

ILRI Research and Workplace Likes and Dislikes Feedback from a series of strategy consultations with staff September 2012

In July and August 2012, three follow-up internal staff consultation on the new strategy were held (July 25; August 17; and August 21). Participants were asked to review the notes below from previous internal discussions and then suggest what could be done to address the issues mentioned and who could address them. The points emerging from these discussions are listed in the first row below

In May and June 2012, staff were asked to comment on what they liked and disliked about ILRI's research, and its workplace. The second and third rows contain this initial set of feedback and comments. See more information online at <http://ilristrategy.wikispaces.com/engagement+groups>

What to do about research	What to do about the workplace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the existing internal communication tools: like ILRINet, Yammer, WIKI's, e-mail and coffee morning but try to understand why some people are hoping for more and are not using the existing tools • Keep the research environment and research quality • We need to avoid the scramble for everyone to do everything; we need to choose what we focus on. • We should define a narrow range of research-oriented performance measures. Anything not contributing should be outsourced. • We need a narrow range of performance measures, both for individuals and the institute. • Internal communication – everyone says this need to be improved. We need management to exemplify use of communication methods. • Avoid working on too many projects – ILRI needs institutional focus • Avoid overloads in work • We are into too many small projects and ILRI needs to focus on major issues and focus on FEW, KEY, JOINT projects and address issues at a higher level than deal with small projects • Upgrade the resource mobilization unit to be able to guide the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On facilities maintain safety and security – but this can be improved through creating awareness and can be managed through safety and security units. • On the working facilities: we need to have laboratories, whether station and open offices to help us interact more within ourselves. • Zebu Club: upgrade the gymnasium facility and this should be done through the zebu Club committee • Training opportunities: training budget needs to be allocated by project leaders. • Employee's benefit – spouse employment – can be done by human resources • On staff development: sufficient time needs to be allocated for application and this can be done through the staff development committee. • Internal communication needs an improvement • Staff turnover needs follow up and need to study why people are leaving the institute not only within the research staff but with the support staff as well • Incentives and rewarding systems need to be in place. There was a reward system but is not there anymore (e.g. people management award) • HR policies and involvement – people are not aware about the HR polices and they need to be updated in line with the new strategy and staff needs to be informed and involved. • Supervision of carrier paths – what kind of opportunities are there and what kind of path to follow. Supervisors need to discuss with staff. • We need more effective systems (supportive services) • Our staff:

- researchers on where and when opportunities are available
- We want to see more lab facilities. Closing those facilities creates less confidence on the side of our partners.
 - External communication with our partners, financiers needs improvement.
 - Partnership should not only focus on our partnerships with research institutions but we should also link with universities.
 - Take more calculated risks
 - Staff
 - Include focus on existing staff, including performance
 - Internships – distinction with lab and other research. For the former there is a need for a lot of time investment
 - Better link between lab and field
 - IRS and NRS better career progression
 - Mentoring
 - Gender
 - Science – more women into science
 - Growth and careers
 - Fund raising
 - More support – navigating donor systems etc – needs support
 - Partnerships
 - Depends on project, partners have different roles
 - Need to be clear on real partnerships....
 - Perceived accessibility of ILRI by NARS --- more work on perceptions
 - Define who are the partners
 - Don't do it for the sake of it but add value
 - Internal collaboration is also important
 - Continuity – change, short projects (affects credibility, capacity)
 - Something in it for them – win – win
 - Enable partners, allow them to grow, change
 - Partnership management - keeping partnerships healthy? Recognizing the investment needed.....and support required.
 - Co production and ownership of outputs is important for partners. Need to recognize and reward both publication AND a range of other outputs. Incentives!
 - Facilities
 - We don't need more labs, rather fill the ones we have
 - Separate – research related; support

- No career path
- Female ratio
- Benefits (not salary per se)
- Promotion – no system
- Gym
- Secondments? Shadow in another region? And vice versa
- Motivation and recognition (not financial)
- Efficiency and effectiveness
 - Work overload to mid management staff – especially operations

What should be done? ILRI needs :

- Work hard and play best
- Benchmarking with other organizations and improve
- Come up with a gym
- Team ILRI – netball, football etc
- Project team to look at this
- Benefits – no need to repeat.
- More stress on training and development as it relates to CSFs.
- More synergy between all these different parts.... BECA, CAST, planning, development
- IRS-NRS divide – narrow gap. Just stop mentioning this and have one grading system
- Equality and diversity policy? More awareness about the diverse environment we work in (many aspects).....again, a project team to look at this.....make sure its embedded
- Recognition system is needed
- Need for joint collaborative efforts to lead to porous boundaries

- Research – more balance needed (some over utilized others not)
- Science
 - More visible science
 - Good balance of different disciplines
 - Improve science environment – time and space for thinking; sabbatical opportunities
 - Everyone to go for this and management to facilitate this
 - We need to have more cross disciplinary efforts
 - Value chain approach- Need a common understanding
- Communication
 - Communication – both internal AND external. We are weak on the latter.
 - Who is the audience (eg for aggressive awareness?)?
 - Seminars would be good
 - More internal communication
 - More science driven meetings
 - More focus
 - Evaluation – again relates to the audience, both internal and external
 - Use of media – we don't do enough
 - Experience sharing....newsbrief....
 - Seminars – more widely.... Or workshops that cut across
 - Long time since we had a conference (also with other partners)

What should be done? ILRI needs :

- Streamlined administration
- Fewer commitments
- Involve staff in peer assisting/mentoring
- To give skills training on time/self management
- To give creativity space
- High quality experts
- Invest in staff career development (NRS/IRS)
- Timely decision making
- Streaming/automated procedures (HR, finance, purchasing equipment engineering)

What we like about the research – we need to keep these!	What to work on in our research – we should improve these!
<p>Scope and focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global scope / Global offices / Global mandate and outlook • International research for development • Poverty focus <p>Our research approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity as a research institute • Quality of science • Wide scope of research in livestock • Collaborative research • CRP focus • Current structure of research themes and teams • Freedom to do translational high-quality research • Different disciplines working together • Interdisciplinary approach • Whole systems approach to research challenges • Value chain approach • Innovation systems approach • Biosciences <p>Our staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified, trained scientists and staff • Core staff in research areas • Competencies in the science department • Good expertise on research • Enthusiasm and excitement about our research • Cross cutting competence • Using attachment students for research <p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in technology and infrastructure • Biosciences facilities and laboratories • Quality infrastructure • Infrastructure • Infrastructure for science support • Facilities: farm and laboratories • Wet science facilities • Good laboratory facilities • Physical resources • Kapiti Ranch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take more risks <p>Our staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase/double the number of staff • Improve team work • Implement internships/research assistance in themes to free scientists to focus on research • More field work by bioscientists • Attract high caliber professional staff • Attract, recruit and work with key research experts ; Get qualified expertise in ILRI • Re-brand our research position titles e.g. research technicians <p>Organization structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integrate CRPs to ILRI main research themes • Increase inter-departmental cohesion • More cohesive inter-departmental relations and less fragmented research efforts • Remove sciences boxes; move to holistic research approaches. • Diffuse boundaries between thematic/disciplinary groups • Create more synergies among ILRI research groups • Derive new structure of ILRI from the new strategy <p>Fund raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a very strong resource mobilization unit • Overcome research funding constraints • Increase efficiency of resource mobilization <p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focus on NARS • Focus more on partnerships arrangements and how ILRI shares roles with partners • Good partnership with NARS • Strong and continual engagement with staff and partners • Interaction with partners – ILRI is an “expensive partner” • Capacity building (of staff and NARS) • Collaborate more with crop centers • Strengthen regional offices • Vibrant West African program <p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More lab facilities • More research labs and experimentation areas • Full utilization of lab facilities

Communication

- Aggressive awareness {publications, seminars}
- Social media -but have focus and not information overload
- Knowledge management approach

Partnership approach

- Partnerships
- Partnerships across the world
- Lean collaboration
- Linkages to partners

Our science

- Reduce emphasis on markets and products rather than bioscience
- Emphasize connections between livestock and environmental economics
- Increase our involvement in advocacy and policy
- Take more advantage of (bio-) technological opportunities and breakthroughs
- Strengthen use of 'modern language of science' especially in areas like economics in order to better communicate in 'popular/buzz' areas of research

Impact focus

- More impact-oriented research
- Increase impact at grassroots
- Focus on bridging the gap/missing link between development and use (research to impact).
- Research on soluble problems
- More impact from the research we conduct
- Increase gender focus in design of research projects
- More monitoring and impact assessment
- Ensure research has impact on the ground
- Needs-based research
- Adopt better methodologies to disseminate research to grassroots
- Anticipate and prepare for the future
- Sustainability of projects

Communication

- Enhance/expand our communication targets
- Communication more connected to research
- Help regional staff connect with the rest of ILRI
- Become a bigger key player, put ourselves on the agenda, expose ourselves more
- Timely delivery of research products
- Better management of the information we generate (data management)
- More efficient and targeted PR
- Better dissemination of livestock research results and outputs
- Improve information sharing internally
- Improve internal communication and collaboration
- Reduce confusion about CRPs
- Increase budgets for research communications
- More learning
- Create more opportunities to work together and know one another's strengths
- Hear more from top management/leadership; on changes, trends, developments.
- More communication among campus staff and regional offices

What we like about the workplace – we need to keep these!	What to work on in our workplace – we should improve these!
<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work hard and play hardest • Safety and Security • Facilities that support work-life balance (e.g. sports & recreational facilities, crèche) • Beautiful grounds • Infrastructure • Facilities • Enkare Club • Physical environment and facilities • Communication technology • Working facilities • Campus facilities (green area, sport facilities, cafeteria) <p>Employment conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to staff (medical cover etc.) • Training opportunities for staff, both in-house and through the Staff Development Fund • Employee benefits • Staff development fund • Staff rewards and development package <p>Workplace environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural and multidisciplinary environment • Friendly and relaxed work environment • Conducive environment • Attractive working environment • Working relationships are good, not much hierarchy • Porous boundaries between teams and themes • Open-door policy that allows for free communication between staff and management • CRP approach to break down theme barriers • Open dialogue with staff • Shallow hierarchies, flat structure, easy to talk on all levels • International outlook and diversity • Diversified workforce (IRS) 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Communication and internal PR style • Internal communication should be enhanced • Transparency in communication between management and staff • Stronger cross regional communication and cooperation • Stronger internal communication mechanisms and communication <u>culture</u> • Communication in decision making • Less untargeted email • Flow of information <p>Organization structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighter, faster, more nimble organization • Organizational structure <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff cohesion issues between NRS and IRS • Reduce the boxes - hierarchies creates divide (IRS, NRS), regional exchange • Uniform rules and regulations for IRS and NRS • Overcome constraints of staff relations with management • Staff representation • Staff-management relations • NRS-IRS divide <p>Organization culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for collective identity and responsibility • Clearer and well disseminated organization values • Continuous engagement and better communication of overall strategy • Leadership and direction • Organization culture from top-bottom to have a one staff system • Increase ownership amongst staff • Overcome barriers to being creative <p>Our staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% women directors • Gender imbalance in some departments • High staff turnover, especially among research staff • Clarify better the roles/duties of staff. • Build in-house skills and knowledge and use fewer consultants • Clarify career paths for staff.

- Junior scientific staff to be allowed room to enhance their careers
- A more deliberate career development plan
- Absence of succession planning – opportunities for promotion
- Improve overall job satisfaction by staff; appreciate them
- HR policies and involvement
- Staff motivation
- Staff salaries are in the 80% quartile
- More attractive salary and benefit package
- Remuneration
- Better reward mechanisms to keep staff motivated
- Staff recognition
- Work life balance

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Move from manual systems to more automated ones
- Reduce administrative burden on senior researchers
- Reduce administration and bureaucracy for more senior research managers
- Make systems less cumbersome, slow, time and energy-consuming
- Make sure support services do provide support
- More responsive support services (HR and finance)