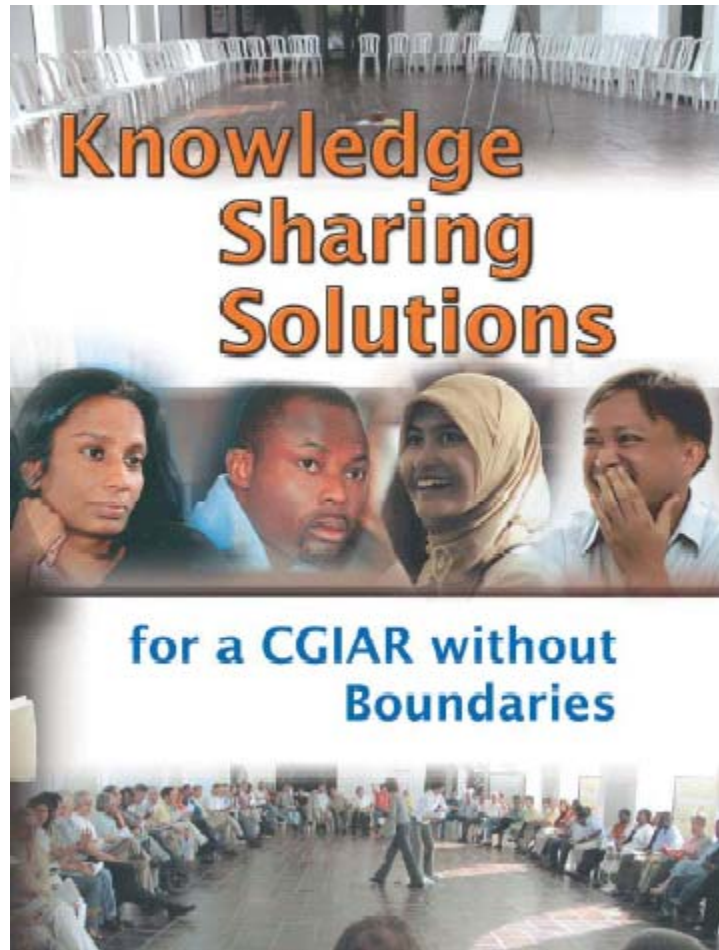


The CGIAR Knowledge Sharing Project: Results of a Self-Assessment

Report of a Self-Assessment carried out by participants in the CGIAR's KS Project



March 2006

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Acronyms

CIAT	Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
KS	Knowledge Sharing
KM	Knowledge Management
ICT-KM Program	Information and Communication Technologies – Knowledge Management (ICT-KM) Program
AGM	Annual General Meeting
TRG	Training Resources Group
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research
OCP	Organizational Change Program
HR	Human Resources
ILAC	Institutional Learning and Change
IT	Information Technology
IM	Information Management
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
WIG	Wheat Improvement Group
CPWF	Challenge Program on Water and Food
KM4Dev	Knowledge Management for Development

Summary

In 2003, the developers of the CGIAR Information and Communications Technology – Knowledge Management (ICT-KM) Program decided that its technical activities related to infrastructure and content management should be complemented with a knowledge sharing project that would foster behavioral and cultural changes leading to improved production and use of knowledge in the CGIAR system. CIAT assembled a project development team, and submitted such a project at the end of 2003. Reflecting earlier change programs in the CGIAR led by external consultants, the project design centered on the development of comprehensive KM strategies in CGIAR centers and programs. However, when the project got underway in 2004, the design was shifted in the direction of introducing KS approaches into major center events in order to involve large numbers of managers and staff and foster capacity building. The project was originally approved for a 12-month period, but implementation was stretched over 20 months, in order to allow the completion of a set of pilot activities in 4 centers and to document the results. In addition to the pilots, highly successful facilitation courses were organized and a study was conducted of the role of human resources policies and practices in fostering KS and organizational learning. The KS project has also cultivated a strong relationship with the community of international development practitioners KM4Dev.

The KS project has essentially “put KS on the map” in the CGIAR by introducing hundreds of people in the CGIAR to KS approaches that directly improve interpersonal communication, relationships, collaboration and participatory decision making.

The Core team¹ encourages the ICT-KM Program to support a second phase of the KS Project, designed to mainstream KS in the CGIAR and particularly in its research partnerships. The following suggestions are made for designing and implementing the project:

Areas that should be improved in future KS Project designs

- **Ensure a more participatory process of project design, involving centers and partners.**
 - > How: Ensure a longer and facilitated process of project preparation, including face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions among collaborators.
- **Clarify the role of the KS project within the ICT-KM Program.**
 - > How: Seek greater alignment of the objectives and activities of the ICT-KM Project leaders through facilitated face-to-face meetings and regular on-line discussions.

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- **Clarify the “impact pathways” leading from specific activities to the desired long-term goals**
 > How: Hold a planning meeting and provide time for developing hypothetical impact pathways.
- **Integrate KS thoroughly into centers’ key research areas and development activities**
 > How: clarify the connection between KS and cutting edge science involving a broader cross-section of people (including scientists!) in project design and implementation.
- **Plan activities over a longer time period to support institutional change processes**
 > How: Move beyond the focus on events and meetings to strengthen KS in research.
- **Build stronger links between the KS Project and communities of KS practitioners**
 > How: Foster the development of a CGIAR-wide KS community, linked to such global KS communities as KM4Dev.
- **Pay greater attention to cross-center activities**
 > How: Put KS more thoroughly on the map of existing cross-center activities, and facilitate active knowledge sharing among the CGIAR KS community of practitioners.
- **Make decision making more transparent**
 > How: Form a Steering Committee that includes all actors involved and define its TORs.
- **Improve communication between the coordination team and leaders of pilot activities**
 > How: Clarify roles within the Project Coordination Team and outline communications processes and tools.
- **Integrate pilot activities more thoroughly into the project**
 > How: Through the Steering Committee, ensure the Pilot Activity leaders have central roles in the project, and facilitate strong relationships and exchanges among them.

1. Introduction



This report presents results of a self-assessment of the Knowledge Sharing (KS) Project of the Information and Communications Technology – Knowledge Management (ICT-KM) Program of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The self-assessment was carried out by members of the project's coordination team and participants of a review and planning workshop held in September 2005.²

When the ICT-KM Program was designed, during 2002 and 2003, its activities were grouped within three thrusts:

Thrust 1. Communication and connectivity infrastructure for the CGIAR

Thrust 2. Management of, and access to, the content that is produced by the CGIAR or needed to achieve its mission

Thrust 3. Knowledge Management and Sharing Project (KM/S Project)

A budget of US \$7.3 million was proposed for the Program, of which \$ 1.3 million (18%) was assigned to knowledge management. However, the approved budget for the program was only \$5. million, of which under \$400,000 (less than 7%) was allocated to the KS project for the first year with the expectation that significantly more resources would be raised for the following two years.

In 2003, CGIAR centers were invited to submit project proposals for activities within the ICT-KM Program. The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) submitted a proposal for "*Fostering a Learning-Oriented, Knowledge Management and Sharing Culture in the CGIAR*" for the knowledge management thrust. In early 2004, this proposal was approved for funding.

The CIAT project – the only one within the KM thrust – became known as the "*CGIAR Knowledge Sharing Project*" (or "*KS Project*"). The project's activities, coordinated by CIAT and supported by the Bellanet International Secretariat, involved several CGIAR centers.

The KS Project began in April 2004 and continued through the end of 2005. Reviews of each major activity were carried out, using After Action Reviews (AARs) and participant evaluation surveys. In September 2005, the Project Team met at CIFOR headquarters in Bogor, Indonesia for a 3-day review and planning workshop. The objectives of this workshop were to:

- Review experiences with the project to date
- Draw lessons for organizing and managing future KS initiatives
- Identify priorities for mainstreaming KS in the CGIAR
- Plan the participation of the KS Project in the December 2005 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the CGIAR to be held in Morocco

In the project review, our principal goals were to improve our own understanding of the work carried out and its results and to identify areas for improving future initiatives to foster KS in the CGIAR.

The present report summarizes the main results of our review.

Section 2 assesses the process of designing the project, the approved project document, and the evolution of the project's design over time.

² Workshop's participants: Nathan Russell, Doug Horton, Simone Staiger-Rivas (CIAT), Michael Hailu CIFOR, Petr Kosina CIMMYT, Sanjini de Silva, Julie Van der Bliet from IWMI, Allison Hewlitt, Lucie Lamoureux (Bellanet) and Teck Hong Lee (ICT-KM Program's management team).

Section 3 assesses the implementation and outputs of the project.

Section 4 assesses the behavioral changes to which the project has contributed.

Section 5 outlines the priorities we have identified for further developing KS in the CGIAR. During the Review and Planning Workshop, results of this review were used immediately by participants to outline a concept note for a future KS project and to initiate preparations for the 2005 AGM.³

2. Project Design

The design process

When the ICT-KM Program was formulated, it was decided to complement the more technologically oriented ICT projects with a KM project that would promote behavioral and cultural changes that were thought to be crucial for improving the production and use of knowledge in the CGIAR. The desired changes relate to improved collaboration and teamwork and more extensive use of accumulated information and knowledge.

CIAT established a project-preparation team that included members from the center and also from the Training Resources Group (TRG),⁴ the Bellanet International Secretariat⁵ and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR). TRG was involved because of its experience with KM in the CGIAR, based on its role in leading a CGIAR system-wide “Organizational Change Program” (OCP) from 1997 to 2000.⁶ Bellanet was involved to provide technical support to the project, drawing on its extensive experience with KM and KS approaches for facilitating face-to-face and virtual collaboration in international development organizations. ISNAR was involved because of its extensive experience in the field of organizational development and change. The project development team based its work on a skeletal concept note provided by the ICT-KM Program. The team members worked via the Internet and occasional telephone conversations, but they never met face-to-face.

The project document

The approved project document includes three broad objectives and six activity clusters (Table 1).

³ The concept note can be viewed at http://www.ks-cgiar.org/pdf/phase2_CN.pdf

⁴ <http://www.trg-inc.com>

⁵ <http://www.bellanet.org>

⁶ <http://www.trg-inc.com/orgchange>

Table 1. Original project objectives and proposed activities

Objective 1. Review past experience with KM/S and generate commitment to the approach

- Organize an initial workshop to review KM/KS experiences in the CGIAR and to identify areas for improvement
- Organize a workshop at the end of the project's first year for center directors, deputy directors, and human resource managers, to generate their support and help them understand their roles in supporting KM/KS

Objective 2. Support participatory development and institutionalization of KM/KS strategies

- Develop one center-specific KM/S strategy
- Develop three KM/KS strategies with center-based programs or cross-center programs

Objective 3. Facilitate access to KM/KS tools and techniques

- Organize a pilot training course on techniques for KM/KS
 - Provide access to practical guides and best practices in KM/S in print form and via the CGIAR Intranet
-

In the project document, the main emphasis was on the development of KM/KS strategies. Technical leadership for this and other activities was to be provided by experts from TRG. The KS Project was to be implemented over 12 months. Resources were provided for contracting a part-time project coordinator. It was expected that CIAT would obtain funds to continue the project after the first year.

Evolution of the project design

In April 2004, the project coordinator was hired, and representatives of CIAT, TRG and Bellanet met to review the project's design and to plan its implementation.⁷ Based on their experiences with KM and organizational change, the group had serious reservations about the project document. They questioned whether the development of comprehensive KM strategies and other top-down measures (for example, changes in human resources (HR) policies, exposing senior managers to external KM champions, and training in KS techniques) would be effective in fostering KS in the CGIAR. The group felt that the desired changes in behavior and organizational culture could better be achieved through a more gradual, "bottom-up" and participatory process of experimentation, capacity building and learning-by-doing – processes that could benefit from external facilitation and support, but should be "home-grown and evolutionary."⁸

The group was also concerned with the short duration of the project (12 months) and the lack of secure funding beyond April 2005. They believed the project's short duration would limit the nature and scope of activities to be carried out and the likely contributions to changes in behavior and organizational cultural. The group was also

⁷ Jonathan Darling represented TRG; Mark Faul represented Bellanet; Nathan Russell, Simone Staiger, Edith Hesse and Doug Horton represented CIAT. A full report on this meeting is available on the KS Project website at http://www.knowledge-cgiar.org/pdf/prog%20report_feb05_annex2.pdf

⁸ This phrase was used by the Chair of the CGIAR at the 2003 Annual General meeting to describe the desired process of change and reform in the CGIAR.

concerned that the project had very few resources to support hands-on activities in CGIAR centers.

The group suggested several changes in the project design:

- De-emphasize development of comprehensive KM strategies, in favor of implementation of strategic activities to foster KS
- Reallocate resources from personnel and consultancies to support for center- and program-based activities, which came to be known as “KS Pilots”
- Extend the project’s implementation over 20 months (instead of 12)
- Link training and development of KS tools to the KS Pilots
- Prioritize work with Challenge Programs, which are key instruments of the CGIAR renewal process
- Link activities of the KS Project to those of the CGIAR Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative⁹
- Organize a joint planning workshop for the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative

The proposed Workshop on Knowledge Sharing, Institutional Learning and Change was held at CIAT in June 2004.¹⁰ Participants endorsed most of these suggestions, and as a result, the KS Project’s objectives and activities were revised (Table 2).

Table 2. Revised project objectives and proposed activities

Objective 1. Review experiences with KS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize a workshop on KS and ILAC in the CGIAR• Issue a publication on experiences with KS in the CGIAR
Objective 2. Generate commitment to introducing KS approaches and tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a review and synthesis workshop at end of project• Make center visits and presentations, particularly in support of Pilot activities• Disseminate information on results of the KS Project (professionally edited report, multi-media products, posters, KS website)• Organize a special session on KS at AGM 2005
Objective 3. Support development and implementation of KS strategies, Pilot Activities and supportive policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement four KS Pilots• Conduct a study on HR policies in relation to KS and organizational learning
Objective 4. Facilitate access to KS tools and techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a web-based “KS toolkit”• Provide training for facilitation participatory decision making

⁹ Information on the ILAC Initiative can be found on the website: <http://www.cgiar-ilac.org>.

¹⁰ A workshop report is available on the CGIAR KS website: http://www.ks-cgiar.org/pdf/KS_june_workshop04.pdf.

Assessment of the project design

In our view, the original design of the project had a number of serious weaknesses, and implementing the project as originally designed would have limited its results. Fortunately, the design was modified early during project implementation. After identifying positive aspects of this new design, we identify some areas in which we believe improvements should be made in future design efforts related to developing and mainstreaming KS in the CGIAR.

Positive aspects

Basing the project at a CGIAR center grounded it more effectively within the CGIAR.

One of the limitations of the KM work of the OCP was that a consultancy firm based in the USA led it, and this is likely to be one reason for the limited effects of this program within CGIAR centers. Basing the KS Program at a CGIAR center contributed to its practical orientation and to capacity development within the CGIAR. Furthermore, the revised design increased ownership of the project through the pilots.

The project's revised design raised awareness about KS and it fostered capacity development through practical activities. The original project design would have continued the CGIAR's dependence on external consultants, because it was centered on the development of KM strategies in a few centers and programs, led by external consultants. In the revised design that emerged from the June planning meeting, the emphasis shifted to experimentation with KS approaches through the design and execution of hands-on activities in CGIAR centers. By focusing on the introduction of KS approaches into major center meetings, hundreds of center managers and staff members learned first-hand how KS approaches could be used to improve the activities of their centers and gained experience with their use. It also contributed to local capacity development for KS.

Areas that should be improved in future KS Project designs

There should be a more participatory process of project preparation that involves CGIAR centers and partners. In developing a future phase of the KS Project, CGIAR centers and partners should play more central roles (relative to external consultants). There should be a longer process of project preparation, including face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions among collaborators. This would ensure that the project is designed from the outset to respond to the needs, opportunities and priorities of CGIAR centers and partners, and it would foster a stronger sense of involvement and commitment of centers. After approval of the KS project, the project design was reviewed and strengthened in a participatory workshop. This type of exercise could serve as a model for future project development.

The role of the KS Project should be clarified within the ICT-KM Program. The original project seems to have been based on the assumption that KM is an important complement to technical work on information and communications technologies (ICTs). But it has never been clear how these two components of the ICT-KM Program fit together, how KS activities relate to those of the other projects, or how the KS Project contributes to the goals of the ICT-KM Program. It would be useful if the leaders of all projects in the ICT-KM Program could seek greater alignment of their objectives and

activities through facilitated face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions in order to ensure more effective pursuit of the goals of the program as a whole.

“Impact pathways” should be clarified, leading from specific KS activities to changes in behavior and organizational culture, and ultimately to more effective research for development. While it is generally assumed that improvements in KS will lead eventually to more efficient and effective research, it is not clear how specific activities contribute to these results. Strategies for introducing and developing KS in research organizations are seldom well spelled out and they are frequently unrealistically optimistic. At the beginning of a future KS Project, a planning meeting should be held and time should be provided for developing hypothetical impact pathways for the project. These would serve as guides both for managing the project and for monitoring and evaluating the project’s results.

KS should be integrated more thoroughly into centers’ mainstream research and development activities. In designing a future project, greater attention should be paid to integrating project activities into the centers’ “core business” of research for development. The connection between KS and better science should be clarified, and a broader cross-section of people (including scientists!) should be involved in project design and implementation.

Activities should be planned over a longer time period to support organizational and institutional change processes The present project was of very short duration and partly for this reason, the emphasis was on discrete activities that could demonstrate the value of KS. In a future project, pilot activities should move beyond the focus on meetings to support organizational and institutional change processes.

Stronger links should be built between the project and KS communities of practitioners. A future project should be designed to link up practitioners within the CGIAR who may serve as “KS Champions” with global KS communities such as KM4Dev. The project should also continue to foster the development of a CGIAR-wide community of KS practitioners which could play the role of a “KS think tank” and pool resources and talents for cross-center activities.

Greater attention should be paid to cross-center activities. The project design mainly involves activities within centers. This was appropriate at an initial stage, when centers needed to be motivated to begin working in this area. However, the ultimate goal is to improve the integration and effectiveness of the CGIAR as a whole, and achievement of this goal will require more cross-center work in the future. This can be achieved through active knowledge sharing among the CGIAR KS community of practitioners, and by strengthening KS in existing cross-center activities.

3. Project Implementation and Outputs

Organization and management of the project

CIAT established a project coordination team with three members. Nathan Russell, a senior staff member at CIAT, has been Project Leader. Doug Horton was contracted by CIAT on a half-time basis to serve as Project Coordinator. Simone Staiger-Rivas has served as Project Associate. A representative of Bellanet also served on the coordination

team (initially Mark Faul; later Allison Hewlitt). Other CIAT staff members (in particular, Edith Hesse) have been involved from time to time in project planning and activities.

Prior to the KS Project, the team needed external support in KM and KS. Initially, it was assumed that TRG would be the main source of such expertise. But during project implementation we came to realize that Bellanet could be a more cost-effective partner in developing capacities for KS within the CGIAR. As a result, TRG's involvement in the project was scaled back, and Bellanet's involvement was expanded.

Our original contact at Bellanet was Mark Faul. Later, Allison Hewlitt took over his role as primary source of KS expertise. Personnel from CIAT's Information Technology (IT) and Information Management (IM) Units were expected to play prominent roles in the project. However, over time, the project began to focus more and more on communication issues, and members of CIAT's Communications Program played more prominent roles relative to those of CIAT's IT and IM staff.

During 2004, most decisions were made by the Project Coordination Team. Beginning late in the year, an attempt was made to broaden the project team and decision-making responsibilities to include the coordinators of the KS Pilots (see below).

Project activities and outputs

In this section, we assess the project's activities and outputs in relation to the objectives (see again Table 2, page 9).

Objective 1. Review experiences with KS

Workshop on KS and ILAC in the CGIAR

A desk review of experience with KS in the CGIAR was carried out at the beginning of the project. Key individuals involved with the OCP were interviewed. Information on the development and implementation of KM strategies was acquired from three centers that had developed such strategies (ICARDA, CIFOR and IWMI). At the joint Planning Workshop for the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative (June 2004), information on experiences with KS and ILAC was obtained from 7 centers. Additional information on the status of KS has been collected during visits to centers, particularly those that implemented KS Pilot Projects.

Publication on experiences with KS in the CGIAR

The original plan was to prepare a report on KS in the CGIAR in time to serve as an input for planning and as a baseline for measuring the project's results. However, given the project's short duration and the urgency of implementing other activities, the proposed publication was not produced. Instead, during 2005 we prepared publications on experiences with KS in the CGIAR and more broadly in the international development community. An article on experiences with KS in the CGIAR was published in the online journal *Knowledge Management for Development* as one of a set of articles and case studies on KS in international development agencies.¹¹ Additionally, an ILAC Brief was

¹¹ Knowledge Management and Development Journal (Vol 1, No 2) at <http://www.km4dev.org/index.php/articles/news/600>.

published on the importance of meetings as entry point for KS¹². The project also published a final report in magazine style, a leaflet, and three posters on the pilot initiatives. All of the project publications are available on the KS web site (<http://www.ks-cgiar.org>).

Objective 2. Generate commitment to introducing KS approaches and tools

Center visits and presentations in support of pilot activities

During 2004 and 2005, members of the project coordination team made numerous visits to the centers carrying out KS Pilot Projects (CIMMYT, CIAT, CIFOR, IWMI). They met with senior managers and staff at various levels in the organization and delivered presentations on KS to managers and staff.

Review and synthesis workshop at end of project

The review and planning workshop was carried out in September 2005 at CIFOR headquarters in Bogor, Indonesia, with nine participants from the four centers that carried out KS Pilot Projects from the coordination team and one from the ICT-KM program. As all the participants occupy management positions in their centers, they represent the core of an important emerging KS community of practice within the CGIAR and are effective KS champions in each of their centers and programs.

Dissemination of information on results of the KS Project (professionally edited report, multi-media products, posters, KS Web site)

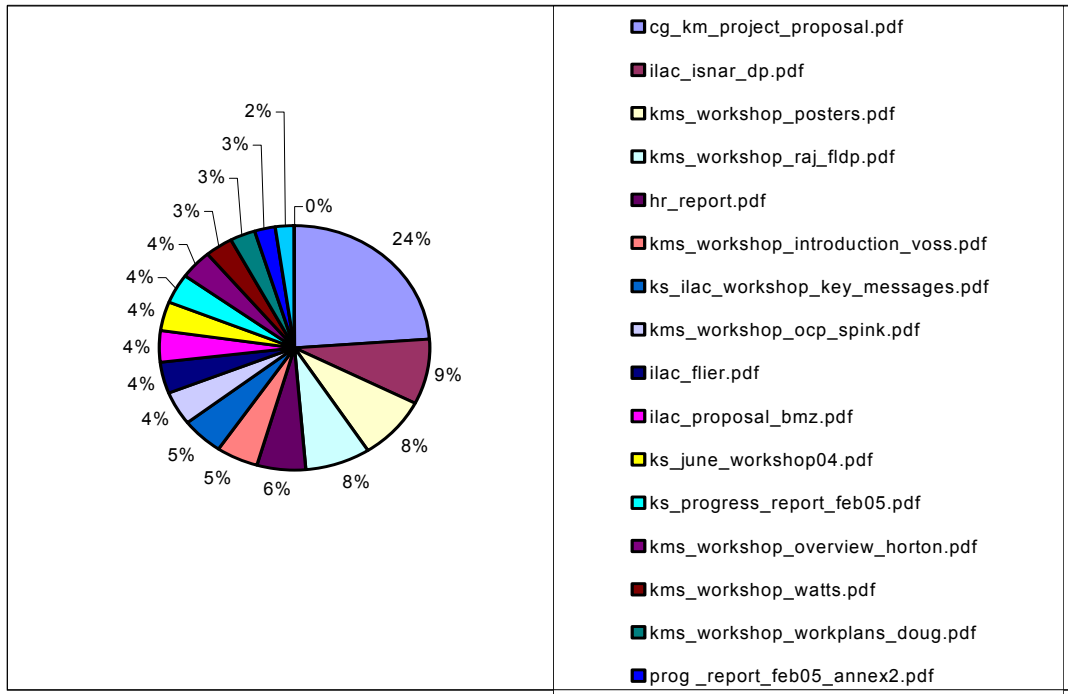
In its early stage, the project team developed a Web site with the aim to inform widely about the ongoing activities of the project and to provide easy access to useful information on KS. The Web site is available at: www.ks-cgiar.org. By the end of October 2005, the project Web site had 7,325 page visits. The most frequently visited pages were the Homepage, the pages containing information from the planning workshop and the information resources section.

The site's 18 documents have had a total of 14,809 downloads. The most frequently downloaded documents are the project proposal and an introductory document on Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC). Documents presented at the Planning Workshop have also been downloaded an average of 500 times each month. Project documents such as the project progress report and the final project report have been posted more recently and therefore have been downloaded fewer times.

The Web site contains also a KS toolbox¹³, which is presented on page 20 of this report.

¹² ILAC brief 10. Making the most of major meetings: An entry point for knowledge sharing. Simone Staiger, Nathan Russell and Allison Hewlitt.
<http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/downloads/Brief10Proof2.pdf>

¹³ www.ks-cgiar.org/toolbox



A final printed report on the KS Project, prepared in a magazine format, has attracted many readers¹⁴. It is available on the KS Web site and was distributed at the 2005 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the CGIAR in Morocco. Multi-media presentations on three of the four KS Pilots have been produced by the centers that implemented the Pilots (CIAT, CIFOR and IWMI). All four centers have prepared posters on their pilots.

In 2005 the KS Project Coordination Team guest edited a special issue of the Web-based and printed journal *Knowledge Management for Development* on the topic of “Approaches to Promote Knowledge Sharing in International Organizations.” This issue contains articles, case studies and an interview that deal with KS in development organizations as United Nations Development Program, the World Health Organization, the CGIAR (2 studies), the Asian Development Bank, the African Capacity Building Foundation and a joint donor training group. In this issue, the KS Project Coordination Team authored a case study on the CGIAR KS project that discusses the opportunities offered by major meetings for introducing KS attitudes, methods and tools into development organizations. The paper draws on our experiences with the four pilots to introduce KS into major meetings. It outlines the approaches employed in each pilot, the challenges faced and the results to date.

Special session on KS at AGM 2005

All of the materials mentioned above were presented at a special session of the Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR in Morocco in December 2005. At a lunch meeting, a “chat show” was held. Through frank discussions with directors and other staff from four

¹⁴ Russell, N.; Staiger, S. 2005. **Knowledge-Sharing Solutions for a CGIAR without Boundaries**. CIAT, Cali, Colombia. http://www.ks-cgiar.org/pdf/KS_magazine.pdf

centers – CIAT, CIFOR, CIMMYT, and IWMI – and representatives from the ICT-KM Program, participants could find out how to transform otherwise mundane institutional events into exciting entry points for improved knowledge sharing and collaboration. Future plans of the ICT-KM Program were discussed.

Objective 3. Support development and implementation of KS strategies, Pilot activities and supportive policies

During the June 2004 workshop, participants outlined proposals for KS Pilot Projects in their own organizations. Following the workshop, ten of the proposals were submitted to the KS Project for support. After a review of the submissions, four proposals submitted by CIAT, CIFOR, CIMMYT and IWMI were selected for support. The four KS Pilot Projects were a central focus of the KS Project's activities during late 2004 and 2005 and a key source of learning about KS for the individuals involved in them.

The CIAT pilot was the first to be initiated, and it was completed during 2004. The other three KS Pilots were implemented during 2005. Each of the KS Pilots involved introducing KS approaches into the design and implementation of major meetings organized by the centers. In two cases – CIAT and CIFOR – the pilots involved redesigning the centers' annual meetings. In the CIMMYT case, the pilot focused on KS in the inaugural meeting of a new thematic interest group. At IWMI, the pilot focused on introducing KS into a set of research projects, beginning with a project meeting.

Each of the KS Pilot Projects has been professionally documented in print and multi-media products. In each case, a brief, engaging text on the pilot activity is accompanied by examples and quotations that illustrate key points. Guidelines for implementing the KS tools applied in each Pilot Project are available on the KS Web site and the KS Toolkit (see below).

In addition to the KS Pilots, the project jointly sponsored with the ILAC Initiative a study of HR policies that provides insights into how changes in policies and procedures can foster or inhibit knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

CIAT Knowledge Sharing Week



Like other CGIAR centers, CIAT has a long tradition of annual meetings. In the past too many hours were gobbled up by formal presentations, with too little discussion of burning issues. In Knowledge Sharing (KS) Week, CIAT tried a different formula to help staff share knowledge and strengthen relationships. From November 29 to December 4, CIAT held its first "Knowledge Sharing Week." Designed to improve communication,

relationships, and collaboration within CIAT, KS week had three specific objectives: (a) to enhance the integration of headquarters and regional staff and activities, to develop a shared understanding of three major initiatives referred to as Research-for-Development Challenges and contribute to their effective operationalization, and to promote effective work-planning on the part of project teams and collaborators.

In order to achieve these objectives, Knowledge Sharing Week included KS processes and tools designed for the following activities:

- Using the *Open Space technique*, CIAT staff set an agenda and discussed action plans to move forward with three major initiatives that encompass the Center's R&D agenda.
- CIAT's support units were in the limelight with the *Research Support Fair*.
- A *Peer Assist* session focused on working relations between headquarters and the regions. Staff presented practical problems and had the benefit of discussion and advice from small groups.
- As part of our *Evaluation* of the event, a "barometer team" met during the week to reflect on the process as it unfolded. In addition, KS Week participants completed an evaluation questionnaire.
- A Colombian musical group entertained staff on the first evening of KS Week. Other *social events* included a party with live music and dancing.



Most participants were quite positive about KS Week and felt the meeting had improved communication and relationships and demonstrated the value of KS. Participants felt that less progress was made in operationalization of the DCs during the week, due in part to the complexity of the task and the lack of background information on the DCs. While it is difficult to assess the usefulness of specific KS tools, apart from the usefulness of the sessions in which they were used, most participants indicated that they found the peer assist, the knowledge fair and the open space approaches useful, and expressed interest in using them in the future. They expressed less interest in the on-line event planner and the meeting Web site. Key suggestions (mentioned more than 3 times) offered by participants for improving future annual meetings at CIAT include:

- To balance the new and the old formula (i.e., combine exchange of scientific information with KS techniques)
- To more clearly define the topics and give more background information beforehand
- To assure that everybody attends

Participants also felt that KS approaches should be incorporated into CIAT's projects. Special attention should be given to involving nationally recruited staff members more effectively in CIAT's KS activities.

Sharing knowledge on wheat improvement at CIMMYT



Ciudad Obregon in northwestern Mexico, holy ground for wheat scientists worldwide, was the location for a meeting of CIMMYT's Wheat Improvement Group from 30 March - 2 April 2005.

This gathering provided alternative approaches to achieve the following objectives: (a) clarify how the group will contribute to the Program's priority areas, (b) contribute to the formation of a well-

integrated team of scientists that share knowledge and information and work toward common goals, and (c) use the collective wisdom of the group to develop plans to solve some of the key science issues confronting wheat improvement.

The agenda for the first 2 days was set by participants using an “Open Space Approach.” Members and other involved CIMMYT scientists explored a broad range of ideas and issues related to the delivery of the best wheat improvement science and developed action plans to work towards their priorities.

Held on the third day, Peer Assists allowed individuals with a specific problem to solicit ideas and suggestions from their peers. Much positive energy was captured from these methods.

The general reaction from the participants was positive, and most felt that the KS principles enhanced the spirit and cohesiveness of the team, one of the meeting’s main objectives. Participants felt that although the meeting was very fruitful, more time should have been devoted to action planning and the logistics of these plans. Also, it is clear that further benefits will require follow-up on all the ideas that were generated. After it became clear what the KS principles entailed, they were very much appreciated. In particular, most found the Dgroups and After Action Reviews to be helpful and would like to continue using them within the WIG or within CIMMYT. The Peer Assists and Open Space session were ranked as being less popular, but most expressed interest in utilizing these tools again.

To build on the positive momentum set during this meeting, suggestions were offered by participants to improve future WIG meetings:

- Allocate more time to the meeting.
- Have an agenda in advance with clear goals and focused on a few targeted items.
- Host the meetings at different CIMMYT locations.



Most participants felt that the best of the tools and methods should be applied to other programs and groups within CIMMYT. The most popular tool, by far, was the Dgroups, an online resource for messages, resources, and events. Another way knowledge sharing can be improved at CIMMYT is through the enhancement of IT services and Intranet use in the regions.

Knowledge sharing in research at IWMI

IWMI has embarked on a pilot project that focuses on KS in research. It aims to enhance the impact of agricultural research by helping bridge the gap between scientists and the end-users of research results. The idea is to make the research process more efficient by improving KS between researchers. But the main focus is on increasing the effectiveness and impact of research by enhancing interaction between all stakeholders.

The pilot project is part of a comprehensive KS strategy for IWMI and the CGIAR’s Water and Food Challenge Program (CPWF), which IWMI coordinates. Through the project, IWMI is identifying, evaluating, and documenting innovative KS and communications methods that scientists and their partners can use in research.



To plan the launch of this project, a coordination team (Sanjini de Silva of IWMI and Allison Hewlitt of Bellanet) met to organize an inception workshop. Supported by the KS Project, the workshop was designed to help participants reach a shared understanding of KS in research and draft concept notes for projects to integrate KS approaches and tools into current research activities.

Held at Colombo in June 2005, the workshop brought together 17 people – including 10 “focal points” from IWMI and CPWF projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The event was facilitated by Allison Hewlitt and Simone Staiger of CIAT. They employed a range of KS approaches, including:

- A Knowledge Fair, in which participants shared experiences and activities involving KS.
- An Open Space session on a range of ideas – from developing a culture of listening to post-project sustainability – for enhancing KS between researchers and users.
- A Peer Assist process, based on issues raised by participants.
- Outcome Mapping to identify challenges and progress indicators.
- An After Action Review at the end of the workshop to gather constructive feedback and capture lessons learned.

In an evaluation of the workshop, participants judged the Knowledge Fair and Outcome Mapping exercise to be the most important and interesting aspects of the event. In addition, they said they were committed to applying KS approaches (the Peer Assist method, for example) to strengthen relationships within research teams and with partners.

Working together to make a difference: CIFOR annual meeting



When CIFOR started planning for its Annual Meeting, the Center had one clear objective in mind: Maximize the amount of staff interaction and input into the important issues CIFOR faces today while making sure these interactions happen in a meaningful, productive and professional way. On top of that people should have fun.

Through a process facilitated by the KS Project Team, CIFOR’s Program Advisory Group and CIFOR staff developed an innovative program, which included: A one-day knowledge fair, an Open Space meeting on the central theme of the week:

“Working Together to Make a Difference”;

A Peer Assist session on regional and global issues, A Chat Show to talk openly about the upcoming EPMPR as well as a “Program Meeting” day.

The CIFOR meeting was held on 19-23 September. At the end of the week, those attending the meeting were invited to fill in an evaluation form. The overall reaction to the design and implementation of the meeting was very positive.

Participants identified many positive features of the week. These included: the openness of the meeting and the lively, engaging and democratic atmosphere; the active involvement of all staff and the feeling of togetherness; the many opportunities for

discussions; and the Open Space methodology, which allowed participants to raise issues they really cared about.



The week, of course, had its limitations too. The main ones identified by respondents to the survey were: the lack of opportunities for cross-programmatic communication and planning; the low probability of follow-up on the topics that were raised; and insufficient time for in-depth discussion of scientific issues.

Study on human resource policies, KS and organizational learning

Management systems and practices may or may not be conducive to introducing or mainstreaming KS. To gain a better knowledge of this issue and to identify key areas for future intervention, the KS Project and ILAC Initiative carried out a joint study on the role of human resources policies and practices in fostering KS and organizational learning. The study examined six CGIAR centers as well as six other organizations that are regarded as leaders in this area.¹⁵

All of the organizations studied, including the CGIAR centers, are promoting KS and organizational learning to some extent, generally in the context of broader organizational change efforts. While some of the organizations studied have pursued comprehensive, integrated approaches, most have resorted to small-scale efforts, seeking incremental changes. It is sometimes assumed that CGIAR centers are far behind other research and development organizations in KS and organizational learning. Our findings indicate, though, that while most of the centers covered in the study lack comprehensive strategies, some are actively pursuing promising initiatives, from which others can learn.

Three key factors were identified that influence the success of efforts to foster change through KS sharing and organizational learning:

- Public support for such initiatives from top leaders
- An explicit recognition of the way in which the organization's business strategies are reinforced by KS and organizational learning
- Effective policies and practices for internal communication that support KS and organizational learning.

¹⁵ For further information on the study, see Krista Baldini. The Role of Human Resources Policies and Practices in fostering Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Learning. ILAC Brief 11. IPGRI, Rome (2005). <http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/downloads/Brief11Proof2.pdf>

KS Toolbox



A “toolbox” for KS practitioners in the CGIAR, which has just been made available on the Web (www.ks-cgiar.org/toolbox), presents a selection of KS methods. Short descriptions of each tool are included, drawn from the most relevant sources, and step-by-step guides are provided for their use. The toolbox also provides links and references to more information, as well as stories from experiences in the use of these tools. The Toolbox also offers a list of peer contacts who have used the tools and are willing to

share their experiences. Users of the toolbox will be encouraged to enrich the content by contributing their own references, stories and contacts.

So far, the Toolbox contains ten tools (Open Space, Peer Assists, After Action Review, Group Facilitation, Storytelling, Knowledge Fairs, Communities of Practice, Mentoring, Appreciative Inquiry, and Chat Show). It also contains stories on the use of KS processes in the four pilot projects. We plan to expand the Toolbox as new KS methods are experimented with in the CGIAR centers. Here are two examples of user reactions:

“Very nice - a marvellous reference and resource for us all.”

“Thank you for sharing the link developed by CGIAR in collaboration with Bellanet. I have passed on the link to others here in Eastern Indonesia and all have commented positively, to the extent that I would like to ask whether we here could obtain permission to translate elements of the toolkit into Indonesian.”

The design and development of the toolbox led the project team to unexpected connections with the KM4Dev community. A concept note for a project titled “Knowledge Expeditions” has been developed (see Unplanned activities page 21)

Facilitation training for participatory decision making

Facilitation skills are essential for CGIAR staff, not only for organizing better meetings, but also for working more effectively with partners in teams involving people from different organizations, backgrounds, disciplines, nationalities, and cultures. For that reason the KS Project joined forces with the CGIAR Institutional Learning and Change

(ILAC) Initiative to offer training on the facilitation of group decision-making, led by Sam Kaner from CommunityatWork¹⁶. The objective of the course was to build participants' facilitation skills for conducting meetings, working with teams, managing conflict, and building consensus.



The training proved to be extremely effective. A Web based survey after the first workshop showed that three months after the course, over half of participants had used their new skills to facilitate work-related meetings and had shared the skills with colleagues. Here are some examples of participants' assessments of the workshop:

"It was the most directly useful workshop I've ever attended."

"The training was exactly what I was looking for to enhance my capacity as a leader."

"The workshop exceeded my expectations because it went beyond the presentation of tools or techniques and presented these within a broad framework for group work and decision-making. This framework helps me understand and manage these processes much better."

"Using the techniques I learned at the course, I facilitated a very important 2-day meeting of CIFOR's senior management team on strategic staffing. I introduced the "gradient of agreement," which was used throughout the meeting before making decisions. It was a highly productive and satisfactory meeting."

Given the highly positive results of the first course, a second course on facilitation skills was held in November 2005. This course motivated the participants to set up a d-group on facilitation for the CGIAR, and all participants of the two courses have been invited to join.

Unplanned activities

During project implementation, the KS team had the opportunity to develop strong links with the KM4Dev community which has led to the development of a concept note for a project titled "Knowledge Expeditions". Initial discussions on the project centered on the toolbox but eventually merged into discussions amongst community members on the use of narrative. The result is a document, which proposes a newly energized set of self-organizing learning alliances forged from the KM4Dev community. Alliances will mount Knowledge Expeditions, purposeful explorations of the equipment a knowledge worker needs to respond to common development challenges.

¹⁶ <http://www.communityatwork.com/>

Assessment of project implementation and outputs

Positive aspects

The project design was improved over time. Based largely on decisions taken at the participatory planning workshop in June 2004, the original project design was modified substantially to shift away from externally led strategy exercises to experimentation with KS approaches and internal capacity development for KS within CGIAR centers. The involvement of center staff in planning the project helped tailor its activities to specific needs and opportunities, and increased centers' commitment to the project.

The project built on and improved existing activities. Project participants have appreciated the fact that the project worked to improve the effectiveness of already-scheduled activities (particularly center meetings) rather than initiating a set of new activities that would have added to the workload of center managers and staff.

Project management has been flexible. One of the features of project management that has been appreciated by participants and should be maintained in future is flexibility. One example that shows what we mean by flexibility is the CIFOR pilot who's initial pilot focused on CoPs and networks. When Michael Hailu heard about CIAT's KS Week, he decided that it would be of greater value to do something similar at CIFOR. Rather than making him stick to his original plan, the project team supported his decision.

Major center meetings proved to be good entry points for introducing KS. In retrospect, selecting major meetings as entry points for KS was a very good decision, which produced valuable results. Through these meetings, large numbers of center managers and staff were exposed to KS approaches that they were previously unaware of. The response was generally positive, the meetings were substantially improved, participants have applied some of the KS approaches in other contexts, and there is now great interest in applying similar KS approaches in other centers' meetings. The challenge now is to meet the growing demand for facilitation skills and to move beyond meetings per se to the application of KS approaches in a broader range of the centers' activities.

The facilitation training courses have been very useful. In the June 2004 planning workshop, it was decided that the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative would sponsor a training course in facilitation skills, as core skills for knowledge sharing and organizational learning. The two courses organized in 2005 have been extremely successful in building motivation and skills in participatory decision-making.

The HR study has provided useful insights into the role of HR Units in fostering KS and organizational learning. The HR study, also carried out jointly with the ILAC Initiative, has provided new insights into the relationships between HR policies and practices, KS and organizational learning in CGIAR centers.

Areas that should be improved

There should be more transparency in decision-making. In the KS Project, decision-making processes were not always clear, particularly with regard to the selection and budgeting of Pilot Activities. In a future project, decision-making processes should be more transparent. A Steering Committee should be formed including all the centers involved, as well as Bellanet, and the ICT-KM Program management. Terms of Reference should to be defined for the committee.

Communication should be improved between the project coordination team and leaders of pilot activities. Related to the point just made, in a future project, roles should be clarified within the Project Coordination Team, and project communications processes and tools should be clearly outlined for the Steering Committee and the leaders of project activities.

Pilot activities should be integrated more thoroughly into the project. In the KS Project, the pilot activities were not included in the original project design, but were added at the time of the June 2004 workshop. Each of the Pilots has been implemented independently from the others. We believe that the concept of pilot activity is a good one, which should be continued in the future. To strengthen the overall coherence and results of the project, stronger relationships should be developed among Pilot Activities, and between the project coordinators and the pilots. Essentially, the leaders of pilot activities should have more central roles in the project. In addition to the center-based pilots, more joint work should also be carried out involving KS practitioners in several centers.

More attention should be paid to developing a vibrant community of KS champions and practitioners in the CGIAR. The pilot activities have shown that there are individuals who could play vital roles in promoting KS in every center. However, they are seldom aware of the KS work going on in other places or of its possible application in their own center. A crucial role for a future KS Project is to locate these individuals and build up a community of KS practitioners within the CGIAR.

All of us involved in the project should work hard to “practice what we preach.” Finally, it is often easier to preach KS than to practice it. In future we need to pay special attention to upgrading the KS skills of all those involved in the project and to improve our own day-to-day use of KS approaches in our work.

The KS Project should work more closely with the CGIAR Challenge Programs and other change initiatives in the CGIAR. In the April 2004 planning meeting, we decided that the KS Project should seek to work with Challenge Programs, as they are central actors in the CGIAR’s reform process. Because the Programs involve multiple partners, improving KS should have especially high benefits. We also agreed that the KS Project should work closely with the ILAC Initiative because of the similar goals of the two initiatives. However, little progress was made in these two areas. We soon realized that the Challenge Programs are so large and complex, so well endowed with resources, and under so much pressure to produce quick results that they are reticent to experiment with new things, like KS. Consequently and paradoxically, ***we found least interest in new KS approaches precisely where we felt they had the greatest potential benefits!*** Nevertheless, we feel that in future, efforts should be made to bring representatives of the CPs into the CGIAR KS community and to motivate them to participate in pilot activities.

As far as the collaboration with ILAC is concerned, some very useful joint activities were carried out, including the human resources study and the facilitation training. However, differences in the conception of the two initiatives (ILAC and KS), in the management style and in the center allegiances discouraged more substantial collaboration or integration. Nevertheless, we believe the KS Project should continue to share its experiences with other change initiatives in the CGIAR and should continue to be open to opportunities for collaboration when they arise.

4. Behavioral Changes to which the Project has Contributed

In very broad terms, it was expected that the KS Project would encourage people in the CGIAR to do their work differently. The expected changes include more openness and sharing, people seeking out the knowledge, experience and advice of their peers, people more willing to admit and discuss failures and learn from them, more teamwork within programs and centers, and ultimately, more teamwork across the centers. These behavioral changes together would constitute a profound cultural change.

In retrospect, many of the expectations for behavioral and cultural change were unrealistic, given the short duration and limited resources of the KS Project. Nevertheless, some important changes have been registered, particularly in CIAT and CIFOR.

- The CIAT Pilot – CIAT’s KS Week – was the first to be planned and implemented, and it has had the most continuous and concerted support from the KS coordination team. The environment at CIAT was also highly conducive to KS and organizational learning. Therefore, it is not surprising that the most profound and widespread changes have been observed at CIAT.
- Although its pilot activity was only recently completed, CIFOR is the other center that has experienced notable behavioral changes as a result of the KS pilot.
- At IWMI, KM has been a priority since before the initiation of the KS Project, and many activities have been carried out to promote KS in the center. In this case, the additional value of the KS Project has not been measurable.
- In the case of CIMMYT, the center is undergoing profound structural and personnel changes, and in this environment, few observable benefits have accrued from the KS pilot.

In the rest of this section, we present personal assessments and examples of behavioral changes in CIAT, CIFOR, IWMI and CIMMYT.

Changes at CIAT¹⁷

Since the beginning of the Knowledge Sharing Project, CIAT team members have been aware of the opportunities of KS methods and processes, for the institution and far beyond the project itself.

CIAT’s Annual Meeting proved to be a good entry point for KS techniques and helped many staff members see and feel what KS is about.

¹⁷ This section is based on notes provided by Simone Staiger-Rivas.

Since Knowledge Sharing Week in late 2004, we have continued to promote knowledge sharing attitudes among staff and have introduced KS processes and techniques into various center events.

The KS philosophy – *to encourage open and inclusive sharing of expertise and experiences among CGIAR staff members and partners* – fits very well with many activities of CIAT’s Rural Innovation Institute, concerned with, for example, learning alliances, participatory monitoring and evaluation and innovation histories. In all these areas CIAT is looking for increased participation of its partners to achieve more effective collaborative research. CIAT now has several staff members who are committed to KS and who are involved in different projects where they support the diffusion of KS ideas and approaches.

On the institutional level, a 2004 culture study has highlighted the need for improved internal communication. CIAT management and staff reacted to this by developing an internal communications action plan and joining the CGIAR mentoring and leadership training program.

Examples. The KS Project Team has contributed to these on-going processes by applying KS principles and tools in various ways.

- In several project meetings with local partners, KS team members have supported the development of participatory agendas and group dynamics. Those meetings have been professionally facilitated to foster good relationships with partners and through the use of KS tools and meeting dynamics. One recent example involves a capacity building program that was developed by the Rural Innovation Institute with support from the Kellogg Foundation called “Learning and Knowledge Sharing Centres” (Centros de Aprendizaje e Intercambio de Saberes (CAIS), in Spanish). In this program, an interactive agenda was developed and included a knowledge fair, a chat show and a field trip where a communications group working with CIAT showcased their project through a drama, a storytelling exercise, and a peer assist. The participant evaluation of this training was very positive.
- Simone Staiger-Rivas has participated in the development of CIAT’s new internal communications action plan, building KS in as an integral part of the strategy. A proposal to review CIAT’s internal seminars has been developed, with the idea of including new approaches, such as peer assists, knowledge fairs, and after action reviews. Open Space Technology has been used to consult staff on future development of the Center’s Intranet.
- In the framework of the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program and CIAT’s active women’s group, KS dynamics were introduced into an event held on International Women’s Day. More than 140 Colombian women came to meet and share experiences with the international women staff at CIAT. As representatives of their countries, they opened the conversation allowing CIAT women to talk in five groups about issues related to culture, work, education, masculinity, and sexuality. Women appreciated the opportunity to have conversations in small groups rather than a formal

seminar, as previously. They also seemed to appreciate the opportunity to talk only among women.

- Interactive knowledge-sharing activities have been introduced into CIAT's Cultural Diversity Week, for example, in activities aimed at identifying the needs of CIAT employees who are single heads of household. Five colleagues shared their stories with participants in small discussion groups. With the support of facilitators, participants had the opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a single mother or father, to be solely responsible for parents, brothers and sisters, or other relatives, and to give some good advice. The discussions included a brainstorming session on how to support single heads of households, and the ideas are now being converted into an action plan.
- Several internal CIAT meetings (for example, a one-day event on Business Process Reengineering) have also been prepared and facilitated using KS approaches.
- As a result of the course on facilitation skills for participatory decision making, a chart writing workshop was developed and carried out in Spanish for members of CIAT's Communications Unit with the goal of developing a pool of meeting facilitators.

The feedback on all these activities has been positive. Participants liked the work in small groups. The local institutions involved highlighted the inclusive dynamics where all participants at all levels of the organization – from assistants to unit leaders – were free to express themselves. The G&D events were extremely well received and confirmed a need for employees to discuss their problems and needs, and to exchange experiences, as an ideal complement of seminars and courses. Most significantly, the participants realized that the techniques lead to more integration and foster democratic behaviors. Participants felt their contributions were valued, and they found the events to be energizing.

More progress could have been made with CIAT scientists, who so far have not really requested support with KS. We have had more success introducing KS in other domains than in science per se. This is especially noteworthy, since scientists had been most thoroughly exposed to KS tools during KS Week. We need to better understand scientists' reticence to employing KS tools and do more to promote KS among researchers.

Next steps.

- The CIAT KS team is building on the momentum created by the project and taking advantage of opportunities to incorporate KS into institutional and research events. We also encourage our colleagues to identify new opportunities for using KS tools. Initially championed by the Communications Unit, we are now expanding KS to the Rural Innovation Institute and hope to awaken interest in other research areas during the next year.
- CIAT is also pursuing greater involvement in the larger KM4Dev community. Since the last community meeting in June 2005, Simone Staiger-Rivas is member of the

KM4Dev core-group. A concept note on a project titled “Knowledge Expeditions” has been developed jointly with SDC, Sparknow and Bellanet to and is being presented to the community for feedback. The next KM4Dev workshop, planned for Brighton in July 2006 will create space for moving forward on the initiative.

- Collaboration with CIAT’s Human Resources Unit and the G&D group will also be pursued to improve internal communications.

Changes at CIFOR¹⁸

The annual meeting went very well. The level of energy – the buzz of excitement – the feelings of camaraderie can be attributed to the efforts we all made in coming up with an agenda that was innovative and took people – all of the staff here at CIFOR – outside the norm of such meetings. What was truly unique about the approaches and methods used (Open Space, Knowledge Fair, Speed Dating and to some degree the Peer Assist and Chat Show) was that they allowed people of different cultures, different nationalities, different ages and different professional backgrounds to all feel part of the event and that they all somehow contributed to, and were valued by, CIFOR.

CIFOR Management has taken the results and evaluation of the week seriously. The management meeting immediately after the week retained a lot of the positive “glow,” and subsequent meetings have reinforced the spirit of improved communication and celebration. A very solid reminder of the approaches used during the week is in the gender and diversity goals that were presented to CIFOR’s Board of Trustees a couple of weeks ago. In the brief to the Board it was stated as part of the goals for 2006 CIFOR would “introduce meeting strategies to encourage expression of diverse opinions (encompasses elements of open space and facilitation) at a minimum of three CIFOR meetings and/or seminars.” This position is related very much to the outcomes of the pilot!

People came away from the annual meeting with a desire to renew their feelings of community that the pilot engendered. There has been an increase in the number of social events (building social capital was one of the main aims of the pilot), the increased number of informal interactions on matters of science (over coffee, lunch break and corridor chats), and an increase in the frequency of formal seminars and meetings to share ideas and knowledge (a gathering of poverty-linked researchers; more attendance at visiting researcher seminars).

Where there is some danger is that some of these meetings are tending to fall into the more conventional style with little facilitation or expanding the repertoire of approaches. This is something we obviously need to watch out for and encourage people to feel comfortable in taking on new styles of interaction. In this we need to build capacity and widen people’s comfort levels so they want to try new ways of interacting. There are still way too few people really skilled in facilitation and different, more innovative approaches.

¹⁸ This section is based on notes provided by Fiona Chandler.

Changes at CIMMYT¹⁹

During discussions after the Wheat Improvement Group meeting at CIMMYT, many participants mentioned that the meeting had made them enthusiastic and left a positive spirit for change. So, what happened afterward?

During a meeting of CIMMYT's Research Committee shortly after the WIG meeting, it was decided to streamline CIMMYT management structure, eliminating one side of the matrix management structure by disbanding the disciplinary groups. The main reason was to reduce the management load that the matrix-management system required. The outcomes of the WIG meeting that required action were passed on to the program directors. CIMMYT management also announced the creation of an annual "CIMMYT Science Forum" to discuss and debate research-for-development issues related to the center's programs. While senior managers encouraged disciplinary groups – such as the WIG – to continue to operate on an informal basis, most scientists interpreted these decisions as the end of the thematic groups. As one scientist noted:

“Disciplinary groups had meetings, and in the case of wheat group, the meeting in Obregon was very successful. But then it lost steam and a reason to exist.”

Six months after the WIG meeting in Obregon, we asked all the participants what changes had occurred since the meeting, and about half of them responded.

Nearly all the respondents said they used the Dgroup, but most used it passively, receiving messages posted by few others. Two individuals indicated that they had used Open Space to organize other events. Some respondents also mentioned that they knew of similar approaches for organizing meetings before the WIG met in Obregon.

The main changes that participants feel resulted from the meeting are improved communication among those working on wheat and a more common understanding of key topics such as shuttle breeding. Several participants expressed frustration that there had been little follow-up after the meeting, largely due to the disbanding of the group. Most participants feel that future meetings should employ the new KS approaches but not drop altogether the classical “presentation and discussion” format. Two respondents prefer not to meet at all until some “real issues” need to be resolved.

There is a strong consensus among participants that a lot of work is still needed to improve knowledge management and sharing at CIMMYT.

Changes at IWMI²⁰

Little information is available at IWMI on behavioral changes related to the KS Pilot. The facilitation-training course organized by the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative is

¹⁹ This section is based on notes provided by Petr Kosina.

²⁰ This section is based on notes provided by Sanjini de Silva.

seen as useful, as was the facilitation of the workshop on KS in research. However, it was noted that participation in the KS Project involved substantial time and effort in relation to the benefits received.

5. Priorities for Mainstreaming KS in the CGIAR

How far have we come and how far do we have to go?

The KS Project has focused on incorporating KS principles and techniques into high-profile center events under pilot initiatives led by each of the four centers, with project support. The pilot initiatives at CIAT and CIFOR resulted in a new way for the centers to organize and conduct their annual staff meetings, while that at CIMMYT contributed to the formation of a well-integrated team of scientists who share knowledge and information and work towards common goals. At IWMI, the pilot initiative centered on a workshop designed to launch the Institute's pilot project on knowledge sharing in research.

By creating opportunities for large numbers of center staff to connect with one another through KS approaches, the pilots have helped identify practical ways for each participating center to enhance the efficiency of its work.²¹ Here is a sample of comments from center staff about the pilot initiatives:

“This has been an experiment like any experiment; some things worked well and some not so well. Now we can take the best of what we've learned this week and apply it in the future” – Joachim Voss, Director General, CIAT

“The Peer Assist session has enhanced my capacity for future actions. I really appreciate the exercise.” – Jean Claude Rubyogo, Seed Systems Specialist, CIAT-Africa

“[In the knowledge fair] there were plenty of things to do, and that generated a sense of high energy and excitement.” – Moira Moeliono, Scientist, CIFOR-Governance Program

“We've broken the mold – we've changed the way in which meetings have been traditionally run within CIMMYT. That's a huge leap forward.” – Dave Hodson, Head, GIS laboratory, CIMMYT

The training workshops organized by the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative on facilitation of group decision-making were also highly successful.

“I would like to give this workshop the strongest endorsement I can. I felt, and I think others felt, that it was the most useful event they'd attended since joining the CGIAR.” – Paul O’Nolan, Head, IT Services, IIRI

²¹ For further information on two of these pilot initiatives, see: Staiger, S., A. Hewlitt, D. Horton, N. Russell, and G. Toomey. 2005. Major meetings as entry points for knowledge sharing. *KM4D Journal* 1(2): 47-60. www.km4dev.org/journal

The KS Project and the ILAC Initiative also carried out a valuable study on the role of human resources policies and practices in fostering KS and organizational learning. A Web-based “KS Toolbox” (www.ks-cgiar.org/toolbox) has been developed for KS practitioners in the CGIAR.

As a result of all this experience, the four centers involved in the KS Project are now well positioned to confront further challenges in mainstreaming KS in the CGIAR.

Priorities for future work to mainstream KS in the CGIAR

Building on the interest and gains created by the KS Project, future work should focus on three main directions.

- First, each of the four centers needs to develop and implement a plan for extending within the organization lessons learned from the KS pilots and other project activities. These centers will also work collectively through the ICT-KM Program to mainstream KS in other centers.
- Second, it is essential to foster further development of the emerging community of KS practitioners in the CGIAR, expanding it to include professionals from all areas of the centers’ work, including research, capacity building, research support, and management.
- Finally, and perhaps most important, opportunities for incorporating KS approaches into CGIAR partnerships should be identified and pursued. This is vital for ensuring that KS can have a profound effect on the way the centers contribute to collaborative learning and innovation through their R&D partnerships.

Work in these three broad areas should lead to effective use of KS approaches and tools throughout the CGIAR and in its R&D partnerships, and more specifically to the following direct results:

- *KS approaches integrated into center activities:* Field-tested strategies for ensuring widespread use of KS approaches in CGIAR centers and programs
- *A vibrant KS community:* A dynamic and expanding community of KS practitioners in the CGIAR and its partner organizations
- *Partnerships strengthened:* Proven approaches for achieving more collaborative learning and innovation in CGIAR partnerships through the use of KS

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