AGRIVISTA

Opening access to CGIAR research with the ICT-KM Triple-A Approach

The CGIAR ICT-KM Program has developed a plan to assist the CGIAR Centers in taking the steps necessary to ensure that all outputs from their research become international public goods, in other words, that they are Available, Accessible and Applicable to all who could benefit from their use – a Triple-A approach.

A research-oriented organization such as the CGIAR cannot be satisfied just knowing that it has produced good research. It is critical to ensure that the knowledge or outputs this research produces is put to the best possible use. Using the same philosophy that questions how a crop grown in a lab can feed a hungry person, the issue here is to find the pathway that will take research information off of library shelves and out of hard drives and make sure it is available to its intended users – be they policy makers, researchers, extensionists or the farmers themselves.

Research outputs and the CGIAR

An essential part of the CGIAR mandate requires that the outputs of its research – data, information, knowledge – are preserved for posterity by attending to their long-term accessibility. The research outputs of the CGIAR are not intrinsically international public goods; they must be made so intentionally. This requires front-end design and planning of research in a way that guarantees its outputs are available, accessible and in a form that can be taken up and applied by others. The Triple-A approach to research proposes that each individual research output, even if it is location specific, has generic appeal and can be assembled, created, handled and disseminated to ensure it reaches its intended audience.

The CGIAR can encourage this by adopting the ICT-KM Triple-A approach and ensuring that each research output meets pre-defined, optimal measures of availability, accessibility and applicability. These measures can be tailored to different types and domains of research and the specifics of each Center and cross-cutting program. They can help scientists and Centers decide on the level of availability and accessibility of the outputs they produce.

CGIAR Centers already pursue an innovative range of activities that aim to make their knowledge and research outputs more known and more available. However, these diverse activities are often isolated efforts. In designing this Triple-A framework, ICT-KM is offering Centers the opportunity to improve their dissemination and the uptake of their outputs.

There are many ways in which the public character of a research output can be limited by decisions taken regarding its dissemination. A classic example is publicly funded research outputs that are disseminated in limited-access scientific journals and, thus, explicitly exclude some classes of potential users, or are available only on Web sites that are less accessible to those without good Web access. A similar case can be made for outputs available in one language only, written in highly technical language that does not serve all potential user groups, published in a proprietary format or with restricted intellectual property licenses.
**Triple-A approach – into action**

ICT-KM research has found that, although the CGIAR is committed to producing and disseminating quality outputs, there is disparity among Centers. Actions are often confused and confounded by the wide, unconnected range of options available.

The ICT-KM Triple-A approach provides an opportunity to ensure that research outputs can be measured uniformly according to their availability, accessibility and applicability. The ICT-KM Program can play a leading catalytic role in adding value to CGIAR research outputs, putting the Triple-A approach into force widely, rapidly and effectively through:

- promoting discussion and agreement on Triple-A vision for the CGIAR,
- advocating Triple-A thinking to measure research performance,
- guiding and helping scientists in adopting Triple-A thinking,
- establishing complete scientific information repositories,
- leveraging CGIAR publishing muscle,
- making CGIAR knowledge visible through partners.

**ICT-KM believes the Triple-A approach offers a pathway for bringing the benefits of the crops grown in the lab to the people who need them.**

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### Defining the Three A’s

#### Availability
Research outputs are stored in appropriate open digital formats and described using public metadata standards so they can be found through structured search and access systems. They may not always be publicly available in full. Availability means assembling and storing content so it will be permanently accessible, and describing it in systems so others know, and can find, what outputs have been produced.

#### Accessibility
Research outputs are publicly available online using accepted public formats and appropriate licenses so they can be queried, viewed, and obtained in full. Outputs are optimized so metadata and full content can be harvested and shared across different platforms and applications, and they can be incorporated into other systems and services. Accessibility means making outputs as easy to find and share and as open as possible, in the sense that others are free to use, reuse, and redistribute them, with appropriate acknowledgement and without restrictive legal, technological or financial barriers.

#### Applicability
Research processes are open and inclusive so that all perspectives and knowledge are taken into account during research design, planning, implementation and communication. Research outputs are customized and/or adapted for easy uptake and use by other actors in agricultural innovation systems, increasing the public benefits derived from the data, information and knowledge produced through research. Applicability means research and innovation processes that are open to different sources of knowledge, and outputs that are easy to adapt, transform, apply and re-use..