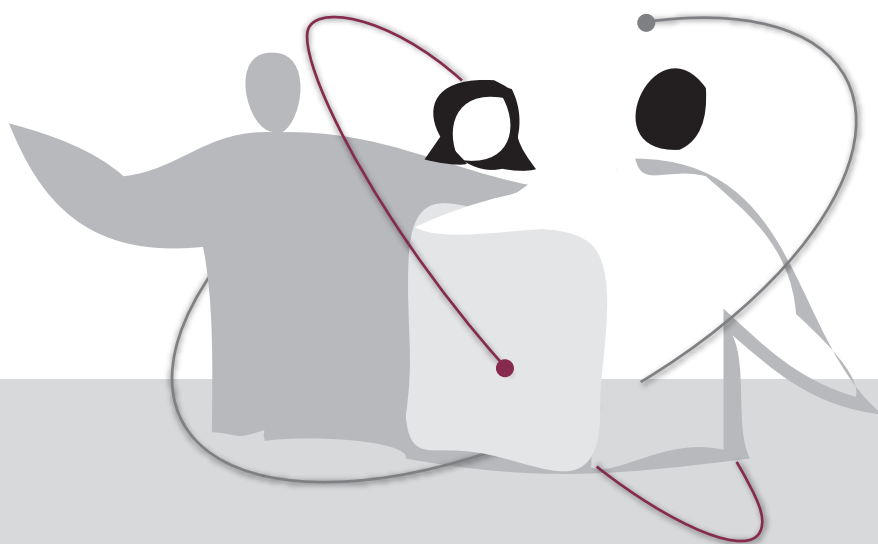


ILRI

## ILRI'S PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



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This guide was developed by an ILRI task force on partnerships instituted by the Directorate of Partnerships and Communication and guided by Jürgen Hagmann from PICOTEAM Ltd (external consultant/facilitator). It forms part of a Centre-Commissioned External Review. The main contributors at ILRI were: Tom Randolph, Bruce Scott, Nick Hooton, Brigitte Laude, Joep van Binsbergen, Azage Tegegne, Danny Romney, Richard Fulss, Rose Ndegwa, Ponniah Anandajayasekeram, Veryl Adell, Gertrude Buyu, Asfaw Negassa and Veronica Waiyaki.

# Table of Contents

Acronyms	v
Executive summary	vi
1 Why this partnership strategy and management system	1
1.1 The context of the partnership strategy	1
1.2 The process of developing a partnership strategy and management system	2
2 ILRI's partnership strategy	3
2.1 ILRI's partnership principles	3
2.2 Objectives of ILRI's partnerships	3
2.3 A framework of nested partnerships	4
2.4 Partnership categories	5
2.5 Requirements for proactive partnership management	6
3. ILRI's partnership management system	8
3.1 Institutional partnerships	8
3.2 Strategic partnerships (OP and Theme level)	11
3.3 Project-based partnerships	12
3.4 Coordinating partner relationships across levels	20
3.5 Nurturing ILRI's partnership management capacity	22
4 Systems to support Partnership Management	24
4.1 ILRI legal status and contractual arrangements	24
4.2 Supporting partnerships within ILRI's research management system	24
4.3 Implications of partnership work on the ILRI Human Resource Management System	26
4.4 Guidelines for the sound management of the financial aspect of partnerships	33
4.5 Knowledge management and learning to improve partnerships	39
5 How to nurture the use of the guide	42
6 Key resources and references	43
7 Annexes	44
7.1 Key partnership management tools and approaches	44

7.2 Partnership management—expectations for ILRI staff: Guidelines for HR	48
7.3 Sections in current ILRI performance evaluation form relevant to partnership management	54
7.4 ILRI partner profile (template)	55
7.5 Partner update survey for MTP	57
7.6 Checklist for assessing organizational financial and administrative capacity	57
7.7 Sample wording of advertisements for positions with strong partnership emphasis	59
7.8 Sample of a Collaborative Research Agreement	59

# Acronyms

APM	Annual Programme Meeting
ARIs	Advanced research institutes
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
AU/IBAR	African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources
B&G	Budget & Grants Unit
CaSt	Capacity strengthening
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
COMESA	Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa
COP	Community of practice
CRA	Collaborative Research Agreement
DDG	Deputy Director General
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
HR	Human Resource
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IP	Intellectual property
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
LoA	Letter of agreement
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoLFD	Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
OP	Operating Project
SDP	Smallholder Dairy Project
STI	Swiss Tropical Institute
TIGR	The Institute for Genomic Research
TQM	Total quality management

# Executive summary

## Background and process

In 2003, ILRI published the new centre strategy for its research and development activities. This strategy moved away from the conventional view of research, as a rather linear and often isolated process, to the pursuit of impact as a driving force for research with the perspective of innovation systems as a framework. The strategy recognizes the complexity of innovation as a socio-technical process where both knowledge networks and networks of influence are central to success in a continuous transformation process. A new way of doing science is the consequence of this commitment to impact-driven engagement in research for development.

Partnerships among multiple actors are at the centre of such an approach to science and ILRI's strategy highlights working through partnerships. The goal of ILRI's strategy emphasizes the integration of science, capacity building and partnerships as a vehicle for impact.

After three years of implementation of the new strategy, ILRI Management recognized the need for an in-depth analysis of the state of its partnerships and initiated a Centre Commissioned External Review. An initial short study revealed that, whilst considerable progress had been made, the management of partnerships needed to move from a rather ad hoc approach to one that was more proactive and systematic.

The Management decided to pursue the development of a more coherent partnership strategy and management system which aims at institutionalization and operationalization of effective partnership management in the organizational structures, systems and processes. ILRI anticipated that by the end of this development and institutionalization process, ILRI would have a much clearer understanding of its partnerships and would be in a position to improve their quality in partnership management at all levels, thereby increasing its efficiency and effectiveness.

The approach chosen to develop the partnership strategy focused on the commitment and ownership of ILRI staff. An internal task force was formed, guided by an external process consultant. The process included the analysis and conceptualization of experiences and perspectives of stakeholders (a survey was carried out), lesson learning from successful and failed examples and exploring approaches practised elsewhere. Institutionally, the administrative systems were analysed in regard to their role in supporting partnership management and where necessary the systems were adapted. The product coming out of this analytical process by the task force is this guide to ILRI's partnerships: a dynamic working document which will be regularly revisited and complemented as ILRI further professionalizes its partnership management with new instruments and mechanisms in a learning mode.

### Some highlights

- The partnership survey indicated that ILRI is highly appreciated as a partner for its expertise and scientific quality. However, in the clarification of roles and responsibilities and the involvement of partners from the start, ILRI's partnership management was not seen as strong. Overall it revealed that the handling of the 'soft' issues related to communication and facilitating relationships needs improvement.
- The task force was able to analyse and synthesize partnership work at different levels and develop concrete ways to improve partnerships and partnership management.
- The process of the task force in itself was an innovation: instead of an expert consultant, ILRI staff analysed the issues and identified the requirements for change and then institutionalized changes through negotiating with the respective units. It was a process of development and simultaneous institutionalization of improved partnership management modalities.

- In seeking to institutionalize changes, the task force adopted the principle of building on existing systems and strengths to enhance uptake, and avoided proposing overly ambitious new systems that would stress already stretched resources and risk not being implemented successfully or sustainably.
- The task force developed an innovative framework to categorize partnership management, rather than partners per se: categorizing partners is the conventional way of looking at partnerships. This framework allowed the task force to distinguish clearly different ways of managing partnerships at the different levels and to develop appropriate instruments.
- The outcome of the work has a high potential to professionalize ILRI's new way of doing research through partnerships, thereby increasing its overall quality, effectiveness and efficiency.
- This partnership strategy and management system has filled a gap in ILRI's overall strategy and provides a methodology and approach towards its operationalization.

## Summary of contents

The partnership strategy consists of:

- a. the basic philosophy, principles and perspective of innovation systems
- b. a framework to categorize different forms of partnership management
- c. related instruments, processes and administrative systems
- d. the capacities to manage partnerships proactively.

In terms of philosophy and principles, ILRI commits itself to trust and respect and aims at mutual benefits and equitable relationships with partners. Partnerships are driven by a joint mission to address poverty.

In terms of the framework to categorize partnership management, ILRI operates at three main levels. At the most basic level in project-based partnerships, ILRI works with another organization to implement a specific piece of research, usually within the context of a donor-funded project. The roles and responsibilities of each partner are defined by individual researchers in the two organizations and usually outlined in the project proposal submitted to the donor. If these responsibilities involve administrative and financial requirements, the arrangement may be formalized in a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA). The partnership is time-bound, limited to the duration of the project.

At the level of the Operating Project (OP) and Theme, ILRI research managers establish longer-term strategic relationships with partners who have complementary capacity and who share similar interests in their specific research area. Their role in contributing to the OP or Theme research objectives is described in the OP or Theme Implementation Plan, with the arrangement usually recognized by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The expectation for the partnership is that it will generate proposals for specific donor-funded joint activities within the framework of an agreed research agenda and, perhaps, sharing of personnel.

Finally, ILRI enters into institutional partnerships consistent with its broader role as a research broker for poverty reduction in the developing world. Such partnerships are established and managed by ILRI's Management Committee. Partners include research coordinating bodies such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), regional and international organizations and authorities such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), and international development agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Other CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centres also fall into this category. These partnerships are not motivated by mutual interest in a specific area of research but rather by ILRI's overall mandate. They may be formalized, if appropriate, by a MoU and their purpose articulated in ILRI planning documents, such as its Strategy and Medium Term Plan.

For each of the categories this guide elaborates the functions, approach, instruments and processes needed to achieve successful, mutually beneficial partnerships.

In terms of the administrative systems to support partnerships, great emphasis was put on the alignment of the performance management system with incentives for researchers to invest their time and efforts to make partnerships work better. Emphasis was also put on sound financial systems which clearly define expectations and requirements and monitor compliance.

In terms of improving ILRI's capacity to manage partnerships proactively, a range of mechanisms were identified to nurture knowledge management and learning and enhance core competencies of staff, including increased emphasis on partnership management skills when recruiting new staff members.

All the thrusts for improvement of partnership management have been integrally linked to the existing administrative system at ILRI.

# 1 Why this partnership strategy and management system

## 1.1 The context of the partnership strategy

In 2003, ILRI published the new centre strategy for its research and development activities. This strategy moved away from the conventional view of research as a rather linear and often isolated process, to the pursuit of impact as a driving force for research with the perspective of innovation systems as a framework. It recognizes the complexity of innovation as a socio-technical process where both knowledge networks and networks of influence are central to success in a continuous transformation process. A new way of doing science is the consequence of this commitment to impact-driven engagement in research for development.

Partnerships among multiple actors are at the centre of such an approach to science and ILRI's strategy highlights working through partnerships. The goal of ILRI's strategy emphasizes the integration of science, capacity building and partnerships as a vehicle for impact:

*'By positioning itself at the crossroads of livestock and poverty, and by bringing to bear high quality science and capacity building, ILRI and its partners will reduce poverty and make sustainable development possible for the poor livestock keepers, their families and the communities in which they live.'*

The conceptual base on which ILRI's strategy is built are three major 'pathways out of poverty', defined as:

- a. securing the current and future assets of the poor
- b. sustainably improving the productivity of agricultural systems of the poor, and
- c. encouraging participation of the poor in livestock related markets.

Research Themes are developed from the different pathways. This concept by itself gives a high importance to partnerships along the pathways as research can only play a limited role in the many stages of the pathways and strongly depends on effective partnerships to fulfil its mission.

Partnerships are also highlighted in ILRI's operational principles, which are:

- a. ILRI is one of the actors in the effort to reduce poverty. It therefore needs to focus on contributions in which it can play a valuable role and in which through *effective partnerships* it can have significant impact.
- b. Given the need to respond to new developments in science, *new partnerships* and funding opportunities, ILRI will work with *appropriate partners* to demonstrate real and lasting impact at all levels—household, institutional and policy.
- c. Through strengthening the capacity of *ILRI and its partners* to contribute to the identified Research Themes.
- d. Through adopting a facilitative, catalytic and brokering role that empowers, equips and encourages *a wide range of diverse partners* to work together.
- e. Through recognizing that the agenda is large and therefore it must *work with many and diverse partners* to accomplish its goal.

ILRI works in partnerships and alliances with other organizations, national and international, in the fields of livestock research, training and information exchange. For ILRI to accomplish its goal, partners and appropriate partnerships play a critical role. This should serve as a basis not only for delivering current outputs, but also as a launching pad and hunting ground for future partners through capacity strengthening. ILRI also recognizes that there is a multiplier effect on partnerships: existing partners can be a gateway to new and additional partners.

## 1.2 The process of developing a partnership strategy and management system

After three years of implementation of the new strategy, ILRI Management recognized the need for an in-depth analysis of the state of its partnerships and initiated a Centre Commissioned External Review. An initial short study revealed that, whilst considerable progress had been made, the management of partnerships needed to move from a rather ad hoc approach to one that was more proactive and systematic.

ILRI decided to pursue the development of a partnership strategy and management system **which aims at institutionalization and operationalization of effective partnership management in the organizational structures, systems and processes**. The specific objectives of this process were:

- to develop a partnership strategy responding to the institute's strategic thrust for partnerships
- to identify ways to improve the operationalization and management of partnerships in ILRI at all different levels—from one-off collaborative project activities to the high-level strategic partnerships
- to identify ways of aligning institutional structures and systems to support partnerships and integrate these in management and administrative structures, systems and processes.

It was anticipated that by the end of this development and institutionalization process, ILRI would have a much clearer understanding of its partnerships and would be in a position to improve its quality in partnership management at all levels, thereby increasing its efficiency and effectiveness.

The approach chosen for the development of the partnership strategy focused on the commitment and ownership of ILRI staff. An internal task force was formed, guided by an external process consultant. The process included the analysis and conceptualization of experiences and perspectives of stakeholders, lesson learning from successful and failed examples and exploring approaches practised elsewhere. Institutionally, the administrative systems were analysed in regard to their role in supporting partnership management; emphasis was placed on identifying how existing good practices and systems could be strengthened, rather than proposing the introduction of ambitious new systems whose investment and maintenance requirements might discourage uptake; however, where necessary new elements were designed. The main steps in the review process were:

1. A workshop to design the review and strategy development process with the task force.
2. Implementation of the analytical activities by the task force.
3. A synthesis workshop.
4. Processing further and documentation of the products.

This strategy and management system for effective partnerships in ILRI is not a static document. Rather it will be a dynamic working document which will be regularly revisited and complemented as ILRI further professionalizes its partnership management with new instruments and mechanisms in a learning mode.

## 2 ILRI's partnership strategy

In its fight against poverty ILRI deals with many different types of partners. The management of the resulting partnerships also varies according to the type and level of interaction and is inevitably complex and dynamic in nature. Appropriate skills, processes and tools are required to manage these partnerships effectively at different levels.

The notion of 'partnerships' in itself is very diverse and allows for many interpretations. To facilitate a common understanding of the role of partnerships and their management in ILRI it is useful to define an appropriate lexicon and framework. For our purposes, a partnership is:

*a recognized relationship between ILRI and another institution to undertake activities jointly that contribute to each institution's mandate.*

The focus here is on the partnership—the nature of the relationship—rather than the partner: each partnership is associated with a partner organization but each partner may have one or more different types of partnerships operating with ILRI at any given time.

The partnership strategy consists of a) the basic philosophy and perspective of innovation systems; b) a framework to categorize different forms of partnership management; c) related instruments, processes and administrative systems; and d) the capacities to manage partnerships proactively.

### 2.1 ILRI's partnership principles

It is critical to establish a common vision and understanding of ILRI's partnership mandate and orientation as these define the criteria by which we evaluate our partnership behaviour. All partnerships need to be consistent with the vision, mandate and orientation of ILRI. We can summarize these values as principles, which are:

- ILRI commits itself to engage with **partners in an inclusive, transparent and trustworthy manner where credits are shared with integrity** and obligations are implemented in a mutually accountable way while being fully committed to the impacts and strategic goals.
- Partnership and collaboration, however, are considered a means to an end and ILRI must carefully consider the **quality of partnerships and weigh the trade-offs** in terms of transaction costs vs. outcomes and impacts.
- ILRI enters into a partnership with another institution if and only if both ILRI and the potential partner can identify and articulate clearly their expected **mutual benefits**. [A partnership in which only one partner derives benefits is unhealthy and likely to fail.]
- **Transparency** promotes healthy partnerships. Making sure that roles and expectations are discussed and agreed, and then clearly stated and documented, avoids misunderstandings later.
- **ILRI will support effective management of partnerships at all levels**, through valuing and helping to develop the skills of ILRI staff in managing partnerships and defining and recognizing good performance, and by allocating the time and resources needed for effective partnership management.
- ILRI is committed to **the supremacy of performance over politics, seniority and hierarchy in partnerships**. It will operate in the least bureaucratic and hierarchic way possible to ensure efficient, effective, accountable services and provide space for innovative and entrepreneurial high-performing staff while maintaining inclusiveness and equal opportunity.

### 2.2 Objectives of ILRI's partnerships

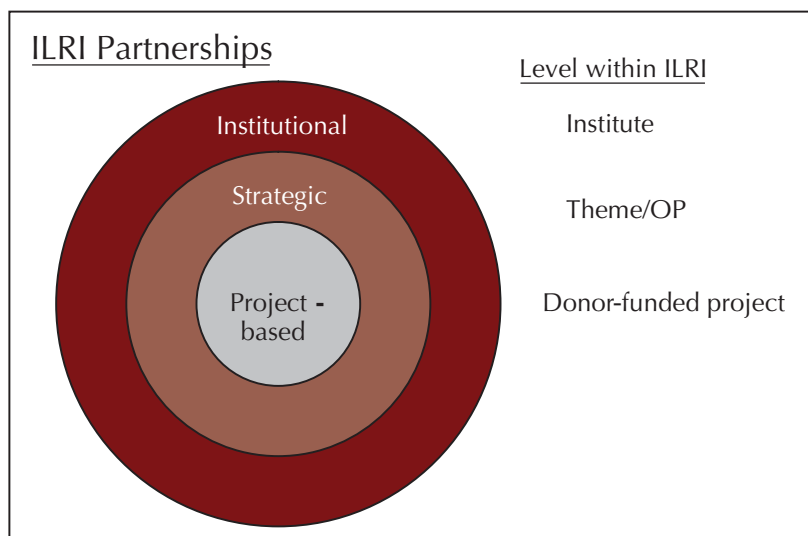
Partnerships vary depending on their purpose. The archetypal research partnership is one that matches two researchers with complementary skills and a common interest to undertake a specific research activity. However, ILRI engages in partnerships for a range of other reasons, including:

- to enhance impact on livelihoods
- to create access to decision-making processes and to influence policy
- to develop capacity for livestock research and development
- to expand expertise and leverage capacity in research areas where the institute does not currently have a comparative advantage
- to mobilize resources.

In accordance with the adoption of an impact oriented, innovation system approach, ILRI's responsibilities now extend beyond simply generating research products: it also needs to translate them into outcomes and enhance their eventual impact. ILRI researchers therefore increasingly find themselves working closely with non-traditional research partners, such as local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector organizations, which necessitate different types of partnership principles and arrangements. These different types of partnerships need to be categorized and differentiated to manage them appropriately.

## 2.3 A framework of nested partnerships

At ILRI, partnerships operate at three main levels depending on their scope, as illustrated in Figure 1. At the most basic level in project-based partnerships, ILRI works with another organization to implement a specific piece of research, usually within the context of a donor-funded project. The roles and responsibilities of each partner are defined by individual researchers in the two organizations and usually outlined in the project proposal submitted to the donor. If these responsibilities involve administrative and financial requirements, the arrangement may be formalized in a Collaborative Research Agreement (CRA). The partnership is time-bound, limited to the duration of the project.



**Figure 1.** A framework of nested partnerships.

At the level of the Operating Project (OP) and Theme, ILRI research managers establish longer-term strategic relationships with partners having complementary capacity and who share similar interests in their specific research area. Considerable investment must be made in developing and cultivating such partnerships: an OP or Theme would be expected to have only a few such core partners. Their role in contributing to the OP or Theme research objectives is described in the OP or Theme Implementation Plan, with the arrangement usually recognized by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The expectation for the partnership is that it will generate proposals for specific donor-funded joint activities within the framework of an agreed research agenda and, perhaps, sharing of personnel.

Finally, ILRI enters into institutional partnerships consistent with ILRI's broader role as a research broker for poverty reduction in the developing world. Such partnerships are established and managed by ILRI's Management Committee. Partners include research coordinating bodies such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), regional and international organizations and authorities such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR), and international development agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Other Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centres would also fall into this category. These partnerships are not motivated by mutual interest in a specific area of research but rather by ILRI's overall mandate. They may be formalized, if appropriate, by a MoU and their purpose articulated in ILRI planning documents, such as its Strategy and Medium Term Plan (MTP).

In Figure 1, these different levels of partnership are nested to recognize that project-based partnerships are established within the context of existing strategic partnerships, and these in turn may need to take into account ILRI's political relationships and overall partnership strategy. This dimension of nesting may also be evident when taking the case of an individual partner institution which may be operating in partnership with ILRI at multiple levels and with different individuals. FAO, for example, is one of ILRI's key institutional partners, but specific FAO programmes are closely aligned with certain of ILRI's research areas (e.g. the Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Initiative with ILRI's Targeting Theme), while individual FAO staff members may be conducting joint ad hoc activities with ILRI scientists in other research areas. Examples of each type of partnerships will be provided in the text below.

The framework in Figure 1 is useful in the beginning to understand the fundamental nature of different types of ILRI partnerships, how they might be grouped, who should be responsible for their management and how their management strategies might vary. However, this simple framework masks a highly complex and dynamic variation among partnerships.

## 2.4 Partnership categories

A second aspect that colours ILRI partnerships and influences how they are managed is the role played by each partner. One way to characterize these roles is along the continuum depicted in Figure 2. At the one end ILRI is in charge, acting as the contractor with the other partner paid to contribute a component of the research. The other side of that relationship, the service provider role, is the opposite end of the continuum. In between is a range of nuanced relationships where the partners have varying degrees of equal footing and control over the research.

An additional dimension to consider within each of these groups is the degree to which ILRI or the partner is responsible for implementing a research activity, ranging from a limited facilitation or coordination role or implementing a relatively minor portion of the activities, to having primary responsibility for carrying out the majority of the work. The further the relationship is toward one of the ends of the continuum, the easier it is to define the terms of reference through contractual arrangements. Establishing contracts for partnerships falling in the middle ground is more problematic and difficult to enforce; these partnerships often depend on the inherent strength of the relationship to be successful. They are the most important partnerships and the most difficult ones to manage successfully.

The evaluation of the roles of partners along the line of the continuum can be seen as a way to assess if there is a sound balance in the partnership modes. Periodic reviews will provide an indicator of the balance. A highly unbalanced situation, where ILRI is predominantly a 'contractor' who outsources most of its research, might result in the loss of know how and capacity to carry out research. The intention is to keep a critical mass of capacity to generate knowledge in-house and proactively manage a sound balance.

	CONTRACTOR	EQUAL PARTNER	SERVICE PROVIDER
Involvement of partners in:	ILRI in charge —full responsibility for outputs, contracts with partners	Mutual contribution to a shared goal	ILRI contributes to ongoing processes led by others
Design, planning & priority setting			
Project management & coordination			
Budget control			
Decision making			
Cost sharing			
Benefit sharing			
Ownership of process			
Accountability to ILRI			
....			

Source: Adapted from Hagmann (2005).]

**Figure 2.** Continuum of partnership roles.

## 2.5 Requirements for proactive partnership management

Personalities and interactions between individuals are key factors in building and maintaining successful partnerships. Interactions will be more effective if they are aligned with and supported by institutional strategies and management capacities. The three nested levels of partnerships (Figure 1) provide a pragmatic framework for developing relevant mechanisms and creating an institutional culture of conscious and proactive partnership management. Key elements include formulating partnership strategies, developing management practices and tools and recognizing responsibilities for partnership management, including evaluation and learning.

- **Institute level:** In addition to broad references to the role of partnerships in the ILRI Strategy document and details listed in the MTP, ILRI Management needs to review continuously ILRI’s longer-term partnership needs at institute level and how they will be addressed. ILRI Management assigns responsibility to Relationship Managers for monitoring partnerships with individual partners. Having a system to ensure that Relationship Managers have access to and can share information across the three nested levels about all relevant plans and activities concerning each partner will be critical.
- **Theme and OP-level strategic partnerships:** A specific section in the OP Implementation Plans requires OP Leaders and Theme Directors to articulate their partnership needs over the next 5 to 10 years and to identify the partners they anticipate will be their strongest ‘core’ collaborators in moving forward their planned research agenda. The Management Committee, Theme Directors and OP Leaders will be responsible for monitoring implementation of this strategy, which should be reflected in the MTP and in MoUs.
- **Project-based partnerships:** Partnerships established to undertake specific project activities are described in project proposals and associated CRAs and are monitored within the normal donor project evaluation and reporting cycle by the ILRI scientist involved (who we will refer to as the Partnership Manager).

**At the core of improving the quality in partnership management are staff competencies.** Creating the appropriate institutional culture also requires recognizing partnership management as a core competence

required for ILRI staff. The following key competencies and behaviours are desired qualities in an ILRI staff member, adjusted as needed according to the staff member's specific job description:

- he/she strategically identifies partnership needs
- he/she actively explores partnership opportunities
- he/she effectively leads or contributes to implementation of collaborative activities
- he/she successfully motivates participation and commitment within partnerships
- he/she monitors and cultivates the performance and health of partnerships.

Expectations regarding these competencies are being made more explicit when recruiting and evaluating the performance of ILRI staff and training to this end is planned for inclusion in staff development programmes.

The following chapters describe and provide practical guidance on the various components of ILRI's partnership strategy, outlined above.

## 3 ILRI's partnership management system

ILRI has developed a system to manage partnerships more systematically at the different levels of the organization. The purpose of the system is to ensure high quality and rigour in partnerships as part of ILRI's commitment to total quality management (TQM). The management system consists of approaches and methods to be applied at different levels, as well as the support system and incentives required to reach successful management of partnerships by researchers and research managers.

The management system will be elaborated for each of the three levels of the nested framework, with their own functions, approaches and instruments.

### 3.1 Institutional partnerships

ILRI's role is to use knowledge to make change happen. ILRI and research partners are primarily involved in generating new knowledge and less directly involved in implementing policy change. It is therefore very important for ILRI to be engaged with organizations which have responsibility for making and implementing policy and influencing policy change at regional and international levels. To achieve this, ILRI needs to link up with key institutional partners, including FAO, OIE, the World Bank, Africa Union, FARA and regional economic associations (e.g. the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa, COMESA).

#### 3.1.1 Functions of institutional partnerships

These global and regional organizations are often 'political' in the sense that they involve high level inter-governmental bodies and require a high level of political sensitivity to be successful. Membership is frequently based on national governments as stakeholders and shareholders. These organizations have the potential to influence and ensure members implement significant policy changes at the national and global level.

ILRI is an international organization which on its own can generate significant knowledge but has little direct influence on its implementation. These inter-governmental bodies can potentially play a significant role in scaling-up evidence based knowledge from the micro to the macro and global level. In short, ILRI can provide the scientifically based evidence needed to support macro level policy change.

Partnerships with these political organizations can help ILRI identify priority issues which are politically relevant and important. This feedback helps ensure that ILRI's research agenda is dealing with issues that are important in a regional and global context.

Partnerships with these organizations can also be instrumental in ILRI's resource mobilization activities. In some cases these organizations have significant resources under their direct responsibility which can be allocated directly to ILRI. In other cases their endorsement of research activities that ILRI is undertaking is a necessary condition to receive funds from donors.

#### 3.1.2 Approach to institutional partnerships

ILRI Management discusses on a regular basis the need and desirability to engage with certain political organizations. In some cases the partner approaches ILRI to initiate a partnership. The ILRI Board of Trustees is informed on a regular basis of the rationale and status of various institutional partnerships that ILRI has entered into.

The main decision-making criteria for choosing to engage into such partnerships are:

- Is such a partnership in line with our mission and mandate, philosophy and approach?
- What is the negative influence this organization can have if we do not enter into a partnership?

- How much can it positively influence our effectiveness?
- How much potential to influence others does this partnership offer?
- How much potential leverage to scale-up ILRI's technologies and approaches does this partnership provide?
- How far can these partnerships have a positive influence on ILRI's resource mobilization?

### 3.1.3 Instruments and processes

ILRI utilizes a number of instruments and approaches to engage with these organizations. Development and signing of MoUs between the parties is a key instrument in managing these types of partnerships. These are very general in nature and recognize the desire of the parties to collaborate together for the achievement of the overall objectives of each party. These MoUs recognize the legitimacy of each party and identify the contribution that each will make.

In many cases ILRI can have a direct input into technical issues that the political bodies are formulating. Often ILRI staff members are called upon to participate on technical working committees established to formulate policy recommendations for the decision-making bodies of the political bodies. This provides a direct input into shaping issues that become translated into policy recommendations.

Based on the MoU, ILRI is often invited to attend annual meetings, assemblies and other meetings as an observer. This is a further opportunity to understand the larger regional and global issues of political significance and to influence and shape the decisions and recommendations.

Periodic review and monitoring of such partnerships enable ILRI to take stock and renew the commitment or to bring to an end certain partnerships. They also ensure that gaps can be addressed effectively and that a continuous 'scanning of the horizon' identifies potentially important new partners. Due to their nature, institutional partnerships are identified, developed and managed in an opportunistic way.

## The case of AU/IBAR—An example of an institutional partnership

The African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) is a specialized agency of the African Union (AU) with a continental mandate to enhance the efforts of AU member states and their regional economic communities to sustainably improve the contribution of animal resources to the nutrition and incomes of their communities, especially the rural poor. This mandate is being addressed through three core strategic programme thrusts of animal health, animal production and trade and markets, and cross-cutting pillars covering livestock information, communication and knowledge management, quality assurance of livestock and products of animal origin and the harmonization of livestock related policies and legal framework. Major projects coordinated by IBAR in recent years include: the Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC), the Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootics (PACE), and the Farming in Tsetse Controlled Areas (FITCA) Programme.

ILRI recognized the importance of establishing a strategic alliance with IBAR given the complementarities of our mandates. The following actions were undertaken to realize this partnership:

1. AU and ILRI signed a MoU to signify the intent of developing a working relationship. ILRI assisted the AU to develop its natural resources management plan for the continent that includes livestock.
2. AU recognized ILRI as a preferred partner to implement its agricultural strategy for Africa.
3. ILRI was provided observer status at AU meetings.
4. The head of AU/IBAR was invited to serve on the ILRI Board of Trustees.
5. A number of projects were identified whereby ILRI and AU/IBAR would collaborate.

Examples of the synergy of AU/IBAR and ILRI working together are provided below.

AU/IBAR is currently increasing its involvement in activities aimed at promoting livestock trade and marketing, especially those that require animal health interventions. A major initiative in this connection is the ALive (African Livestock) Programme that aims to map existing livestock development programmes, identify and address the gaps and facilitate the livestock sub-sector to significantly contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa by encouraging trade, opening markets and creating sustainable institutions. The development of three initiatives on research under the ALive Programme is being supported by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) with full stakeholder participation and ownership.

AU/IBAR responds to the problems of animal diseases at the continental level. Currently, AU/IBAR is coordinating FAO-Avian influenza technical cooperation programmes (TCP) in Nairobi, Bamako and Cairo in liaison with the national veterinary departments. With the recent outbreaks of Avian flu in Nigeria, Niger, Egypt, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Djibouti, the need for AU/IBAR and other partners to collaborate has become even more urgent. Currently FAO is implementing three sub-regional HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza) TCP Projects in Africa all under the supervision of AU/IBAR. The primary objective of the projects is to strengthen the capacity for generating and sharing HPAI disease intelligence and using this to mount emergency preparedness planning against the eventuality of HPAI being introduced into the region. A secondary objective of the TCP projects is to gain a better understanding of migratory bird movement into and within the region (and potential for their contact with domestic poultry), HPAI field surveillance and training in laboratory diagnosis as well as establishing information and technology network linkages with other regions through the Global Early Warning and Response System (GLEWS), OFFLU and PACE in the global system for HPAI surveillance.

Jointly with ILRI, AU/IBAR is organizing and implementing a GTZ-sponsored training course on rapid detection of Avian Influenza virus for veterinary and medical laboratory staff from African countries. The aim of this training course is to support active and passive surveillance and to ensure the capacity of a rapid and early detection of the disease through national and/or regional veterinary laboratories and medical institutions in Africa. The course is in collaboration with FAO, OIE and WHO. Three training courses have been conducted in Yaoundé, Cameroon (20 November–1 December 2006), Nairobi, Kenya (4 December–15 December 2006), and Dakar, Senegal (22 January–2 February 2007). In total 80 trainees from 39 countries and drawn from both veterinary and medical laboratories were trained. Trainers were drawn from OIE/FAO/WHO Avian influenza reference laboratories and complemented by trainers from ILRI, AU/IBAR, CDC-Kenya, Institut Pasteur, Centre Pasteur, and African universities /research organizations.

ILRI is also currently engaged in supporting AU-IBAR to enhance the delivery of the East Coast fever infection and treatment (ECF-IM) method of immunization.

The collaboration between AU-IBAR and ILRI is a good example of a partnership that covers political/strategic issues and project implementation. The strength of this partnership has enabled both institutions to mobilize considerable resources together which would not have been possible if they had been working separately.

## 3.2 Strategic partnerships (OP and Theme level)

### 3.2.1 Functions of strategic partnerships

ILRI conducts research on a broad range of subjects related to the role of livestock in reducing poverty. With such a broad mandate, ILRI is not able to invest intensively in any single subject area, for example establishing a full-time team of scientists devoted to the various aspects of dairy technologies. Instead, ILRI maintains a team of scientists representing strategically selected areas of expertise who typically depend on leveraging the additional expertise and capacity needed to achieve their research objectives through collaboration with external partners. In some cases, there is a natural and compelling complementarity between the capacities, roles or interests at ILRI and the collaborator or collaborating institution, creating a longer-term, higher intensity relationship leading to multiple activities, joint development of new activities and, possibly, joint appointment or exchange of staff.

We are referring to these types of relationships as strategic partnerships, which can be loosely defined as those key longer-term core relationships that are essential for ILRI to achieve the outputs proposed in the MTP as it translates in the short term the strategic objectives ILRI wishes to achieve. The nature of these relationships varies, but usually involves providing access to:

- field study sites through collaboration with national research systems
- specific or advanced research knowledge or technologies; ILRI often looks to advanced research institutes (ARIs) in the North and some partner institutions in the CGIAR for such capacity
- development agencies as boundary partners that may facilitate uptake of ILRI's outputs, and so enhance impact. For each research area, there are often key international, regional or national organizations with a particularly relevant capacity or mandate.

### 3.2.2 Approach to strategic partnerships

Since strategic partnerships are usually associated with a specific research area within ILRI, they typically correspond to a research focus at the Theme or OP level: a good example is the relationship with The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) within the Biotechnology Theme. The Theme Director and OP Leaders are generally responsible for managing the partnership, with support from their scientific teams and ILRI Management. The objective of partnership management in this case is to cultivate and strengthen the long-term relationship, the level of interaction and the synergies between ILRI and the collaborator, and therefore gives particular attention to developing a shared research agenda that evolves and adapts to changing conditions. This process requires regular consultation and communication to build a common understanding of the research opportunities, the respective comparative advantages and perceived benefits for each partner and a shared vision of the desired outputs. If successful, this relationship will then translate into a range of project-based partnerships to implement joint activities.

The main decision-making criteria for choosing to engage into such partnerships are:

- synergy with and complementarity in capacity
- being a recognized authority in the technical area of collaboration is desirable
- shared vision and commitment to a longer-term common goal/desired output
- shared values and commitment to development
- ability to leverage the benefit of the collaboration for both sides (long-term mutual benefit).

### 3.2.3 Instruments and processes

The first step in managing strategic partnerships is to recognize these collaborators as 'privileged'/ particularly important partners with whom we have already established a track record and high level of trust and flexibility, or have identified as targets for cultivating such a relationship. Within ILRI, the primary instrument is the **Theme and OP Implementation Plan**. The Implementation Plan describes the background and central elements for each OP's priority research agenda, including the proposed outputs

to be generated over the medium term (5-year horizon) and the main research activities envisaged to achieve those outputs.

One section within the Implementation Plan is devoted to the partnership strategy needed to undertake the planned activities. This involves analysing critical gaps within ILRI's capacity to do the proposed research and, based on this analysis, identifies core collaborators who are expected to be willing and able to work closely with ILRI to address those gaps and enhance the probability of success. The relationship with these core collaborators should be considered and managed as strategic partnerships.

Responsibility for managing a given strategic partnership should be explicitly assigned to the relevant Theme Director or OP Leader who will be the **Relationship Manager**. The Relationship Manager will track and coordinate interactions with the collaborating institution and monitor the relationship through periodic contact with its collaborators. This will also include understanding and being able to represent their mandate, objectives, areas of interest, capacity and motivation for collaboration, and to identify and evaluate new opportunities for collaborative activities as they arise. This person will also establish and periodically update a Partner Profile (see 7.4) so that basic information is readily available to others within ILRI.

The Relationship Manager will also ensure that an appropriate MoU is established between ILRI and the partner to recognize formally the partnership. The MoU will provide the framework within which CRAs for specific project activities are defined, including the possibility for joint appointment or exchange of staff.

To underline the special nature of strategic partnerships, the Relationship Manager will actively seek opportunities to involve collaborators in Theme or OP strategy planning meetings or organize joint planning meetings to map out a common strategy. During these meetings, the Relationship Manager will use the simple tools described in the next section to conduct visioning exercises to agree on objectives, partnership analysis to identify comparative advantages, and team-building exercises to agree on values and practices and enhance communication and collaboration. Conducting a participatory self-evaluation exercise may also be appropriate during such meetings for existing relationships.

### 3.3 Project-based partnerships

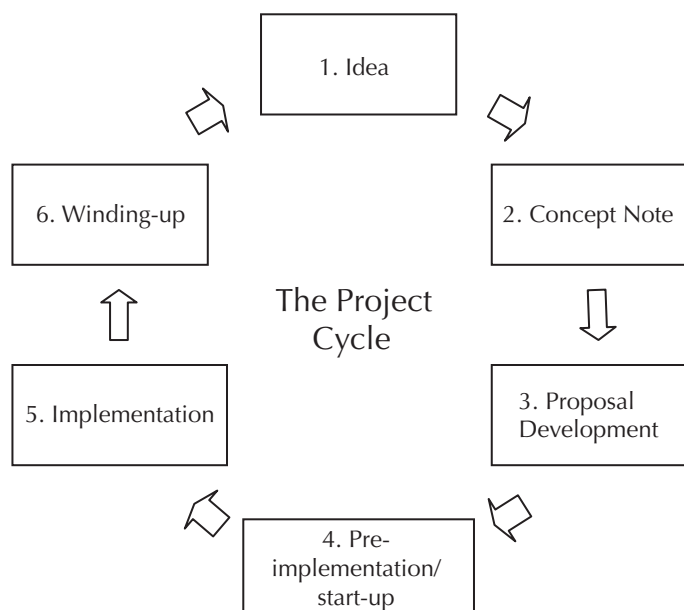
#### 3.3.1 Functions of project-based partnerships

The third category in the nested framework is project-based partnerships—mostly around donor-funded projects. Project-based partnerships are closest to the classic partnerships between researchers and development-related partners with a very clear function of getting things done on the ground.

The main function of this type of partnership is to generate the project outputs, outcomes and impacts outlined in a project document. The function and contribution of each partner is defined by the function they have to play within the innovation system and impact pathways. In most cases the partnership is limited to the duration of the project, but longer-term partnerships can also arise from good collaborations at this level.

This section outlines an approach for management of ILRI's project-based partnerships which will enable scientists as partnership managers to lead these processes successfully. It gives a structure for managing partnerships against the background of the project cycle (Figure 3).

The different stages of the project cycle present different issues in terms of partnerships, from initial partner identification though to various aspects of effective management of partnerships to achieve the objectives, and enhancing linkages for future collaboration. These guidelines for partnership management therefore follow the stages of the project cycle.



**Figure 3.** *The project cycle.*

Given the diversity of types of partnerships outlined in Section 2.2, and the nuanced relationships and approaches this implies, this section does not present a blueprint for project-based partnership management. Rather it outlines specific questions that the manager should be asking at each stage to focus the issues, and gives suggested actions or tools. Some of the key tools that can be used to support these approaches are described in Annex 7.1.

### 3.3.2 Approach to partnership management in the project cycle

This section outlines the approach to management of project-based partnerships in which ILRI is acting as the ‘contractor’, i.e. where the project is initiated and led by ILRI (the extreme left of the continuum in Figure 2), or where ILRI has the convening role of the partnership in a different arrangement. In terms of partnerships, the focus is limited to external partners who would be directly involved in implementing activities. A subsequent section outlines the way this approach may differ when ILRI is acting in another role in the partnership and the considerations that may apply.

The main decision-making criteria for choosing to engage into such partnerships are:

- capacity to contribute effectively to a specific function in the innovation system and impact pathway as described by the needs of the project
- track record of capacity to deliver on promises
- track record in managing funds
- position to leverage collaboration in the setting of the project (standing of the partner, reputation, partner’s own networks of influence etc.)
- considerations from the funders of the project
- shared values and commitment to development and the desired outputs.

### 3.3.3 Instruments and processes

The suggested considerations, instruments and processes are intended to translate into action the principles adopted by ILRI in cultivating and maintaining healthy and productive partnerships with other organizations, including ensuring that partnerships are based on expected mutual benefits, promoting transparency and equipping ILRI staff with the needed competencies.

This section outlines particular key considerations, questions and activities that should be considered at each stage of the project cycle (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Summary of considerations for project-based partnership management

Project cycle phase	Objectives	Activities
Idea	Assess needs and potential roles	Partnership needs analysis
Concept note	Assess motives and potential roles	Partnership analysis
Proposal stage	<p>Cultivate shared understanding and ownership</p> <p>Assess motives and roles</p> <p>Establish transparency for budgetary expectations and arrangements</p> <p>Agree on governance mechanism for monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) and conflict resolution</p> <p>Establish good communication practices</p> <p>Establish spirit of self-assessment</p>	<p>Visioning exercise: agree on goals and outputs, and work backwards to the activities</p> <p>Partnership analysis</p> <p>Facilitate discussion on budget and administration</p> <p>Propose and facilitate discussion on governance</p> <p>Keep everyone informed of evolution and fate of the proposal</p> <p>Lead post mortem self-evaluation of proposal development effort</p>
Start-up stage	<p>At the initial project planning meeting, a team-building session should be held with the core partners:</p> <p>Confirm shared understanding and ownership, motives and roles, agree operating principles</p> <p>Promote transparency</p> <p>Clarify expectations regarding credit-sharing, data access and after-project collaboration</p> <p>Promote monitoring and self-evaluation and agree on how poor performance should be handled</p>	<p>Repeat team-building exercises (visioning, partnership analysis)</p> <p>Conduct simplified outcome mapping to identify secondary partners</p> <p>Facilitate a team health check to agree on behavioural values</p> <p>Introduce protocol-based project management</p> <p>Present and agree on administrative and financial procedures</p> <p>Facilitate specific discussions on these points and record the consensus</p> <p>Facilitate discussion and record the consensus</p>
Implementation stage	<p>Encourage regular proactive rather than reactive communication</p> <p>Promote monitoring and self-evaluation</p> <p>Recognize contributions and achievements</p>	<p>Update partners periodically on progress; establish a project newsletter</p> <p>Facilitate team health checks or solicit feedback from partners</p> <p>Facilitate participatory review of progress and achievements relative to agreed work plan, possibly as an ongoing outcome mapping exercise</p> <p>Celebrate successes</p>
Winding-up stage	<p>Enable partners to successfully meet project commitments</p> <p>Promote continued self-assessment</p> <p>Cultivate shared understanding</p> <p>Recognize contributions and achievements</p>	<p>Warn early and remind frequently about final reporting and administrative requirements</p> <p>Facilitate a final team health check and self-assessment</p> <p>Facilitate a final outcome mapping session</p> <p>Facilitate discussion on next steps after the project ends</p> <p>Feedback to partner organizations on collaborators' performance</p>

### Key steps for managing strategic partnerships

- In preparing Operating Project and Theme Implementation Plans, identify as strategic partnerships those with core partner organizations who will be particularly important for implementing the research agenda and achieving the defined objectives.
- Designate a Relationship Manager to coordinate and monitor each individual strategic partnership.
- Ensure that a MoU is established with each strategic partner organization as a pre-condition for developing collaborative activities.
- Engage the strategic partner organization in periodic consultation to monitor the relationship, using the partnership management toolkit where appropriate.

### Swiss Tropical Institute: A successful new strategic partnership

As ILRI began exploring a new area of research, the interaction of livestock keeping and human health, the Swiss Tropical Institute (STI) was identified as an especially promising partner. It is primarily a public health research institute with particular interest in health issues of the developing world, and has the unusual feature of integrating veterinary and public health capacity. In 2006, a funding opportunity made it possible to establish a Joint Programme on Zoonoses with a shared researcher position based at ILRI. An agreement on joint appointments was established to provide the appropriate institutional framework, with a schedule added to define the particular conditions for the shared staff appointment under the Joint Programme.

The jointly appointed researcher played a central role in drafting the component of the Human Health Impacts OP Implementation Plan related to zoonoses, with STI identified as a core partner. In January 2007, a joint meeting was organized at STI in Basel during which the OP Implementation Plan was presented to collaborators from STI and two other targeted strategic partner institutes in Europe, and consensus reached on working together to take the proposed research agenda on zoonoses forward.

#### 1. Idea stage

The project cycle begins with a researcher or research team wanting to contribute to ILRI's agreed outputs by conceiving an activity that will achieve their objective. At this point, the activity is described in a brief idea note without details about the who, where or how, e.g. field trials in several countries to establish proof-of-concept. This idea note is then used by the research team and management, firstly to circulate for discussion and to identify possible collaborative opportunities within ILRI, and secondly to market the idea and seek either potential collaborators or donors.

While not citing specific names of potential partners, the idea note should identify the type of partners that would be targeted. For example, 'An ARI partner with specific expertise in... will be needed to help develop the diagnostic tool; NGO partners will be sought locally to help implement on the ground.'<sup>1</sup>

Key partnership-related questions that should be considered at this stage, and included in the idea note include:

- What do we want to achieve and which functions in an innovation systems perspective are required to make the system work and achieve the desired output outcome?
- What capacities are needed or required for each of the identified functions and activities, which are either not present or limited within ILRI?
- How could poverty-reduction outcomes be enhanced by bringing in partners to work on the envisaged research?

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1. In some cases where there has been previous successful collaboration with particular partners, an idea note may emerge for further or related activities with those partners. In that case, the partners may be involved more closely with commenting on or contributing to the idea note.

- What generic types of partners will be critical to the envisaged research and what essential contribution is expected from them?

## 2. *Concept note stage*

If a specific opportunity for a research activity is identified, then the next step is to prepare a concept note that sketches out the purpose, contribution to ILRI outputs, general approach, timing, location, partners (both organizations and individuals), ILRI's role and internal collaborators and the donor targeted. In many cases, the concept note will be the product of a very preliminary brainstorming with one or more key potential partners but often other potential partners will not yet have been approached. In the spirit of TQM, the purpose of the concept note is not only to present an exciting research idea, but also to provide an initial opportunity to critically review the proposed activity in terms of its fit within the ILRI research agenda. This should also provide an opportunity to think critically about which partners are appropriate and to take advantage of existing intelligence within ILRI (i.e. other researchers' experiences or information about potential partners).

A key partnership-related activity that should be considered at this stage includes:

- **Conducting an initial partnership analysis from the ILRI perspective that identifies: (i) the contributions needed from different partners; (ii) candidate partners, their capacities and possible alternative suppliers; and (iii) the perceived benefit to the partner.** This is not intended as a major exercise; it could be captured in a very simple table incorporated directly into the concept note to be circulated for the TQM process. At this point, depending on the context, the ILRI research team may want to make its own preliminary assessment without any consultation with other partners or alternatively may already want to open consultations with external advisors and potential partners. Either way the team needs to give some initial thought to the appropriateness of the proposed partners or how they will be identified, and provide an opportunity for others within ILRI to offer their feedback or inputs. A possible approach for a preliminary partnership analysis is outlined in Annex 7.1.1

## 3. *Proposal development stage*

As the project concept moves into proposal development, contact is made with potential partners and respective roles and expectations become the key subject of discussion and negotiation. In some cases, the partners will have the luxury of meeting in person for these discussions; more often, it will be done by email or telephone. Key partnership-related considerations and activities during this phase include:

- **Ensure a common understanding or consensus is achieved on the objectives, outputs, outcomes and impacts of the research.** The process of drafting, circulating and reviewing a research proposal among partners contributes to developing a shared understanding. To achieve this shared understanding early on in the process, and to facilitate the subsequent discussions, a preliminary visioning exercise could be conducted. This will be especially useful when there is likely to be a wide range of different activities and partner types and can help to link all partners' activities to the overall 'vision' or purpose. A possible approach to visioning is outlined in Annex 7.1.2
- **Redo the partnership analysis together with the partners, using it as a mechanism to clarify roles and expectations and ensure everyone is 'reading from the same page'.** In addition to identifying the main types of capacity needed and the contribution of each partner, this exercise will also list expected benefits for partners (including intellectual property [IP]) from their participation and could go further to explore strengths and weaknesses. In some cases, donor applications have a specific section requesting information on partner capacities and roles; the results of this exercise can serve as the basis for that section. A possible approach for a more in-depth partnership analysis is outlined in Annex 7.1.1
- **Clarify, to the extent possible, resource requirements in terms of human and financial resources needed for the desired achievements.**
- **As the budget proposal is being finalized, identify which partner is expected to be allocated or to administer which components.** Constructing a proposal budget is often a very dynamic and iterative

process and the expected allocation of budget can become confused. For the sake of transparency, it is therefore essential to make sure that budget components are identified by expected recipients in the near final version circulated among the partners, and consensus confirmed. For any partner that is expected to manage project funds, are there any particular requirements that must be met, such as overhead charges? If so, these must be reflected in the budget.

- **Propose and agree upon a governance mechanism.** Governance mechanisms are likely to vary depending on the type and scale of a project. For larger projects, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) formula of a Steering Committee has proven quite effective. The membership of the Steering Committee includes representatives from the participating partners together with external stakeholders and, if possible, the donor. This offers several advantages and functions, but especially a) an in-built monitoring and external review mechanism; and b) a conflict resolution forum (since it includes independent members).
- **For each partner, identify and adhere to any internal review and approval processes normally required for proposal submission.** This should be clarified early in the proposal development process to ensure that deadlines are met.
- **In consultation with the Human Resource, Finance & Administration Section, identify what contractual arrangements with partners may be appropriate if the proposal is successful.** Make sure that the partners are aware of the proposed arrangements. This information must be made available to partners before they sign off on the proposal submission.
- **Briefly evaluate the proposal development process immediately after submitting the proposal.** Asking partners to identify any lessons learned from the proposal development stage will help cultivate a spirit of self-assessment and internal monitoring within the project.
- **Regularly communicate with partners to update them on the fate of the proposal, even if nothing has happened.**
- **If the proposal is not successful, ask each partner to evaluate the reasons why and to suggest next steps.**

#### *4. Project pre-implementation and start-up*

An early project activity generally involves convening a planning meeting. In many cases, other stakeholders may be invited to participate to initiate a process of engagement. If such a broader meeting is being held, an initial team meeting of main partners should be held before this.

- **Organize an initial team meeting of the main partners for planning and team-building.** This meeting provides an important opportunity to carry out a number of activities and exercises in support of the partnerships. An approach and activities for the initial team meeting is outlined in Annex 7.1.3.

**Before the team meeting,** the following should be prepared:

- draft CRAs
- an appropriately adapted financial systems guide
- adapted protocol forms, particularly those related to overall project management and data management. By having these prepared, they can be explained and discussed during the meeting rather than trying to explain them later via email.

**During the team meeting,** ensure that the following topics are addressed:

- A review and reconfirmation of the visioning exercise.
- Agreement on a clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Identification of stakeholders and key non-core partners to be recruited into project activities, including possible use of **Outcome Mapping** approaches. An approach to Outcome Mapping and its potential use in partnership management is outlined in Annex 7.1.4.
- **Conduct a team-building exercise using a team health check questionnaire** to reach consensus on partnership and operating principles, and in preparation for performance evaluation and conflict management.
- **Negotiate and agree on how credit for project outputs and achievements are expected to be shared (e.g. authorship vs. ownership).** This agreement should be detailed and be part of the written partnership agreement to avoid any later conflicts or disappointments. Credit sharing is one of the

most critical points of a partnership and one that can easily destroy a collaboration if not handled with great care and mutual respect. Issues like authorship of papers, use of logos etc. are essential parts of this agreement.

- **Facilitate and document consensus on what would constitute unacceptable partner performance** and how it would be addressed.
- **Agreement on project management systems and protocols, and data management and sharing.**
- **Agreement on administrative and financial arrangements**, including the assets and their transfer to the partner should be formalized.
- **Initial discussion of end-of-project expectations**, i.e. do partners view their participation in the current project as an investment in future collaborative activities. Would they feel 'abandoned' if ILRI did not ensure such follow-up?
- **Great care must be taken to record fully and faithfully the actions and principles agreed during the meeting.**
- **Consider initiating an electronic newsletter or similar mechanism** that establishes the spirit of regular communication and transparency. Especially in larger projects with three or more partners, such a newsletter is extremely effective for confirming and reinforcing agreed principles within the team, recognizing the contributions of partners—both institutions and individuals—while at the same time providing a mechanism to communicate plans and progress to others within the partner institutions and more widely. A first newsletter should be produced immediately following the first team meeting to highlight the principles agreed.

### *5. Project implementation and monitoring stage*

As the project is implemented, considerations for managing the partnership aspects should follow directly from the principles, procedures and practices agreed during the initial team-building and planning meeting. For the ILRI Partnership Manager (usually the project manager), it is important to follow through and monitor that these are respected. Key partnership-related considerations and activities during this phase include:

- **Practice proactive rather than reactive communication.** The project manager sets the tone in terms of communication and so must make a particular effort to keep up with one-on-one communication with individual partners and with sharing information more widely. Again, some type of periodic electronic project newsletter or project webpage would be ideal for this purpose.
- **Facilitate 'partnership health checks' at project meetings.** In addition to the standard review of progress and planning done at project meetings, the project manager should periodically plan and facilitate a session using standard team-building techniques to lead a collective self-assessment of the partnership dynamics within the project.
- **Use the project governance mechanism to address poor performance and resolve conflicts.**
- **Complete a simple partnership report to ILRI Management every time a project report is submitted to the donor.** This will be in line with ILRI's partnership monitoring process, and would be a very simple questionnaire naming the partners, the individuals involved (to keep ILRI's database up to date), and the following questions:
  - Have all reports been submitted and on time?
  - Has programme collaboration been smooth? If not, describe any problems that have arisen.
  - Have there been any issues related to management of project funds held by the partner?
- **A related assessment questionnaire should be sent occasionally to partners, asking them to report back to the project management** on ILRI's performance as a partner.
- **Collectively monitor and document progress in influencing mindsets and working towards impact within the Output Mapping framework.**
- **Remind, motivate and monitor to ensure that the required reporting and documentation is kept up to date and submitted on time.**
- **Make efforts to recognize and showcase partnerships that are working well and celebrate their successes.** A project newsletter or webpage offers an effective mechanism for public recognition of successful partnerships: make sure to highlight the role of the partnership in any success achieved by the project.

## 6. Winding-up phase

It is very important to pay close attention to partnership issues during the winding-up phase. In the rush to compile and submit final reports and close out budgets, less attention is often paid to partnership issues. But careful consideration of these issues can make sure that the project ends on a positive note, that lessons are captured and learned, and that the partnership is strengthened for future collaboration. Key partnership-related considerations and activities during this phase include:

- **Give several early reminders about any final reporting commitments.** There is often an extra heavy load of reporting needed at the end of a project; early, repeated reminders can help to avoid missed deadlines and bad feelings.
- **Anticipate final administrative arrangements that may be of concern to partners.** If partners are holding any project assets (i.e. equipment purchased with project funds or lent for project activities), clarify with ILRI administration whether (i) their recovery is expected; or (ii) how their transfer to the partner should be formalized. Some projects may require an independent financial audit and it may be useful to review partners' project accounts carefully to help them prepare in advance.
- **Facilitate a collective self-evaluation of the project and partnerships.** Some projects are able to hold a final wrap-up or feedback workshop, and this opportunity can be used for such an evaluation. Lessons captured during this evaluation can often contribute to the narrative of the final report on the project process and management. If no dedicated meeting is possible, it may be possible to solicit feedback from partners through a facilitated email discussion.
- **Facilitate a final Outcome Mapping session to assess progress achieved and capture lessons.**
- **Agree on any next steps that are planned for follow-up collaboration.**
- **Ensure that the partnerships and the contributions of the individual partners are clearly recognized and acknowledged.** A letter should be sent to the director of the partner institution to transmit formally any final reports and to recognize the contribution of the individual collaborators from that institution.

The six stages of the project cycle are a useful concept to demonstrate explicitly what partnership management at project level means in practice. It serves as a checklist for project managers and partners to consciously deal with partnership issues. Table 1 summarizes the key considerations in each stage.

### 3.3.4 ILRI in other partnership roles

The preceding section outlined the approach that should be taken for effective partnership management when ILRI is in the position of main contractor. In this position, the ILRI project manager has overall responsibility for the delivery of project objectives and of managing partnership issues in order to achieve those objectives. The position is somewhat different when ILRI assumes other types of partnership roles: as outlined in Section 2.2 there are a large number of variations in the specific partnership role that ILRI may occupy.

Whilst the particular partnership role that ILRI assumes will affect its degree of responsibility for overall project objectives and management of partnerships, the principles of good partnership management will still apply. ILRI puts a high priority on collaboration and the need for effective partnerships to achieve its vision and in supporting staff with the necessary skills for partnership management. In this respect, the ILRI project manager should work with the other partners, including the main contractor, in ensuring that the principles and practices for good partnership management are followed. This will take two main forms: (i) ensuring that the ILRI team works as good partners in whatever specific role they are allocated; and (ii) supporting the main contractor in the overall management of partnership issues throughout the project cycle.

Recently, the concept of a 'partnership broker' has been receiving attention. Whilst often involving an external broker to act as an impartial facilitator during part of a partnering process, in practice a 'brokering' role can also be performed by an individual from any of the partnering organizations: they assume the role of facilitator to move the overall process of partnering forward, both in the planning and implementation stages. Depending on the partnership management capacities of other partners,

and following discussion with the main contractor(s) at an early stage of project planning, it may be appropriate for ILRI to take on aspects of this role. However, this should be approached in a way that is seen to be supporting and developing other partners' capacities to manage partnerships rather than undermining them.

Whatever ILRI's partnership role, the principles outlined in the preceding section should still be followed, both in respect of ILRI's management of partners they 'sub-contract' and in support of the managing and collaborating partners.

### 3.4 Coordinating partner relationships across levels

We have found it useful to distinguish the types of partnerships that occur at the institute level as broadly institutional (reflecting overlapping institutional mandates), those at Theme or OP level as strategic (reflecting complementary scientific or development interests), and those that are project-based for implementation of specific research activities. The preceding sections have outlined general management strategies tailored to each of these categories.

It should be evident that ILRI's partnership strategy is aligned with, and serves to strengthen, ILRI's research management across the same nested levels as seen by the integration of partnership management elements in ILRI's cascading research planning and monitoring cycle: the ILRI Strategy setting the overall environment and values; the OP and Theme Implementation Plans defining the research-driven partnership needs; and the MTP linking the Strategy and Implementation Plans into short-term activities and outputs. These planning documents provide the central reference for longer-term coordination of partnerships.

As stressed in Section 2.2, in the shorter term ILRI may be engaged with a given partner organization in multiple, constantly evolving partnerships across the three categories: ILRI's senior management may be in regular contact with senior management in the other organization regarding issues and policies affecting the international research community, while at the same time an OP Leader may be developing a new long-term joint research agenda with one of the partner's research divisions, and ILRI scientists are implementing other research activities in the field in collaboration with individual scientists from the same research division. So, while we find it useful to categorize relationships according to the nested model (Figure 1), it does not make sense to apply the same categorization to the partner organizations themselves.

This situation of multiple, dynamic and interactive partnerships with a given partner raises the issue of how to coordinate effectively such a potential range of varied relationships and thereby better manage the overall partnership. How can ILRI capture current knowledge and insights about the partner organization, its interests, capacity and performance, ongoing partnerships, and past experiences, and share this information within ILRI to those who might need it to inform their interactions with the partner? Currently, the most common demands for information about partner relations appear to be:

- **determining the status of formal agreements between ILRI and a partner when establishing a new partnership**, such as when a new donor-funded project activity is starting
- **compiling lists of current partnerships** (and partners) for the MTP and Annual Report
- **identifying the specific partnership information required for the CGIAR Performance Indicators**
- **compiling a briefing book to prepare for meetings between ILRI Management and management of a partner organization.**

Developing a knowledge sharing system on partnerships significantly facilitates these tasks in the short term, but more importantly establishes a key component of a support system for promoting proactive partnership management by researchers and managers more generally in the longer term. Two main mechanisms serve the purpose of information sharing and access:

## **An approach to partnership management in a national-level project: The experiences of the Smallholder Dairy Project in Kenya**

The Smallholder Dairy Project (SDP) was a research and development project collaboratively implemented by ILRI, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MoLFD). A large number of activities were conducted relating to smallholder dairy production, marketing and consumption, including many policy-related activities.

### **SDP management and governance structure**

SDP operated with three managers, one from each of the main collaborators. Whilst MoLFD was the 'lead institution' and provided the overall Project Manager, the three organisations were in effect equal partners, each with specific responsibilities: ILRI was responsible for overall financial management. Management decisions were taken in regular ILRI Management Committee meetings.

The project was also governed by a Steering Committee, which met quarterly. In addition to members from MoLFD, KARI and ILRI, there were a number of other key dairy sector stakeholders on the Steering Committee (Warner 2003). The Steering Committee commented and advised on activities, although the Management Committee was ultimately responsible for decisions .

The Steering Committee mechanism helped SDP to determine the research focus and topics and provided opportunities to consult with key stakeholders before presenting research results to the scientific community or the public. The relationship that built up between the project and these stakeholders became very important as the project developed to include policy-level activities. Importantly, when some of the activities became controversial, the director of one of the main collaborators was able to intervene and ensure the proposed project activities went ahead.

### **Other SDP partnerships**

SDP also instigated a number of less formal partnerships for tactical reasons, including for specific research activities and for the later policy-influencing activities. Some of these relationships, especially with policy/advocacy focused partners, were very informal but focusing on a common vision helped to ensure that these strategic partnerships functioned well, even in difficult circumstances.

As SDP was a national-level project wholly based in ILRI's host country, partnership management was relatively straightforward. Not only were regular face-to-face meetings easy to maintain, but previous collaboration had already build up a considerable amount of trust and goodwill between partners.

An analysis of the SDP, focusing on its policy-related activities, provides more details and assessment of its collaborative and partnering approaches (See Leksmono et al. 2006).

- 1. Relationship Managers:** Partner organizations engaged in either institutional or strategic partnerships with ILRI are critical to ILRI's success and so merit individual attention and monitoring. The relationships with these partners risk being particularly complex and dynamic, so a member of ILRI Management or an OP Leader is assigned responsibility for timely monitoring and coordination, and for acting as a one-stop deposit of information that other ILRI staff can consult for up to date information and advice as needed. The assigned person is most often selected because they regularly interact with the partner as part of their normal management or research activities. As Relationship Manager, this person (i) maintains a profile of the partner and the various partnerships with ILRI in which it is engaged (information capturing function); and (ii) is responsible for monitoring the health of the relationship, including periodically interacting with the partner organization to solicit feedback or facilitate a self-assessment of the relationship (proactive coordination and management function). The manager periodically updates the partner profile

in ILRI's partnership knowledge base (see next point). The type of information to be included in a partner profile is outlined in Section 4.4.

2. **Partnership knowledge base:** Currently, information about partnerships and partners is dispersed throughout ILRI in the form of tacit knowledge held by individuals directly involved in the partnerships, a range of project reports and strategy documents, and in some cases in some of the institute's databases (e.g. the ILRI contact list). If a researcher or a manager wants information about the relationship(s) with a partner, they need to invest time in networking and hunting down the relevant sources. To better capture these different types of information and make them available for internal use, a very basic and simple knowledge base is being established: in the longer term this is expected to evolve into a much more sophisticated integral component of ILRI's Knowledge Management System. In the meantime, we will start with a very simple system that responds to the current demands for such information listed above, but which is not overly ambitious or onerous in the effort required to feed information into it and keep it up to date. This simple e-knowledge base will consist of:
- An electronic repository consisting of a sub-directory established for each partner organization in which any relevant materials are filed, including institutional agreements, partner profiles, partnership assessments, staff exit hand-over notes, trip reports and promotional or informational materials.
  - A partner inventory database containing basic contact information and partner profiles, name of the Relationship Manager, past and current collaborative activities and the relevant ILRI contacts or agreements and observations, major meetings etc.

Given the overlap with grant management information, the partner knowledge base is maintained by the Grants Officer who works under both the Deputy Director General (DDG)-Research and Director of Partnerships and Communication. Given the potentially confidential nature of some of the information that might be captured, the Grants Officer acts as gatekeeper to the full knowledge base but will post the non-confidential subset of the partner inventory database on ILRINET. The Grants Officer takes responsibility for posting relevant files to the electronic repository on an ongoing basis. The partner inventory database is maintained by systematically circulating the appropriate portions of the database to ILRI staff to update annually as part of the MTP/Annual Report cycle, together with annual review and updating by Relationship Managers for their specific institutional and strategic partners. Section 7.5 provides a more detailed description.

Drawing from and feeding into the existing MTP drafting and reporting cycle is considered critical as an incentive to contribute to and sustain the knowledge base.

As a simple strategy to enhance access to partnership information, the ILRINET search tool will be extended to permit searching key words, such as partner organization names, across the full website, including mission reports and their attachments. A web page devoted to the Partnership Knowledge Base, to be established under the Partnership and Communication division, will advise staff to use the search tool and will provide the public version of the partner inventory database.

### 3.5 Nurturing ILRI's partnership management capacity

The previous sections have outlined a framework and selected strategies for raising awareness that effective management of partnership should be recognized as a core value and competency within ILRI. In addition, some simple tools and systems have been presented to support ILRI staff in improving their partnership management performance. However, articulating a partnership strategy and putting in place a few mechanisms to support that strategy will not translate into improved performance unless ILRI staff takes on board the importance of consciously managing partnerships, make an effort to try out some of the suggested approaches and adopt a learning attitude of continuous evaluation. The following actions will be taken to continuously nurture a culture within ILRI that values and reinforces this behaviour:

- A time-bound action plan will be agreed for translating the partnership strategy into action.
- A semi-formal community of practice (COP) will be formed with representation from senior management and each of the Themes. The members should be seen as resource persons and mentors respected for their track record of working with partners, who are personally committed to and interested in strengthening our institutional capacity to manage partnerships. The Partnership COP will work closely with the Director of Partnerships and Innovation Works to introduce, help backstop and continuously review partnership management tools, behaviours and lessons learned, either through structured events or through peer-to-peer mentoring. Participation in the COP will need to be kept very strategic, minimizing time commitments, to sustain interest.
- ILRI's commitment to strengthening the soft skills capacity of staff will emphasize the role of such skills, especially those related to communication, team-building and facilitation in partnership management.
- Beyond the generic soft skills (management) training events, the Director of Partnerships together with the COP will periodically organize training/discussion seminars within ILRI to review the types of strategies and tools outlined in the preceding sections and solicit and share staff experiences, to maintain an ongoing discussion at institute level and help orient new staff.
- It may be useful to stress that ILRI is a leader in this often ignored area. To capture our particular insights, experience and learning, the Directorate of Partnerships and Communication will work with the COP and individual scientists to document case studies and prepare some training materials (e.g. video clips of facilitating a partnership analysis) on simple partnership tools.

## 4 Systems to support Partnership Management

The previous sections have outlined a strategy and system for proactively managing ILRI's partnership more effectively within an innovation systems framework. In this section, we focus on how ILRI's administrative processes support the partnership strategy, focusing on human resource (HR), financial, and knowledge management policies and procedures.

### 4.1 ILRI legal status and contractual arrangements

#### 4.1.1 ILRI legal status

ILRI is established as an international organization through an agreement signed between the governments of the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). ILRI has host country agreements with the governments of Kenya and Ethiopia where the two principal research sites are located. In addition, ILRI has concluded agreements with a number of other countries.

The legal persona of ILRI as an international organization makes it possible for ILRI to work in and to partner with organizations in different jurisdictions. ILRI endeavours to embody this international outlook in its contractual arrangements with partners. For example, ILRI preference for dispute settlement is arbitration under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) or the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) rather than settlement under a given national law.

#### 4.1.2 Agreements facilitating partnerships

The relation between ILRI and an institutional, strategic or project-based partner is usually articulated or defined in a contractual document or agreement. A MoU is the primary document that defines the relationship with an institutional and strategic partner. The MoU should ideally be broad, expressing the underlying desire of the parties to enter into the partnership and outlining in general terms the objectives of the partnership. If a more definitive collaboration is anticipated as is usually the case for strategic partnerships, the MoU provides that such collaborations will be defined under specific CRAs between the parties. The CRA defines in specific terms the relationship between ILRI and the partner in a project-based or strategic partnership. In project-based and strategic partnership, the research proposal and the donor funding contract or agreement will have implications on the terms of the CRA.

#### 4.1.3 Intellectual property provisions

In line with the CGIAR policy on intellectual property, ILRI's primary strategy is to make available its intellectual assets resulting from its research without restriction, and to use such intellectual assets in achieving its mission. ILRI does not seek to assert intellectual property over its research products except when necessary for the development and transfer of technology. In addition, ILRI does not seek to profit from any of its research products or genetic materials. ILRI publications and other copyrightable products may be used without restriction for non-commercial purposes. Publication of work resulting from research partnerships is done jointly with all collaborating partners. Partnership agreements should embody this general philosophy in addressing matters relating to access to intellectual assets held by others and management intellectual assets developed within the framework of collaboration.

### 4.2 Supporting partnerships within ILRI's research management system

ILRI uses two principal tools for managing its research: (i) a cascading planning and monitoring system based on the logical framework concept; and (ii) a TQM system when developing specific research activities. Each tool features components that permit proactive management of partnerships.

### **International treaty and implications on ILRI's research products**

ILRI holds in trust several accessions of forage germplasm in its gene bank for the benefit of the world community. In October 2006, ILRI together with 10 other CGIAR centres signed an agreement with the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA Treaty) placing the plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) collections they hold under the framework of the Treaty. The ITPGRFA creates a multilateral system of access and benefit sharing for a list of crops and forages included in Annex 1 of the Treaty. The basic operating principle of the Treaty is that all materials included in Annex 1 will be exchanged via a standard material transfer agreement (SMTA) which has been developed and adopted by the Governing body. The SMTA sets out obligations of the recipient and supplier of materials including rules of dispute resolution. The terms and conditions of the SMTA are exhaustive and cannot be deleted or altered by either the supplier of materials or recipient. Of particular relevance to partnerships and ownership of research results is that effective January 2007, the CGIAR Centres undertook to distribute Annex 1 germplasm in their collections using the SMTA. The centres also undertook to transfer non-Annex 1 PGRFA in their collections under terms and conditions similar to those of the SMTA. Thus for partnerships involving use of PGRFA the agreement between ILRI and the Governing Body, the terms and conditions of the SMTA as well as the terms and conditions of the non-Annex 1 MTA will have a bearing on ownership and utilization of research results.

The cascading planning and monitoring system is intended to ensure coherence in ILRI's research agenda from the CGIAR level down to the level of the individual staff member. The research agenda is developed through an interactive and iterative process between OP and Theme Implementation Plans and the institute's rolling MTP, and then linked to individual staff member's work plans for implementation. Within this system, as noted in Section 3.2, the needs for strategic partnerships to advance priority research areas are identified in a dedicated section within the Implementation Plans. The strategic partnerships established to address these needs, together with institutional partnerships identified by the ILRI Management Committee (Section 3.1), are presented and updated as needed in the MTP, providing a public record and recognition of the role of ILRI's partners.

The TQM system is designed to enhance input and feedback provided to scientists developing research proposals, and to improve internal communication and coordination for specific research activities. Internal review of idea and concept notes at an early stage in proposal development permits research management and other scientists to evaluate and advise on the appropriateness of proposed collaborators. Since scientists may be asked to explain their choice of collaborators, this step also encourages scientists to think through more carefully their selection criteria and to apply the partnership analysis techniques described in Section 3.3. This step also provides an opportunity for management, the Grants Officer (who maintains the partner inventory database and partner document e-repository; see section 4.5 below), and other scientists (including any relevant Relationship Managers), to contribute intelligence regarding the proposed partners that the scientists developing the proposal may not be aware of. This process ensures common understanding and appreciation of the appropriateness of specific project-based partnerships.

Finally, researchers filing progress or final research reports through the Grants Office are also expected to submit a brief annual partnership assessment (see Section 4.5.2 below for more detail). This assessment prompts researchers to monitor the health of the partnerships that they manage, and provides a mechanism for sharing that information with research managers.

## 4.3 Implications of partnership work on the ILRI Human Resource Management System

ILRI's commitment to managing partnerships adds new emphasis on the role that ILRI staff play in supporting partnerships, translating into sets of expectations regarding staff member capacity and performance. This section describes how the work in partnerships can be enhanced through all the components of the Human Resource Management System

### 4.3.1 Human resources provided through partnerships

Working in partnerships provides access to knowledge and skills embodied in human resources that ILRI and its partners can leverage and pool through sharing arrangements. Sharing arrangements may include:

- staff members remain employees of their home institution but are required to work closely together with the other
- one institution may host a visiting scientist from the other
- two organizations may decide to share a staff member as a joint appointment.

The ILRI Human Resource Department needs to ensure some degree of consistency across all the various unique situations that may arise and that all the necessary support systems are in place (e.g. orientation to ILRI, housing, laboratory space).

For any type of HR collaboration, the two organizations should develop a common understanding well in advance of the start of the appointment as needed. This may include:

- the recruitment process for the position (criteria, recruitment pool, participation in the process, orientation)
- the performance management system (job description or terms of reference, work plans, supervision, evaluation) and the elements of the compensation package (salary level, elements of benefits)
- the mechanisms for staff development.

The HR Department has developed a checklist to guide the discussions between ILRI and the partner organization to ensure that the full range of relevant issues are addressed and provides guidance to ILRI managers on such matters.

### 4.3.2 How the key elements of the ILRI HR Management System can support staff performance in managing partnerships

As working in partnerships is an essential part of the work of many, if not all, scientists at ILRI, the major HR processes need to be adapted accordingly:

- guidance from ILRI values
- definition of relevant competencies
- recruitment process
- orientation process
- job valuation system
- performance management process: planning, M&E performance
- staff development process
- separation process.

#### 4.3.2.1 *ILRI values*

**ILRI's values** (respect, responsibility and responsiveness) are very fitting for partnership work. Every ILRI staff member should embody those values in their dealings with partners and also be evaluated on how well their work and behaviour reflects the organizational values:

- **Being respectful** could mean respecting the partner’s organizational culture or working with the same level of commitment whether the partner organization is a small East African NGO or a large US university.
- **Being responsible** could mean living up to the commitment specified in the partnership agreement.
- **Being responsive** could be interpreted as taking steps that respond to a partner’s new circumstances while still aiming to achieve the agreed objectives. It could also mean working effectively with a wide variety of partners and recognizing that they may have different objectives and resources.

#### 4.3.2.2 Competencies specific to partnership management

Most ILRI staff members will in some way be asked to contribute to partnerships. For partnership managers and other closely associated staff, it is essential that they are able to:

- strategically identify partnership needs
- actively explore partnership opportunities
- lead or contribute to implementation of collaborative activities
- successfully motivate participation and commitment within partnerships
- monitor and cultivate the performance and health of partnerships.

Table 2 provides a detailed explanation of those essential competencies.

**Table 2.** Essential competencies for staff working at ILRI

Key ability for partnership management	Breakdown
<b>1. Strategically identifies partnership needs</b>	
Analyses the institute’s and one’s own area to identify key internal and external relationships that should be initiated or improved to further the attainment of goals within one’s area of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identifies strategic gaps:</b> Can articulate the critical research gaps that need to be filled by leveraging capacity through partnership</li> <li>• <b>Actively scans for opportunities:</b> Continuously seeks new contacts and information about other organizations active in own area of responsibility, assessing what they may offer to ILRI (and vice versa)</li> </ul>
<b>2. Actively explores partnership opportunities</b>	
Exchanges information with potential partners to clarify benefits and collaboratively determine the scope of mutual expectations; seeks ways to collaborate with diverse groups (internal or external to ILRI); develop sustainable strategic partnerships and collaborative agreements with external organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Initiates discussions with potential partners</b></li> <li>• <b>Facilitates a consensus on mutual benefits to be gained through partnership</b></li> <li>• <b>Clarifies expectations:</b> (agreements for agreed activities, follow-up activities once current collaborative activity has ended)</li> </ul>
<b>3. Effectively leads or contributes to implementation of collaborative activities</b>	
<b>Managing performance</b>	
Focusing and guiding others in accomplishing work objectives. Fostering trust and dialogue to enhance performance of self and others; acting as an advocate for personnel development opportunities and resources; managing in a frank and open manner and applying the same standards of treatment to everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sets performance objectives/define roles:</b> Collaboratively works with partners to set meaningful performance objectives and align them with agreed priorities; sets specific performance goals and identifies measures for evaluating goal achievement; clearly defines roles and responsibilities for members of the partnership</li> <li>• <b>Establishes ground rules:</b> Collaboratively works with partners to identify the behaviours, knowledge, and skills required to achieve goals; identifies specific behaviours, knowledge, and skill areas for focus and evaluation</li> <li>• <b>Creates a learning environment:</b> As necessary, helps secure resources required to support development efforts; facilitates opportunities for development to build capacity; offers to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning. Provides equal growth opportunities within the collaborative activities for individuals across all cultural and demographic backgrounds</li> </ul>

## Key ability for partnership management

## Breakdown

### Formulating action plans

Collaboratively determines courses of action to realize mutual objectives; facilitates agreement on each partner's responsibilities and needed support

- **Collaboratively establishes action plans:** Defines and clearly communicates performance expectations; collaboratively identifies coaching opportunities, training, workshops, seminars etc., that will help partners achieve important goals

### Planning and organizing

Establishing courses of action for self and others to ensure that work is completed efficiently and effectively in accordance with ILRI's core values

- **Prioritizes:** Works with others to identify more critical and less critical activities and assignments; coordinates project assignments, roles and responsibilities; adjusts priorities when appropriate
- **Determines tasks and resources:** Determines project/assignment requirements by breaking them down into tasks and identifying types of equipment, materials, and people needed; coordinates project assignments, roles and responsibilities
- **Schedules:** Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others' work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones; prepares detailed project plans including timelines and objectives
- **Leverages resources:** Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, and tools) to complete work efficiently; coordinates with internal and external partners; delegates appropriately while maintaining accountability for work; manages resources within the framework of short and long-range budget plans and other resources
- **Stays focused:** Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion; maintains focus when faced with competing agendas

### Delegating responsibility

Allocating decision-making authority and/or responsibility as appropriate to maximize the organization's and individual's effectiveness; inspiring collective ownership of decisions and required actions.

- **Shares appropriate responsibilities:** Allocates decision-making authority in a timely manner in appropriate areas (considering positive and negative impact, organizational values and structures, and the enhancement of the individual's knowledge/skills, while retaining appropriate ownership); delegates assignments to appropriate individuals based on their skills, roles and interests
- **Defines parameters:** Clearly communicates the parameters and context of the delegated responsibility, including decision-making authority and any required actions, constraints, or deadlines
- **Provides support without removing responsibility:** Suggests resources and provides assistance or coaching as needed; expresses confidence in the individual and communicates their role to others in the organization
- **Follow-up:** Establishes appropriate procedures to keep informed of issues and results in areas of shared responsibility; follows up to ensure that actions are completed properly and within the period allotted

## 4. Successfully motivates participation and commitment within partnerships

### Subordinates own area's agenda

Places higher priority on partnership's objectives than on own objectives; anticipates effects of own actions and decisions on partners; influences others to support partnership objectives

## Key ability for partnership management

## Breakdown

### Communicating effectively

Clearly conveying information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the audience and helps them understand and retain their message

- **Impact:** Diplomatically, clearly, and logically conveys information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the recipient/audience and helps them understand and retain the message; adjusts words or terminology to ensure audience understanding (e.g. explaining policies, strategies, processes, plans etc. to diverse groups); able to deal with others with tact and sensitivity; considers translating documents into other languages (French, Spanish) when the communication is intended to reach an audience at the country office level
- **Clarifies:** Asks questions to obtain information or to gain clarification to ensure understanding
- **Oral communication:** Communicates clearly and concisely; communicates ILRI's policies effectively in a group or public setting; participates actively in meetings; is sensitive to words used (culturally and to people's feelings)
- **Written communication—day-to-day:** Conveys information and messages clearly, concisely and effectively through both formal and informal (email) documents
- **Listens effectively:** Demonstrates an ability to comprehend communication from others; attends to messages from others including paying attention to nonverbal clues (e.g. body language, facial expressions); correctly interprets messages and responds appropriately
- **Shows respect for others:** Establishes good interpersonal relationships by valuing the knowledge, roles, and diversity of others (enhances self-esteem, communicates, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports); offers suggestions for achieving group objectives
- **Volunteers assistance:** Offers to provide appropriate assistance on a task that is not part of own responsibility because it will help a partner
- **Builds / maintains relationships:** Demonstrates ability to balance or focus on task with attention to relationships; identifies and cultivates relationships with key stakeholders representing a broad range of functions and levels; establishes and promotes trust to facilitate collaboration; shares information with others

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### Negotiation

Effectively exploring alternatives and positions to reach outcomes that gain the support and acceptance of all parties, and builds collective support or agreement

- **Clarifies the current situation:** Explores each party's needs, concerns, and initial positions, including own; is sensitive to cultural or gender differences
  - **Identifies points of agreement/disagreement:** Builds common ground by highlighting areas of agreement; focuses efforts by identifying areas of disagreement
  - **Keeps discussion focused:** Manages the interpersonal process to stay focused on the task; constructively addresses emotions and areas of potential conflict
  - **Develops all ideas:** Engages in mutual problem solving by brainstorming alternative positions or approaches and evaluating them openly and fairly. Builds support for preferred alternatives: builds value of preferred alternatives by relating them to each party's needs; responds to objections by emphasizing value; exposes problems with undesirable alternatives; communicates with others regarding the merits of a particular approach or method to be in line with ILRI's and the partnership's overall priorities; obtains cooperation and commitment from others for working with a new strategic plan
  - **Facilitates agreement:** Seeks a win-win solution through a give-and-take process that recognizes each party's needs
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Key ability for partnership management	Breakdown
<p><b>Developing teams</b></p> <p>Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to help build a cohesive team; facilitating the completion of team goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develops direction:</b> Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (e.g. team has a clear charter or mission statement); guides the setting of specific and measurable team goals and objectives</li> <li>• <b>Develops structure:</b> Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; helps ensure that necessary steering, review, or support functions are in place</li> <li>• <b>Facilitates goal accomplishment:</b> Makes procedural or process suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions; provides necessary resources or helps to remove obstacles to team accomplishments. Involves others: listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents; ensures others from different levels among the partners and from different backgrounds have equal opportunity to participate in strategic processes (interview/recruitment panels, task forces, working groups, strategic planning/visioning exercises, etc.)</li> <li>• <b>Develops others:</b> Identify areas in which partners need to increase knowledge; provide opportunities to develop skills and competencies when needed; provides feedback on individual and team performance</li> <li>• <b>Informs others on team:</b> Shares important or relevant information with the team</li> <li>• <b>Models commitment:</b> Adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfils team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team</li> </ul>

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**5. Monitors and cultivates the performance and health of partnerships**

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<p><b>Monitors partnership</b></p> <p>Promotes and implements effective means for monitoring and evaluating the partnership process, relationship and the attainment of mutual objectives; advocates for internal and external partners to ensure that their needs are being addressed; ensures that areas within the partnership act in the best interest of ILRI and the other partner organizations as a whole (in line with mission, vision and values).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tracks performance:</b> Proposes and helps implement standard performance management processes to track performance against goals; facilitates discussion about performance with partners regularly and in a timely manner. Ensures performance management takes into account diverse work styles, approaches and contributions</li> <li>• <b>Evaluates performance:</b> Holds regular formal and informal discussions with each partner to discuss progress toward goals and review overall performance</li> <li>• <b>Recognizes the work of partners:</b> Ensures that the work of partners is recognized by the organization/others when appropriate; does not take credit for the work of others</li> </ul>
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The required individual competencies to carry out the responsibilities detailed above are very similar to what is required of managers in today's workplace: ability to build, lead and manage teams, collaborate with others, build commitment, communicate effectively, plan and organize, delegate, coach, manage performance, adapt, innovate or make effective decisions.

The partnership context where at least two different organizational cultures come together requires an even higher level of skill in those areas as creating and maintaining a partnership takes the ILRI manager out of his/her organizational comfort zone where the structures, lines of communication and decision-making mechanisms are all clear. Communication is a perfect example of the added challenge of working with outside organizations who may value or prefer other means of communication than the one favoured by ILRI scientists (e.g. verbal vs. written) and where misunderstandings can easily lead to the failure of the partnership.

As partnership work is so essential to ILRI's performance, those abilities and competencies need to be woven into every aspect of HR management at ILRI.

### 4.3.2.3 Recruitment and orientation in the context of partnership

Partnership skills and experience should be explicit criteria, especially when recruiting new scientific staff. The weight given these criteria will vary depending on whether managing partnerships is expected to be a major responsibility in the position (e.g. a network coordinator). Expectations about partnership management and evaluation of candidate skills are integrated in the ILRI recruitment process as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Evaluation of partnership skills at recruitment

Stage	Influence of partnership work	Example
Position advertisement	Partnership responsibilities clearly spelled out Partnership-related skills listed as part of the required qualifications Partner may contribute to the writing of the advert	Examples of wording are shown in appendix 7.4
Position announcement	Partner's recruitment channels may be used Staff from partner organization may be discouraged from applying to avoid 'brain drain' to ILRI	The partner organization would post the advertisement on their website and on the websites of any network they usually use for recruitment
Short-listing	Partner may contribute to short listing	
Interview panel	Partner may be represented on the interview panel Open-ended, behaviour-based questions are used to understand the candidate's own vision and understanding of partnership and seek evidence of how well their competencies compare to the requirements for the position	
Reference taking	Current or former partner organizations of the candidate would be contacted for reference taking	Questions about the specific achievements and demonstrated skills and specific behaviours in the area of partnerships would be asked by the reference taker (HR or supervisor)
Selection	Comparison against the criteria for working effectively in partnerships is done rigorously Advice of partner would be followed, especially when reservations have been expressed as to the suitability of a candidate	
Orientation	ILRI partnership approach would be clearly spelled out Orientation at partner organization would be part of the orientation programme for the position	

### 4.3.2.4 Job evaluation in the context of partnership

Recognizing that building and managing partnerships is a key success factor for ILRI, the dimension of the job evaluation tool that reflects the partnership responsibilities of the incumbent receives high consideration in the overall ranking of the position.

### 4.3.2.5 Performance management in the context of partnership

To stress the importance of managing partnerships as a core competency for ILRI staff, partnership considerations are integrated into the various stages of ILRI's performance management cycle as individual staff members prepare their annual work plans, supervise staff and evaluate performance. Table 4 provides more detail.

**Table 4.** *Partnership considerations in staff performance evaluation*

Stage	Influence of partnership work	Example
Job description	Partnership aspects have to be detailed in the job description as a key responsibility area. Performance indicators to be developed accordingly	Scan the organizational environment continuously to identify potential solid partners for the project  Establish partnerships with interested and sound partners. Establish contact with appropriate persons in potential partner organization, communicate goals of the project and potential benefits derived from the partnership, gauge interest and if the interest is genuine and sustainable, steer process of establishing the partnership (define objectives of the partnership, optimal operating methods and success indicators, negotiate agreement and common work plan)
Work planning	Clear expectations regarding partnership work have to be established in terms of both the nature and the results of the work. These should reflect the objectives on partnership set out in the OP Implementation Plan  Sufficient time has to be allocated to partnership work  When partnerships are initiated, the work plan should recognize that the initiation of the partnership requires time and effort and that outputs cannot always be produced soon after the partnership is established	<i>Sample milestone:</i> By June, a LoA will have been signed with the University of xxx and the xxx NGO to deliver on the Danish-funded project. Roles, responsibilities and processes will be clearly understood by all parties and documented
Supervision	Supervisor monitors ILRI staff's performance as Partnership Manager  Supervisor coaches ILRI staff on partnership skills as needed	<i>Example:</i> At each important meeting with the partners the supervisor attends and discusses the ILRI scientist's partnership performance in an informal manner by asking factual questions to ascertain that the required skills have been applied (e.g. was the work plan realistic for you? Is there anything else we can do at ILRI to reinforce this partnership?)
Performance evaluation	Feedback from the main partners would be sought during the annual evaluation process (this should be limited to the critical partners who work on an important project for the Theme/OP). The supervisor would attempt to gauge both the results the ILRI staff member achieved and the process by which they were achieved. This can be done informally.  Work in partnership also has to be considered while filling the section of the evaluation that assesses performance level on the general ILRI competencies especially on areas such as communication, collaboration, planning, judgement  The section in the evaluation that deals with the management of partnerships should be completed with due attention and concrete evidence  The overall achievement should give fair weight to the partnership work, especially given its different time frame and inherent difficulties	

#### 4.3.2.6 Staff development in the context of partnership

The HR Unit (Learning & Development section), the Directorate of Partnerships and Communication and the Capacity Strengthening (CaSt) Unit collaborate to ensure that staff development opportunities to improve partnership work are provided continuously.

Partnership management is a key success factor for ILRI and as such is viewed as an integral part of staff development activities managed by the HR Department. This may be achieved in several ways, such as:

- continuously refining the partnership competency model, assessing skill level, and designing specific training programmes and follow-up accordingly
- building the staff's general management skills and reinforcing the learning and application of those skills in the context of partnership
- exposing staff gradually to partnership management by increasing the scope and variety of their responsibilities in this area
- seconding staff to partner organizations for short-term or long-term assignments
- ensuring partners are included in the respondents to the surveys done to assess staff management skills and style ('360 surveys').

The development of partnership skills are facilitated by other units, including the Directorate of Partnerships and Communication and the CaSt Unit. The COP of scientists working in partnership established and supported by these units assists in monitoring and implementing the partnership strategy, and helps introduce new methods and instruments in partnership management.

#### 4.3.2.7 Staff separation in the context of partnership

When a staff member leaves ILRI, there are likely to be implications for the partnerships that he/she has been supporting. To minimize any possible disruption, the following tasks are now recognized as part of the staff member's exit process:

- When an ILRI staff member leaves the organization, his/her partners should be alerted as early as possible by the staff member's supervisor to ensure continuity of activities.
- They should also discuss what the staff member has to deliver for the partners before s/he leaves ILRI.
- Discussions on the process for replacement should also be initiated with the key partners at this point.
- One item on the separation form is a 'partnership handover report' which lists by project: the partners involved in the project, the key contact persons at each partner organization, the performance and value brought by each partner, the strong points of the partnership and the areas to improve on, both in general and for each partner.
- The partnership experience, the lessons learned and advice for ILRI on this dimension of the job could also be discussed during the exit interview with the HR Unit.

### 4.4 Guidelines for the sound management of the financial aspect of partnerships

In many project-based partnerships that ILRI enters into or maintains, ILRI is either: (1) provided with funds and/or goods; or (2) provides funds and often tangible or intangible assets to another organization in addition to scientific expertise and guidance. The first situation is straightforward and follows the usual ILRI financial policies and procedures. The second situation, however, can present challenges as ILRI remains ultimately accountable for the appropriate use of the resources assigned to the other organization, but with limited oversight. This section addresses this second situation by outlining a series of guidelines to help the ILRI scientist or other staff member handling the partnership activity (the *Partnership Manager*) deal with such issues in a manner that both enhances the partnership and protects ILRI's interests.

#### 4.4.1 Basic principles

These guidelines are based on a number of **basic principles**:

- The scientific responsibility ILRI undertakes in entering into a specific partnership cannot be disassociated from a responsibility for managing the resources invested in this partnership. Entering into a partnership will involve such issues and scientists should be ready to assume those responsibilities, with the support of colleagues in the appropriate ILRI administrative units (especially the Budget & Grants Unit [B&G] in the Finance Department). The financial and administrative commitments of the partner organization form an integral part of the overall commitment to the partnership and poor management of this aspect has the potential to sour the entire relationship.
- ILRI works with partners who are diverse in terms of mandate, nature and level of skills, organizational culture, legal status, and management and research capacity. ILRI consistently applies a common set of principles/values/objectives to govern the implementation of the administrative and financial aspect across all partnerships, even if there may be differences in the processes to adapt to the specificities of each partner and partnership (e.g. the duration and amount of the sub-grant, the basis of the financial agreement (fixed fee or actual costs), donor requirements etc.).
- ILRI strives to systematically analyse the administrative and financial capacity of the partner organization *before* an agreement is signed in a spirit of mutual respect, collective responsibility and transparency and in a manner not being perceived as onerous or intrusive. The details are described in 4.2.2 below.
- ILRI monitors sub-grants closely through meetings, reports and audits.
- ILRI observes clear close-out procedures with partners.
- Roles and responsibilities within ILRI for the administrative and financial aspects of the partnership are clearly allocated (Table 5).

**Table 5.** *Allocation of roles and responsibilities for administrative and financial partnerships*

Who at ILRI	What
Director General	Signs the partnership agreement
Director of Partnerships & Communication	Reviews the partnership agreement
Intellectual Property Officer	Should be involved in reviewing the agreement if any IP issues are involved
Partnership Manager (scientist)	Monitors the performance of the partner Advises as needed, coaches whenever necessary and appropriate Trouble shoots as necessary Works closely with the B&G Unit Approves cash advances to the partners Approves purchases for the partners Approves expense reports submitted by the partners Approves the close-out documents of the partnership agreement
Programme or Administrative Assistant	Supports the Partnership Manager Facilitates communication with administrative units
Budget & Grants Unit	Helps the manager carry out the initial assessment Advises the manager on the wording of the agreement Assists the manager in the review of the financial reports and other reports submitted by the partner organization. The respective roles of the manager and the B&G Unit are discussed on a case-by-case basis
Internal Audit Unit	May be called in (after Director General's approval) if a serious problem occurs with the management of resources provided to the partner organization
External Auditors	Are often required by donor to conduct an audit, either on a yearly basis or at the end of the grant, including the audit of any sub-grants to partner organizations. External audits are organized by the B&G Unit

#### 4.4.2 Analysis preceding the establishment of an agreement

ILRI must understand the capacity of the partner to undertake the financial and administrative responsibilities entailed by the partnership agreement so that the ILRI team can:

- assess the level of potential risk in handing over funds and assets to the partner organization
- determine the future time investment that will have to be made by scientific and administrative ILRI staff in managing the partnership agreement effectively
- adapt the standard agreement and methods to suit the particular partnership work being envisaged.

This assessment cannot in any way be seen or conducted as an audit. The persons carrying out the assessment (preferably by a visit to the partner organization by the Partnership Manager and the B&G Unit) should be confident that the responses provided reflect the reality. Ask for documents whenever appropriate, ask precise and concrete questions, including ‘what if’ questions, to satisfy yourself that the partner organization has the capacity to manage the funds/assets provided to them effectively and efficiently. The more this can be done in an informal, consultative manner, the better. The B&G Unit can help the scientist by talking with their counterparts at the partner organization.

The key elements that need to be understood are given in Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Essential elements for establishment of a partnership agreement*

Area	Quick dip-stick check
Experience in managing budgets and grants	<p>Size of the budget of the organization and potential impact of the grant on the project management and financial system</p> <p>General size of grants managed by the organization compared to the proposed grant</p> <p>Major donors to the organization: is the organization used to dealing with different sets of rules? Are there several and are they ‘demanding’ donors?</p> <p>Experience in managing grants: has the organization been receiving grants for several years? Are systems in place to manage both the project and financial aspects (budget planning and monitoring, recording of transactions by source of funds/ grant, timely and accurate donor reporting, tracking of matching contributions)?</p> <p>Experience of the main counterpart person in managing budgets and grants of a similar size/nature?</p>
Effective internal control systems	<p>Date of last external audit and period covered?</p> <p>Is it a regular exercise?</p> <p>What were the results? Was any area of relevance to the proposed grant questioned?</p> <p>Are there systems in place that help ensure that expenses reported to ILRI are reasonable and necessary to the achievement of the objectives of the grant?</p> <p>Does the main counterpart person have an appropriate level of control over activities and financial and material resources in this project?</p>

Once this information is collected, the responses are analysed by the Partnership Manager and the B&G Unit so that the agreement and arrangements between the two institutions are as cost-effective and easy to administer for both sides as possible while maintaining sound accountability standards. The recommendations made will address:

- Can funds/assets be provided to the partner organization?
- What special precautions, if any, should be taken to maximize the chances that the funds/assets will be managed well, while ensuring the institutional arrangements are as easy to administer as possible in relation to :
  - size, frequency and prerequisites of fund transfers: for partners who have weaker administrative capacities, smaller and more frequent transfers, using cost-reimbursement rather advancing funds, conditioning transfers to improvements in the financial systems

- basis for financial arrangement : using fixed-fee contracts as opposed to cost-based contracts, (this can be used for either partners with weaker administrative capacities to avoid risks or on the opposite very 'strong' partners to facilitate administration of the grant)
- reporting and audit requirements: format and level of detail of the reports, requirement (or not) for original documentation, requiring annual rather than end-of-project audits for 'weaker' partners
- requirement for separate cash management for weaker partner (separate bank account for the project, requirement for a joint bank account)
- providing goods and services rather than cash.

A more detailed checklist is shown in Appendix 7.6.

#### 4.4.3 Sharing ILRI's requirements with the partner organization during the negotiation of the agreement

During the negotiation of the agreement, the Partnership Manager and the B&G Unit will provide information and guidelines to the appropriate personnel of the partner organization, preferably in a face-to-face meeting, and agree on the principles to be followed during the implementation of the agreement regarding the issues listed in Table 7.

#### 4.4.4 Specifying the financial and administrative aspects of the agreement

Arrangements for project-based partnerships are typically formalized in the form of a CRA. An example is shown in Annex 7.8. One purpose of the CRA is to set the administrative and financial terms of the partnership. The project manager is responsible for ensuring that the CRA adequately addresses the comprehensive checklist of issues given in Table 8; the Budget & Grants unit is responsible for recommending the wording and specific conditions, taking into account their understanding of the specific donor's requirements and ensuring that other ILRI administrative units are consulted as appropriate.

#### 4.4.5 Monitoring the financial and administrative aspects of the partnerships

This needs to be done formally through planned meetings and reports and through informal means such as attending workshops and visiting the partner organization.

- The B&G Unit in the Finance department assists the Partnership Manager by keeping a checklist for each grant and monitoring the timing of the reports, audits etc.
- The Partnership Manager and the B&G staff review and discuss the financial and other reports to make sure that the expenses are in line with the activities and the agreement (especially expenses for staff, equipment, travel and scientific materials). Findings from those meetings are documented and filed.
- Any query is formally made to the partner organization by either the Partnership Manager or B&G depending on the seriousness of the question; the Partnership Manager is responsible for monitoring follow-up closely but may delegate to B&G as agreed.
- B&G can assist the Partnership Manager as needed by visiting the partner organization and addressing any issues arising.
- B&G also coordinates the external audits as needed in coordination with the Partnership Manager.

Besides the administrative aspects mentioned in this guide, there are a number of other ILRI policies that involve partners too (e.g. transport, asset management).

**Table 7. Requirements for partnership agreements**

Financial aspects	Other aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget format (<i>often dependent on the format imposed by the donor; should not be too detailed to create onerous reporting but should provide sufficient information</i>)</li> <li>• Budget contents (<i>special attention on acceptable staff time and costs; ditto for travel costs; inclusion of project evaluation and financial audit costs as well as communication and dissemination costs</i>)</li> <li>• Link between budget request and planned activities in terms of nature, amount and timing</li> <li>• Budget flexibility (<i>often guided by the relevant donor rules</i>)</li> <li>• Budget revision process (<i>often guided by the relevant donor rules but would be good to link to periodic programmatic reviews</i>)</li> <li>• Treatment of accruals and provisions, including for staff severance at the end of the grant</li> <li>• Reporting formats and frequency (<i>often guided by the relevant donor rules; dependent on size and duration of the grant</i>)</li> <li>• Audit requirements including nature of audit firm</li> <li>• What happens if expenses are rejected?</li> <li>• What happens in case of embezzlements?</li> <li>• Treatment of exchange gains and losses</li> <li>• Banking and transfer arrangements</li> <li>• Acceptable matching funds and requirements for matching funds</li> <li>• Acceptable overhead rate or amount (<i>often guided by the relevant donor rules</i>)</li> <li>• Treatment of programme income (<i>ideally to be re-ploughed into the project and reported on unless donor rules differ</i>)</li> <li>• Treatment of interest income (<i>ideally to be re-ploughed into the project and reported on unless donor rules differ</i>)</li> <li>• Allowable costs (<i>costs should be necessary, customary and directly linked to the activities that effectively support the achievement of the set objectives; ideally, costs should not too different from those ILRI would incur; the policies applied to this grant by the partner organization should be the same as those that apply to all funding received by the organization; the elements of staff compensation, allowable travel costs, allowable procurement costs should all be discussed based on the specifics of the grant; discounts and rebates should be included in the cost of procured items and services</i>)</li> <li>• Donor rules influencing this grant</li> <li>• Required documentation for expenses to be charged to the ILRI grant (<i>the Finance Note on documentation can be provided to the partner organization</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of conduct (ethics, conflict of interest) (<i>the ILRI policy is a minimum</i>)</li> <li>• Rules from donors to be followed by the partner (<i>e.g. on staffing, procurement, use of assets</i>)</li> <li>• Recruitment process for this grant (<i>transparent, open process, includes gender and diversity considerations; ILRI to be involved for senior positions</i>)</li> <li>• Management performance system for staff working under this grant (<i>work plan contents and performance evaluation criteria, including feedback from ILRI for senior staff and vice-versa</i>)</li> </ul> <p>As appropriate :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Per diem rates and travel policy</li> <li>• Requirement for and format of time sheets</li> <li>• Insurance considerations for staff working with ILRI</li> <li>• Procurement requirements</li> <li>• Management of equipment, including reporting</li> <li>• Tax payments, especially on payroll</li> <li>• Vehicle management (<i>especially maintenance of vehicles, personal vs. official use, the ILRI policy can be used as a basis if needed</i>)</li> </ul>

**Table 8.** Checklist for Collaborative Research Agreements (CRA)

Topic	Details
Start and end date of the grant	
Amount of the grant	Currency and amount
Rules of ILRI donor applying to this grant	
Disbursement of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currency and amounts (if determinable in advance)</li> <li>• Process to be followed</li> <li>• Conditions to be filled for funds to be disbursed, both programmatic and financial (e.g. receipt of reports as a prerequisite for further disbursements)</li> <li>• Timing of the disbursements</li> <li>• Right of ILRI to suspend payments in case of late, defective or non-completion of agreed activities and results</li> </ul>
Financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements for accounting system</li> <li>• Accounting standards to be used</li> <li>• Requirements for expenses to be reported under this grant</li> <li>• Retention of records</li> </ul>
Financial reporting and audit requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency, deadlines and formats of financial reports including level of detail and treatment of supporting documentation, and reporting requirements for matching funds</li> <li>• Approval process for financial reports</li> <li>• Audit requirements (extent of the audit, period to be covered, deadline for the audit report, suitability of audit firm)</li> </ul>
Budget revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable grounds for revisions</li> <li>• Approval process (who, when, how)</li> </ul>
Budget variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable (or not) budget variations, i.e. actual vs. budget</li> </ul>
Retention of financial and administrative documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length</li> </ul>
Access to records by ILRI staff or ILRI auditors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length</li> <li>• Process to access (authorization)</li> </ul>
Insurance and liabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard paragraph on indemnity for ILRI staff and management</li> <li>• Requirement for partner organization to take insurance to cover their staff and activities financed by/through ILRI</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements to approve/review key staffing appointments</li> <li>• Requirement to alert of changes as soon as possible</li> </ul>
Requirements on asset management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title of the asset</li> <li>• Acquisition</li> <li>• Intended/approved use (all but especially vehicles)</li> <li>• Maintenance requirements</li> <li>• Care and security standards</li> <li>• Custodianship</li> <li>• Disposal method and approval process</li> <li>• Reporting requirements to ILRI (what: asset name, type, number, cost, location, condition, when)</li> </ul>

Topic	Details
Requirements on administrative policies (procurement, travel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement: rules on duty free imports and tax free procurement, competition, ethics, selection, documentation</li> <li>• Travel, especially rules on air travel and per diems</li> </ul>
Conditions applying to close-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return of funds</li> <li>• Reporting requirements (type, format, deadlines, scope)</li> <li>• Audit requirements</li> <li>• Evaluation linking research and financial performance</li> <li>• Treatment of assets</li> <li>• Access to records by ILRI post closing</li> </ul>

#### 4.4.6 Closing out the financial and administrative aspects of a partnership agreement

Giving proper attention to winding down and closing out a collaborative project activity avoids potential misunderstandings and protects the relationship for subsequent collaboration. To demonstrate ILRI's institutional commitment to the collaboration, project close-out is formalized by an official letter to the partner organization signed by the DDG for Research that specifies the final steps and requirements. It should at least cover:

- **Financial matters:** final report (format, scope, deadline), audit requirements, remittance of cash balances, position on accruals/provisions
- Special considerations for the **staff**
- **Equipment:** the partner organization should provide a full report of the assets purchased under the grant and propose a disposal method in line with the agreement
- **Communication to other partners** to announce the end of the contract as needed
- **Data management** (research and financial): handled as per the CRA
- **Information technology:** closing/sustainability of email boxes and websites
- **Publications and final workshops**
- Final **evaluation** of the project.

The Partnership Manager is responsible for drafting the letter with inputs, incorporating recommended text and guidelines provided by the specific competent ILRI administrative units and by the IP Unit.

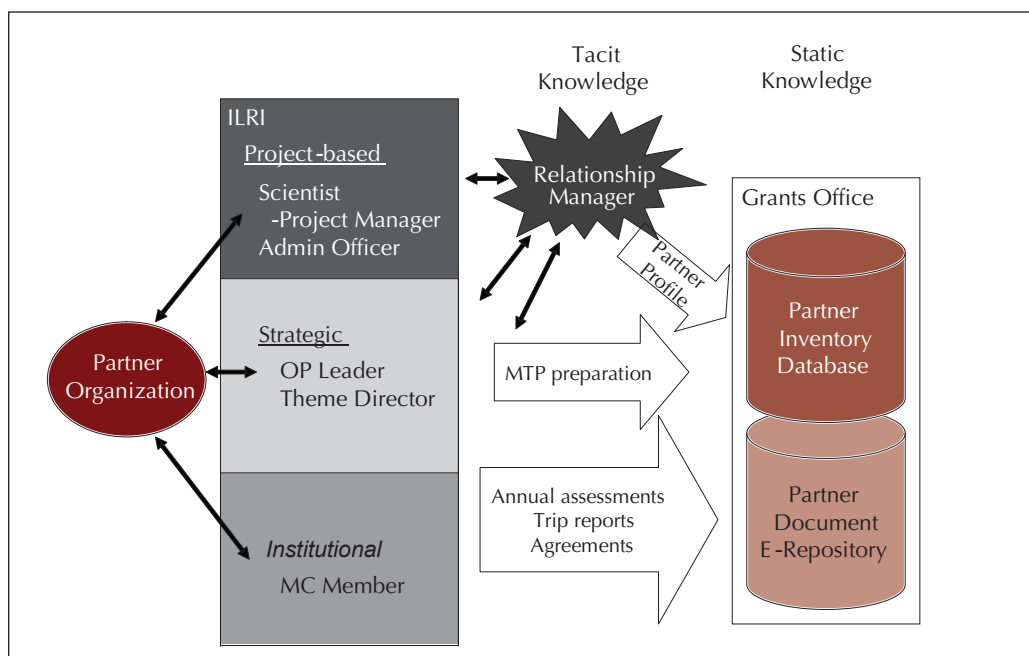
### 4.5 Knowledge management and learning to improve partnerships

The focus of this section is the management of knowledge that pertains to the quality of partnerships. Any information (quantitative or qualitative) on partners or on the interactions between ILRI staff members and partners can be used to help ILRI to learn and improve its partnerships. It is anticipated that gathering such information systematically and sharing it within ILRI—for instance on ILRINET—will assist ILRI staff to become more effective and productive in their interactions with partners.

Ideally, a knowledge base for partnerships would be one element integrated into a comprehensive institute-wide knowledge management system, linked for example to grant management and financial, HR and IP databases. While the need for such a system has been recognized and some initial attempts have been made to design the needed architecture, it is not likely to become available in the short to medium term. The challenge, then, is to develop a prototype, stand-alone partnership system that avoids making the capture and storage of information too burdensome and therefore difficult to sustain, yet maintains sufficient flexibility and ease of access to accommodate the dynamic nature of partnerships and the anticipated demands for such information. To encourage uptake of such a system,

it will be important to begin with simple, easy-to-implement components, working gradually to a more sophisticated integrated system.

The prototype system described in Section 3.4 is illustrated in Figure 4. The partner organization may have different types of partnerships ongoing at the three different levels within ILRI. There are several instruments for capturing the needed knowledge from ILRI staff involved in those partnerships.



**Figure 4.** Partnership knowledge system.

#### 4.5.1 Tacit knowledge

The **Relationship Manager** is the repository of tacit knowledge about the relationship with the partner organization. The designated Relationship Manager will be interacting periodically with the ILRI staff involved in collaboration with the partner organization to keep abreast of any ongoing or planned activities, how they are evolving and the quality of the relationships. ILRI staff can consult the partner (inventory) database maintained on ILRINET to identify the designated Relationship Manager for a given organization. ILRI staff and management will contact the Relationship Manager to get specific information or a general briefing about the current or potential collaboration with the partner organization.

#### 4.5.2 Static knowledge

The Grants Officer with the assistance of the programme assistants manages the static knowledge base in the form of a partner inventory database and a partner document e-repository. The **partner inventory database** is being established based on the existing information available in the Grants Management Information System and will be expanded and updated mainly through:

- A **partner profile** maintained by the Relationship Manager and updated at least annually; a profile template is presented in Annex 7.4
- Annual review and updating of the file as part of the **MTP and Annual Report preparation cycle**. The Grants Officer will extract an Excel file with, for example, the entries for those partners currently flagged as having active collaboration with the Targeting Theme and circulate that file to the Theme Director or Programme Assistant for review, asking them to make any corrections in the partner profile and note any partnerships that were initiated or ended in the previous year. This process should help

to streamline the current process of requesting themes to reconstitute their partner lists each year. An example of the EXCEL file is presented in Annex 7.5.

- Annual review and updating of the **status of institutional agreements** (e.g. MoUs, CRAs) by the person in charge of institutional agreements
- The Grants Officer entering **partner intelligence** taken from mission reports or ILRI's AGM summaries.

The structure of the partner inventory database is presented in Annex 7.4.

The **partner document e-repository** is a subdirectory established on the computer or server accessed by the Grants Officer, where the Grants Officer will file daily any relevant files, including but not limited to:

- the **partner profile** maintained by the Relationship Manager
- **agreements** established with partner organizations (MoUs, CRAs, amendments)
- **mission or meeting reports** that describe discussions with partners
- annual **partnership assessments** submitted by project managers. As noted in Section 3.3, project scientists will be asked when submitting annual progress or final reports to donors through the Grants Office to submit a very brief assessment of their working relationship with each partner organization involved in a joint activity. Where appropriate, the Grants Officer should share this assessment with the Relationship Manager. The assessment includes:
  - partner organization name
  - project
  - brief description of the role of the partner in the project, noting the names of the individuals participating
  - did the partner submit any requested reports in a timely fashion?
  - has the partner performed to expectations?
  - how would you describe the nature of the working relationship with the partner, noting any particular strengths or weaknesses?
- **hand-over notes** from ILRI staff when they leave or are re-assigned
- any **literature provided by the partner** that describes the organization, its mandate, structure, or research interests
- any relevant **project documents**, such as proposals or reports, from joint activities.

By clustering these documents together in one place, the Grants Officer will be able to respond quickly to requests for briefing notes for upcoming ILRI Management consultations with partner management, and for other requests for information from ILRI staff.

#### 4.5.3 Partnership web page on ILRINET

To facilitate access to partnership information, a web page on partnerships will be maintained by the Director of Partnerships and Communication under the Partnerships and Communication page on ILRINET. The page will contain:

- this Partnership Strategy document
- a brief overview of ILRI's partnership information management, especially with respect to the role of the Relationship Managers, the partner (inventory) database, and advice to search the ILRINET and trip reports for recent information
- a portal to the public version of the partner database
- a description of the partnership COP

## 5 How to nurture the use of the guide

This guide to managing ILRI's partnerships is a 'living document' to facilitate better and more effective partnership management in ILRI. Experience has demonstrated that guidebooks and manuals which are not integrally bound into organizational mechanisms are not effectively used and tend to be outmoded after a short period of time. A range of measures and mechanisms will be used to nurture the use and develop the guide further. They will be described in this section.

**Sharing with partners.** This guide is not just for ILRI, but will become a reference for ILRI staff and partners. The discussions and negotiations with partners can be informed by the guide and ensure transparency on both sides. Therefore, each project manager and partners will use the guidelines naturally in their project planning and implementation. If the guide is useful and contains a range of tools which are regularly updated, it will become a tool and reference guide.

**Competence development.** Previous chapters highlighted the need to build ILRI's partnership management capacity. This guide will form the basis on which staff training on partnership management will be carried out. It will be used and distributed in staff induction courses. Training modules will be developed.

**Further development, update and sharing of experiences.** This is extremely important to make it a living effort. The following mechanisms are designed to ensure a continuous debate:

- A COP on partnerships will be hosted by the Directorate of Partnerships and Communication. This COP, made up of interested practitioners, will share best practices and experiences and distil best practices for integration into the next version of the guide. This group will also be motivated to give seminars in ILRI on their experiences.
- Sessions and discussion groups in ILRI's Annual Programme Meetings (APM) will be instituted to further bring partnership management in the mainstream, internalize it and share experiences and new developments
- The Directorate of Partnerships and Communication will host a task force which facilitates learning processes on partnerships—also as a research topic on which publications can be developed.

The oversight on the internalization process in partnership management is within the Directorate for Partnerships and Communication. They will ensure that the activities are coordinated and that partnership management in ILRI becomes professionalized and part and parcel of the way of doing business.

## 6 Key resources and references

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- ODI (Overseas Development Institute). 2005. *Successful communication: A toolkit for researchers and civil society organisations*. ODI, London, UK. (Available at [http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Comms\\_tools\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Comms_tools_web.pdf)). This toolkit is designed to help development actors communicate better. This toolkit presents work in progress on communication tools, specifically geared towards the needs of researchers in civil society organizations. The 23 tools are grouped under the headings of Planning, Packaging, Targeting and Monitoring tools.
- ODI (Overseas Development Institute). 2006. *Tools for knowledge and learning: A guide for development and humanitarian organizations*. ODI, London, UK. (Available at [http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf)). This toolkit covers a wide range of tools and methods that have been used to facilitate improved knowledge and learning in the development and humanitarian sectors. They are divided into five categories: Strategy Development; Management Techniques; Collaboration Mechanisms; Knowledge Sharing and Learning Processes; and Knowledge Capture and Storage.
- Schacter M. 2000. *Capacity building: A new way of doing business for development assistance organizations*. Institute on Governance Policy Brief No. 6. Institute of Governance, Ottawa, Canada.
- Tennyson R. 2003. *The partnering toolbox*. The Partnership Initiative and GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) in association with UNDP (United National Development Programme) and IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). (Available at <http://thepartneringinitiative.org/mainpages/rb/toolbooks/>) This two-part publication includes a short book on 'partnering essentials' along with a series of stand-alone tools aimed at increasing the effectiveness of partnerships. Tools include: Partner Assessment Form, Coherence Assessment Questionnaire, Sample Partnering Agreement, Partnering Roles and Skills Questionnaire, Guidelines for Partnering Conversations, Partnership Review Template, Case Study Template, and Communications Checklist.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 1995. *Capacity development: Lessons of experiences and guiding principles*. UNDP, New York, USA.
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## 7 Annexes

### 7.1 Key partnership management tools and approaches

This section outlines some basic tools that can be used to support the partnership management approaches described in Section 3 (Guidelines for Partnership Management), and are linked to the project cycle stages described in that section. This is not an exhaustive list; other tools may be appropriate in place of these depending on the particular circumstances and the project manager's previous experience.

#### 7.1.1 Partnership analysis

A partnership analysis can be conducted at different levels, depending on the project cycle stage.

##### A1: Preliminary partnership analysis

At the concept note stage, the approach may just involve identifying the capacities needed to achieve the objective and the potential partners who might supply these capacities. Some comment on particular benefits, strengths and weaknesses of potential partners may also be appropriate. An example of such an analysis is given in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1.** *Preliminary partnership analysis: ICIPE tsetse repellent evaluation project*

Capacity needed	Potential partners (name of institution)	Expected benefit strengths/weaknesses	Alternative suppliers
Independent evaluation, especially epidemiology and socio-economic expertise	ILRI	Confirms scientific credibility for critical technology evaluation + research design and biometrics - weak epidemiology capacity currently - animal health field research no longer clear priority according to ILRI's defined outputs	ARIs in the North, e.g. CIRAD
Provides technology, back-stops application	ICIPE	Confirms success of technology; endorses development of technology to a commercial product + Relevant scientific, technical expertise - Some disappointing previous partnership experiences	n/a
Independent evaluation, especially implementation in the field	KARI-TRC	Reinforces role as national agency responsible for trypanosomosis research; enhances capacity for technology evaluation + Appropriately trained field technicians, infrastructure in proposed study area + Long track record, relevant subject expertise ?? Financial management capacity	ILRI hires own field team VSF

##### A2: More in-depth and participatory partnership analysis

A more in-depth partnership analysis is appropriate at the proposal development stage. This should be done together with all the partners; the process of conducting the analysis together can help to ensure that everyone is 'reading from the same page'. The aim should be to clarify roles and expectations from each partner, using a similar framework of capacities needed to achieve the objectives.

One possible approach would be as follows:

1. Agree on the main types of capacity needed.
2. Each partner then identifies their contribution, perhaps ranking it as ‘major’ or ‘minor’.
3. Each partner lists their expected benefits by participating in the project. For ILRI, this should be expressed in terms of the output or output target the activity will contribute to.
4. Each partner characterizes for itself and each of the other partners their perceived strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis implementing the research activity.

Outputs might take the form of the following tables:

**Table 7.2.** *Capacity*

Capacity needed	Partners who can contribute	Proposed role and ability to contribute

**Table 7.3.** *Motivation and strengths/weaknesses*

Partner (name of institution)	Expected benefit (motivation)	Strengths weaknesses
ILRI		
Partner 1		
Partner 2		

In some cases, donor applications have a specific section requesting information on partner capacities and roles; the results of this exercise can serve as the basis for that section.

Other approaches and frameworks could be used to achieve the same objective, or in addition to this simple partnership analysis. One such is a ‘resource mapping’ approach, which may be especially appropriate for large proposals involving a range of different actors bringing different resources. See Tennyson (2003) for details on resource mapping and alternative frameworks for partnership assessments.

### 7.1.2 Preliminary visioning exercise

Visioning exercises have been used to design and help achieve a desirable ‘future’. Visioning is a collective exercise and, whilst it has predominantly been used for community and urban planning, the principles can be applied to many other situations.

For partnership management of research activities, it could be especially useful when different partners are likely to be doing a wide range of activities which could appear isolated.

Even if the grant application does not necessarily require it, it may be useful to use a log frame format to structure this visioning exercise. By asking participants to describe where they expect to be and what they see in ‘x’ years time, related to the activities they will be doing, the similarities and differences between the visions can be elicited. Where there is divergence, this can be discussed so that everyone agrees on the overarching goal and purpose of the proposed research activity.

Agreeing first on the goal and purpose provides criteria for then deciding whether proposed objectives and activities are relevant to the project. This approach can help keep everyone honest if partners try to load in activities that do not contribute directly to the project purpose.

Approaches to 'visioning' are described in ODI (2005). Outcome mapping, as described below, also involves exercises to agree a common vision.

### 7.1.3 Approach for initial team meeting (pre-implementation stage)

Following a successful proposal stage, the initial team meeting provides an important opportunity to carry out a number of activities and exercises in support of the partnerships. During this meeting, the following activities should be undertaken, taking great care to record faithfully and as fully as possible the actions and principles agreed.

- Briefly review and re-confirm the outcome of the visioning exercise (goal and purpose of the project).
- Review the partnership assessment and agree on a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities, and, if relevant, how these might change over the life of the project. It may be appropriate to add a new layer that identifies the roles, expectations and perceived benefits to the individual researchers on the team as well.
- Identify stakeholders and key non-core partners to be recruited into project activities. At this stage, consider whether an **outcome mapping exercise** (see 7.1.4) would be appropriate. If adopted, the outcome mapping would be used to develop a strategy for influencing and changing mindsets of key actors, including partners, and would also then be updated periodically as a measure of progress.
- Conduct a team-building **values exercise**, with questions such as: *Do you agree/disagree with the statement 'An email that starts simply "John, could you..." is impolite.'* This could lead to discussion and consensus on partnership and operating principles and could be particularly valuable for practices regarding performance evaluation, dealing with poor performance, conflict management and communication. Understanding ways of working, values and motivations of staff at various levels of the partner organizations will be critical for maintaining effective working partnerships.
- Propose a protocol-based project management system (see proposed reading system), explaining how it works and its advantages. Getting acceptance of such a system will be key to establishing a systematic use of annual work plans and activity budgets.
- Go over in more detail the overall project management and data management protocols to agree on communication, monitoring, data sharing and documenting principles. A team-building exercise may be a good way to solicit suggestions and agree on indicators, timing and mechanisms for periodic self-assessment (monitoring) of the project, including partnership dynamics.
- Present and allow discussion of administrative and financial arrangements, especially those related to Letters of Agreement (LoA), if relevant. Key commitments in the LoA should be highlighted, such as those regarding reporting requirements. A financial systems questionnaire should be distributed and explained to the partners who will be managing project funds.<sup>2</sup>
- Even at this stage, it may be useful to facilitate and record a brief discussion of expectations for after the project ends:
  - Are the partners' expectations that the project will engender continued or related research projects based on the same partnerships?
  - Do the partners expect that their individual or collective partnership will evolve or expand to focus on collaboration in other research areas or topics?
  - If there are expectations for continued active partnerships, what steps need to be taken during the life of the current project to foster the additional collaboration?

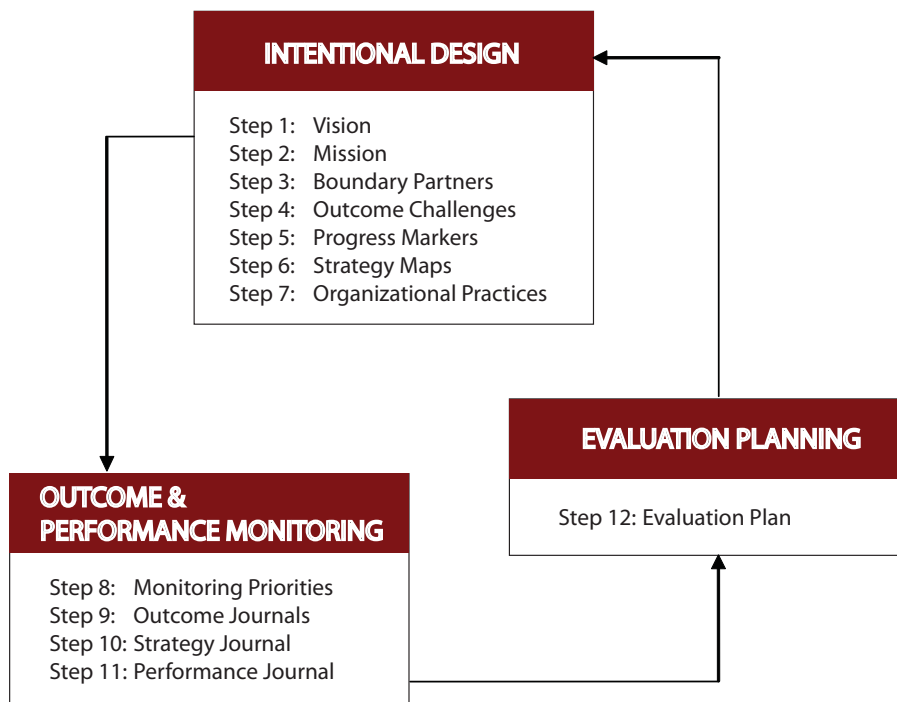
### 7.1.4 Outcome mapping

Outcome mapping is a participatory monitoring and evaluation tool which focuses on the social changes an initiative intends to bring about (Earl et al. 2001). In terms of support for partnership management and project implementation, it can help all partners reach common agreement on vision and mission, but can be particularly valuable because of its focus on behavioural change of people, groups and organizations with whom a project or programme works directly—the so-called 'boundary partners'—and on progress markers towards outcomes. It introduces monitoring and evaluation considerations at the planning stage and links them to the management and implementation of the project.

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2. The questionnaire is administered on behalf of the ILRI Finance Unit to permit evaluation of the partner's financial systems to identify any potential harmonization problems, capacity-building needs, and financial risks.

A full description of outcome mapping can be found at [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). The basic stages of outcome mapping are (i) intentional design, (ii) outcome and performance monitoring; and (iii) evaluation planning.



To follow the full outcome mapping approach as it was originally designed is time-consuming. The approach is based on workshop exercises, which, depending on time and resources, can be difficult to conduct regularly, especially for geographically separated partners. However, even if this is difficult, there can still be substantial benefits from following some elements and the principles of the approach during the project cycle.

An outline of how the outcome mapping stages can be used in partnership management during the project cycle is given below.

**Pre-implementation stage:** For this stage of a project cycle an outcome mapping workshop would cover the intentional design stage, which includes the following steps:

- 1 Identify the vision
- 2 Identify the mission
- 3 Identify the boundary partners
- 4 Identify the 'outcome challenge' for each boundary partner
- 5 Develop graduated progress markers (towards these outcome challenges)
- 6 Develop a 'strategy map' for each outcome challenge.
- 7 Articulate organizational practices.

**Project implementation and monitoring stage:** During this stage of the project cycle, the approach focuses on monitoring the progress of boundary partners towards the achievement of outcomes, the project's strategies to support outcomes and the organizational practices used. The steps during this 'outcome and performance monitoring' stage are:

1. Set the monitoring priorities
2. Develop an outcome journal

3. Develop a strategy journal
4. Develop a performance journal.

This priority setting should be done early in the implementation stage, while the journals are developed throughout the stage. The evaluation plan can also be developed during this stage, in order to be implemented effectively during the winding-up phase.

**Winding-up stage:** Evaluation of the project as it approaches its finish can also be done using the final step of the outcome mapping approach—the evaluation planning stage. This is basically the implementation of the evaluation plan developed during the previous stage.

**Table 7.4.** Overall framework for partnership considerations over the project cycle for an ILRI-led partnership

Project Phase → Who?	Idea note	Concept note	Proposal development	Project start-Up	Project implementation 1	Project implementation 2	Project wrap-up
ILRI PI							
ILRI contracts							
ILRI Finance							

## 7.2 Partnership management—Expectations for ILRI staff: Guidelines for HR

Effective management of partnerships has increasingly become an integral element of ILRI’s ability to achieve its research and development objectives. However, the importance of partnership management is not always reflected in job descriptions of ILRI staff. The purpose of this short note is to describe the expectations for partnership management at ILRI in the form of a Partnership Manager profile and to suggest language that could be used to capture these dimensions when preparing job descriptions and recruitment announcements.

The following key competencies and behaviours are proposed as desired qualities in an ILRI staff member, adjusted as needed according to the staff member’s overall job description:

- strategically identifies partnership needs
- actively explores partnership opportunities
- effectively leads or contributes to implementation of collaborative activities
- successfully motivates participation and commitment within partnerships
- monitors and cultivates the performance and health of partnerships.

### Job description

A job announcement could therefore include a bullet under the ‘core competencies’ section such as:

- Demonstrated skills in managing partnerships, including identifying partnership needs, exploring opportunities, implementing collaborative activities, motivating participation and monitoring performance and relationships

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### Competency area for management of partnership

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Identifying opportunities and establishing and maintaining effective strategic relationships with other units within ILRI and with external organizations to help achieve ILRI's objectives.

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#### 1. Strategically identifies partnership needs

Analyses the organization and own area to identify key internal and external relationships that should be initiated or improved to further the attainment of goals within one's area of responsibility.

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- **Identifies strategic gaps:** Can articulate the critical research gaps that need to be filled by leveraging capacity through partnership
  - **Actively scans for opportunities:** Continuously seeks new contacts and information about other organizations active in own area of responsibility, assessing what they may offer to ILRI (and vice versa)
- 

#### 2. Actively explores partnership opportunities

Exchanges information with potential partners to clarify benefits and collaboratively determines the scope of mutual expectations; seeks ways to collaborate with diverse groups (internal or external to ILRI); develops sustainable strategic partnerships and collaborative agreements with external organizations.

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- **Initiates discussions with potential partners:**
  - **Facilitates a consensus on mutual benefits to be gained through partnership:**
  - **Clarifies expectations:** (agreements for agreed activities, follow-up activities once current collaborative activity has ended)
- 

#### 3. Effectively leads or contributes to implementation of collaborative activities

##### Managing performance for success

Focusing and guiding others in accomplishing work objectives. Fostering trust and dialogue to enhance performance of self and others; acting as an advocate for personnel development opportunities and resources; managing in a frank and open manner and applying the same standards of treatment to everyone.

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- **Sets performance objectives/define roles:** Collaboratively works with partners to set meaningful performance objectives and align them with agreed priorities; sets specific performance goals and identifies measures for evaluating goal achievement; clearly defines roles and responsibilities for members of the partnership.
  - **Establishes approach:** Collaboratively works with partners to identify the behaviours, knowledge, and skills required to achieve goals; identifies specific behaviours, knowledge, and skill areas for focus and evaluation.
  - **Creates a learning environment:** As necessary, helps secure resources required to support development efforts; facilitates opportunities for development to build capacity; offers to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning; provides equal growth opportunities within the collaborative activities for individuals across all cultural and demographic backgrounds.
- 

##### Formulates action plans

Collaboratively determines courses of action to realize mutual objectives; facilitates agreement on each partner's responsibilities and needed support.

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- **Collaboratively establishes action plans:** Defines and clearly communicates performance expectations; collaboratively identifies coaching opportunities, training, workshops, seminars etc., that will help partners achieve important goals.
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### Competency area for management of partnership

#### Planning and organizing

Establishing courses of action for self and others to ensure that work is completed efficiently and effectively in accordance with ILRI's core values.

- **Prioritizes:** Works with others to identify more critical and less critical activities and assignments; coordinates project assignments, roles and responsibilities; adjusts priorities when appropriate.
- **Determines tasks and resources:** Determines project/assignment requirements by breaking them down into tasks and identifying types of equipment, materials, and people needed; coordinates project assignments, roles and responsibilities.
- **Schedules:** Allocates appropriate amounts of time for completing own and others' work; avoids scheduling conflicts; develops timelines and milestones; prepares detailed project plans including timelines and objectives.
- **Leverages resources:** Takes advantage of available resources (individuals, processes, and tools) to complete work efficiently; coordinates with internal and external partners; delegates appropriately while maintaining accountability for work; manages resources within the framework of short and long-range budget plans and other resources.
- **Stays focused:** Uses time effectively and prevents irrelevant issues or distractions from interfering with work completion; maintains focus when faced with competing agendas.

#### Delegating responsibility

Allocating decision-making authority and/or responsibility as appropriate to maximize the organization's and individual's effectiveness; inspiring collective ownership of decisions and required actions.

- **Shares appropriate responsibilities:** Allocates decision-making authority in a timely manner in appropriate areas (considering positive and negative impact, organizational values and structures, and the enhancement of the individual's knowledge/skills, while retaining appropriate ownership); delegates assignments to appropriate individuals based on their skills, roles and interests.
  - **Defines parameters:** Clearly communicates the parameters and context of the delegated responsibility, including decision-making authority and any required actions, constraints or deadlines.
  - **Provides support without removing responsibility:** Suggests resources and provides assistance or coaching as needed; expresses confidence in the individual and communicates their role to others in the organization.
  - **Follow-up:** Establishes appropriate procedures to keep informed of issues and results in areas of shared responsibility; follows-up to ensure that actions are completed properly and within the period allotted.
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### Competency area for management of partnership

#### 4. Successfully motivates participation and commitment within partnerships

##### Subordinates own area's agenda

Places higher priority on partnership's objectives than on own objectives; anticipates effects of own actions and decisions on partners; influences others to support partnership objectives.

##### Communicating with impact

Clearly conveying information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the audience and helps them understand and retain their message

- **Impact:** Diplomatically, clearly, and logically conveys information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the recipient/audience and helps them understand and retain the message; adjusts words or terminology to ensure audience understanding (e.g. explaining policies, strategies, processes, plans etc. to diverse groups); able to deal with others with tact and sensitivity; considers translating documents into other languages (French, Spanish) when the communication is intended to reach an audience at the country office level.
  - **Clarifies:** Asks questions to obtain information or to gain clarification to ensure understanding.
  - **Oral communication:** Communicates clearly and concisely; communicates ILRI's policies effectively in a group or public setting; participates actively in meetings; is sensitive to words used (culturally and to people's feelings).
  - **Written communication—day-to-day:** Conveys information and messages clearly, concisely and effectively through both formal and informal (email) documents.
  - **Listens effectively:** Demonstrates an ability to comprehend communication from others; attends to messages from others including paying attention to nonverbal clues (e.g. body language, facial expressions); correctly interprets messages and responds appropriately.
  - **Shows respect for others:** Establishes good interpersonal relationships by valuing, the knowledge, roles, and diversity of others (enhances self-esteem, communicates, empathizes, involves, discloses, supports); offers suggestions for achieving group objectives.
  - **Volunteers assistance:** Offers to provide appropriate assistance on a task for which you are not responsible because it will help a partner
  - **Builds/maintains relationships:** Demonstrates ability to balance or focus on tasks with attention to relationships; identifies and cultivates relationships with key stakeholders representing a broad range of functions and levels; establishes and promotes trust to facilitate collaboration; shares information with others.
-

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### **Competency area for management of partnership**

#### **Negotiation**

Effectively exploring alternatives and positions to reach outcomes that gain the support and acceptance of all parties, and builds collective support or agreement.

- Clarifies the current situation: Explores all parties' needs, concerns, and initial positions, including own; is sensitive to cultural or gender differences
  - Identifies points of agreement/disagreement: Builds common ground by highlighting areas of agreement; focuses efforts by identifying areas of disagreement.
  - Keeps discussion focused: Manages the interpersonal process to stay focused on the task; constructively addresses emotions and areas of potential conflict.
  - Develops all ideas: Engages in mutual problem solving by brainstorming alternative positions or approaches and evaluating them openly and fairly. Builds support for preferred alternatives: Builds value of preferred alternatives by relating them to each party's needs; responds to objections by emphasizing value; exposes problems with undesirable alternatives; communicates with others regarding the merits of a particular approach or method to be in line with ILRI's and the partnership's overall priorities; obtains cooperation and commitment from others for working with a new strategic plan.
  - Facilitates agreement: Seeks a win-win solution through a give-and-take process that recognizes each party's needs.
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### Competency area for management of partnership

#### Developing teams

Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to help build a cohesive team; facilitating the completion of team goals.

- Develops direction: Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (e.g. team has a clear charter or mission statement); guides the setting of specific and measurable team goals and objectives.
- Develops structure: Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; helps ensure that necessary steering, review, or support functions are in place.
- Facilitates goal accomplishment: Makes procedural or process suggestions for achieving team goals or performing team functions; provides necessary resources or helps to remove obstacles to team accomplishments. Involves others: Listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents; ensures others from different levels among the partners and from different backgrounds have equal opportunity to participate in strategic processes (interview/recruitment panels, task forces, working groups, strategic planning/visioning exercises, etc.).
- Develops others: Identify areas in which partners need to increase knowledge; provide opportunities to develop skills and competencies when needed; provide feedback on individual and team performance.
- Informs others on team: Shares important or relevant information with the team.
- Models commitment: Adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfills team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team

5. Monitors and cultivates the performance and health of partnerships

#### Monitors partnership

Promotes and implements effective means for monitoring and evaluating the partnership process, relationship and the attainment of mutual objectives; advocates for internal and external partners to ensure that their needs are being addressed; ensures that areas within the partnership act in the best interest of ILRI and the other partner organizations as a whole (in line with mission, vision and values).

- **Tracks performance:** Proposes and helps implement standard performance management processes to track performance against goals; facilitates discussion about performance with partners regularly and in a timely manner. Ensures performance management takes into account diverse work styles, approaches and contributions.
  - **Evaluates performance:** Holds regular formal and informal discussions with each partner to discuss progress toward goals and review overall performance
  - **Recognizes the work of partners:** Ensures that the work of partners is recognized by the organization/others when appropriate; does not take credit for the work of others.
-

**Performance evaluation**

In the current version of the ILRI performance evaluation form, a specific question asks the employee and supervisor to assess ‘management of partnerships’ as one of four management skills (see Annex 7.3), but without an explanation or any guidance being provided. In the ‘competency assessment’ section, the employee and supervisor are also asked to assess certain competency dimensions including team work and collaboration, planning and organization, leadership, communication and judgment, all of which could be considered critical elements of effective partnership management.

We propose breaking down the ‘management of partnership’ into the five subcomponents listed above, plus providing a more detailed explanation of what each quality represents. Guidelines as presented in the table below will accompany the evaluation form. These guidelines need to be adjusted to take into account (i) the role of the staff member as leader or contributor; and (ii) the staff member’s level of responsibility, i.e. Management vs. researcher vs. support staff.

**7.3 Sections in current ILRI performance evaluation form relevant to partnership management**

**2. ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

(to be completed for all supervisors):

Management of Partnerships	
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**3. COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT**

Please rate how the following competencies were demonstrated during the year by the Employee. The Supervisor may wish to indicate the importance of the competency to the overall performance.

Competency	Rating	Importance (1=very important, 3=moderately, 5=not important)	Comment (required for EE, ME or BE ratings)
<b>Team work and collaboration:</b> seeks and supports contributions from others, is effective at working with others, builds partnerships both inside and outside...			

Competency	Rating	Importance (1=very important, 3=moderately, 5=not important)	Comment (required for EE, ME or BE ratings)
<b>Planning and organizing:</b> Plans work, time and resources effectively, handles multiple responsibilities effectively, delegates well, respects deadlines, follows through, and accomplishes goals...			
<b>Leadership:</b> Sets vision or goals with others, organizes and motivates others to accomplish goals, makes effective decisions, takes responsibilities, is accountable, effectively mentors others.			
<b>Communication :</b> Organizes and presents ideas effectively, listens actively, conveys ideas and opinions effectively, writes well ...			
<b>Judgment:</b> Assesses issues or situations adequately, makes appropriate decisions, knows where to look for additional information or input...			

## 7.4 ILRI partner profile (template)

Name of partner organization:
Postal Address:
Country:
Telephone:
Fax:
Website:
Email:
ILRI Relationship Manager:
Partner main contact person(s):
Designation:
Contact email:
Name of Partner Head:
Partner head designation:
Partner head email:
Other key staff members (and email):
Type of organization:
Organizational mandate:
Areas of potential collaboration:
Recent intelligence (note dates):
Relationship Manager's comments (note dates):
MoU established? Y/N
Date MoU established:
MoU currently in force? Y/N
List any other relevant agreements:
Location of E-Document Repository
Collaborative activity 1
Project title:
Implementing organization:
Funding source:

Project start date:	
Project end date:	
Currently active?:	Y/N
Project duration:	
Location of activities:	
ILRI contact person:	
Operating project:	
Theme:	
Grant code:	
Other ILRI participants:	
Partner role/involvement:	(Describe their role in the project, types of activities they are responsible for; e.g. field data collection; lab analysis; student supervision )
Partner Contact Person:	
Contact Information:	
Other Partner Participants:	
Reporting Obligations (and from whom to whom):	
Financial Obligations (and from whom to whom):	
Partnership agreement established?:	Y/N
Type of agreement:	
Partnership assessments available?:	Y/N
Collaborative activity 2	
Project title:	
Implementing organization:	
Funding source:	
Project start date:	
Project end date:	
Currently active?:	Y/N
Project duration:	
Location of activities:	
ILRI contact person:	
Operating project:	
Theme:	
Grant code:	
Other ILRI participants:	
Partner role/involvement:	
Partner contact person:	
Contact information:	
Other partner participants:	
Reporting obligations (and from whom to whom):	
Financial obligations (and from whom to whom):	
Partnership agreement established?:	Y/N
Type of agreement:	
Partnership assessments available?:	Y/N
Collaborative activity 3	Etc.

## 7.5 Partner update survey for MTP

The following is an EXCEL table available on the ILRI website:

Name of Partner Organization	ILRI Relationship Manager	Relevant to:				
		Management Y/N	T1 Y/N	T3 Y/N	T4 Y/N	T5 Y/N

Partner Organization Info					
Postal address	Country	Telephone	Fax	Website	Email

Partner Liaison Contact Person		
Contact name	Designation	Email

Organization Head			Other			
Name of Head	Designation	Email	Other key partner staff names and designation	Type of organization	MoU established?	MoU in force?

### Comments:

- List of partner organizations to be reviewed and updated annually, with additions as needed
- Information extracted from partner inventory database

## 7.6 Checklist for assessing organizational financial and administrative capacity

Area	Elements to assess
General information	Mandate
	History
	Legal status
	Tax status
	Governance structure
	Management structure
	Organization chart relevant to the project
	Experience in the type of activities required by the agreement
	Research management systems
	Type and frequency of audits
	Major donors
Internal control	Size and duration of grants generally received by the partner organization
	Results of external and internal audits
	Authorization system for resource-related decisions (e.g. HR, procurement, travel, payments)
	Systems : decision making, policies, computerized systems
	Internal audit structure?

Area	Elements to assess
Project management	<p>Systems in place to manage projects (project planning, monitoring and evaluation, technical and financial reports, audits)</p> <p>How are research and financial performance matched?</p>
Financial management	<p>Status of financial management in the organization (e.g. composition of senior leadership team, experience of the leadership team in financial management, importance of financial management in the job descriptions and the evaluation process of the managers involved in this partnership team)</p> <p>Structure of the finance department</p> <p>Finance staff qualifications</p> <p>Finance policies: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?</p> <p>Financial systems: Accurate, complete and up-to-date recording of transactions? Transactions identifiable by sources of funds and budget line items?</p> <p>Financial information system: Computerized? Backup? Capability to record transactions and produce reports?</p> <p>Cash management systems: cash planning, treasury management—including speed of disbursements and selection of banks, foreign exchange management</p> <p>Financial planning and budgeting system (establishing, monitoring and revising)</p> <p>Contract management and other experiences with grants, including overhead</p> <p>Financial reporting: type, frequency, reliability, audiences</p> <p>Tax compliance</p> <p>Results of external and internal audits (e.g. Management letters)</p>
Human Resource management	<p>Staffing levels and types</p> <p>Policies: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance?</p> <p>Recruitment system</p> <p>Performance management system</p> <p>Compensation policy</p> <p>Insurance arrangements for staff (medical, travel, life, liability...)</p>
Procurement of goods and services	<p>Policies: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?</p> <p>Scope of procurement activities</p> <p>Focus on ethical considerations, vendor management, importance of competition, tendering methods, criteria for selecting an offer and documentation, goods receipt system</p>
Asset management	<p>Scope of fixed asset management activities</p> <p>Scope of inventory management activities</p> <p>Policies on fixed asset management: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?</p> <p>Focus on responsibility for assets, asset maintenance system, asset verification, asset disposal system, asset records and reporting</p> <p>Policies on management of inventories: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?</p> <p>Type and coverage of insurance</p>
Travel management	<p>Scope of current travel activities</p> <p>Policies: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?</p>

Area	Elements to assess
Vehicle management	Size, age and type of the current fleet, especially at the locations where the project will be conducted and level of transport activities  Policies: Existence? Topics covered? Level of compliance? Main differences with the ILRI policies?
Management of field activities	Financial and administrative support available at the location of the activities  Completeness of policies that would apply to field operations  Previous experience in this area

## 7.7 Sample wording of advertisements for positions with strong partnership emphasis

The announcement for a position of a **project leader** who needs to create and manage partnerships may include wording as follows:

The incumbent is expected to create new partnerships in the context of a new research project, successfully identifying and articulating the partnership needs, exploring opportunities and initiating new partnerships. The successful candidate is expected to be familiar with the most successful and influential research organizations/projects working in xxx (specific research area).

The incumbent is also expected to manage on-going partnerships:

- ensuring that the partnership delivers as planned by sustaining the motivation of all partners, by sound planning and organizing, by agreeing on effective allocation of responsibilities, defining appropriate communication/reporting mechanisms and managing the resources s/he is responsible for effectively and efficiently
- monitoring results and reorganizing as needed
- learning and creating a sound basis for future collaboration

S/he is also expected to have demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills, communication, negotiation, coaching and project management skills across institutions.

The announcement for a position of a **postdoctoral fellow** who will need to work in the context of an ongoing partnership

The postdoctoral fellow is expected to work closely with the project partners, delivering research reports in the time, format and quality agreed with the partner. S/he is expected to be able to demonstrate excellent interpersonal and communication skills, sensitivity to different organizational cultures and commitment to work in partnership.

## 7.8 Sample of a Collaborative Research Agreement

This section details the important areas that the CRA should cover.

1. **Date of commencement:** This should be the date on which the performance of research collaboration shall begin. If the collaboration has already started before the CRA is signed, the date on which the collaboration started should be considered as the date of commencement rather than date on which the CRA is signed.
2. **Principal investigators:** The CRA should identify the persons responsible for project implementation from ILRI and the collaborating institute/organization.
3. **Proprietary and confidential information:** In the event that proprietary or confidential information or data is exchanged or developed within the course of collaboration, terms under which the information is to be disclosed or used should be covered under the CRA. The terms should

also specify how long the information can be considered confidential after the expiry of the collaboration.

4. **Project data:** This should cover how data from the project will be made available to the public. Any donor funding condition relating to release of data should be included.
5. **Intellectual property:** This should cover both the IP brought into the collaboration by each of the parties and that generated within the collaboration, detailing the rights and obligations of each party.
6. **Publicity:** This should detail allowable use that each party can make of the other party's name in publicity, advertising or news releases. The purpose of this provision is to prevent misuse of the other party's name.
7. **Reports and publications:** This section should provide for appropriate recognition of contributions made by each institution and acknowledgement of the funding agency.
8. **Project funding:** The CRA should detail:
  - source of funding
  - any matching contributions by the parties
  - detailed budget and funds disbursement schedule.
9. **Budget revisions:** Any allowable budget revisions should be specified.
10. **Financial management and audits:**
  - accounting system to be used for project funds
  - reports and documents required before payments/disbursements are made
  - scope and frequency of audit reports
  - financial/expense records.
11. **Reports:** The reports required include:
  - certified financial reports (interim and final)
  - audited financial reports
  - progress reports—including frequency
  - the form or contents of financial and progress reports.
12. **Procurement and travel:**
  - details of how procurement of goods and services required for the project shall be carried out
  - travel guideline or policy to be followed
  - guidelines on rates of daily subsistence allowance/per diem to be paid to project staff.
13. **Asset management:** If assets are purchased/procured using project funds, there should be guidelines of how they will be managed and disposed of at the end of the project. This should include detailing the responsibility for the safety, care and insurance of all project assets and vehicles.
14. **Insurance:** The CRA should detail which party is responsible for taking out appropriate cover for employees or agents involved in the project, such as health, life, accidents, long-term disability, workers compensation, travel, public liability etc.
15. **Term and termination:** This section should detail:
  - the term of the CRA
  - extension of term of CRA and any conditions for such extensions
  - determination—this should include circumstances that could lead to termination of the CRA before expiry of the term or completion of the project
  - the rights and obligations that should survive termination of CRA.
16. **Warranties and indemnities:** This provision should detail any warranties and indemnities made by either of the parties.
17. **Notices:** This should detail the form in which notices or communications relating to the CRA should be in, e.g. fax, registered mail etc. It should also detail the address of each party to which the communication should be posted.
18. **Dispute resolution:** The preferred mechanism for dispute resolution is arbitration under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) or the International Chamber of Commerce.

**19. Other provisions:**

- Assignment
- Force majeure
- Governing law and jurisdiction
- Amendment of agreement