

Feedback from consultations with partners and stakeholders on draft purpose, goals, and wider drivers for ILRI's new strategy September 2012

In mid 2012, the ILRI strategy taskforce produced an updated strategy outline for ILRI. This drew on previous consultations with staff, outside partners and other stakeholders.

In July and August 2012, to validate and improve the analysis and directions, ILRI hosted six consultation meetings with external partners. In total, 91 people excluding ILRI staff joined the discussions in Accra (15 August), Addis Ababa (24 July), Delhi (6 August), Gaborone (30 July), Nairobi (21 August) and Pretoria (31 July). The meetings were intended to:

- Share and test our thinking on a number of key elements of the strategy
- Get feedback on our emerging purpose and goals
- To examine and test overall 'drivers' of livestock development in a specific regional context - are we paying attention to the right challenges and opportunities?
- To discuss how ILRI engages with partners so we can enhance our contribution to regional and national livestock development goals and challenges

This is a structured synthesis of the various discussions; the full notes are available online: http://ilristrategy.wikispaces.com/file/view/strategy+external+consultations_collated.pdf

Feedback on the external drivers

As part of the external analysis, ILRI asked some global leaders and thinkers to identify the major factors or forces that will affect policy and practice in agriculture and food production over the next 10-15 years. The results were clustered around seven key factors:

- *What quantity and quality of food will be available?*
 - *How much food will the World need?*
 - *How will the World perceive agriculture, particularly livestock in relation to global sustainable development challenges?*
 - *What is the future of smallholder agriculture and what does the transition look like?*
 - *What is the potential role of smallholder livestock agriculture in sustainable intensification?*
 - *How will the World address scarce and competing uses of natural resources?*
 - *How will the World perceive livestock agriculture in relation to the impacts on and of climate change?*
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What did participants think of these? What are the most significant ‘local’ – national/regional – factors likely to influence agricultural and livestock development in the coming 10-15 years?

Participants in Ethiopia largely agreed with the factors listed, highlighting climate change (especially the impact on livestock systems), scarce and competing use of natural resources (mentioning issues such as land use change and competition for land), feed, energy, water, the role of smallholder agriculture in relation to global sustainable development challenges and the future of smallholder agriculture and the transition. They also identified some additional factors with national/regional significance:

- Population growth and pressure, and its impacts on land holdings.
- Income, power and market opportunities (potential accentuated inequities – example of beef production in Ethiopia that benefits few).

In Southern Africa, participants also agreed with most of the seven external factors. Those highlighted as key for this region included natural resource issues, covering grazing management, land use and land grabbing; food availability in relation to urbanization and demographic growth and climate change.

Policy issues were stressed as important, in relation to investment in development, the coordination of that and finances to recapitalize farmers as well as policies related to land tenure, knowledge, energy, infrastructure, livestock trade and disease control, market related policies, and impacts on equity. Policies impacting on market accessibility, trade and access to new technologies were also mentioned. In this regard, ILRI needs to better address the gap between policy lessons and publications from research and translating these into information that is readily accessible and relevant to appropriate policy makers. A number of additional dimensions were also mentioned: The link between feed and the natural resource base and the production environment (spanning grazing, climate, diseases and management), livestock disease and management and genetic improvement (genotype * environment). The importance of communication and the power of advocacy were stressed, including impacts of and on consumer perceptions about animal agriculture and its role in food security.

In India, food security was the most frequently mentioned higher level external factor, including quality of food, and impacts of international trade policies. Climate change impact was also mentioned. Participants highlighted some important research for development topics (fodder and feed for livestock, market intelligence, health care and its delivery, land preparation, mechanization, livestock breed selection, risk in value chains, zoonoses), and commented on ways in which research is implemented (partnership and systems approaches, strategies that take account of gender, interaction with the policy sector, smallholder collective action opportunities).

In Ghana, participants also agreed that the list of external factors were relevant, with priority to numbers 4, 5, 6 and 7 in particular. Missing factors included issues of conflict between pastoralists and arable farmers, the evolution of livestock production in relation to climate change and the need to produce animal commodities in the context of a green economy. One feature that was stressed was the spatial separation of livestock production (in the dry northern parts) and the focus of marketing (much directed at the major coastal cities – Lagos, Accra, Dakar as well as an increasing number of mid-sized cities etc). In some cases this is within single countries, it is often also between countries with issues of cross border trade, and increasingly the role of political conflict in the “producer countries” (eg Mali) or “demand countries” (eg Cote d’Ivoire) being highly relevant.

In Kenya, participants identified some factors deserving additional attention in East Africa: Competing uses of natural resources, particularly encompassing: Environmental viability, conflict overlays, policy

and evidence base in relation to different land uses and opportunity costs; Climate change – addressing current variability but also in terms of better understanding climate change projections; the resilience and viability of livelihoods in different production system - pastoral, agro pastoral etc. It was noted that human health-animal interface (zoonoses, nutritional impacts, etc.) is not apparent in the list.

In Kenya, other drivers considered important or missing from the list included: Moving towards more formal livestock sector and the issues around this; social dimensions –which are not clear in the drivers... equity, pastoralists, poor and not so poor; farming systems dimension, sustainable intensification and livestock, trade off issues in such systems, buffer role, safety nets, savings etc, and selling livestock in relation to climate shocks; and finally the overall ‘architecture of farming’ – there will be a shift from groups at the moment – the large to medium scale will increase and the smallholders may decrease. The group that grows the most is those smallholders that form collectives, not least because the extension systems are collapsing.

Feedback on the draft purpose and goals

Participants were presented with draft purpose and goal statements, see below:

Purpose:

- *To improve the lives of poor livestock producers, consumers and their communities, in the developing world in terms of benefits including:*
 - *increased income (producers)*
 - *improved food security & nutrition (both producers and consumers)*
 - *reduced environmental damage (producers)*
- *by creating and applying knowledge that enables people to use livestock more smartly to improve their lives*

Goals:

- *Proof at scale of:*
 - *Improved productivity of livestock and improved value chains to potentially benefit of X00 million people, and*
 - *Alternative livestock-mediated benefit schemes that result in pastoralists and agropastoralists achieving improved lives through increased resilience to potentially benefit of X00 million people*
- *Investment in research and development of smallholder livestock production by national governments and major donors increased by X%*

What did participants think of these? Do these make sense; are they the right ones; and what do they imply for our research?

In Ethiopia, Botswana, India and South Africa, participants were in general agreement with the intent of the purpose and goal statements.

In Kenya, participants discussed the emphasis in the purpose between ‘creating’ and ‘applying’ knowledge. Some argued that ILRI is about generating only (with others doing the applying); others

argued that ILRI's responsibility also extends to include pathways for knowledge application. The specifics of three sub-bullets were discussed: It was suggested that ILRI needs to split the allocation of resources/emphasis across the 3 bullets in the purpose. Can we signal priority levels of effort? It was suggested that food safety and health need to be included; with the environment perhaps taken out. There was some concern that we might not be able to monitor and attribute some of these changes (to consumer nutrition for example). ILRI was urged to provide the precise numbers AND be sure to have ways of monitoring them (and having baselines)

The Kenya meeting pointed out that capacity building is a key area that is not clearly articulated here

Participants in Ethiopia were keen to see ILRI take a systems approach to the livestock challenges. Many remarks were made on the issue of capacity building, with participants calling for it to be more explicit in these high level elements. The absence of references to the private sector was an oversight.

In Southern Africa, most of the issues raised were around the "how" aspects, spanning issues such as trade and market dimensions (competition for smallholders from developed countries); how to identify knowledge gaps; influencing policy decisions and ensuring government buy-in; addressing knowledge gaps.

In Ghana, the issue of whether the focus should be on improving lives, or a broader consideration of "well being" or "livelihoods" was raised several times, as was the need to place more emphasis on capacity building in relation to knowledge dissemination.

In South Africa, the focus on poverty was acknowledged, but many participants indicated that it would be more appropriate to include all livestock keepers, not just those who are "poor", and to consider consumers, producers and others throughout the value chain. Scaling up would also be important

Many participants considered the statements to read too negative, and made a number of suggestions in this regard. These included: using "livelihoods", avoiding the use of "poor", stressing livestock contribution to food security (refer to "livestock derived products") and sustainable farming. The environmental statement was also considered far too negative, and could be rephrased to emphasise managing environmental issues of limiting degradation. Focusing on poor producers was considered inappropriate, and having a broader "smallholder" focus would be better. Using the term "income" was considered too restrictive, with a broader set of wealth parameters (animals, social status, meeting community obligations), or "improving livelihoods" considered more appropriate. Animal health should be highlighted and the intention to address environmental issues as part of proof at scale would also be welcomed although this should not be phrased negatively. In Southern Africa, including a wildlife dimension should also be considered.

In India, the need to ensure positive phrasing was again stressed, both in relation to not only focusing on (or referring to) "the poor" but a broader group of stakeholders, encompassing livelihood (including gender) rather than income issues, including beyond production, and not highlighting "damage" in relation to the environment. Participants were again looking for a broader systems focus.

Issues of equity were highlighted in Southern Africa, stressing that the evolution of the livestock sector and the research for development to support this should not overlook the potential for inequitable results that may bias those with better resource endowments, more access to information etc.

Many participants in Ghana were not comfortable with the “low growth” scenario which in the goal statement is associated with pastoralists and agro pastoralists, noting that in West Africa up to 80% of the meat comes from such systems. It was recognized that whilst the storyline allows for such dynamic meat producing pastoral systems to be part of the “inclusive growth” scenario, this is somewhat negated in the goal statement where such systems are specifically associated with low growth and the need to address issues of resilience.

In Southern Africa, a role in “advocacy” was felt to be very important and that this would include appropriate “packaging” of messages, impacting on policies thus raising investments. Participants stressed the importance of engaging with the “political group”, which would mean attention to process to get buy in.

In Kenya, ILRI was urged to address the 'enabling environment, the policy settings, not just the financial returns. Perhaps this needs to be on investments and policy reform. ILRI has a critical role to influence issues that are prominent in the region - resilience, disaster risk reduction, etc. ILRI needs to consider how to fulfill the role and influence the policy debate at national, regional and global levels.

Feedback on the role of ILRI

Participants were asked to reflect on the potential roles ILRI could play in their region, and specifically what can be done to make partnerships much more productive.

What did participants think of these? What roles do they see ILRI best playing; What capacities should ILRI have and how might these best support national/regional efforts?

In Ethiopia, participants considered that ILRI’s visibility and role in collaboration and partnership needs to be strengthened and that this should happen in such a way as to be based on real demands. This would include joint research, capacity development, and partnerships at all levels. The role of ILRI as a leading research centre providing technical backstopping and facilities was stressed.

In Botswana and South Africa, the need for ILRI to prioritise its roles and not try to do everything was highlighted, the institute should carefully identify its role in relation to partners and their roles and competencies. ILRI does not need to have all the capacity in house but to partner appropriately with others. The institute’s role as a facilitator, and in linking up different partners to help bring business management skills into the sector were also highlighted.

In this region, it was stressed that partnerships is a critical dimension for ILRI; it will be important for partnerships to work in an equitable way – no partners being considered inferior, but each bringing the relevant comparative advantage(s).

Other roles mentioned for ILRI were coordination, providing a platform for partner interactions, a voice for livestock in Africa. Capacity strengthening was another key dimension mentioned, as was the importance of communication which demands a diversity of tools and approaches. Farmer/farmer

organizations emphasized ILRI's role as a value chain "thought leader". More generally, ILRI (ILCA)'s previous roles in research networks, and their role at country level were considered very valuable. This could include mobilizing expertise where there were gaps at national level.

A role in advocacy to policy makers was stressed, mentioning that such an approach needs to be deliberate, and to include ensuring that research results reach the end users. ILRI's roles in research and policy advice, presenting a neutral voice that carries weight were emphasized as well as providing the required coordination between multiple parties around key issues was stressed. ILRI may not have all the capacities in house but has a key convening role, leading to better advocacy and communication. In order to facilitate such actions partner identification, convening conferences and matching complementary partner skills were mentioned.

Capacity building was again mentioned, especially in relation to enhancing skills for impact assessment and policy interventions. Greater investment in capacity building for students was highlighted, which could include capitalizing on the local expertise in South African educational institutions. ILRI can also provide a vehicle for academic institutions outside of the region to have students and projects implemented within the region.

Compared to other organizations in the region, ILRI niches include: 1. High end usage of technology and development (not every country can afford such high end equipment etc) then disseminate outputs 2. Building capacity in the region (students through universities.....) 3. Port of call for evidence and knowledge – an information hub.

In India, partnerships in general were seen as important, with there being a need for ILRI to identify its roles, ensuring there was no competition with NARS and others within the country, and that efforts were rather complementary. Including private sector, policy makers and NGOs amongst ILRI's partners was considered critical as well. ILRI's roles as an "aggregator of knowledge", in partnership for dissemination, supporting M and E and dissemination of success stories were mentioned.

In Ghana, participants articulated a number of roles for ILRI in West Africa, covering knowledge generation and dissemination, and capacity building. The institute's roles in translating knowledge in ways that it can change attitudes and bring about policy actions was stressed as important in advocating for the livestock sector. In order to implement such roles ILRI would need to boost its presence in the region and ensure that the full range of disciplines is present, working together with NARS and SROs/FARA.

Participants emphasized the institute's role in capacity building, mentioning previous training opportunities and materials that had stopped, leaving a void that has not been filled. The suggestion of a regional centre for such was raised.

The conversation in Kenya focused on partnership modalities and how to make them effective. In general, ILRI was advised to: Distinguish different categories of partners; adopt a tighter nomenclature (strategic partner vs collaborator ...); recognize the fluidity of partnerships at times, their evolution over time; and consider, like ICRAF, setting a target of income that should go through partners. An aspirational goal should be to be a better partner!