RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Agriculture for Nutrition and Health

CGIAR

LED BY IFPRI

Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH)
Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting
IFPRI, Washington, D.C.
October 22-23, 2014

Chair: Robert Paarlberg

Purpose: The Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) provides independent advice to the IFPRI Director General, the IFPRI Board, and to the A4NH Director and Planning and Management Committee on the following:

1. The overall Program portfolio and resource allocation.
2. Program milestones, outputs and outcomes for quality and relevance and how these are being monitored and evaluated.
3. Program impact pathway, progress in achieving these and progress in assessing impacts. Provide advice on partnerships needed to accelerate and broaden impacts.
4. Planning and implementation for gender, partnerships, capacity development and communications. Provide advice on program management.
5. Research priorities and quality of science. Advise on needs for external review or support for the program's research as appropriate. Advice on adjustments to the research plans of the program. Provide advice on scientific partnerships.
6. Promoting the program within different networks and to partners and donors.
7. The quality, relevance and performance of the program.

Objectives of the Meeting:

- IAC members will review A4NH progress in 2012 and 2014
- IAC members will provide advice on the proposed Plan of Work and Budget for 2015-2016
- IAC members will provide advice on partnership, capacity development, and regional strategies
- IAC members will review progress in implementing the gender strategy
- IAC members will review and comment on the Food Safety Evaltuion and the plan for Review and Validation Study
- IAC members will provide advice on communication strategy

DATE & TIME	AGENDA	
October 21, 2014	**Pre-Meeting**	
6:30– 9:00 PM	**DINNER WITH IAC MEMBERS AT:** **St Gregory Hotel/M Street Bar & Grill- the Library at lobby level** **2033 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036**	
October 22, 2014	**DAY 1** **Conference Room 7AB**	
08:30 -9:00	**LIGHT BREAKFAST AND COFFEE**	
09:00– 9:30	**Session 1**	**Welcome and Introduction of Members -** Shenggen Fan – Director General IFPRI
09:30– 9:45	**Session 2**	**Opening remarks** Robert Paarlberg - IAC Chair
9:45– 10:30	**Session 3**	**Program Overview 2012-2014 and plans for 2015-2016** John McDermott – Director A4NH
10:30– 11:00	**COFFEE BREAK**	
11:00- 12:00	**Session 4**	**Health in A4NH** Delia Grace – Leader of Flagship 4
12:00– 13:00	**LUNCH**	
13:00– 14:00	**Session 5**	**Gender Research in A4NH** Hazel Malapit – Gender Research Coordinator
14:00– 15:15	**Session 6**	**Update on ongoing Food Safety Program Evaluation** Sanjeev Sridharan (45 minutes) **Planning the A4NH Program Evaluation** Julia Compton/Nancy Johnson (30 minutes)
15:15- 15:45	**Session 7**	**Strategic Communications** John McDermott
15:45– 16:15	**Session 8**	**Update on Partnerships, Capacity Development and Regional Strategies –** John McDermott
16:15– 17:00	**Session 9**	**IAC to meet at the end of Day 1 – to Summarize** Robert Paarlberg

October 23, 2014	DAY 2 Conference Room 7AB	
08:00 – 08:30	LIGHT BREAKFAST AND COFFEE	
8:30 – 12:30	**Session 10 - Program Plans and Budget by Flagship 2015 – 2016 by Flagship leaders** **Flagship 1 – Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition** – Alan de Brauw **Flagship 2 – Biofortificaiton** – Howdy Bouis **Flagship 3 – Agriculture Associated Diseases** – Delia Grace **Flagship 4 – Integrated Programs and Polices** – Marie Ruel	
12:30 – 14:30	**LUNCH and IAC DISCUSSION**	
14:30 – 15:00	**Presentation and discussion of IAC recommendations and any other issues** – Emmy Simons	
15:00 – 15:15	**Wrap up and Summary of Action Points** - John McDermott	
15:15 – 15:30	**Closing Remarks** – Shenggen Fan	

Summary of Comments and Recommendations with Action Items

Introduction

The Independent Advisory Committee (IAC), the Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) flagship leaders, the program management unit (PMU), and the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) Director General's Office met on October 22-23, 2014, at IFPRI headquarters in Washington, D.C. for their third annual meeting. A list of participants can be found at the end of this summary. Robert Paarlberg chaired the first day and Mahendra Dev chaired the second day of the meeting.

The purpose of the IAC is to provide independent advice to the IFPRI Director General, the IFPRI Board, and to the A4NH Director on the following issues: program strategy; plans of work and budget; research quality, relevance, and innovation; monitoring and evaluation; potential for outcomes and impacts; and other advice relative to the strategy, implementation, and performance of the program.

Meeting objectives

- IAC members will review A4NH progress from 2012 to present
- IAC members will provide advice on the proposed Plan of Work and Budget for 2015-2016
- IAC members will provide advice on partnership, capacity development, and regional strategies
- IAC members will review progress in implementing the gender strategy
- IAC members will review and comment on the food safety evaluation and the plan for the Review and Validation Study
- IAC members will provide advice on the communication strategy

This document summarizes the IAC's **key comments** and **recommendations** to the A4NH program. A list of **action items** is included at the end of this document.

Health

Health was a major focus of this year's IAC meeting, particularly how A4NH can refine and strengthen this part of the portfolio during the extension period (2015-16) for Phase 2 of the CRPs, which will begin in 2017. The discussion was particularly timely given how prominently both health and nutrition feature in the latest draft of the CGIAR Strategic Results Framework (SRF).

Recommendations from the IAC on health covered a number of topics. First, although A4NH provided explanations to the IAC for not bringing research on **non-communicable diseases** (NCDs) to the center of A4NH work, the IAC strongly advises that NCD research options continue to be explored. A4NH management has proposed data analysis and modelling of future trends in overweight/obesity and other NCDs will be linked to foresight studies conducted in other CRPs, particularly the CRPs on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) and Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security (CCAFS). At this time, A4NH does not plan to conduct specific research on behavior change or other actions to reduce overweight/obesity.

Second, the IAC recommended that the health portfolio should include exploring issues around urbanization and the **evolution of urban food systems**, particularly from the angle of water use and animals. Third, recognizing that working with professional **institutions in public health** can be valuable for A4NH, the IAC encouraged A4NH to strengthen its relationship with the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and identify other public health institutes in other countries, particularly in Africa. IAC member, Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo agreed to help A4NH identify potential institutes in Africa. The IAC was supportive of the high-level stakeholder event A4NH is planning in mid-2015 to engage the public health community in agriculture, nutrition, and health research, and encouraged A4NH to use that event to begin thinking more about what key indicators will guide A4NH's work in health.

Fourth, some of the preliminary research results from A4NH shared at this meeting suggest that food sold in supermarkets may at times be less safe than food sold in informal wet markets. The IAC recommends that A4NH should be wary of embracing this conclusion until more research is done and the research is published in peer-reviewed journals. How the "**informal markets vs. supermarkets**" message is presented needs to be sensitive to local political contexts and it might be more strategic to put the emphasis on food safety improvements, not on judging one system as safer than the other. Fifth, after hearing results from an ILRI-led study on Ebola risks in intensifying pig production systems in Uganda, the IAC was interested in how A4NH could be involved in developing **strategic communications around the issue of disease epidemics**, like Ebola. IFPRI is working to document the broader livelihood and nutrition and health consequences of the current Ebola epidemic in West Africa, with results expected during the first quarter of 2015. Lastly, the IAC encouraged A4NH to consider more research on **irrigation and the links to human health**. Even though diseases linked to irrigation can be a problem, the IAC encouraged A4NH to avoid offering this as an argument against much-needed irrigation investments, in Africa, for example.

Gender

In terms of how A4NH is implementing the Gender Strategy, the IAC recommended that instead of presenting gender as a separate theme, it should be mainstreamed into each flagship. What gender research is ongoing or completed in each flagship was not clear from this year's presentation. The IAC encouraged A4NH to extend gender research beyond women and to look at the relationships between men and women. The role of older women in households should be considered. This year's presentation on gender to the IAC focused on coordination and capacity building, but in the future, the IAC would like to hear more about what gender research is being conducted in each flagship to uncover the gender dynamics in these ongoing activities. Finally, the IAC recommended that the

gender team should try to address operational issues through linking and working closely with the other Centers.

Evaluations

In this year's meeting A4NH described the two processes the CGIAR is using to evaluate the CRPs. Although all CRPs are required to undergo an evaluation – some will be evaluated by the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) and others have to commission their own external evaluation. Unlike PIM, which is currently being evaluated by the IEA, A4NH falls into the group that will undergo an externally-commissioned evaluation. Findings from the evaluations, which are also known as Review and Validation Studies (RVS) will be used by the Fund Council and broader CGIAR system as an input in decisions about Phase 2 of the CRPs. What is less clear is what will be the relative strengths of the two types of evaluations. The A4NH evaluation team lead, Julia Compton, has been selected, but the evaluation team has yet to be formed and the inception report is not yet ready. Two IAC members – Mahendra Dev and Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo– agreed to serve on the oversight committee for the external evaluation of the overall CRP. In addition, to the overall CRP evaluation, A4NH is conducting an external evaluation on food safety in A4NH, which will be completed by early 2015. Mahendra Dev from the A4NH IAC will serve as the liaison for that evaluation.

The IAC noted that it was too early in the process for the IAC to make strong comments on either evaluation. Nevertheless, they requested clarity about who will use the overall CRP evaluation beyond A4NH and IFPRI, and whether or not it will influence the larger CGIAR system or the Fund Council.

Partnerships

On the topic of partnerships, the IAC requested some clarity from A4NH on its focus areas. It encouraged A4NH to pay attention to gaps, such as partnerships with professional public health associations and institutions, which was mentioned in the discussion on health. The IAC encouraged A4NH to explore partnerships with other Centers and CRPs, like PIM. A4NH should consider adding more research collaborations with NGOs like Oxfam and strengthening its relationship with the World Food Program in several projects under the Flagships on Biofortification, Integrated Programs and Policies, and Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition.

Communication Strategy

In response to last year's request from the IAC, A4NH developed a strategic communications plan for the first year of the extension phase (2015). This plan proposes targeted communication efforts to three specific donors – Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands. In addition, starting in October 2014, A4NH is planning specific events for A4NH donors that foster dialogue around the agriculture, nutrition, and health research agenda. The IAC recommended that strategic communication should be tailored to different donors, taking care to communicate in different ways to different donors. The IAC would like to see more emphasis on capacity building, particularly at the country- and community-levels, articulated in the communication strategy.

Other areas

Overall, the IAC recognizes that A4NH is well-positioned to push big ideas that link with the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the area of eliminating hunger and malnutrition. The IAC encouraged A4NH to take a leadership role in providing evidence on these issues in order to **influence the global development agenda**. The highest priority collaborations with CRPs and Centers were outlined in the A4NH Extension Proposal. The IAC emphasized that it is important for A4NH to **collaborate with other CGIAR Centers and CRPs**, particularly on issues like climate change, and the water and human health issues that were raised. The IAC encouraged A4NH to consider devoting funds from Window 1 (W1) and Window 2 (W2) to facilitate such cross-Center work. Given the unexpected budget cuts in W1/W2 (10% in 2014; 13% in 2015), these collaborations will likely rely more on joint fundraising of W1/W2 funds. The IAC suggested that Flagship 1: **Value Chains for Nutrition needs to be refined**. They expressed some concerns with the progress of this flagship since last year's meeting and expect to see a more focused agenda and improved progress at next year's meeting. A4NH continues to explore how to measure impact through its work on developing impact pathways and theories of changes for parts of the portfolio. Nevertheless, the IAC encouraged A4NH to **measure impact in other ways** beyond number of articles in peer-reviewed journals.

The IAC also requested that the A4NH management assess and document the implications of recently notified W1/W2 budget cuts on the plan of work for 2014 and for the extension period (2015-16).

Action Items

Topic	Action Item	Who	Timeline
Health	- Prepare a brief, with other CGIAR partners, to further specify research plans on non-communicable diseases (NCDs)	A4NH research leaders and PMU, with partners	May 2015 *In time to include in expression of interest for Phase 2 proposal*
	- Plan a high-level consultation with public health stakeholders with a view of positioning A4NH in the broader public health context and agree upon priorities for A4NH research	A4NH research leaders and PMU, with partners	June-July 2015 *Progress will be reported at next IAC meeting*
	- Identify potential partnerships with public health institutions in Africa that A4NH could begin to explore	Mary Amunyuzu-Nyamongo, with A4NH PMU	March 2015 *Progress will be reported at next IAC meeting*
	- Take into account comments on the "informal markets vs supermarkets" research and messaging as part of the overall food safety research planning and positioning for Phase 2 and the ongoing externally-commissioned food safety evaluation	Delia Grace, with A4NH PMU	May 2015 *In time to include in expression of interest for Phase 2 proposal*
	- Explore collaboration with IWMI on diseases associated with irrigation	Delia Grace, with A4NH PMU	March 2016 *In time to include in development of Phase 2 proposal*
Gender	- Focus next year's gender presentation to the IAC on both the cross-cutting issues and the Flagship-specific research, specifically highlighting A4NH research on household dynamics and relationships between men and women, the role of older women, time use studies, and adapting empowerment indicators for nutrition and health outcomes	Hazel Malapit	October 2015
Partnerships	- Describe the focus areas of A4NH partnerships and explore links with other NGOs (e.g., Oxfam) beyond existing partnerships	A4NH PMU, with research leaders	May 2015 *In time to include in expression of interest for Phase 2 proposal*

Action Items (cont'd)

Topic	Action Item	Who	Timeline
Communication Strategy	- For 2015, focus strategic communication on target donors – Canada, German, and the Netherlands; communication strategy will be reviewed and updated at next year's IAC meeting	A4NH PMU, with IAC	Ongoing *Progress will be reported at next IAC meeting*
	- Host events for A4NH donors to dialogue on issues of interest in agriculture, nutrition, and health	A4NH PMU, with research leaders	October 2014; continuing through 2015
	- Describe extent and plans for capacity building activities in the Phase 2 proposal	A4NH PMU, with research leaders	March 2016 *In time to include in development of Phase 2 proposal*
Other areas	- Refine the Flagship 1: Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition research portfolio	Alan de Brauw, with PMU	May 2015 *In time to include in expression of interest for Phase 2 proposal*
	- Update partnership plans for CRP and Center collaborations, including options for joint fundraising	A4NH research leaders and PMU, with partners	May 2015 *In time to include in expression of interest for Phase 2 proposal*
	- Document implications of W1/W2 budget cuts on activities in 2014 and plans for 2015-16	A4NH PMU with research leaders	January 2015 for 2015 POWB