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# Cross-CRP Analysis of Partnership Strategies in the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Program Portfolio (CRP2)



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## CONTEXT

The new CGIAR portfolio includes eight Agri-Food System programs linked with four Global Integrating Programs to create and enhance enabling conditions for the delivery of CGIAR research outcomes. The CGIAR, however, will also need to rely upon a wide range of partnerships to achieve its goals. Therefore, full proposals for the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Program Portfolio (CRP2) were required to include a detailed partnership strategy, outlining the type, role, and comparative advantage of partners, partnership modalities, and strategic partnership activities.

This brief provides a summary analysis of how the CRPs are planning the design and implementation of their partnership strategies, and how the strategic partnership activities will contribute to the outputs and outcomes of the CRPs.

## ANALYSIS

CRP Phase II partnership strategies reflect a growing range of partnerships and partnership relationships in terms of:

- Diversity of partners in research, implementation/delivery, and policy/advocacy—spanning public/private and national/advanced research center partners, public-sector partners, private-sector

partners, and NGOs/civil-society partners and those from the international development system, from local to global levels;

- Linkages within and across the CRPs (in particular in countries identified as priorities for CGIAR country collaboration); and
- A more diverse range of partnership types/modes and architectures.

As part of the further evolution of the CRP Phase II portfolio, and under the umbrella of the [CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework \(SRF\) 2016-2030](#), the CGIAR should commit to developing an overarching strategic partnership framework to guide the continued development and evolution of CRP partnership strategies, approaches, and practices. Such a framework would be particularly significant in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.) A more robust and forward-looking partnership framework is needed to ensure that CRP partnerships—and the CGIAR as a whole—are fit for purpose to address the systemic challenges of the SDGs and achieve impact at scale. This includes recognizing the growing role and importance of global multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) as a modality for scaling up innovation, resources, and action to deliver the SDGs.

There are five guiding principles (key success factors)<sup>1</sup> for future CGIAR partnerships highlighted in the SRF

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Patscheke et al. (2014). [Shaping Global Partnerships for a Post-2015 World](#). Palo Alto: Stanford Social Innovation Review.

that can be the building blocks for a new overarching strategic partnership framework:

- (i) **A common agenda.** *All partners must share a vision for change, including a common understanding of the problems and a joint approach to solving them.*
- (ii) **Shared measurement.** *Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all locations ensures that efforts remain aligned and partners hold each other accountable.*
- (iii) **Mutually reinforcing activities.** *Partners should have distinct roles, which need to be coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.*
- (iv) **Continuous communication and learning.** *Consistent and open communication lines, and a focus on continuous learning, are critical for building trust and ensuring the realization of shared objectives.*
- (v) **Backbone support (multi-layered).** *Creating and managing collective impact requires a designated entity with staff and specific skill sets to serve as the backbone for the partnership (and to ensure that the other four conditions for success are in place.)*

Building on the SRF principles, the Independent Science and Partnership Council's [Strategic Study of Good Practice in AR4D Partnership](#) provides a sound conceptual foundation for developing a more robust overarching partnership strategy, based on four Innovation and Partnership Modes (IPMs) described in the study. A few CRP proposals applied the four modes in their examples and descriptions of partnerships:

- IPM 1:** Research consortia (participatory research and development, farmers groups.)
- IPM 2:** Partnerships, platforms, and alliances with the private sector, NGOs, and farmer groups that create value for farmers and companies (local innovation platforms.)
- IPM 3:** Inter-linked farm-to-policy multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships to action changes in food systems that create social and economic value (local and national innovation platforms.)
- IPM 4:** Global architectures of MSP platforms to create coherence between global and local agendas and implementation strategies and action that brings about systems adaptation (global communities of practice; platform of platforms; global MSP.)

An overarching strategic partnership framework also can provide the basis for improved monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of MSP performance in terms of partnership guiding principles, architecture, and good practice. The CGIAR and the CRPs could (and should) play a valuable and much-needed role in strengthening the evidence for and learning on MSP good practice and comparative advantage, as a general contribution to the global knowledge base, and also to enhance the role and effectiveness of the CGIAR system itself in contributing to achieving large-scale system change and achieving the SDGs.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The absence of an overarching CGIAR strategic partnership framework, and the format of the CRP partnership strategies, makes it more difficult to form a coherent picture of the array of partnerships and partnership relationships within and across the CRPs and Flagships. As an interim measure, the CGIAR may also want to consider the following:

- Provide a more complete and coherent picture of the overall set of ongoing, new, and planned partnerships for the CRPs;
- Provide a more complete and coherent picture of each of the flagship partnerships, with an explicit focus on the backbone structure of the partnership (what is in place and/or what plans there are for strengthening), and highlighting any higher-order links to major regional and global initiatives and processes that are critical to achieving the CRP's outcomes and are pathways to scaling impact—particularly those with an explicit link to the SDGs;
- Describe how the five guiding principles have been addressed and/or outline plans for integrating them into the strategy;
- More fully address issues around strengthening partnering capacity (the various dimensions of the capacity to build and sustain effective multi-stakeholder partnerships); many proposals seemed to confuse partnering capacity with more traditional capacity-development activities.
- Include a brief assessment of partnership-related risks and assumptions, and the actions proposed to manage these in the Risk Management section of the CRP partnership strategies.

