

Knowledge Sharing in the CGIAR

A report on progress to date and plans for 2005

Doug Horton, Nathan Russell & Simone Staiger
International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
February 2005

Summary

The goal of the CGIAR Knowledge Sharing (KS) Project is to foster a learning-oriented, knowledge-sharing culture in the CGIAR. The project's specific objectives are: to review past experiences with KS in the CGIAR, to generate commitment to KS in the CGIAR, to support development and implementation of KS strategies, pilot activities and policies, and to facilitate access to KS tools and techniques in the CGIAR.

The original project designⁱ relied heavily on the use of consultants to organize workshops and training courses, prepare KM strategies, and provide CGIAR centers and programs with KS tools and guidelines. During the project's implementation, the emphasis has shifted toward capacity development, learning-by-doing and empowerment of CGIAR staff members and managers to plan and implement their own KS activities.

Progress in relation to the 4 objectives is outlined in the following paragraphs.

Review of experience with KS in the CGIAR. The activities and results of the CGIAR Organizational Change Program have been reviewed. Information on experiences with KM strategies has been acquired from 3 centers. In a June 2004 workshopⁱⁱ, information on experiences with KS was obtained from 7 centers, 1 Challenge Program and 3 Inter-Center Initiatives. Additional information on the status of KS is being collected through visits to centers, particularly those involved with KS Pilot Projects. A report on *Experiences with KS and ILAC in the CGIAR* will be issued in 2005.

Generating commitment for KS. Efforts to gain commitment for KS began with the June 2004 Workshop. A KS Website was launchedⁱⁱⁱ to disseminate news and information on KS in the CGIAR, and also to provide access to KS tools. Commitment to KS is also being built up through the Pilot Projects and visits to CGIAR centers.

Developing and implementing KS strategies, Pilot Projects and policies. In the June 2004 Workshop, participants suggested a shift from developing comprehensive KM strategies to providing guidelines and support for less complex KS strategies and strategic activities that could promote KS within CGIAR centers and programs. Ten proposals for KS Pilot Projects were submitted by Centers and Challenge Programs and 4 were selected for support.

The CIAT Pilot – converting the center's Annual Meeting into "CIAT KS Week" – has progressed quickly, with a range of positive results^{iv}. The CIMMYT Pilot – launch of a new "Wheat Improvement Group" through a KS event – was initially delayed by organizational and personnel changes taking place in the center. The pilot has now been planned and the main implementation will be in March 2005. The KS pilots at CIFOR and the Water & Food Challenge Program have also lagged due to delays in arranging for initial visits on the part of the Project Team but are now ongoing.

The CIAT pilot is being documented with a multi-media product, and the plan is to document the other pilots similarly, so that others in the CGIAR (and elsewhere) may be encouraged to follow their example. The KS Project has joined forces with the Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources and the ILAC Initiative to study human resources policies in the CGIAR and to suggest ways in which policy changes may stimulate KS and organizational learning.

Facilitating access to KS tools. The original plan was to develop a web-based collection of KS tools and to organize a pilot training course. In addition to these activities, we are now also providing experience with KS tools in the pilot projects. Based on the pilots, a training workshop and a “Guide to KS Tools and Expertise” will be completed in 2005.

Introduction

The project “*Fostering a Learning-Oriented Knowledge Management and Sharing Culture in the CGIAR*” aims to promote knowledge sharing within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) as a means to improve the overall performance of the CGIAR system. Generally known as the “*Knowledge Sharing (KS) Project*,” it is one of the 15 projects that make up the Information and Communications Technology – Knowledge Management Program of the CGIAR (ICT-KM Program).

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), headquartered in Cali, Colombia, has lead responsibility for implementing the project, in collaboration with other CGIAR centers and programs and with external sources of expertise in knowledge management and sharing.

The project proposal was developed by an ad hoc team made up of individuals from CIAT, Bellanet (headquartered in Canada), the Training Resources Group (TRG) in the USA and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR). Bellanet and TRG have extensive expertise in KS approaches and techniques for facilitating face-to-face and virtual collaboration. These organizations were also involved in the “*Organizational Change Program (OCP)*” – an earlier effort to introduce KS to the CGIAR with support from the Ford Foundation. TRG was the implementing agency and Bellanet also participated in the program. ISNAR was viewed as a source of expertise in capacity development and organizational change. Doug Horton, from ISNAR, was coordinating a related project, known as the ‘Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. He was subsequently contracted by CIAT to coordinate the KS project as well.

When the ICT-KM Program was being formulated, it was decided to complement the more technologically oriented mainstream projects with a KS project that would spearhead the introduction of KS into the CGIAR by focusing on issues of behavioral and cultural change.

Project design

Original project design

The proposal for the KS project, submitted in December 2003 and approved in January 2004, included 3 broad objectives and 6 main activities, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Original objectives, main activities and milestones: CGIAR KS Project

Objective / Main activity	Milestone
Objective 1. Review past experience with KM/S and generate commitment to the approach	
A workshop near the outset of the project, designed to review KM/S experiences in the CGIAR, to draw lessons from the experience, and to identify areas for improvement	Workshop by May 2004
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/S	Workshop by March 2005
Objective 2. Support the development and institutionalization of KM/S strategies	
Participatory development of 1 center-specific KM/S strategy	Final report and action plan by December 2004
Participatory development of 3 KM/S strategies with center-based programs or cross-center programs	Final report and action plan by December 2004
Objective 3. Facilitate access to KM/S tools and techniques	
Pilot training course on KM/S techniques	Pilot course held by November 2004
Provide access to practical guides and best practices in KM/S in print form and via the CGIAR Intranet	Materials posted to CGIAR Intranet beginning in July 2004

The KS Project approved by the ICT-KM Program had a scheduled implementation period of 12 months. It was expected that additional funds would be acquired by CIAT to continue its implementation for a minimum of 2 – 3 years. It was also expected that the initial review workshop would be held by May 2004; the pilot training course on KS techniques would be held by November 2004; Center- and program-level strategies would be completed by December 2004; the workshop for Directors, Deputy Directors and Heads of Human Resources Units would be held by March 2005; and that practical guides for KS would be posted on the CGIAR Intranet throughout the project, beginning in July 2004.

The proposal presents an ambitious list of expected outcomes. For Objective 1 (review of past experience with KM/S and generate commitment to the approach) the following outcomes were expected:

- A review of experiences related to the OCP and other KM/S experiences
- Senior CGIAR managers committed to improving KS in their organizations
- Human resource managers who understand the benefits of KS and begin to develop appropriate policies and approaches

For Objective 2 (support for development and institutionalization of KS strategies) the following outcomes were expected:

- One center-level and 3 program-level KM strategies leading to “blueprints for action” Revised human resource policies, performance appraisals and incentive systems that encourage staff to adopt KM/S approaches.

For Objective 3 (facilitation of access to KM/S tools and techniques) the following outcomes were expected:

- 20 – 25 CGIAR staff members trained in a Pilot Course, with expertise in basic KS skills and methods
- Center-specific workshops organized by participants of the pilot course
- Easy access for CGIAR staff members to a comprehensive set of KM/S tools and techniques, refined based on feedback from centers, programs and communities of practice

Project personnel

The project design called for a Project Leader (a senior staff member at CIAT), involvement of a project coordinator (to be contracted by CIAT), and involvement of several staff members at CIAT, TRG and Bellanet. Nathan Russell assumed the role of Project Leader, Doug Horton was contracted by CIAT to serve as Project Coordinator, and Simone Staiger (CIAT staff member) assumed the role of Project Associate. Horton also coordinates the “Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative” in the CGIAR (to be discussed later).

In order to reduce the proportion of the budget going to external consultants, and to reduce the continuing dependence on consultants, TRG was engaged to facilitate one workshop, but their involvement beyond this event was reduced considerably. Mark Faul from Bellanet was heavily involved at the beginning of the project, participating in the initial planning meeting and a joint KS and ILAC workshop at CIAT in June. Later, Allison Hewlitt took over his role as primary source of KS expertise from Bellanet. Personnel from CIAT’s Information Systems Unit (ISU) were expected to play prominent roles in the project. But as the project focused increasingly on improving communication for change, members of the Communications Program – primarily Simone Staiger and Nathan Russell – have played increasingly important roles. At the same time, the role of members of the Information Systems Unit has declined in importance.

Evolution of the project design

The individuals who developed the proposal from CIAT, Bellanet, TRG and ISNAR had never worked together and didn’t have the opportunity to meet face-to-face during the project development process. CIAT, which was ultimately responsible for

developing the proposal, had little expertise in KM. Due to these circumstances the resulting proposal had numerous weaknesses.

When the project got underway in mid-April, the project coordinator and representatives from Bellanet and TRG traveled to Colombia for an initial project-planning meeting with CIAT staff members. This group reviewed the project's design, in particular the *correspondence* of the objectives with perceived needs and opportunities in the CGIAR, the *coherence* of activities and expected outcomes with the project objectives, and the *feasibility* of the project, in relation to the time and resources available to achieve the objectives.

Based on a cursory review of experiences with KM strategy development and discussions with CGIAR managers, the planning group was concerned that comprehensive KM strategy development might not be the best way to introduce KS to CGIAR centers and programs. The group was also concerned that the project's overall approach was rather mechanistic and top-down. In essence, the proposal assumed the following:

- Externally led interventions (KM strategy development exercises, HR policy changes, training in KS techniques, exposure of top-level managers to external KM champions, and a supply of KS tools) would lead to cultural change that would promote broad collaboration, teamwork and KS throughout the CGIAR.
- Cultural and behavioral changes, in turn, would enhance the overall performance of the CGIAR.

The planning group questioned the validity of the first assumption. It felt that the desired cultural and behavioral changes could be achieved more effectively and sustainably through a more gradual, organic process of experimentation, capacity development, and learning-by-doing in the CGIAR. Such a process could benefit from external facilitation and support, but it should be “home-grown and evolutionary”¹ and not be driven by external experts.

Another of the group's concerns was the short duration of the project – 12 months – which would severely limit the nature and scope of activities that could be carried out and their expected impacts.

Finally, the group was concerned that an excessively large part of the budget was allocated to personnel costs (including consultancies) and that very few resources were available to support “hands-on” activities within CGIAR centers and programs.

As a result of their analysis, the planning group decided to suggest a number of changes in the project design to a broader stakeholder group that would meet at a “*Workshop on Knowledge Sharing, Institutional Learning and Change in the CGIAR,*” to be held in June. Some of the key suggestions were to:

- De-emphasize comprehensive KM strategy development in favor of support to short-term, practical KS activities
- Reallocate resources from externally organized training and KM strategy development to support for center- and program-based activities – “Pilot KS Activities”
- Link the activities of the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative

¹ This phrase was used by the Chair of the CGIAR at the 2003 Annual General meeting to describe the ideal process of change and reform in the CGIAR.

Participants at the June workshop largely concurred with these suggestions, and went further than the earlier planning group in suggesting modifications in the original project design. One area in which little progress was made was in the integration of activities of the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative.

Revised project design

This section presents a revised work-plan for the KS Project. Most of the proposed changes emerged from discussions that took place at the April 2004 planning meeting and the June 2004 workshop. A few additional changes have been introduced more recently, as a result of preparation of the KS Project M&E Plan and development of the Pilot Projects.

Revised objectives and activities

The original set of 3 objectives has been expanded to 4 (Table 2, at the end of this section) and (2) generating commitment to KS. In addition to these 4 objectives, we are contributing to professional development in KS by documenting experiences with the KS Project (in particular the Pilot Activities) and sharing the new knowledge gained on KS interventions with others in this professional area, both within the CGIAR and in the broader KM/KS community. We will also foster the development of a community of practice for KS in the CGIAR.

A number of new activities have also been added. Principal among these are the following:

- Development of 4 “Pilot KS Activities” – 3 in CGIAR centers and 1 in a Challenge Program
- Preparation of a print publication and multi-media products on the Pilots
- A study of HR policies in relation to KS and ILAC
- A training course on facilitation skills
- Sharing knowledge gained during the KS Project with others in this professional area, both within the CGIAR and outside
- Fostering of a Community of Practice for those engaged in KS in the CGIAR
- Preparation of a “*Guide to KS resources and expertise*” that includes information not only on KS methods but contact information on people with experience with each tool

Revised timeline

It is proposed to extend implementation period of the project to include all of 2005. This will allow:

- Successful completion of the 4 KS Pilot Activities
- Documentation and publication of the results of the Pilot Activities
- Organization of a workshop to draw lessons from the Pilots and to exchange experiences more broadly with professionals in the CGIAR
- Completion of a “*Guide to KS Resources and Expertise,*” that incorporates lessons and examples from the Pilots
- Holding a special session on KS at the Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR in Morocco in December 2005

The contract with CIAT for the KS Project Coordinator (Doug Horton) terminates in mid-April, but arrangements have been made for him to participate in key activities and events during the rest of the year.

Expected outcomes

There has been no major change in the project's expected outcomes, except that we now expect considerably more capacity for KS to be developed within the CGIAR, as a result of implementation of the Pilot Activities and the associated activities (drawing lessons and sharing experiences with others in the CGIAR).

Table 2. Revised objectives, activities and milestones: CGIAR KS Project

Objective / main activity	Milestone
Objective 1. Review experience with KS	
Workshop on KS and ILAC in the CGIAR	Workshop held in July 2004
Publication on experiences with KS and ILAC in the CGIAR, including not only past experiences but those gained during implementation of the KS project.	Publication issued jointly by KS and ILAC: October 2005
Objective 2. Generate commitment to introducing KS approaches and tools	
Center visits and presentations, particularly in support of Pilot Activities	
Publications on results of Pilot Activities	CIAT: March 2005 CIMMYT, CIFOR, Water & Food CP: October 2005
Special session on KS at AGM 2005	Session successfully held at AGM: Dec 2005
Review and synthesis workshop at end of project	Workshop held by Dec 2005 (at the AGM in Morocco)
Objective 3. Support development and implementation of KS strategies, Pilot Activities and supportive policies	
Study on HR policies in relation to KS and ILAC (carried out by KS and ILAC projects and SAS-HR)	Paper issued: March 2005
Objective 4. Facilitate access to KS tools and techniques	
Facilitation training course (joint activity with ILAC)	February 2005
Develop a " <i>Guide to KS Resources and Expertise</i> " to be posted on the KS website and printed	Advanced version available prior to September 2005
Workshop to draw lessons from the Pilot Activities and to share results with professionals in the CGIAR.	Workshop by September 2005, at CIFOR or IWMI

Project Implementation

Project activities began in mid-April 2004 when the project coordinator (Doug Horton) was contracted by CIAT. In April, an initial project-planning meeting was held at CIAT, involving the CIAT team (Nathan Russell, Simone Staiger, Doug Horton, Edith Hesse), and representatives from Bellanet (Mark Faul) and the Training

Resource Group (Jonathan Darling). During this event, the project proposal was reviewed and a number of issues were flagged for attention^v.

The second major event of the KS Project was the *Workshop on KS and ILAC in the CGIAR*, held at CIAT headquarters from June 22 – 25. The objectives of this workshop were to: share experiences with KS and ILAC in the CGIAR, to identify opportunities for improving KS and ILAC, and to build relationships and identify next steps for continuing the momentum begun during the workshop.

During the June workshop, participants critically reviewed their personal experiences with KS and ILAC. They discussed concepts and frameworks for KS and ILAC, and they developed proposals for KS “Pilot Projects” in their own organizations. Participants discussed similarities and differences between ILAC and KS as well as advantages and disadvantages of integrating the 2 initiatives. While there are many reasons for the 2 initiatives to work together, some thorny conceptual and institutional issues emerged that stymied the move toward integration. The resulting decision was that the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative would seek ways to work together and support some joint efforts, but each would retain its unique identity.

Following the workshop, the proposals were revised and submitted for review by the KS project team. In August, Mark Faul and Doug Horton carried out an initial review of the proposals. Their recommendations were discussed with David Balson (ICT-KM Projects Coordinator) and then were submitted to the full project team. As a result of this process, 4 pilots were selected for support, as discussed in the next section.

Since August, the main focus of the KS Project has been to initiate the Pilot Projects. The CIAT pilot has progressed most quickly, with a range of positive results. The CIMMYT Pilot has been delayed by organizational and personnel changes in the center; a work-planning meeting was held at CIMMYT in early December. The pilots at CIFOR and the Water & Food Challenge Program have also lagged due to delays in arranging for initial visits on the part of the Project Team but are now ongoing.

Progress in Relation to Objectives

This section reports on progress in relation to each of these objectives

Review of experience with KS

The review of experience with KS in the CGIAR was initiated via a desk review of activities and results of the CGIAR Organizational Change Program. Information on the development and implementation of KM strategies has been acquired from 3 centers. A joint Planning Workshop was organized by the KS Project and the ILAC Initiative in June. Here, information on experiences with KS and ILAC was obtained from 7 centers. The workshop also allowed participants to clarify concepts and approaches for KS and ILAC, and to plan future activities. Additional information on the status of KS continues to be collected during visits to centers, particularly those involved with KS Pilot Activities. A report on *Experiences with KS and ILAC in the CGIAR* is to be issued in 2005.

Generating commitment for KS

Initial efforts to gain commitment for KS began with the June Planning Workshop. A KS Website has been launched to serve as a platform for disseminating news and information on KS in the CGIAR (and also to provide access to KS information resources).

Development and implementation of KS strategies, pilot activities and policies

In the June Workshop, participants suggested a shift from an emphasis on development of comprehensive KM strategies for CGIAR Centers and Challenge Programs to providing guidelines for developing “practical,” “quick-and-dirty” or “back-of-the-envelope” KS strategies, and to planning and implementing strategic activities that would promote KS.

Current status of KS Pilot Projects

Stemming from the workshop, ten proposals for “KS Pilot Activities” were submitted by Centers and Challenge Programs for possible support. Of these, 3 proposals from Centers proposals and 1 from a Challenge Program were selected for support.

CIAT’s KS Week

From November 29 to December 4, CIAT held its first “Knowledge Sharing Week,” with the overall aim of improving communication, relationships between staff, and collaboration within the Center. The event had four specific objectives:

- Develop a shared understanding of the three Development Challenges (initiatives launched recently by CIAT as a means of integrating the work of its 15 projects) and contribute to their effective operationalization.
- Enhance the integration of headquarters and regional staff and activities.
- Promote effective work planning on the part of project teams and collaborators.
- Demonstrate the usefulness of KS techniques in CIAT’s annual meeting.

To achieve these objectives, management and groups of staff planned the week’s activities meticulously with technical support from the KS project team. Planning and implementation were handled by Simone Staiger-Rivas, Nathan Russell, Doug Horton, and several other CIAT staff under the oversight of CIAT’s research director, Douglas Pachico. Allison Hewlitt of the Bellanet International Secretariat in Canada provided facilitation for the event.

A number of KS approaches were used during the week, including an event Web site, an online meeting planner for self-organized meetings, an open space workshop, peer assists, a knowledge fair, a barometer team, and after-action reviews. At the end of the week, participants evaluated the event and provided suggestions for future annual meetings and for improving KS more broadly at CIAT.

Participants were generally quite positive about KS Week and felt the meeting had improved communication and relationships among staff, while demonstrating the value of KS. Participants felt that less progress was made in deciding how to operationalize the Development Challenges during the week due to the complexity of the task and because staff were insufficiently informed about these initiatives prior to the event.

It is difficult to assess the value of specific KS tools except in relation to the particular sessions in which they were used. Even so, most participants indicated that they had found the peer assist, knowledge fair, and open space approaches to be helpful and expressed interest in using them in the future. They expressed less interest in the on-line event planner and meeting Web site.

Key suggestions offered by participants for improving future annual meetings at CIAT include:

- Balance the new and the old formula (i.e., combine exchange of scientific information with KS techniques).
- Do a better job defining and identifying the topics, and provide more background information beforehand.
- Ensure that everybody attends.

Participants also felt that KS approaches should be incorporated into CIAT projects, with special attention given to involving nationally recruited staff more fully in KS activities.

KS for CIMMYT's Wheat Improvement Group

To implement its new strategy, CIMMYT is establishing a “soft matrix” that consists of impact-oriented programs and thematic groups responsible for ensuring research quality across programs. The KS project team is supporting the work of the largest thematic group –Wheat Improvement. In December Allison Hewlitt and Doug Horton traveled to CIMMYT to work with Richard Trethowan, Dave Hodson, and other CIMMYT staff in designing the initial meeting of the Wheat Improvement Group, to be held at Cd. Obregón in March 2005.

Knowledge sharing processes before, during, and after the group's first meeting are intended to:

1. Contribute to the formation of a well-integrated team of scientists who share knowledge and information and work toward common goals.
2. Better enable the group to draw on its collective wisdom in planning to solve some of the key scientific issues confronting wheat improvement.

Through this process the Wheat Improvement Group will take its first steps on the road to improved integration and knowledge flows within a diverse and geographically dispersed group of researchers having common interests. A second aim is to share lessons learned within CIMMYT and the CGIAR and thus promote the adoption of good practices among other nascent thematic groups, while avoiding common obstacles to effective knowledge sharing and performance improvement.

The following activities are planned:

- Hold an initial planning meeting in which external KS specialists and key Wheat Improvement Group members determine needs and approaches relevant for implementation at the group's first annual meeting.
- Implement virtual workspaces to allow group members to share information, ideas and resources.
- Integrate KS tools and techniques into the group's first annual meeting (to be held at Cd. Obregón in March 2005) as an aid to forming an effective, well-integrated team with improved knowledge flows between group members.
- Promote and provide training in the use of virtual workspaces to assist information sharing before and after the annual meeting.
- Document and share the experiences (positive and negative) of the thematic group, both within CIMMYT and the CGIAR.

Introducing KS Approaches into CIFOR's Center-wide Meeting

The KS pilot initiative at CIFOR has evolved from a focus on virtual teams to an

emphasis on introducing KS into CIFOR's annual research meeting. This shift resulted from a number of discussions, both online and face-to-face, between CIFOR's knowledge-sharing champion, Michael Hailu, and the KS project team as well as from senior management recognition of the value of integrating KS approaches in a center-wide meeting.

Discussions with a cross-section of staff were initiated during a visit to CIFOR by Nathan Russell and Allison Hewlitt in early January, which was undertaken for the following purposes:

- Learn about previous CIFOR meetings.
- Sound staff out on their expectations from the annual research meeting scheduled for September 2005.
- Generate interest in KS approaches among CIFOR researchers

The discussions pointed to the need to address a number of perceived challenges in designing a successful center-wide event, including:

- Building a sense of unity and team spirit.
- Getting scientists excited about the meeting.
- Ensuring wider participation of scientists and non-scientific staff.
- Creating a common vision for CIFOR, based on the belief that "the total is greater than the sum of the parts".
- Changing attitudes and narrowing gaps.

Integrating KS approaches into the center-wide meeting will not address all of those challenges, but it could contribute toward their resolution. The activities listed below have been planned for the next 6 months:

- Revise CIFOR's pilot proposal.
- Hold a meeting of CIFOR's Program Advisory Group (PAG) to:
 - Articulate meeting objectives and theme.
 - Name the event and create a slogan.
 - Identify members for and develop terms of reference for the design and implementation group.
 - Agree on a communication plan.
- Organize a conference call with the KS project team to share the outcomes of the PAG meeting and to define next steps, including a subsequent visit by the KS project team to CIFOR in May or June.
- Develop and implement an information dissemination plan to ensure that staff are kept well informed of the event and are provided with opportunities to make meaningful contributions to its design and implementation.

KS in research projects at IWMI and in the Water and Food Challenge Program

The KS Project will pay special attention to working with the Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF), now in its second year. The CPWF encompasses many global activities carried out through research projects featuring significant KS and institutional change components. Given the size and complexity of these projects, just gaining an overview of the KS-related activities and monitoring their progress is a major challenge.

The CPWF and IWMI are jointly developing the Knowledge Sharing in Research Pilot Project as a means to address this challenge and to improve the impact of agricultural research for development through KS approaches. The objective of the project is to promote a KS culture in research by:

- Creating opportunities and spaces for the exchange of ideas and challenges related to KS in research.
- Demonstrating the value of KS through hands-on experience.
- Nurturing the formation of a network of KS champions.
- Developing a framework to introduce a culture of KS across research projects within the CGIAR system.

The KS Project will provide support as a partner in the joint CPWF and IWMI Knowledge Sharing in Research Pilot Project, led by Sanjini de Silva. Our main role will be to strengthen the development and inception phase of the KS in Research Pilot Project by:

- Providing advice for strengthening the proposal, which should be finalized by mid-February
- Designing and facilitating the inception workshop, which is scheduled for early May

Documenting the process of sharing KS Project experiences with the KS in Research Pilot Project

The CIAT pilot has progressed most rapidly and is most fully developed. The main phase of what became known as “CIAT’s KS Week” was implemented in late November. The design of CIAT’s KS Week was highly participatory, and several KS tools were employed, including the following:

- An “Open Space” workshop design
- A “Knowledge Fair” for research support services
- Several “Peer Assists”
- An “On-Line Meeting Planner” for self-organized meetings
- A Website for the event

Implementation of CIMMYT’s KS Pilot Project was originally scheduled to take place in November. Work was delayed by the organizational and personnel changes that are occurring at the center. The project coordinator and Allison Hewlitt of Bellanet worked with managers and staff at the center in early December to develop a detailed work-plan for the pilot, which will be implemented in March 2005. Lessons from the CIAT pilot are proving useful for the work at CIMMYT.

Pilot activities at CIFOR and the Water and Food Challenge Program were originally scheduled to begin in October. However, arrangements were not finalized in time to begin the work in 2004. Recently the KS Project Team decided that it would be advisable for Allison Hewlitt, who had supported the CIMMYT and CIAT pilots, to also support the work in CIFOR and the Water & Food Challenge Program. This change in team composition was negotiated with Bellanet and the centers involved, and meetings to initiate these 2 pilots are scheduled for January 2005.

Documenting the KS Pilot Projects

The CIAT pilot is being professionally documented in both print and multi-media products. Each of these will contain a brief, engaging text on the transformation of a traditional CGIAR “meeting week” into a genuine “KS week.” The text will be

accompanied by numerous examples and quotations that illustrate key points. Guidelines for implementing the KS tools used during the KS Week will be contained in Annexes.

The plan is to document the other pilots similarly, so that others in the CGIAR may be motivated to follow their example. Realization of this plan, however, will require co-financing of the documentation process by the participating organizations.

HR policies to promote KS & ILAC

In addition to getting the pilot projects under way, the KM/S Project undertook several other activities as well, some of them in collaboration with the ILAC Initiative. For example, with the CGIAR's Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources, the two have jointly contracted a consultant to conduct a study of human resources policies as they relate to KS and ILAC in three CGIAR centers. The consultant is also examining such policies in selected organizations that are considered leaders in the areas of KS and ILAC. On the basis of these reviews, the consultant will identify changes the centers could make in their human resources policies and practices that would encourage more knowledge sharing, teamwork, innovation, organizational learning, and institutional change. A draft report is to be circulated in February and a final report published by mid-2005.

Facilitating access to KS tools

The original strategy was to facilitate access to KS tools by developing a "KS Toolkit" and a training course. However, the effective application of KS tools requires the acquisition of tacit knowledge that is not easily shared through toolkits. Hands-on experience with KS tools, under the supervision of an experienced practitioner, is a much more effective way to share knowledge about KS tools than providing access to tools via print publications or Web sites.

In line with this thinking, we are now providing CGIAR staff members with personal experience with KS tools in the pilot activities. Based on the experiences gained, those involved in the pilot activities will organize a training workshop on KS approaches and tools in mid-2005. A "Guide to KS Tools and Expertise" will also be developed, to help practitioners find useful information resources on KS approaches and tools. It will also provide contact details for professionals who have experience and expertise with different KS tools, so that interested parties may contact them for advice or to involve them more directly in their work.

Results and lessons to date

Evaluation of CIAT KS Week

As mentioned earlier in this report, in 2004, with support from the CGIAR KS Project, CIAT introduced a number of KS approaches into its annual meeting, in order to improve communication, relationships, and collaboration within the center.

The objectives of the Knowledge Sharing Week were to:

- Develop a shared understanding and contribute to the operationalization of the center's 3 "Development Challenges" (DCs)
- Enhance integration of headquarters and regional staff and activities
- Promote effective work planning

- Demonstrate the value of KS techniques. This brief report presents summary results of a participant evaluation.

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:

- Balance the new and the old formula (i.e., combine exchange of scientific information with KS techniques)
- Define and identify better the topics, and give more background information beforehand
- Assure that everyone attends all the sessions throughout the week

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.

Aside from the now-completed CIAT Pilot Project, the main results of the KS Project as of the end of 2004 have been the following:

- Bringing together professionals engaged in activities that support KS and ILAC in the CGIAR, to exchange experiences and identify high-priority areas for future work
- Successful planning of the inaugural meeting of CIMMYT's new Wheat Improvement Group, employing a number of KS methods
- Development of an approach for designing, implementing and documenting results of KS initiatives, that will be used in the other pilot activities supported by the KS Project, in CIFOR and the Water & Food Challenge Program.

Two important lessons that the project team has learned through its experience with the KS project:

- Direct face-to-face interactions are critically important to design successful KS interventions and to facilitate their implementation.
- Experimenting with KS approaches in high-priority activities that involve large numbers of managers and staff members (for example in annual planning and review meetings) may be a more effective way for organizations to develop capacity for KS than short courses, reform of HR policies or development of comprehensive KM strategies.

ⁱ **Fostering a Learning-Oriented Knowledge Management and Sharing Culture in the CGIAR; A Project Proposal Submitted to the CGIAR's ICT-KM Program**; prepared by Daniel Shaul (TRG), Nathan Russell (CIAT), and Doug Horton (ISNAR), with key contributions from Edith Hesse (CIAT), Jacqueline Ashby (CIAT), Ajit Maru (ISNAR), Jamie Watts (IPGRI), and Masaru Iwanaga (CIMMYT).

http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/cgiar/pdf/cg_km_project_proposal.pdf

ⁱⁱ **Knowledge Sharing, Institutional Learning and Change in the CGIAR:** Report on a Workshop organized by the CGIAR Knowledge Sharing Project and the Institutional Learning and Change Initiative; CIAT, Cali, Colombia, 22-25 June 2004 http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/cgiar/knowledge_sharing/workshop_new.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ **Knowledge Sharing in the CGIAR: “Help energetic communities thrive” Web site:**
http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/cgiar/knowledge_sharing/home.htm

^{iv} **CIAT’s Knowledge Sharing week: Results of a Participant Evaluation**
http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/ks_week/pdf/ks_week_evaluation_report_final.pdf

^v **Knowledge Sharing in the CGIAR: “Help energetic communities thrive”;** Record of a planning meeting for the CGIAR Knowledge Sharing Project, CIAT, Cali, Colombia, April 21-23, 2004
http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/cgiar/pdf/prog_report_feb05_annex2.pdf