

# International agricultural research and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the era of the SDGs: New practice agenda, new science agenda

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## Dorai, Hall and Dijkman (2015) **Strategic Study of Good practice in AR4D**

**partnership**; Rome, Italy. CGIAR Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC), viii + 39pp +

annex 49pp



# Context 1: the CGIAR

- CGIAR: 15 international agricultural research centers established 40 + years ago
  - One of the largest public investments in international research for development. Annual budget US\$ 1 billion, although shrinking.
  - Established to address isolatable technical problem relating to yield, productivity and policy, but increasingly facing the challenge to tackling / contributing to highly diverse and increasingly complex challenges of agricultural systems and development more generally.
  - Decades long search for ways of linking agricultural research to innovation and impact.
  - Agricultural research is a key ingredient to agriculture led growth and poverty reduction, but how can this be best organized and mobilized?
  - Receiving increasing attention as ability to deliver impact comes under intensifying scrutiny in an era of tightening budgets.
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# Context 2: the SDG's



- Broadly framed development goals.
  - Poverty - [End poverty in all its forms everywhere](#)
  - Food - [End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture](#)
  - Ecosystems - *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial [ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss](#)*
  - Sustainability - *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for [sustainable development](#)*
- Complex, multi-dimensional, multi-scale, cutting across sectors, missions and conventional intervention instruments.
- Technological solutions have a key role to play, but as part of wider efforts to catalyze innovation and and systemic change processes where partnerships will be a key element.
- The CGIAR has linked its systems level outcome to the SDG's: Signals the need to embed work within the wider architecture of partnership required to tackle the global scale challenges articulated in the SDGs
- What does this mean for research practice and strategy in the CGIAR, particularly in relation to engagement and participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs)?

# A lens to explore modes of innovation and partnership



	Discrete technical challenges	Discrete agricultural impact challenges	Complex agricultural impact challenges	Complex global impact challenges
Partnership mode	<b>Mode 1</b> Research consortia	<b>Mode 2</b> Partnerships, platforms and alliances with the private sector, NGOs and farmers groups create value for farmers and companies	<b>Mode 3</b> Inter-linked farm-to-policy multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships action changes in food systems that create social and economic value	<b>Mode 4</b> Global architectures of MSP platforms create coherence between global and local agendas and implementation strategies and action that brings about systems adaptation

# MSPs practice in AR4D

- Framed by concerns about making more effective use of agricultural research in impact processes.
- Informed by historical views on how impact takes place: solving isolatable technical problems and transferring results, farmer empowerment and more latterly with innovation systems perspectives and the use of innovation platforms;



# Partnership architectures – AR4D

- Establishing community level innovation platforms;
- Disconnected from platforms and other groups at higher scales;
- Impacts are at local scales and often restricted to project cycle funding;
- Emphasis where impact needs to happen and this is a key operational interface;
- However without any link to higher-level groupings: Little scope for tackling overarching policy and institutional constraints or aligning with longer-term (and wider-scale) development goals and plans.

# Global MSPs for Development practice

- Framed by concerns about the need for collective action to tackle complex global development challenges;
  - Practice is informed by a tradition of action rather than research. Many of the global MSPs are virtual organizations of relatively recent origin – variety of leads;
  - Conceived as interventions with systemic change impact pathways or have evolved into this position through trial and error;
  - Seen as key intervention strategies to progress the SDGs. (hyper collective action)
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# Partnerships and platform architectures – Global MSP's

- Locally-embedded platforms that focus on immediate local issues (including local policy dynamics), linked to a global platform that share information between different regions. Often with backbone structure EG GAIN, Roll Back Malaria. New Vision for Agriculture
  - Support for immediate development issues combined with longer-term agenda setting for global priorities. The subsidiarity principle avoids crowding out of capacity development of local and intermediary scale actors by international agencies.
  - MSPs are less like a multi-scale bureaucracy and more like a club or community of practice. Governance structure with a strong focus on alignment of autonomous activities, avoids agenda capture by vested interests.
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# Similarities and Differences

- The lack of a robust and widely agreed upon framework for judging effectiveness is a challenge for developing an evidence base of effectiveness of MSP generally
  - AR4D framing practice accounts are largely concerned with individual innovation platforms and the “nuts and bolts” of facilitating and organising these individual platforms;
  - Aspiration to engage in systemic change impact processes but much of current MSP practice resembles mode 2 partnerships (mobilising technology to create value for farmers and companies);
  - Restricts the scale of impact of these approaches.
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# Similarities and Differences (continued)

- Global MSP practice emphasis is placed on what is needed to mobilise collective action across multiple scales to address broadly conceived development challenges;
  - More closely resembles mode 4
  - Clear vision of addressing challenges through systemic change;
  - Unlike the AR4D practice, vision is not contested, no history to compete with on how impact and scale can be achieved.
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# Towards MSP Good Practice in AR4D

Three issues stand out that have relevance for the CGIAR and the AR4D community:

1. Strengthening and connecting to MSP platform architectures;
  2. Clarify roles within emerging architectures based on the principles of comparative advantage and subsidiarity are key;
  3. Strengthen learning, strengthened capacity building: Engaging with complexity means engaging with uncertainty. Development of appropriate (and widely accepted) evaluative and analytical frameworks to help assess partnership performance is key.
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# Broad implications for the CGIAR

- Operating through either local or global MSP platforms is insufficient for systemic change and impact at scale;
  - Key element of global good practice is the creation of (or at least participation in) nested platforms/ architectures that link local and global agendas and scales and that both address defined problems locally but also address systemic change at appropriate scales;
  - Partnering with broader developmentally framed architectures of MSPs of the sort implied by the SDGs would have to emerge as a core practice.
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Scale of impact	Dependent on linkages to other delivery, innovation and societal change processes	Quick wins, but restricted to scale of project, mission or commercial opportunity	Long term, but enduring impacts at value chain or national scales	Long term enduring impacts at global scale
Science agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Science discovery</li> <li>- Building scientific capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning technology delivery practice.</li> <li>- Trouble shooting application challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning innovation practice.</li> <li>- Identifying new research priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicating existing knowledge and evidence.</li> <li>- Reframing science enquiries and practice</li> </ul>
Role of the CGIAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading science discovery research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading technology delivery practice research</li> <li>- Leading technical capacity building</li> <li>- Convening and brokering delivery partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leading innovation practice research</li> <li>- Research service provider and or trusted advisor</li> <li>- Catalyst in innovation capacity development</li> <li>- Convener of community of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trusted advisor</li> <li>- Service provider.</li> <li>- Agriculture domain expert and stakeholder</li> </ul>

# New practice agenda for the CGIAR

- **A renewed but reframed partnership agenda:**
    - Good practice in the new reality of systemic change means that partnership activity needs to be framed within wider change process (mode 4 like);
    - **Support, rather than lead.** Need to support links between MSPs at different scales: identifying existing architectures or backbone structures and constructively contribute to these..
  
  - **The CGIAR will need to play different roles at different levels in global MSPs**
    - Increasingly playing a service provider and trusted advisor role;
    - Does not negate need for MSPs to test and develop foundational science and practice
      - if effectively linked to Global MSPs, mode 1, 2 and 3 become a critical element in knowledge application and systemic change agendas.
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# New science agenda for the CGIAR

- **Establishing the scientific basis to link MSP practice with impact:**
    - Stronger theoretical case for an impact pathway premised on the more effective interplay between patterns of partnership, institutions and policy;
    - Need a framework to better understand this and an evidence base of what works and how;
    - The CGIAR has a core knowledge role (IPGs) in helping answer this question. Contribution to impact should be grounded not only on understanding how this process works, but also on developing and adopting practices that enable it to do so;
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# Thank you

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