved and even lead much of this day-to-day M&E and performance measurement and review work.

Change Pathway 5 – Learning and adapting from piloting

CGIAR – Learning-by-doing is a proven approach to effectively embracing RBM. Pilots which focus trying and learning on specific aspects of RBM will need to be designed, funded, and supported. To adapt global best-practice in CGIAR's unique A4R programming context, aspects of RBM have already been purposely piloted in several CRPs with the intention of learning. Lessons learned from well-designed, intentional pilot need to be assessed, documented and shared as part of ongoing RBM learning and adaptation efforts.

Center – Individual Centers have been directly involved in early pilots. Other Centers are piloting RBM initiatives using their own funds. Direct learning from doing, by Centers and within CRPs, is the most effective way to build momentum for RBM.

Expected Early Operational Results

These operational results are processes steps that may result in qualitative changes in management that then may lead to better results from research. The Theory of Change for adopting a RBM approach at CGIAR expects that the 5 pathways of change noted above, will lead to early (1 to 5 years), measurable, operational outcomes aligned with well-recognized principles of good RBM practice[3]. Early operational outcomes expected by this ToC include:

- Practical RBM tools and guidance available to CRPs and Centers;
- Results-based research agreements between CGIAR and the CRPs;
- A coherent, updated, helpful, widely accepted Strategic Results Framework;
- Workable, value-added, M&E frameworks in CRPs;
- A harmonized performance monitoring system across the CRPs;
- Coherent CGIAR-wide communication on results; and
- ICT-based management information systems to support M&E and RBM.

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[3] See *Eight Principles of Good RBM Practice*, Inception Report – Evaluation of RBM in CGIAR, Annex A, Vandenberg and Wigboldus, pages 20-21, June 2017,

This list of operational outcomes, and the order of priority, will evolve as CGIAR, and the Centers, learn from their RBM experience.

CGIAR System Change

Finally, the theory of change (Figure 1) expects that early, operational outcomes will lead, within a decade from fully launching the 5 different but pathways of change, to sustained system-wide change:

- Results-oriented research practice is the standard across all CGIAR programming;
- Staff are motivated as they work collaboratively across Centers to achieve expected results;
- Partners want to work within the System, and funders provide a predictable level of resources;
- Independent results-based evaluations support ongoing learning and accountability;
- Near-term assessment of adoption and influence provides learning of what works best; and
- Learning and striving for constant improvement continues to be the CGIAR cultural norm.

The ToC suggests that the successful embrace of RBM can help assure that CGIAR-supported agricultural research is effective, results-oriented, and consistently funded as final expectation.

Key Assumptions

The assumptions listed below are key factors that must hold for the theory of change to unfold as expected, and for the RBM approach to help CGIAR experience the described system-level change. Only higher risk assumptions are noted. High risk is associated with assumptions that are less likely to hold. High risks need to be thoroughly discussed, carefully monitored and actively mitigated for the ToC to unfold as desired.

At system change level

1. The use of advocated RBM tools and techniques supports programming practice that is integral to CRP implementation success
2. CRPs, and related Centers, integrate RBM into their core management systems, and sustainably support RBM with appropriate competencies and capacities
3. By using an RBM approach, CRPs are more effectively involved in collaborative processes that work to help achieve better results

At operational outcome level

1. RBM guidance materials, collaboratively produced by Centers and CRPs, and promoted centrally by the System Management Office, are effective, widely used, up-to-date, and reflect best practice
2. Piloting provides sufficient and timely learning to arrive at appropriate system guidance on integrating RBM practice in CRPs and Centers
3. Centers and CRPs have the capacity and resources, and are ready to apply RBM in terms of System-advocated tools and techniques including results frameworks, ToC, etc.
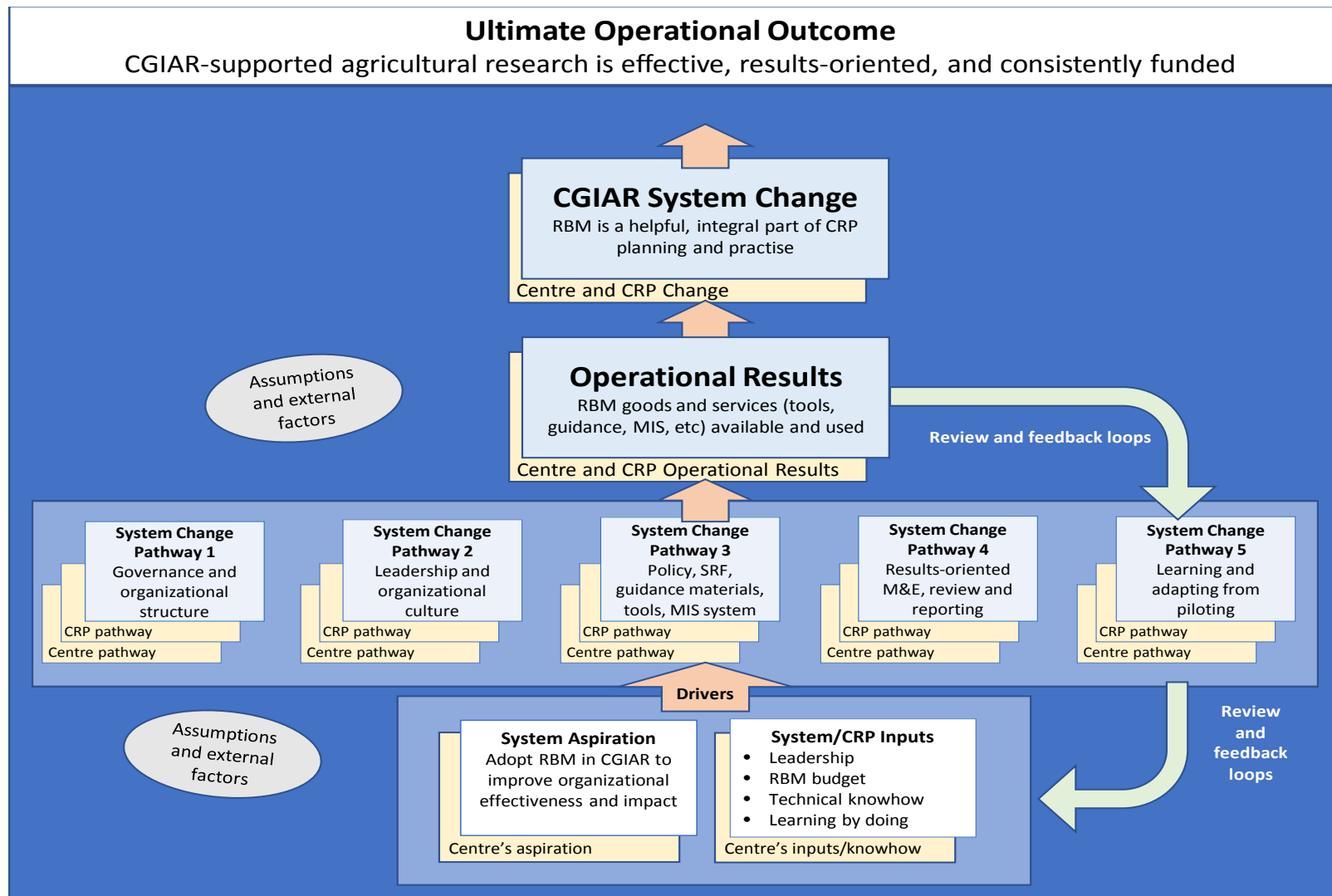
At pathways, activities, and output level

1. Donor engagement and level of financial support is sustained
2. The process of piloting, learning from piloting, and updating guidance materials for wider application is appropriate to Center-based, on-the-ground realities
3. Capable RBM champions at System, CRP and Center levels come together to collaborate around an RBM ToC for the consortium
4. The technical complexities of long results chains, SLO/IDO and sub-IDO indicators, and other RBM requirements can be overcome
5. Staff adjust to application of RBM, internalize this cultural change, and become active drivers, leading the RBM change process from below[4]

At intension and aspiration level

1. The drivers for change and full adoption of RBM within CGIAR and Centers are strong enough to overcome internal organizational resistance and inertia
2. The organizational structure and governance of CGIAR consistently, and convincingly advocates for RBM change pathways
3. A combination of human and financial inputs, collectively pooled from the System, CRPs and Centers is sufficient to drive an RBM approach
4. Senior-level System management and governance, and CPR leadership, is committed to adopting an appropriate RBM approach and has the capacity to do so
5. Centers are committed to the consortium model and a system-wide RBM ToC as the most appropriate management approach to global, results-oriented, agriculture research practice

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[4] This assumption, and assumption 4 above, are of very high risk. Results chains have been debated for years and cultures vary and have been difficult to influence.

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Figure 1 – Theory of Change for making RBM work within CGIAR, CRPs and Centers

Ultimate Operational Outcome
CGIAR-supported agricultural research is effective, results-oriented, and consistently funded

CGIAR System Change
RBM is a helpful, integral part of CRP planning and practise

Centre and CRP Change

Assumptions and external factors

Operational Results
RBM goods and services (tools, guidance, MIS, etc) available and used

Review and feedback loops

Centre and CRP Operational Results

System Change Pathway 1
Governance and organizational structure
CRP pathway
Centre pathway

System Change Pathway 2
Leadership and organizational culture
CRP pathway
Centre pathway

System Change Pathway 3
Policy, SRF, guidance materials, tools, MIS system
CRP pathway
Centre pathway

System Change Pathway 4
Results-oriented M&E, review and reporting
CRP pathway
Centre pathway

System Change Pathway 5
Learning and adapting from piloting
CRP pathway
Centre pathway

Drivers

Assumptions and external factors

System Aspiration
Adopt RBM in CGIAR to improve organizational effectiveness and impact
Centre's aspiration

System/CRP Inputs
- Leadership
- RBM budget
- Technical knowhow
- Learning by doing
Centre's inputs/knowhow

Review and feedback loops

ANNEX D – RBM pilot case studies

For the detailed case studies, please see Volume III of the report, which can be requested from IEA.

USD 4 million was available for the five CRPs piloting RBM in 2014. The planned funds for 2015 could not be secured. The three took place within the Climate Change and Agriculture Food Systems (CCAFS), Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB), and Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP) CRPs.

1. Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

CCAFS operates on a global scale. It unites the work of 15 CGIAR Centers in the domain of climate change science and is a continuation of a previous Challenge Program. CCAFS is led by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), CCAFS is one of the largest CRPs, with annual budgets between USD 60-70 million. After completion of its first Phase, CCAFS is currently in the process of implementing Phase II (2017-2022).

1. **History of RBM in CCAFS**

Since its start as a CRP in 2011, CCAFS has been moving towards a stronger focus on RBM: a) developing an evaluative culture b) using ToC and impact pathway approach, c) portfolio management and d) M&E.

CCAFS has developed an overall program level Theories of Change and Impact pathways as well as those for Flagship Project (former research theme) level and Regional Program level. It has developed Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) which have been formally introduced in the Extension Proposal (2015). These IDOs have been largely derived from the CGIAR overall Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), at that time in its initial version.

Although the CCAFS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy was only published in July 2014, CCAFS, from its start, implemented monitoring and evaluation at program level. It was one of the first CRPs to conduct a variety of CRP commissioned evaluations and reviews. Furthermore, logical frameworks were developed and baselines conducted across its five target regions.

Initially the CCAFS project portfolio was largely influenced by what the Centers chose to map to CCAFS on the basis of perceived relevance to climate change. CCAFS experimented with performance based allocation of W1/W2 funding to gradually increase the strategic coherence of its overall research programme. For example, in 2013 this was done using 10 criteria against which each of the Centers would be assessed. These criteria (strategy, reflection of CCAFS principles, ambition, administrative efficiency) however did not include aspects of performance as such.

All these initiatives point towards a program management that has been taking RBM quite seriously and accepted the challenge of introducing RBM tools in a multi-layered, multi-partner, matrix management programme.

2. Motivation

CCAFS had already been in the process of implementing RBM, so the pilot aligned well with the general management direction of CCAFS. For a multi-Center programme like CCAFS, which started with a very diverse portfolio of projects, there was a need to streamline and prioritize. Interviewees stated that it was obvious that CCAFS would participate in an RBM trial given that it was a program that "wants to be at the forefront of things" and be transparent about its progress towards outcomes. Apart from this, Apart from CCAFS' internal motivation, there has been a CGIAR system level push towards RBM, which mostly manifested itself through the CRP level reporting requirements.

3. Design and start-up process

CCAFS's proposal estimated USD 8 million to be the total annual budget required for its RBM pilot. Of this CCAFS expected USD 1.5 million to come from the Consortium's RBM piloting budget. The CCAFS proposal was ranked first among proposals received by the Consortium Board. The Consortium liked that CCAFS had M&E supporting systems in place, made a commitment to self-funding a large part of the trial, and had followed a transparent process to identify pilot projects.

The proposal was to move CCAFS towards a Theory of Change approach and to link this to outcome level performance assessment. The idea was also to introduce and roll out a ToC approach at project level. It was decided to do this at the project level within Flagship (FP) 4: "Policies and Institutions for Climate-Resilient Food Systems".

A key feature of the proposal was performance assessment, which would integrate achievement of outcomes with other measures. The plan was to pay bonuses based on performance assessments and for this USD 370,000 was set aside.

4. The Piloting Process

The pilot started with a meeting of representatives of all selected projects in Washington in 2016 in which Impact pathways were refined. IPs were developed at various levels, starting from the overall FP level to regional level to project level. After that projects were asked to finalize their RBM frameworks (outcomes and indicators) and implement their M&E systems.

Capacity was uneven in applying the ToC approach. External consultants were hired to support the process. A "CCAFS Theory of Change Facilitation Guide" (June 2014) was developed and later revised (December 2014).

An early Planning and Reporting Platform had already been developed and put in place before the RBM pilot started, set up in Phase I (2011-2014). During the pilot, a conceptual model for a newer version of the PRP was developed to reflect a shift towards an "outcome-focused research program for development". The newer version was implemented in the CRP Extension Phase (2015-2016) and now exists as the further adapted Managing Agricultural Research for Learning and Outcomes (MARLO) platform.

The M&E component consisted of indicators, baseline data, mechanisms for reflection and learning, performance evaluation and other support mechanisms. Although baseline data was requested from projects, at the time of the start of the trial it was already quite late to collect or identify relevant baseline data. A key milestone at the time of the pilot was the launch of the "CCAFS Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy" (Jul 2014). This strategy reflects the overall approach taken during the RBM trial and consists of 6 different modules.

Performance assessment
A key feature of the pilot was introduction of performance assessment along weighted criteria:
- Progress towards outputs, 25%
- Progress towards outcomes, 35%
- Reflection of CCAFS principles (quality of partnerships, communications, gender), 20%
- Response of team to the unexpected, ability to adapt and self-reflect, 20%

Initially the idea was to allocate additional funding (USD 370,000, thus 10% of overall RBM piloting budget received by CCAFS) to the highest scoring projects. However, due to budget cuts at overall CCAFS level this was not applied.

5. Reflections on the piloting process

Cultural change - RBM was a new way of working. CCAFS management was aware of this organizational challenge. A lot of emphasis was put on convincing staff of the usefulness of using ToC for research projects.

ToC approach - Essential to the pilot was the focus on Theories of Change and learning and adapting. The ToC was conceived and communicated as a dynamic tool. Key elements, were flexibility, learning, effectiveness and incentives. The focus was not on creating a perfect ToC, but rather on co-developing them with partners and establishing ownership through that process. The second ToC how-to guide[5] was adapted from a first version.

Center level - The capacity and level of engagement from the Centers varied. RBM roll out during the pilot was almost exclusively supported at the level of CCAFS management: no noteworthy Center-led initiatives were mentioned during the interviews. A special case was CIAT which could afford a small management unit also supporting RBM. Through this a M&E and Impact Assessment Specialist was recruited through charging each project overhead. This was not possible for Centers who had only limited involvement in CCAFS.

Learning about RBM from the piloting
CCAFS saw the pilot as an opportunity to learn before rolling RBM out across its whole portfolio. A wikispace was set up and information about the trial shared and six learning briefs were produced. The effort made to reflect on and to document the RBM piloting process helped CCAFS adjust and fed into a variety of RBM tools: MARLO, the M&E strategy, and the ToC Guide. It was less obvious what was done to support sharing across the 6 sub-pilots.

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[5] Schuetz, T., Förch, W., Thornton, P., 2014a. Revised CCAFS Theory of Change Facilitation Guide. CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), Copenhagen, Denmark.

6. Results to date

Main achievements

Move towards outcome-oriented culture - Although still evolving, there has been a shift towards thinking more about outcomes and impacts.

Performance based funding allocation - CCAFS today allocates its funding through a competitive process which is based on performance of projects.

Strategic direction and coherence - CCAFS management now has a better overview of its portfolio and can prioritize research based on expected outcomes and on alignment with its overall program level Theory of Change.

Engagement with next users and partners - While ToC was used at the program level to engage and communicate with partners, it was also used at project level. Project leaders found that involving partners in their ToC design helped establish better relationships. This is also true for funders who use ToC to relate how CCAFS research fits into their objectives.

Main challenges

Outcomes measurement - Measuring data at the outcome level is challenging and costly. Another issue is the reliability of outcome data. Projects report on outcomes, but there needs to be quality assurance of the underlying data and this is costly.

Moving targets - "Nothing is fixed" - The focus on adaptive management recognized the complex environment in which CCAFS operates. The ToC approach has to be flexible, but some interviewees stated that assumptions and impact pathways are constantly moving.

Learning from learning - The adaptive Theory of Change model is based on reflection and learning. A lot of qualitative information is being captured that needs to be analysed and processed and used for CCAFS-wide learning. This is a challenge. "I don't see what is happening with that information".

7. Lessons Learned

Holistic approach to RBM
Starting from the beginning of the RBM pilot, RBM was introduced as a holistic approach that covered various aspects: planning with Theory of Change, monitoring outcomes, evaluating progress, an online reporting platform, and use of incentives through the performance bonus. The move to outcome orientation was supported by new systems.

Recognition of change management
CCAFS management was conscious that introducing RBM is not just a matter of imposing processes on its team. The leadership recognized that this is about shifting the mindset of people and introducing

a "new way of business". This was done with consistent messages, patience and also some degree of capacity building (workshops, technical support, etc).

Take into account the diversity of Centers

CCAFS works in 15 different CGIAR Centers. This complex organizational structure makes implementation of RBM across the full portfolio difficult. Some Centers have embraced RBM, others less so. The performance assessment systems used by the Centers are not completely aligned to the kind of targets that CCAFS sets and instead are usually based on scientific outputs. The stake that Centers have in CCAFS is different.

Use of learning

There are examples of learning from CCAFS' RBM experience which have been applied in a wider context; not only within this CRP but beyond:

- CCAFS set up a wikispace to document learning and produced high-quality, detailed learning briefs to support dissemination and learning;
- The lessons from the pilot informed the further development of the P&R platform (now MARLO) which is presently being used by seven CRPs;
- The ToC Guide has been used to guide ToC development for Phase II proposals; and

Informal exchange of knowledge where CCAFS was approached to provide advice to other Centers and CRPs.

2. Global Rice Science Partnership (GRISP)

GRiSP brought together three CGIAR research Centers plus three non-CGIAR institutions as core partners. The three research Centers that participated in the 2014 RBM piloting included IRRI, AfricRice, and CIAT. GRiSP was first approved in 2011 with a five-year budget of USD 593 million, the largest of the 15 CGIAR Research Programs. In 2016, GRiSP was redesigned as RICE.

1. History and readiness for the RBM pilot

The RBM piloting built on GRiSP's already defined impact pathway. GRiSP submitted a proposal to the Consortium Office for a RBM pilot project that would design and test an effective system to collect and evaluate IDO indicators within a 2-year time frame, with approved funding for the first year (2014) of USD 600,000. The pilot connected to on-going work. A workshop to develop an integrated impact pathway and M&E framework took place in February and March 2013. The workshop led to an integrated strategic framework for GRiSP's later discussions on work program strategy, staffing and budgets.

In the three participating Centers, IRRI, AfricaRice and CIAT, there was experience working with RBM even before before the pilot. For example, AfricaRice had an outcome-oriented 2011-2020 strategic plan and a 2012-2013 baseline survey was completed to help monitor it.

In summary, there was already a lot to build on when the RBM pilot supported by the Consortium Office started: a generic ToC, impact pathways, tentative definition of IDOs, a GRiSP gender strategy,

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and planned impact assessments, plus initial ideas on indicators. As early as April 2013, a draft M&E plan for GRiSP had been developed.

2. Motivation and focus of the pilot

In instructions to CRPs (November 2011), the Consortium Office noted that M&E systems of CGIAR had relied on multiple indicators, some of which were difficult to link to performance and were complex, time consuming, and expensive to use. The Consortium Office asked CRPs to improve their monitoring systems.

Outcome indicators and other metrics for GRiSP were necessary to track progress, to demonstrate the impact pathways and theory of change, to assess impact, and to satisfy donor requirements.

GRiSP had developed an outline for the CRP II phase, based on a draft set of IDOs and overall thematic impact pathways and theories of change. This needed to be followed-up by designing an effective M&E system to collect data for IDOs indicators. As preparation for GRiSP phase II, the pilot project would aim to design and test a system to collect and evaluate IDO indicators. Initially, the idea was to do this in a 2-year timeframe (2014-2015) involving a total investment of around US$2.7million. Part of this was expected to come from the special RBM piloting funds.

3. Design and start-up process - MISTIG

The Consortium Office approved a results-based management (RBM) proposal from GRiSP with a $600,000 budget for 2014 with the expectation that the same amount would be available for 2015. GRiSP would also allocate funds from its program coordination budget to supplement the Centers' M&E activities. This meant that overall approximately USD 1 million per year would be spent on conducting M&E training, workshops, buying hardware, conducting surveys, and other activities. The RBM pilot project was referred to as the *Metrics and Indicators for Tracking in GRiSP* (MISTIG) project.

In December 2013, a workshop was held on Computer-Aided Personal Interview (CAPI) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). This can be considered as the formal start of the RBM piloting. Different CAPI systems were compared as used by CIAT, IRRI, and AfricaRice. This was considered the first-ever overview of all GRiSP partner M&E systems. It also presented the issue of connecting data from different systems since at GRiSP level. The idea was to identify at the program level a set of key indicators, and to come up with at most 4 IDOs with 3 or 4 indicators per IDO to keep things manageable. The consensus was that CAPIs would speed up and automate data collection, reduce risk of errors, reduce the time for data processing (no more manual transcriptions), and ease data transfer and analysis. The move to CAPIs, and possibly one or a few CAPIs only, would be of great advantage for M&E purposes. An M&E specialist, based at IRRI, was contracted to spearhead the RBM-related activities funded 50:50 between GRiSP and IRRI.

4. The pilot process

Results-framework related

The focus in 2014 was on developing a robust M&E framework and system for tracking progress along the impact pathway from outputs (rice research products) to IDOs. The IDOs have several indicators that were to be monitored at three levels: global, national, and at action sites. In 2014, a start was made to develop monitoring plans for the IDO indicators at those three levels.

National rice R&D related

The MISTIG project was implemented by CIAT in collaboration with the Latin American Fund for Irrigated Rice (FLAR in Spanish). Participants selected and defined 20 indicators for monitoring GRiSP IDOs at the national level. AfricaRice, in collaboration with the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), conducted a similar workshop for a national rice development strategy in 2009. In 2014, AfricaRice organized a hub vision stakeholders' workshop representing 24 African countries. In 2014, CORRA and GRiSP conducted two workshops to initiate an inventory of national rice research and development strategies (NRDS) in Asia. GRiSP IDOs and indicators, and the NRDS of the participating countries were presented, compared, and discussed in group sessions.

Action site baseline survey related to IDO monitoring

Action sites are areas within countries where GRiSP flagship projects are actively being implemented. At IRRI in 2014, a CAPI questionnaire was used to collect baseline data to systematically monitor GRiSP IDOs at action sites. The survey was conducted in five countries with a total sample size of 11,254 rice farmers. This was followed by data quality checking and cleaning and analysis of IDO indicators (which has still not been finished completely). A monitoring plan for the action sites was designed after 2014 in consultation with IRRI theme leaders and key staff working on the IDOs. The idea was to conduct a similar survey every 3 to 5 years, but currently (2017) this is not considered feasible and doing this every 5-6 years is thought to be more realistic.

The main activity undertaken at CIAT and FLAR action sites is research on impact assessment. In 2013, a nationally representative survey was conducted in Bolivia and the data was analyzed in 2014. A similar survey with qualitative methods to deepen gender analysis was implemented in late 2014 by CIAT and Ecuador's national agricultural research institute (INIAP). In 2014, AfricaRice conducted a hub baseline survey in two new African countries: Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Other activities conducted were the rice production survey, technology diffusion survey, and a hub vision stakeholder workshop.

MIS-related

A MIS for GRiSP was developed with modules for planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment. GRiSP Centers (IRRI, AfricaRice, and CIAT) and partners are meant to be able to log in and enter data online. Data on IDO indicators at global, national, and action site levels would be displayed online for public viewing, searching, and downloading. AfricaRice developed an offline web-

based M&E application called MLAX. Since most Centers have their own MIS, the challenge was to make them interoperable.

5. Reflections on the piloting process

Guidance

In the early 2013 workshop on developing integrated impact pathways and a monitoring and evaluation framework, consultants helped clarify core aspects of RBM. Several other workshops followed to create shared understanding among GRiSP partners, particularly in the field of M&E-related concepts and processes. The Bangkok meeting of December 2013 was the first following the approval of the RBM pilot proposal.

The main adaptation which took place related to MIS complications and the choice to work with simpler versions. Piloting led to the realisation that the learning orientation of RBM had to significantly improve if RBM were to make a difference beyond an ability to report according to requirements.

How was piloting received

It was a big change to start collecting data at outcome level. In the beginning, many had no notion about RBM. Training was needed and data collectors needed guidance to work with a different type of data and to master new systems. The automation of the data collection system helped in this. Tablets started to become more widely used. Changing the organizational culture, orientation, and mindset required effort. NARS partners are now starting to understand what is meant by results-oriented M&E and results reporting is strating to improve.

MIS issues - MELCoP

Two of the three GRiSP CGIAR Centers had already invested in their own MIS: AfricaRice had developed its own, and CIAT would use MARLO, whereas IRRI did not have a MIS at all. It was decided that IRRI would develop its own MIS, and that IT specialists would assure that the three systems could communicate. The IRRI MIS was eventually developed, but the cross-talk capability never happened - and was never needed. A few years ago, AfricaRice stopped using its MIS. It was considered too complex for staff, and data entered into the system was rarely used.

After the initial full-scale surveys, smaller-scale surveys have been done. Initially the idea was to repeat the baseline survey every 3-4 years to measure changes, but that was not feasible. Now the idea is to do it once in 5-6 years.

MELCoP is trying to harmonize indicators across CRPs. What is becoming clear is that certain key concepts are understood differently, such as food security. This tends to lead to different ideas on what indicators are needed.

Leadership and incentives

There has been significant investment in workshops to establish a shared understanding about RBM. This included interaction with other CRPs in the cross-CRP workshop on Monitoring & Evaluation

(bringing together Dryland Cereals, Grain Legumes, GRiSP, MAIZE, and WHEAT). The CRP director and M&E specialist (both at IRRI) provided support.

CRP and Center level linkages

In the case of GRiSP the interaction between CRPs and Centers is considered not very complex, because involved Centers did most of their rice-related work through GRiSP: IRRI 90%, AfricaRice 85%, and CIAT 100%. For CIAT, however, rice is just one of the crops they work on, which means they related differently to GRiSP than AfricaRice and IRRI. There is a risk of doing things double: at Center level and at CRP level. This also relates to the bilateral projects which must comply with donor requirements. In many cases, this created two different reporting streams. In the end, the approach adopted was that the set of data needed by GRiSP was defined and that each Center would find out its own way of providing this (through different systems) e.g. one may choose to use MARLO and another may not.

A start was made with training senior staff at GRiSP on RBM principles as early as 2013 (developing ToC and impact pathways, and general RBM skills). Since then, every year there has been a 3 to5-day combined workshop on M&E, gender, and impact assessment.

6. Results to date

Main achievements

The main achievement of the RBM pilot has been the development of a M&E framework and implementation system for tracking progress along the impact pathway from outputs (rice research products) to IDOs. This enhanced readiness of GRiSP to develop appropriate plans for CRP II (RICE). In concrete terms, the process led to an agreed set of GRiSP goals, IDOs, regional targets, a set of progress indicators, a prototype monitoring system, and trained staff to implement the monitoring system.

It was new to develop a M&E framework and to build this with involvement of stakeholders. CIAT developed indicators at three levels: global, national, and site-specific. Rather than developing just their own capacity to gather data, they connected to the various partners of FLAR to obtain the data. They then provided the service of putting all data 'under one roof' (centralised information) and offered basic analysis services. Because CIAT worked with FLAR for data gathering and delivery capacity, much could be done with relatively little money. The MIS provides CIAT with an overview of what is going on in the field of rice production while also supporting partners in FLAR. When RBM funds stopped to provide this centralised data house and related analysis, 7-8 countries decided they wanted to continue this service and each provide 20% of full-time-equivalent for a research assistant to keep the service going.

Main challenges

Indicators

Data for many indicators is being collected at project level. The immediate challenge is aggregation and extracting needed information systematically from individual reports and diverse M&E systems that the individual projects operate. The qualitative component refers to different dimensions of

indicators, each with their own units of measurement that cannot be simply added up. Little thought went into how related data would need to gathered, processed, aggregated, etc. Indicators on capacity development and other qualitative processes such as strength of partnership, are difficult to establish. But capacity and partnerships are the very basis for an ability to achieve results (outcomes) and contribute to impact.

Relevant complexity

The Consortium Office sometimes approaches CRPs as projects. However, they are conglomerates of all kinds of projects, involving all kinds of partners, involving all kinds of management systems. This affects what is possible in the field of RBM. It requires consensus and moving forward slowly. RBM cannot be top-down. This also relates to the global reach of GRiSP, where donors and the Consortium Office seem to expect that measurement can be done of 'everything everywhere'. The associated attempt to define and collect system-wide indicators remains as a fundamental challenge and such attempts have proven to be elusive and costly to date.

A complication in reporting is that there are two streams: one for reporting in relation to bilateral funding, and another for reporting for the CGIAR system. There is some overlap in terms of the type of indicators involved, but largely it means having two separate MIS systems. The initial idea was to merge the two systems, but now the idea is to have a consolidated MIS for all CRPs (MARLO). If MARLO is tuned to the CRPs, it will not be possible have it also serve for bilateral reporting.

MIS

A lot of work has been done to develop MIS (electronic systems) that can handle comprehensive data sets related to finance, human resources, and core data. But in the end they are often not used because they are too complex and too difficult to work with. Some still prefer the Excel sheets which can be easily adapted.

From data collection to informing management decision making

There was agreement that planning for results-oriented M&E was often overambitious. Questionnaires were too heavy. There were some situations where questions were not relevant or meaningful. Data acquired through MISTIG was too exhaustive. It takes a long time to process all this raw data. 5 scientists in the action sites worked on this, but they also had their other work. It was an extra obligation that seriously slowed down the process of working with the data.

Funding

An initial indication of available budget was given, but in the end, budgets were cut and some of what was planned could not be implemented. Much of the work needs to be pre-financed by Centers and by the time final budgets from the Sytem are approved, the amounts could be less than intially signalled. By then it is too late to adjust spending. Uncertain funding conflicts with the setting of targets and expecting commitments to achieving them.

7. Main lessons learned (including those emerging after the RBM piloting period)

Learning environment

Creating a safe environment for learning was often lacking (not enough attention for that was given by the Consortium Office in Montpellier). What seemed to matter more was figures and success stories. In GRiSP (and currently in RICE) a need was defined to do more reflection. A lot was invested in setting up the ToCs and IPs and the related systems. After that effort, time needs to be set aside for reflection and review and how assumed change pathways work. This then must lead to adjusted plans so that RBM does not restrict adaptive management. This applies to CRP, flagship and cluster levels.

Engagement with scientists can be further optimised. Results are presented annually. More effort should be made to gain understanding of how results compare to intentions as shown in a respective ToC and its IPs. A CRP sponsored mid-term evaluation should be encouraged. This would respond to the need for earlier sense-making and seeing how the CRP is doing in view of its ToC.

Enabling environment for RBM

There is a danger that targets will always be achieved but only on paper. Key to RBM is an enabling environment for results orientation, including realistic time frames for making a transition and institutionalising such results orientation. Development of a capacity to support RBM takes time. The focus of the pilot was on developing structures and less on developing a conducive environment for results orientation. If RBM becomes mainly an incentive mechanism which rewards those who meet targets and punishes those who do not, this may limit its potential.

Rice not representative for all CRPs

Rice is a crop with a relatively simple supply-demand process model. That makes it easier to select indicators and targets. For other CRPs this is much more challenging.

Indicators

A major lesson learned was that we need to keep indicators simple, measurable, and doable. Informants considered that they were overambitious in relation to M&E.

Principles of good practice in M&E

Some have raised concerns about what they consider to be too simplistic ToCs underpinning the design of results frameworks. This points to the need of actively working with the ToC and updating and improving it over the years rather than working with it as a fixed point of reference.

Taking into account diversity in research

Often the focus of RBM is on short-term issues, for example, introducing new varieties. But the long-term process of breeding requires a different assessment approach. Scientists focus more on long-term research processes. Overfocusing on delivery may come at the expense of losing the unique identification as research organisation. Discovery and delivery need to be combined and the ToC should not be reduced to delivery.

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Addressing issues in reporting complexities

There may be different reporting needs in the same CRP depending on donor requirements but also related to different setup of Centers. It is important to find a way to handle this appropriately through flexible frameworks.

Capacity

Embracing RBM is a long-term process. There is a need to identify more champions to institutionalize RBM. Not everything can be done through paper instructions and frameworks – the human factor is needed to bring RBM to life. At the same time, care should be taken who can champion RBM from an integrated perspective of both accountability and learning. The way in which RBM gets implemented may be more technically-driven due to the type of people who provide guidance. RBM needs to be owned at all levels, include institutional buy-in, and involve a shared understanding about RBM essentials. Training is important. CRP asks for RBM but scientists are not trained for that.

Use of learning

There are many documents available on GRiSP's implementation of RBM: workshop reports, report on the RBM piloting process, and a range of technical reports. A report on the RBM pilot was submitted to the Systems Office, and it informed a section in the 2014 CGIAR portfolio report. Lessons learned have mainly trickled through informally through the involvement of GRiSP staff in the CGIAR community of practice on monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MELCoP), and the Task Force on Indicators (TFI). The MELCoP and TFI mainly focus on the technical part of devising a system to link indicators at various levels and information systems. There has been no exchange between CRPs that implemented other RBM pilots.

RBM piloting significantly informed the development of the online monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) platform for RICE. RICE continues strengthening its RBM practice, mainly in M&E, but also strengthening strategic learning and adaptive management.

8. Conclusions

A major concern that came out of the piloting process (also looking at what happened since then) is an overemphasis on alignment of indicators and targets which may in the end not be meaningful but in the process put an administrative burden on researchers. The pilot points to the need to balance RBM-related reporting requirements with an environment which is conducive to results-oriented motivation and practice.

3. Roots, Tubers, and Bananas (RTB)

This RBM pilot was led by the International Potato Center (CIP). Four CGIAR Centers participated through RBM sub-pilots: Bioversity in the RBM pilot related to banana wilt disease control, CIP in the RBM pilot related to seed potatoes, IITA in the RBM pilot related to cassava processing, and CIAT in the RBM pilot on Nextgen.

The detailed RTB proposal (2011) already showed a vision for RBM including a generic ToC for RTB. In 2012, RTB initiated a structured process for shifting from an output-focused research agenda to RBM. The RBM framework was meant to improve program performance, enhance achievement of outcomes, and increase value for money through evidence-based impacts. RTB subscribed to the 2009 description of RBM by the UNDG and a visual of an RBM cycle for RTB was developed.

In March 2013 there was an RBM workshop and representatives of CIP, CIAT, Bioversity, and IITA, plus other partners, met to establish the foundations for RBM. RTB began to define its ToC with a set of flagships and linked impact pathways. This was shared with a group of stakeholders, primarily funding agencies, in June 2013 in Montpellier who found the framework credible and convincing.

It was therefore clear that RTB was ready to pilot RBM in concrete work processes. Conceptually, a foundation had been laid in the years before the pilot started.

1. Motivation and focus

Key reasons for further RBM work: a) improving program performance; b) strengthening a results-oriented culture for the planning, managing and assessment of research for development; c) supporting adaptive management, organizational learning and informed decision-making at all levels; and d) promoting greater accountability, transparency and value for money.

It was also noted that there had been limited participation of either upstream research partners or downstream R&D partners into the development of ToC with its shared and nested accountability structure. Therefore it was considered essential during the piloting phase to improve ToCs with broader stakeholder participation.

2. Design and start-up process

In 2014 RTB received supplementary funds from the Consortium Office to pilot the development and the implementation of its new Results-Based Management (RBM) system: Potatoes (Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda), Bananas (Uganda, DR Congo), Cassava (Nigeria), and NextGeneration breeding (global). USD 700,000 was approved which RTB complemented from existing budgets.

Strengthening outcome thinking at all management levels was considered important. This was facilitated by the Program Management Unit (PMU) which started the RBM pilot by training a group of process coordinators. The members of this group played a central role in designing the workshops and have been acting as "change agents" within their teams, familiarizing them with new concepts and tools.

RTB focused RBM at the Cluster level because they were considered, more than the project level, to present interdisciplinary synergetic research, multi-level and cross-country interventions, and a broad set of research and development partners who form part of an impact pathway.[2]

3. The pilot process

In the following, we briefly describe the RBM sub-pilots.

BXW (Banana Xanthomonas Wilt disease control)

This was about a programme in Flagship 1 in Eastern and Central Africa, led by Bioversity International. This RBM pilot aimed at improving a ToC for BXW with broader stakeholder participation, including with national and regional organizations and CGIAR Centers. The focus was on revised impact pathways (IPs) and indicators, as well as further steps towards the establishment of a M&E and learning (MEL) system.

A broad group of partners and clients were connected to the RBM process, including researchers, farmers and farmer organizations, extension staff, SMEs, local governments, and the media. The main methods used for introducing RBM were workshops, presentations, field visits, group sessions and plenary sessions. The first workshop in 2014 established a common outlook on what RBM was about. The development of an impact pathway and involvement in that process was appreciated. It helped to clarify different roles played and contributions to be made. From early on it was clear that for Uganda and DRC (implementation in these two countries) the process would be different. Uganda was more ready to engage with RBM than DRC was.

Nextgen

This pilot was in Flagship 2 on Next Generation Breeding for Roots, Tubers and Bananas led by CIAT. and focused on 1) theory of change and action plan agreed with partner organizations; 2) M&E sub-system for one discovery flagship on Next Generation Breeding; and 3) RBM in government/management structure for RTB. A workshop to develop a M&E system for genetic gains in RTBs took place in 2014 in Colombia at CIAT. A range of stakeholders were involved from four CGIAR Centers of the RTB, National Agriculture Research Institutes (NARIs), its strategic partner CIRAD, as well as advanced research institutes and industry from Europe, United States, Canada and Australia. There was input from social scientists (gender), economists, post-harvest specialists, and other biological sciences. The workshop aimed to develop a RBM system to assess next generation breeding: impacts on productivity, food security, nutrition and income generation.

Further work was done on 1) consolidation key data gathered during the workshop n Cali on metrics and indicators for monitoring RTB genetic gains, 2) a survey to validate findings on indicators through with RTB breeders, 3) reaching agreement among breeders indicators for the M&E system for NextGen cluster of activities.

Seed potato

This was about a programme in Flagship 3 on Seed Potato for sub-Saharan Africa, led by CIP.
CIP/RTB invited partners to jointly review the business plan for going to scale with quality seed potato and put in place a shared framework for RBM to maximize the value of investment in potato research. National partners from the public and private sectors in Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia, and staff from the CGIAR were brought together in RBM planning workshops in 2014 and 2015. These workshops helped develop goals of seed potato-related interventions, and IPs to achieve these goals.
The improved impact pathway was used to formulate smarter indicators and targets.

The RBM pilot facilitated the seed potato cluster to establish a reporting system on program-related interventions and continuous monitoring of targets to assess progress towards achieving cluster targets.

Before this was more a cluster of projects with different partners, but this helped partners see how their work fitted in that bigger picture. For many this was the first time they could see that bigger picture and how their work contributed to this. Initially 25 indicators were identified, which were later further discussed and reduced to 5 initial indicators which all projects had to report on. This created a common structure and outlook on the programme.

Cassava

This was about a programme in Flagship 4 on raising incomes and improving the health and safety of small and medium scale <u>cassava</u> processors, especially rural women led by IITA. Outbreak of Ebola and elections in Nigeria meant that the piloting was limited to less than a year (2015).

A capacity development workshop was conducted in April 2015 in at IITA, Ibadan. The workshop was attended by 21 persons mainly IITA scientists and representatives from RTB, CIAT, and CIRAD. The workshop brought RTB scientists together to gain knowledge around the new RTB program structure, Impact Pathways, Theory of Change and RBM concepts at Cluster level, in particular, for designing and implementing the planning, monitoring and evaluation system.

A planning workshop on raising incomes and improving the health and safety of small and medium scale cassava processors, especially for rural women was conducted early May 2015. It aimed to achieve a joint commitment to a plan for research and development and a shared framework for M&E. It led to 1) a consolidated vision; 2) An agreed indicators framework; 3) a commitment from partners to assist in collecting needed data. Indicators were developed and then refined and validated during a workshop that was December 2015. The indicators are said to be generic enough that they could be used for projects on cassava processing in Latin America and Asia as well.

The RBM piloting in 2014-2015 gradually transformed into preparations for CRP II.

4. Reflections on the piloting process

A consultant helped as facilitator of workshops, and consultant played key role in providing general support throughout the RBM pilot, a role which was found to be critical (see above).

In general, RBM was appreciated. Staff appreciated opportunities for interaction with partners in new ways. What is scaring some away and creating resistance is when it is seen as something that will make them responsible for something they cannot control. Some present RBM in ways which reduces it to just reporting, making it feel like an administrative burden.

MIS/M&E systems

In one sub-pilot it was found that the focus was to design a functional MEL system, which was tried, but it is not yet operational due lack of funding. Setting up a ME&L system was considered to be at the heart of the pilot, but it involves translation into concrete commitments at Center, team and individual level - something yet to be institutionalized.

Another sub-pilot mentioned that developing info systems in was not really part of the pilot. Joint software development across cases was, however, considered as something that would certainly have

been a plus. Related interoperability with other systems (financial, knowledge management) was found to be very important.

Centers are considered to play a crucial role in CGIAR. Around 80% of funds for the projects/clustered related to the CRP comes through Centers (W3 and bilateral funding). So this was reported as creating quite a challenge. The CRP cannot just sit down and plan out a programme and develop a results framework with indicators and M&E processes that neatly pulls everything together. They also have limited influence on what projects Centers plan exactly. Centers often set priorities. Some planned projects may work well in the CRP focus and objectives, but some may do so less.

It was said that at the project level there is not so much an issue of developing RBM since funding is there usually available through the dedicated funding streams. They have their own IP/ToC. However, the idea is to make these projects/clusters work together through flagships towards CRP objectives (sub-IDOs). It is about aggregation, push for coherence, creating synergies. That makes RBM at CRP level much more difficult in terms of making it function well.

Setting things in motion

Stakeholder meetings, are often considered an investment which have no direct outcomes and it is difficult to get funds released for this purpose. In fact, this very process of working with stakeholders and informing and inspiring their decision-making should be considered a major achievement. The inability to monitor the effects in stakeholder groups is often beyond the capacity of projects and there may not be ways to connect this to reporting streams results in not sufficiently presenting the case to donors of the actual cost-effectiveness of such interactions in terms of what has been set in motion and indirectly contributes to e.g. sector innovation.

RBM resourcing

There is a need for more clarity about financial and human resources and the time needed to effectively implement RBM at CRP and Center level. Resource needs are significant and.

5. Results to date

Main achievements

- Enhancing internal coherence and stakeholder engagement towards common outcomes through participatory workshops for impact pathways and collaborative mechanisms.
- Designing the general concept for the M&E system and indicators frameworks through presentation in participatory workshop obtaining feedback to refine it.
- Drafting roles & responsibilities for implementing M&E system, and roles and responsibilities and commitment to a common theory of change across all Centers.
- Improved coherence of RTB interventions by making explicit how efforts can be understood in a bigger picture perspective i.e. research outputs, even when obtained through different projects, as part of a coherent package contributing together to medium and long term goals.
- Through this experience, it became clear how important it is to have access to good data.
- It was found that a participatory approach for designing interventions gave responsibility and ownership to each implementing stakeholder.
- The piloting helped develop plans for seed potatoes, BXW management, and cassava: better project proposals in CRPII because of significant stakeholder engagement.

Main challenges

Use of evidence - Challenge to make systematic use of evidence to sustantiate the theory of change, definition of assumptions and inclusion of these assumptions in the monitoring framework, definition of the right level of expected outcomes in the right timeframe.

Impact pathway complexity - Measuring results along the impact pathway related to different interventions that are in different stage of implementation. Developing M&E frameworks based on impact pathways can be a challenging across many bilateral projects.

A principal challenge of the RBM pilot was found to be the definition of impact pathways and M&E for Discovery research, where the next users are mainly the scientists working in the Delivery Flagship Projects. Impact is typically separated by several to many years from the development of a product. M&E must be carried out on intermediate or even very upstream products, and then linkage made to their ultimate effect on breeding progress.

Some higher-level development outcomes set for CRP are far from what the project feels directly accountable for. Changes in potential of potato cultivation cannot be directly translated to changes in livelihoods. Too little money to do appropriate impact assessments along those lines.

Need for interaction and learning together

Would have liked to have more meetings, but that was too costly. However is important to help understand ToC and to stay in the process together. In general there is a steep learning curve for the biophysical scientists to learn the language and the structure of RBM as proposed by CGIAR. The continuing conversation and training will be essential for comprehension, buy-in and success.

Alignment challenges

Adopting an RBM approach requires a good alignment between PM&E plans and results-oriented budgets to ensure accountability in resource utilization. Centers do not use the same Enterprise Resource Planning systems. RTB depends for its implementation on cross-Center coordination. Currently performance evaluation follows line management through Centers. Improving the quality of implementation and delivery requires performance evaluation of teams which cuts across organizational boundaries.

As management strategy, RBM need to be embedded in a management structure with relevant financial and human resources available and roles and responsibilities clearly defined. In the RTB context, where the Cluster level is a new management level that will be fully implemented in the second phase, the undergoing shift from the old to the new program structure was a challenging issue during the pilot, as flagship project and cluster leaders had not been designated.

Partnering and RBM

Now that Centers rely heavily on W3/bilateral they may effectively become competitors of local partners. They compete for funds their partners are also aiming for. This creates an uneasy situation. CGIAR should focus more on coordination, innovation and bigger processes. "Now we sometimes jump institutions". Has to do with being in a survival mode. "To keep country programmes running you jump on opportunities you didn't jump on before".

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It was found difficult to mobilize enough resources beyond the pilot in order to ensure a good level of participation at the cluster and flagship level where multiple Centers, partners and countries are involved. RBM is a way of introducing a more participatory approach. Now that funds have gone, not much is left for partnership interactions.

The flagships are not all the same. Field realities can be quite different and relate to different levels of difficulty to work along the lines of RBM. That may have to do with country contexts as well as programme contexts.

Participation and RBM

Participation in trainings is often dominated by men, though women often play a stronger role in the day-to-day management of the banana fields. This mismatch has a bearing on development outcomes and stakeholders are called upon to be gender sensitive when offering trainings and other services.

Working with donors and their needs

There is a need to further discuss the move towards RBM with donors. They request a lot of administrative work in terms of e.g. reporting. This results in less time for projects. This means that effectively less time remains available to work on results. And then donors start to fund projects more directly which may turn CGIAR into competitors of local partners in accessing funds.

6. Main lessons learned (also looking beyond piloting process)

Integrated approach to RBM - The management strategy must be linked with, support, and be influenced by the research agenda to ensure that scientists perceive RBM as an opportunity for learning and improvement and not as an administrative/bureaucratic instrument.

Role of the ToC - It is critical to work with a sound theory of change to identify and validate expected research outputs and to identify shared responsibilities and synergies with partners for achieving outcomes. RBM helps to test the ToC.

Application of change management principles - A change process needs to be managed and supported: The RTB PMU (Program Management Unit) adopted a support-intensive approach during the pilot phase. With its direct participation and by mobilizing supplementary funds allocated for the pilot, RTB PMU organized trainings and supported the realization of workshops and the establishment of M&E frameworks. Nevertheless, the structure of RTB for its second phase counts on more than 20 Clusters and this approach won't be sustainable without allocating additional funds.[2] An RBM process is intensive in terms of the time, human and financial resources to be invested. Further expansion of RBM across the RTB portfolio needs to be mindful of limitations to this type of investment in times of scarce resources. Rather than attempting to quickly expand RBM across the whole portfolio, it is worth considering a staggered approach across the portfolio of RTB flagships and clusters.

RBM and involves a major investment. This needs to be carefully considered and may lead to a selection of project to apply RBM to keep things manageable. Try to piggyback on what is already in place as much as possible and connect to local realities and anchor the processes locally. Be modest in what can be done.

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RBM champions: A resource person who can help engage with RBM and learn how to do this, etc. is important to lubricate the process of starting to work through RBM. They play a crucial role in making RBM work for CRPs.

"Stay connected to stakeholders; in the end, that is where the change happens". After working together in developing ToC, etc. such connection needs to be maintained. "Too much work was done and then just left without following up by continued engaging with stakeholders".

MIS - Information management system must be in place to support technical, operational and financial information to easily circulate among program

Learning orientation - There is a further need to facilitate learning and support among Cluster teams. There is a reason for the L in MEL and there is a need for a clear approach regarding what makes for effective learning conditions.

Mere success stories can be meaningless if you cannot show what they exactly relate to. Example given of success story of farmer who says he earned 600 birr from a plot which he planted with potatoes. But this needs to be interpreted, and maybe then it turns out to not be significant at all. Avoid cheap and even misleading good news stories.

Learning in relation to RBM may involve the need for new skills: soft skills in terms of networking, stakeholder collaboration and interaction, partnerships. In other words, it involves other skills than just being a researcher.

The role of trust - The BXW pilot realised the key importance of trust relationships established between researchers and a broad range of stakeholders over years through joint work on BXW management and control in Uganda and, more recently, DR Congo.[7]

CRP-level RBM - To make RBM happen at CRP level remains a challenge. The focus remains on projects/clusters while it is difficult to keep an eye on how this work contributes towards objectives in a flagship and CRP-level perspective. That requires regular interaction, exchange of learning, and fine-tuning flagship/CRP-level ToC/IP. Planning, budgeting and effectively obtaining funds and support for this is something which deserves particular attention.

Use of lessons

The RBM pilot at RTB produced many workshop reports and progress reports which are readily available. A report on the entire pilot was submitted at the end of the piloting. There has been no (formal) exchange of lessons learnt between the RBM pilots.

To illustrate, this is what just the BXW case generated in terms of documentation:
- 2 stakeholder workshop reports (September 2014, November 2016)
- 12 monthly reports (some of which multi-months) for the period July 2014 to December 2015
- 2 country-specific baseline reports
- 2 annual reports (one for the period July-December 2014, one for 2015)
- 1 consolidated final/end of project report (this report)

On top of there, work was started on peer-reviewed journal articles using the baseline data. There is no lack of documentation on the RBM pilot in RTB.

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As for RTB, the pilot played a crucial role in preparing for CRPII, notably for the flagship clusters participating in the piloting. More than before active partnerships have developed to enhance readiness to contribute to impact at scale.

Though no significant formal follow-up of the RBM pilot took place beyond RTB itself, nor connecting the piloting to the wider community of CRPs, through participation of staff who were involved in the RBM pilot in the MELCoP and the Task Force on indicators there has still been a follow-up. RTB is also co-leading MELspace which was started by the Dryland Systems CRP.

ANNEX E: CIFOR reference study (KNOWFOR)

This short reference study is mainly a compilation of (only slightly edited) excerpts from the KNOWFOR Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Case Study (2015). The study is based on broad document review, semi-structured interviews, and an online survey. The study related to the period from mid-2013 till mid-2015[6].

In 2012, a large grant was provided by DFID to make a move in the direction of DMEL to help equip CIFOR/FTA better for R4D, to get more on top of the connection between knowledge development and policy change processes, and to improve learning capacity for enhanced effectiveness through adaptive management. This is what the KNOWFOR partnership process relates to.

This KNOWFOR partnership was not a CGIAR-initiated RBM pilot, but provides overlapping areas of learning since DMEL closely relates to RBM, similar change processes to the RBM piloting were involved in KNOWFOR, and implementation (also) took place in the context of the work of a CGIAR Center (and the related CRP of Forest, Trees, and Agroforestry (FTA).

We therefore include this abbreviated description to complement learning from the RBM pilots.

Background

KNOWFOR is a DFID funded partnership between the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Bank Program of Forests (PROFOR). KNOWFOR aimed to address the disjuncture between the supply and uptake of knowledge by practitioners and decision makers in the forestry sector. DFID KNOWFOR funding provided dedicated resources to address the challenges partners were experiencing in relation to adoption and use of effective DMEL. However, it was the ownership of the DMEL reform agenda and investment of internal human resources by KNOWFOR partners that translated this investment into successful outcomes. External DMEL capacity support was provided by Clear Horizon.

Purpose of KNOWFOR

In order to understand what was working and not working in attempts to reach policy makers and practitioners with robust knowledge and information, KNOWFOR recognised a need to reform how knowledge uptake projects were monitored and evaluated. Reviews of good practice in the area of outcome-oriented monitoring and evaluation led KNOWFOR partners to the conclusion that improvement in this area required a new, consistent approach to project design, monitoring, evaluation and learning.

The investment in DMEL aimed to contribute to organisational management as well as inform a wider conversation on effectively linking short-term localised interventions to broad, long term social, economic and environmental benefits.

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[6] More detail can be found in that document, and in iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/5130180.odt

Focus of KNOWFOR

The investment in improved DMEL through KNOWFOR focused on i) internal systems and culture, ii) individual practice change and iii) external factors influencing effective DMEL. The figure below reflects the theory of change (ToC) related to process of improving DMEL uptake theory of change.

KNOWFOR adopted a people-Centered approach that focuses on unpacking pathways through which knowledge travels, and adopts a range of appropriate approaches to understanding causality. This additionally facilitates the development of well-articulated intermediate outcomes, outlining who will be reached through what networks, and what they will do differently.

In the process of developing effective performance assessment systems, KNOWFOR supported partners to enhance their existing DMEL approaches in two ways. Firstly partners aimed to improve knowledge uptake planning by more deliberately targeting intended audiences, tailoring knowledge products, and making better use of networks in order to maximise the influence of evidence on forest sector policy and practices. Secondly partners have worked to develop and implement monitoring and evaluation systems that will support learning from experience, including learning from successful strategies and approaches and from less successful ones. KNOWFOR accepts that, working in complex systems, with multiple actors, interventions, feedback loops and time lags, it will not be possible or even desirable to demonstrate sole attribution for outcomes or impacts. KNOWFOR instead focuses on contribution in the sense discussed by Mayne (1999), who suggested that we should aim to understand the contribution made rather than proving attribution.

Assumptions underpinning the ToC are thoroughly discussed in the case study report. Most assumptions were found to be valid and realistic, which would mean that the change initiative operated on the basis of an appropriate theory of change.

Achievements

There is substantial evidence of rhetorical and operational support for the implementation of improved DMEL approaches. Across KNOWFOR partners all senior and operational staff interviewed indicated there is unanimous support for the DMEL change process from strategic and senior staff. All partners have revised their activity management cycle guidelines to require stakeholder-centric ToC and monitoring planning at the activity design stage. This endorsement and investment in process improvement were seen as synonymous with fostering open, learning cultures by many partner interviewees and workshop participants.

Partners are also investing in staff and partner training and new tools, systems and human resources to support DMEL at an institutional level. These investments are already delivering value in enhancing understanding of the importance of clarifying outcomes and planning for monitoring.

The clearest finding from this case study is that early adopters are responding positively to the ToC-driven design processes and that staff at all levels of organisations are finding the tool useful for their own purposes.

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Challenges

The development and implementation of improved DMEL approaches in KNOWFOR partners has been hampered by:

- a dearth of good examples of applying theory-driven DMEL approaches in relevant programs and sectors and limited hard data on the role of DMEL as a critical impact delivery mechanism
- a lack of clarity about how to adaptively manage during the activity cycle of knowledge generation programs
- a failure to adequately budget for, allocate time to or incentivise systematic use of DMEL
- real and perceived bottlenecks between stated support for DMEL on the one hand and actual resource allocation and performance management of activities and activity managers on the other
- The lack of robust organisational DMEL approaches, combined with competing demands of multiple donor accountabilities and sometimes conflicting approaches, pose significant challenges to getting buy in from activity managers.

Staff at all levels from all partners noted that time, budget and capacity constraints prevent them from applying planning and monitoring approaches consistently and thoroughly. The tension that exists between revised DMEL approaches and a perceived pressure to deliver outputs at the expense of monitoring and learning suggests that there is still progress to be made in terms of aligning organisational culture and management incentives.

The high levels of endorsement at senior levels have failed to assuage anxiety among early adopters at the activity level that the organisational commitment to the approach will wane. The fact that revised DMEL approaches are being written into the organisational policies and the support and endorsement from organisational governance bodies suggest this is unlikely. This perception however will need to be addressed in order to create an environment in which revised DMEL uptake is supported.

The limited use of outcomes level monitoring data to inform operational decisions can be attributed in part to the fact that performance management in relation to the achievement of outcomes is still being standardised across all partners. As activity leads begin to be managed more closely in line with the achievement of intermediate outcomes, the incentives to draw on monitoring data for adaptive management will increase. The use of monitoring data for adaptive management may also need to be reinterpreted for knowledge generation for development programs to be usefully applied the knowledge production phase. KNOWFOR partners have an opportunity to experiment and adapt theory-driven approaches in ways that offer workable models for planning, learning and assessing contribution for future initiatives. CIFOR's experience of working with ToC in research programs has already generated lessons regarding the formulation of models that appropriately reflect the co-generation of knowledge and multiple levels of outcomes.[7]

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[7] CIFOR sponsored the use of ToC design approaches to two new funded initiatives in 2014/15 including a Global Comparative Study on Land Tenure Reforms and Oil Palm Adoptive Landscapes (OPAL).

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Learning about what worked in DMEL introduction

Key enablers and constraints to the uptake of effective DMEL

Domain of change	Key enablers (what worked well in KNOWFOR)	Key constraints (what did not work so well in KNOWFOR)
Commitment, organisation culture and relationships	• Organisational or systemic drivers and incentives • L*eadership endorsement* • Staff interest in learning and strong cross team relationships	• Fear of underperformance • Unrealistic performance frameworks • Lack of management incentives to focus on monitoring and learning • Resistance to change
Systems and processes	• Strong DMEL building blocks • Appropriate internal and external technical support	• Unsuitable or inadequate organisational systems • Lack of user engagement with exiting tools and systems • Inadequate tools and guidance
Resources and skills	• Dedicated human resources • Regular training and on-the-job capacity development • Dedicated DMEL funding	• Limited published research into approaches being applied • Limited applied experience • Limited knowledge and expertise in organisational learning • Paucity of information on return on investment for DMEL in the sector

Recommendations from those involved based on experience

- Review the management incentives that are currently in place and see what changes could be made to promote the types of learning behaviour that is desired. This could include looking into how partners hold themselves and ourselves accountable for responding to the lessons learned.

- Focus on building a culture of effectively capturing and reflecting on information and lessons learned throughout the life of a project.

- Ensure that lessons are shared across organisations in a constructive way. We should look for opportunities to convene, structured facilitated conversations between key people and then communicating findings more broadly.

- Support DMEL early adopters to demonstrate effectiveness of approaches throughout the project life cycle.

- Attention should be paid to promoting learning and developing appropriate systems that support learning. This will involve addressing the structural/institutional factors that currently limit this style of learning. A simple initial step would be to introduce informal learning opportunities.

- Organisations need systems and processes that promote learning, the spreading of ideas and free flow of information. These systems should focus on the interpersonal dimension of learning as well as the consolidation and management of information in a centralised fashion.

- DMEL needs to be positioned as 'everyone's job', but ensure that there is clear guidance available to help project teams navigate the system, implement the tools and make effective use of the information at the project and organisational level.

- Invest in strengthening organisational DMEL systems in a way that enables partners to sell their own systems to donors rather than being captive to external systems. This will enable partners to have one strong system, rather than a mosaic of approaches. Multiple systems create confusion as they draw on a variety of conflicting conceptual understandings, create obstacles to effective communication across projects and ultimately reduce the quality of information available for internal learning purposes.

- Continue to provide capacity development and mentoring opportunities to project staff and implementing partners. There was a clear demand for more of this and the evidence suggested the multiple exposures in both training and application were important in cementing understanding.

- Provide more support on the use of monitoring and learning tools and approaches. As project cycles progress there is a growing demand for support to build on the initial investment in ToC through the effective use of monitoring tools.

- Reinforce the need to budget for and allocate time to reflection and learning. This can be framed as a valuable strategic investment for project managers, as it facilitates better evidence based communication to senior management/donors and enables them to stay "on the radar" throughout the projects journey.

- Promote models that provide effective, on-the-job support to project staff in relation to DMEL and explore how KNOWFOR Phase 2 funding can support this.

CIFOR/FTA RBM-related capacity development reflections

(mainly based on reflections shared during interview with CIFOR staff)

The investments made through KNOWFOR were crucial for CIFOR to get their act together in the field of results orientation. The support also helped create motivation for staff to get involved, and start working on a results-oriented culture that would not be just accountability-driven. It started a processes of better understanding how change happens and that influenced how projects were starting to be designed and communicated about, not as focusing on that which is academically interesting, but on what is worth pursuing in view of societal objectives.

CIFOR is quite advanced in results-oriented practice and that matches well with the results-orientation in FTA. In FTA, however, also partners participate, and there is no universal agreement along the lines of RBM-type of efforts/orientations.

The natural link to RBM is at project level; that is where RBM happens in practice. It is already difficult enough to achieve internal alignment/aggregation in flagships and then CRP. To then go further and try to align/aggregate cross-Center, cross-CRP, that is quite something. Maybe it is important to first get things settled well at field-level and then only to build some superstructure, and not do it the other way around. It takes time to get appropriate buy-in. This relates to a need to have an internally driven process. In CIFOR they were able to build DMEL up 'from the ground'. That is important for creating ownership for DMEL (RBM). It create opportunities for owning DMEL/RBM at the right levels.

Research at CIFOR/FTA is more and more becoming results-oriented in terms of how it is set up, who to work with, etc. CIFOR/FTA is keen on getting initial findings out sooner than before. Before, researchers would tend to only communicate about findings after an article was published. Now they

try to get key messages out earlier. It is still a challenge, but part of what they consider to be working towards results-oriented practice.

In a wider CGIAR perspective, there is a need to acknowledge diversity of Centers and create adequate levels of flexibility in how results-oriented practice is done. E.g. CIFOR holds to research more than ICRAF which is more development oriented already. But this also has to do with CIFOR's mission which is to get policy-relevant messages out to see policies change for the better.

FTA had built its own platform like MARLO; it has the same type of features as MARLO. The idea is to move to MARLO for pragmatic reasons ("better not to have your own thing separately").

Conclusion

KNOWFOR was seen by all interviewees as providing valuable and timely incentives, resourcing and expertise to accelerate each partner's own DMEL reform agendas. KNOWFOR was able to provide dedicated funding and expertise to focus on tackling an issue that was a priority to partners. Although the DFID investment was valuable in facilitating practice change, it was the ownership of the DMEL agenda by KNOWFOR partners that ensured uptake. DMEL had been a growing priority for KNOWFOR partners as a result of structural and governance reforms and increasing funder scrutiny.

KNOWFOR's function of bringing together three partners who were grappling with similar challenges was also highly valued. This partnership facilitated the collaborative development of ideas, approaches, tools and methodologies. It enabled the pooling and sharing of lessons from implementation and also validated the experience and interest in improving approaches and challenging accepted norms. This additional value further validates the importance of continuing to engage external partners and aligned organisation in DMEL focused conversations.

KNOWFOR partners are in the early stages of a cultural shift in relation to DMEL. However, partners have achieved significant changes in organisational attitudes, understanding and practice since 2013. When asked to assess the achievement of progress to date, across all three pathways partners indicated that they would rank the achievement highly (7-9 out of 10) for this stage in the implementation, but much lower (a score of between 3 or 4 out of 10) if asked to consider the pathway as a whole.

The KNOWFOR partnership experience informed CIFOR's Planning, Monitoring and Learning Strategy (2015). The intensive guidance of the process by Clear Horizon, led to different types of RBM-relevant processes than the ones we see in the RBM pilots, which provides useful complementary insights. Interestingly, though involving a quite different process, recommendations (lessons learnt) appear to be quite similar to the ones we see in the RBM pilots. The DMEL capacity development process continued after 2015 (KNOWFOR phase 2). The process is currently being evaluated (part of a different evaluation).

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ANNEX F: IDRC reference study

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a crown corporation, with a core budget from the Government of Canada (GoC). With this funding come accountability expectations and practices in keeping with the Canadian government's Policy on Results.[8] As such IDRC offers an example of how a respected, long-established development research Center uses RBM to support management efficiency and effectiveness.

The purpose of this study is to seek learning from the IDRC experience with RBM which can potentially be valuable input for the formative evaluation of CGIAR's RBM policy. IDRC is not one of CGIAR's 15 core research Centers and as such provides a valid external reference: a development research Center that has embraced its own understanding of RBM for at least two decades.

Methodology Used for the Study

This was a quick overview to capture and study the most salient learning points. With a total of 5-days research and write-up effort allocated, it was not expected to be exhaustive. Documents available on IDRC's website and through Google search were examined to understand the implementation challenges, adaptations, and successes experienced by IDRC with respect to RBM. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with one present and two former staff members. Outcome mapping as a specific IDRC-designed performance management approach was examined in some depth as was IDRC's work on evaluating research quality. The relatively limited time available, and the lack of full access to IDRC internal files, are noted limitations to this study.

IDRC Overview

Mandate

The IDRC funds research in developing countries to promote growth, reduce poverty, and drive large-scale positive change. IDRC funds projects that aim to bring employment, food security, health, peace, and prosperity to developing regions of the world. The International Development Research Center Act describes the Center's mandate: "to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions."

In carrying out this mandate, the Center:

- provides financial support to researchers in developing countries to work on problems crucial to their communities;
- engages with research partners throughout the innovation process;

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[8] https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31300

- promotes networking among its grantees; and
- facilitates access to information and services, as well as to researchers, policymakers, and business people

Programming

IDRC supports research in all of Canada's development countries of focus, as well as in other countries. The Center's head office is in Ottawa. Four regional offices (Cairo, Montevideo, Nairobi and New Delhi) are also maintained across the developing world. Last year IDRC managed more than 800 research projects with 600 institutions, and granted about 200 individual awards.[9] Its reported annual budget for 2015/16 was $263 million, of which $184 million came from GoC and the rest from other donors.[10] IDRC's three program areas and associate subprograms are:

- Agriculture and Environment (about a third of total program resources)
    - o Agriculture and Food Security
    - o Climate Change
    - o Food, Environment, and Health
- Inclusive Economies
    - o Employment and Growth
    - o Governance and Justice
    - o Think Tank Initiative
    - o Maternal and Child Health
- Technology and Innovation
    - o Foundations for Innovation
    - o Networked economies

Governance

The IDRC Board of Governors provides leadership and expertise to guide the Center's work around the world. Comprised of Canadians and international members, the Board offers strategic direction, reviews Center activities, and approves its budgets. Board members are appointed based on their interest and expertise in science, management, and development issues. The chair of the Board of Governors presents an annual report to Parliament through the Minister of International Development.

IDRC's president oversees day-to-day operations. As the chief executive officer, the president also sits on the Board of Governors. Within IDRC, the Center Management Committee — composed of senior staff members — supports the president in setting objectives, overseeing programs, and directing staff.

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[9] Investing in solutions, IDRC Annual Report 2015-2016
[10] Ibid

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IDRC Accountability for Results to Government of Canada

As one of Canada's government-owned "crown" corporations, the IDRC is a peculiar hybrid entity – somewhere between a government body and a private enterprise. Though it is wholly owned by the GoC, the government's federal Policy on Results applies differently to small agencies like IDRC than to core departments. As such, IDRC enjoys a level of independence and flexibility with respect to performance measurement that larger government departments and agencies do not.[11]

This has allowed IDRC to explore more independently how best to embrace a "results-oriented planning and evaluation approach". When interviewed, IDRC preferred this term rather than RBM, since RBM "conjures up a very limited understanding of log frames and tracking indicators". IDRC strives for an RBM approach that makes sense to its Board, and its stakeholders and partners.

Key Finding – IDRC is given flexibility by the GoC to develop its own practical performance management system that is approved by its Board and makes sense to its stakeholders and partners. Internally IDRC strives for a "results-oriented planning and evaluation approach" and understands RBM to be more limited to indicators and measurement.

Performance Management at the IDRC

History and Context

Key informants interviewed for this case study, who were involved in the creation of IDRC's evaluation unit in the 1990s, indicated that at the time IDRC was concerned with the rather inflexible adoption of RBM by development agencies and donors, including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which was one of the earliest and most active adapters and innovators of RBM within the GoC.[12] From its own understanding of performance management in a research context, IDRC questioned the utility and adaptiveness of the RBM approach and tools being recommended by CIDA. IDRC is funding research that is designed, conducted, managed and used not by IDRC but by people in other developing countries. And the outcomes of this research can take many years to appear. The Center sees its role as facilitating the achievement of the impacts of the research it supports. Given the range of subject matter covered by its funding, and the often-exploratory nature of the research, IDRC did not think adopting RBM in the same way as CIDA would be the best way to manage its program and project performance.

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[11] Further general background on how GoC departments respond to government's federal Policy on Results is included as a last section of this report.
[12] CIDA formally introduced an Agency-wide RBM Policy in 1996. In 2013, CIDA was merged into Global Affairs Canada.

IDRC's Overall Performance Management Approach

Since the early days of the Center, a focus on research quality and capacity building of research partners has been central to its performance support activities.[13] IDRC's overall approach includes outcome-oriented tracking at project, program and corporate levels. Given the nature of R4D, IDRC's results include high quality research (evaluated through on-going monitoring and then ex-post through research quality assessment), and outcomes like the influence of research on policy, practice, technological development and capacity building. Over time, IDRC has developed evaluation frameworks and approaches (including organizational assessments) that are specific to R4D and the types of research organizations partnered with.

While IDRC has its internal ways of monitoring and evaluating, when it works with other donor partners (which IDRC does frequently), IDRC is flexible and incorporates their tools and frameworks to meet joint planning, monitoring, learning and accountability needs – whether that be for a co-funding partnership, or in a multi-donor partnership in which all the donors agree on a common framework.

IDRC's approach to RBM has been focused more on assessing IDRC influence rather than measuring "changes of state".

Outcome Mapping

Though IDRC does not promote a specific approach or performance management methodology, one approach that emerged and is unique to IDRC is Outcome Mapping.[14] Outcome Mapping has been used in IDRC partner organizations and projects where monitoring and evaluation was primarily intended to measure behaviour change. This approach recognizes that when donors and recipients hold themselves accountable for achieving pre-defined outcomes and impact, they may significantly limit the potential for understanding how and why these longer-term results unfold. Outcome Mapping focuses planning, monitoring, and evaluation on targeted behaviours, actions, and relationships within a program's three **spheres of influence**, as well as on learning how to increase a program's effectiveness in relation to its ultimate goals.[15]

Program-Wide Results Framework

The current IDRC strategic plan is publicly available via the web. To help provide program focus and direction, the IDRC Strategic Plan 2015-2020 has 3 strategic objectives and offers one "example" indictor for each: number of farmers reached (300,000 by 2019), think tank leaders supported (150 by 2019), value of donor partnerships increased to $450 million (for period 20105-2012).

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[13] Enhancing Organizational Performance: A Toolbox for Self-Assessment (1999), and Organizational Assessment: A framework for Improving Performance (2002) were two seminal publications that helped establish IDRC's reputation in capacity building.

[14] Outcome Mapping, Earl, Carden, Smutylo, IDRC, 2001

[15] The spheres-of-influence concept was further developed by outcome mapping practitioners and others, and appears in early drafts of CGIAR's most recent RBM Framework.

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IDRC has also developed a corporate performance or **results framework**[16]. The evaluation unit, which led the process of developing the corporate results framework, held onto the idea of evaluation for learning, and not disrupting learning at the program level, while at the same time creating a framework with performance criteria that could help senior management assess and provide direction for improved programming. As explained through an e-mail exchange:

> *"We always have some versions of articulated outcomes and tracking toward them at project and program level. Our approach to program level results monitoring has changed over time, but it's always there in some form or another."*

More recently, IDRC has made efforts to "roll up" results using a systematic framework for evaluating research quality across programs (see section below on assessing quality of research). Additionally, IDRC is developing a method to systematically ask questions across projects that relate to IDRC-wide strategic objectives. The intention is that these questions will help IDRC track and learn about common results and strategies across programs. Overall, IDRC's approach seem to revolve around usefulness (utility) and practical application, or as spoken by one of the interviewees:

> *"Where does utility lie? Standardization so you can roll up results, or more narrative and descriptive-based to improve utility? The need to be able to measure at overall program level and the need to learn needs to be balanced"*

Key Finding – IDRC's approach to monitoring overall performance and achievement of program-level results, considers the utility of performance information, and its practical application. The 2015-2020 IDRC strategic plan helps to clarify high-level outcome expectations.

Key Finding – IDRC takes a balanced approach to corporate-level results reporting, using standardization to facilitate meaningful roll-up of performance information, but also building a nuanced performance story using narrative.

The Importance of Evaluation

IDRC's Board of Governors approves overall plans that detail research priorities, objectives, and evaluation strategies, supported by a range of internal oversight mechanisms. One of these is the **evaluation function**, a cornerstone of IDRC's approach to performance management. IDRC has developed a strategic and decentralized system of evaluations at the organizational, program, and project levels.

- **Organizational level** - *Evaluations of strategic objectives* help IDRC gauge how well it is delivering on its Strategic Plan. This complements monitoring and internal assessment of progress against indicators for the Center's strategic objectives. *Targeted impact evaluations*

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[16] This is an internal IDRC document and was not available for the document review that was part of this reference study.

provide evidence of IDRC-supported research has contribute to longer-term effects on peoples' lives or the environment. These evaluations are targeted in that they assess the impact of IDRC investment on a specific issue over many years and projects.

- **Program level** - *Program evaluations* are conducted for all or parts of program portfolios that are primarily IDRC-funded. These evaluations are typically summative and conducted by external experts. They are designed for accountability, learning, and input into future programming directions. *Shared evaluations* across partnerships are used for programming supported by multiple partners. Evaluations are designed to meet the accountability and learning needs of each funder involved. Large partnerships generally have independent evaluations built into their program design. In most cases, IDRC manages these evaluations. When partners self-manage the evaluation, IDRC expects to be consulted in evaluation planning. In addition, *strategic learning studies* are used to support learning. They can focus on a cluster of projects, organizations, issues, or program strategies. These evaluations may be formative or summative, and conducted internally or externally. Learning studies about cross-cutting issues can cover multiple programs.

- **Project level** - *Project evaluations* are normally commissioned by program officers or grantees. Not all projects are evaluated, and this decision is made strategically based on need (i.e., project risk, learning-potential, priority, phase, and/or size of the investment). *Project completion reports* are program officers' assessments of projects that capture results achieved and significant learning. They complement the technical reports provided by project grantees.

High quality evaluations are key to IDRC's RBM approach. IDRC works to strengthen evaluation practise by staff and grantees. For example, in 2015/16, IDRC completed 11 program reviews and evaluations.[17]

Key Finding – The evaluation function, a strategic and decentralized system of evaluations, is an important part of IDRC's approach to RBM. IDRC invests in both its own capacity to carry out evaluations, and the capacity of its partners do so.

Assessing Quality of Research

IDRC developed the Research Quality Plus (RQ+) Assessment Instrument to evaluate research quality based on an analysis of the types of research it supports and IDRC's values in R4D. The assessment framework encompasses three components:

- Key influences that have significant potential to affect the quality of research for development that must be considered as part of the assessment.

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[17] Investing in solutions, IDRC Annual Report 2015-2016

- Dimensions and sub-dimensions that characterize research quality, as relevant in the context of IDRC-funded research for development.
- Ratings on a scale defined by rubrics, to indicate the level at which a project performs per dimension or sub-dimension.

The RQ+ instrument is intended to contribute to the task of research evaluation in an international development context. The spheres-of-influence concept, initially developed as a conceptual model for Outcome Mapping, has been adapted. This model suggests that the technical quality of research is within the direct control of IDRC and its research partners. However, the uptake, use, influence and impact of research are not under their direct control because of the interaction of multiple actors, agencies, and socio-political circumstances. It is unrealistic to hold IDRC and its research partners accountable for what they cannot control. However, it is not unreasonable to hold them accountable for taking steps to increase the likelihood that the research will be used - in other words, for positioning the research findings for influence and impact.

Key Finding – Monitoring quality of research by funded partners is part of IDRC's overall evaluation regime and approach to RBM.

Annual Report on Results

IDRC publishes annual reports that present financial statements and a summary of results achieved. The most recent annual report (2015-16) has a results section plus an additional section that explains how performance is managed and measured. Each of IDRC's three corporate-level objectives are given 3-4 pages of narrative where results are described.

This annual report profiles IDRC-funded researchers, and highlights key projects and project achievements. It is the main tool used by IDRC to report to the GoC and to inform Canadians.

Key Finding – Annual corporate-level, outcome-oriented performance reports, are an important part RBM tool used by IDRC

Some additional background that may be relevant:

RBM in the Government of Canada

The GoC has long championed RBM and results-oriented Accountability Frameworks to help managers focus on measuring progress toward the attainment of the results of their policies, programs and initiatives such that ongoing improvements can be made. The Government direction and policy is to provide members of Parliament and the public with relevant, accurate, consolidated, and timely information on how tax dollars are being spent and what Canadians receive as measurable results.

Three parliamentary instruments are crucial in working towards these objectives: [18]

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[18] This background provides GoC context. The instruments mentioned do not apply to IDRC since IDRC

- **Departmental Reports on Plans and Priorities** (RPP) are tabled in the spring along with the government's budget (Main Estimates), report on the rationale for initiatives and establish the strategic outcomes against which actual performance will be measured;

- **Departmental Performance Reports** (DPR) are tabled late in the year and report on achievements against the strategic outcomes that established in the departmental RPP;

- **Managing for Results** is the third key document and tabled near the end of each year along with the DPR, as part of a year-end reporting package.

The measurement of results is not an isolated activity. Rather, the process of measuring results begins with the design of a policy, program or initiative and evolves over time. Different results-measurement activities occur at different points in time, but always as part of the ongoing management of a policy, program or initiative. This continuum encompasses the initial consideration of performance measurement, through performance monitoring to formative and summative evaluation. Performance measurement, learning and adjusting, and reporting on performance are key. This **continuous ongoing process** is captured by the definition of RBM as understood by Treasury Board, the central body that directs the conceptualization and use of RBM across all government departments:

> *RBM is a comprehensive, lifecycle approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes and measurements to improve decision-making and drive change. The approach focuses on getting the right design early in a process, focussing on outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning and changing, and reporting performance.*[19]

Key Finding – Each GoC Department has a standard set of results-oriented instruments that help it account to Parliament for resources used. The focus of these instruments is on annual progress in achievement of department-specific results.

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[19] www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/Center-excellence-evaluation/