Independent CRP-Commissioned External Evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH)

Inception Report:
Additional Annexes E-K
27 February 2015

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Introduction

One of the sources of evidence proposed in this evaluation is an analysis of a sample of research projects in A4NH. This will enable the evaluation team to explore the factors which promote or constrain delivery of project outputs and outcomes (EQ1). This project-level analysis will inform higher-level investigation of A4NH structures and systems (EQ3), and may also raise hypotheses about the scope and focus of A4NH, which can be discussed as part of tackling EQ4.

Two levels of sample are proposed:

a) A document review of a stratified random sample of up to 50 "research projects" from the A4NH database and other sources that will enable us to provide some quantitative information about project processes such as planning and reporting and may help generate some hypotheses about success/non-success factors.

b) A smaller number of projects will be examined in more depth through country visits and partner and stakeholder interviews in country (indicatively 3 – 4 / country, 4 countries). (However there is no plan for field visits to meet so-called "beneficiaries" – these are not project evaluations, but visits to explore issues around A4NH systems and partnerships).

The universe: A4NH research projects

We have selected the "research project" as the principal unit of analysis. A majority of projects in A4NH are funded or co-funded by bilateral donors who use a project format to fund the work and require project-level documentation.

There are currently[1] 88 projects in the A4NH database, of which:

- one is a large research program Harvest Plus (total budget $100M)[2] (discussed below),
- 12 are projects between $2M and $10 M total funding, and
- the rest are under $2M total funding.

- 53 of the projects in the database have activities in Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda
- 24 have activities in Bangladesh and India (plus Harvest Plus activities In Bangladesh and India)
- Other centers of A4NH activity include: 20 projects with activities in Malawi and Zambia, 18 in Nigeria/Ghana/Benin/Togo/Cote D'Ivoire and 7 in Viet Nam.

The sample to be examined will normally exclude bilateral projects in legacy areas of work which A4NH is not intending to continue. We will ask research leaders to identify these.

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[1] Latest view as of 27 February 2015

[2] Latest view as of 27 February 2015

Project delivery: The A4NH 'deliverables' database is still incomplete (awaiting inputs from Centers), and it would not be realistic to stratify the sample by status of delivery

Harvest Plus or H+ (which covers nearly all of Flagship 2) is a special case. It is a former CGIAR Challenge Program which has been subsumed into A4NH; it retains its own management and reporting systems. Harvest Plus is subdivided into major work areas (crop/ micronutrient/ country combinations) as shown in Table 1 below; into stages of the research pipeline (breeding/development; delivery; nutrition; and impact) and thence into individual contracts: for example Harvest Plus may contract a CGIAR Center to undertake breeding work in a particular crop. Most of the contracts have total budgets under 2 million dollars (some much less).

Table 1: Harvest Plus 12 main subprograms for Biofortification of crops

Micronutrient	Crop	Country
Iron	Beans	DRC
		Rwanda
	Pearl Millet	India
Provitamin A	Cassava	DRC
		Nigeria
	Maize	Zambia
	Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato	Uganda
Zinc	Rice	Bangladesh
		India
	Wheat	India
		Pakistan

The two samples proposed

See Table 2 below for the list of issues to examine in each type of sample.

a) **Document review (EQ1.3)**
- Proposed total sample size: up to 50, depending on variability and what we learn from early samples (as there is a trade-off in time with other evaluation activities).
- For projects in the main A4NH project database: a stratified random sample - stratified on flagships and clusters.
- Harvest Plus is more complex to sample. After discussions, the sampling was based on choosing country-crop combinations related to the country visits, as follows:
  - Bangladesh – Rice - Zinc
  - India – Pearl Millet – Iron
  - Nigeria – Cassava – Provitamin A
  - Within these combinations, a random sample of Harvest Plus contracts was chosen.

- The final list of all sampled projects for the document review, as well as a detailed description of the sampling process, is available from the evaluation team on request.

b) Country focus projects for deeper analysis, with partner interviews (EQ1.3, EQ2)

- As explained in the main text, country visits will be undertaken to Bangladesh, India and Kenya with additional projects in Nigeria covered by VOIP meetings (due to limitations of time)
- Proposed total project sample size for country projects: 18 (for the four countries)
- Sampling started by listing all projects (and Harvest Plus contracts) in the four countries on a spreadsheet, and color-coding each project according to the following criteria:
    - Part of the random sample of document review - preferred both because of randomization and for efficiency, to use the same project documents
    - Projects with an important policy component
    - Projects which represent a wider spread of Centers than were included in the random sample, and projects with particular evaluation interest, e.g. seed funding
- Projects were then prioritized for the sample which included at least two of the above categories.
- The resulting sample was then examined (via 'pivot table' tallies) to check coverage of: research flagships and clusters; Centers; multi-country vs. single country. Three projects were added to fill gaps in flagship/cluster coverage (still following the criteria above).
- The final country project sample is shown in Table 2.
- The full spreadsheet analysis is available on request from the evaluation team.

In country, we will seek to talk to key stakeholders connected with each chosen project, including partners, policymakers where relevant and (if they exist) others working in the same area. Field visits to examine the actual research work are not currently planned (we don't believe that a fly-in, fly out visit will give good information) – however they are not absolutely excluded, if an issue arises which appears to make a field visit important for verification.

Table 2: Final project sample for country visits

Country	Project Title	Flagship	Research Cluster	Lead Center/ Partner	Total Budget (000 dollars)	Notes
Bangladesh	USAID Horticulture Project, CIP/AVRDC Bangladesh	Flagship 1	VCN-interventions	CIP	9,237	CIP
Bangladesh	A4NH Seed Grant: Expanding research on dried small fish in Bangladesh to improve nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life and beyond	Flagship 1	VCN-interventions	WorldFish	100	Seed grant - interesting mechanism
Bangladesh	Harvest Plus contracts on rice-zinc breeding (1) and nutrition (1)	Flagship 2		H+		H+ two stages, IRRI, NARS
Bangladesh	Alive & Thrive (A&T)	Flagship 4	IPP-nutrition-sensitive development	IFPRI-PHND	6,176	Policy, 3 countries, Gates
India	Convergent Innovation for Pulse Production in India: Constraints and Opportunities	Flagship 1	VCN-interventions	IFPRI-New Delhi	200	IFPRI /pulses
India	Harvest Plus contract on pearl millet-iron breeding (1)	Flagship 2		H+		H+/multipartner
India	Integrated pre and post-harvest management strategies to mitigate aflatoxin contamination	Flagship 3	AAD-food safety, aflatoxins	ICRISAT	785	Related to aflatoxin meeting. Multicountry
India	POSHAN: Partnerships and opportunities for strengthening harmonizing actions for nutrition in India	Flagship 4	IPP-nutrition-sensitive development	IFPRI-PHND	2,540	Policy oriented - Gates
Kenya	Leveraging fruit value chains for sustainable and healthier diets in Kenya and Peru	Flagship 1	VCN-assessments	ICRAF	100	ICRAF / fruit
Kenya	Investigation of the relationship between livestock value chains and nutritional status of women and children: a pilot study in Kenya	Flagship 1	VCN-interventions	ILRI	140	Seed grant - interesting mechanism. ILRI

Country	Project Title	Flagship	Research Cluster	Lead Center/ Partner	Total Budget (000 dollars)	Notes
Kenya	Nutrition Sensitive Landscapes	Flagship 1	VCN-landscapes	Bioversity	666	Only project in nut-sens. Landscapes cluster
Kenya	Nutritional Quality Assurance and Enhancement Network (NQAEN)	Flagship 2	Biofortification-breeding	CIP	748	Innovative network. Only Flagship 2 project in Kenya. Also in Bangladesh.
Kenya	Dynamic Drivers of Disease in Africa: Ecosystems, livestock/wildlife, health and wellbeing (DDDAC)	Flagship 3	AAD-disease risks	ILRI	1,183	Wide deliverables. ILRI.
Kenya	Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use for improved human nutrition and well-being – Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition Project	Flagship 4	IPP-cross-sectoral policies	Bioversity	4,083	Bioversity
Kenya	Mama SASHA under SASHA project	Flagship 4	IPP-nutrition-sensitive agriculture	CIP	1,231	Only project in nut-sens. agric cluster
Nigeria	Harvest Plus contract on cassava-Vit A delivery (1) and impact (1)	Flagship 2		H+		IITA, H+ delivery/ impact
Nigeria	Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) - Expansion of biological control in Africa; Testing of large-scale manufacturing model for aflasafe	Flagship 3	AAD-food safety, aflatoxins	IITA	1,777	IITA

Key:

	(Prodoc) In evaluation project document review - part of a stratified random sample
	(Wider range) Brings in wider range of Centers, commodities, program types
	(Policy) Has a particular focus on policy issues (we believe)
	Prodoc + policy (yellow + red)
	Prodoc + wider range (yellow + blue)
	All three
	Added to fill a gap in coverage of a research cluster or Center (see text)

Factors to examine in research projects

Table 3 shows the list of factors to be examined in the two samples. The list for the document review has been turned into a template for scoring and is currently (at the time this inception report is being finalized) being piloted and refined. For the country project sample, interview protocols will be developed shortly. Final versions will be available from the evaluation team.

To promote comparability between assessments by different team members, templates, clear criteria and guidelines will be used, and there will be regular communication within the team to resolve any methodological questions emerging.

Table 3 Initial checklist of factors to examine in research projects

X – to examine (X) – will look for documentary evidence, but likely to be thin or incomplete GE – Include consideration of gender and equity – see Annex G

Factor	Issues to examine	Document review	Country visit sample
Planning process	From concept to specific activities: Who was involved and how (GE) Any comments on proposals and responses to those, Changes since initial approval	X	X
Objectives of research including impact focus (EQ2)	Focus on impact: Clear vision of ultimate goal, Clarity about target groups (including disaggregation of gender and other groups - GE)[3]	X	X
Theory of change/impact pathway	Clear and logical impact pathway/ToC Use of ToC for research management including risk management e.g., testing assumptions and changing direction (GE)	X	X X
Consideration of policy (EQ4)	Appropriate consideration of policy and regulatory environment, including allocation of resources or partnerships to address key constraints (GE)	(X)	X
Quality of science (EQ2)	Peer/expert review of research designs Evidence of innovative/novel approaches Research teams and partners have appropriate qualifications and clear roles and responsibilities Reporting and networking functions clear	X X	X X X X

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[3] Note: it is expected that the research portfolio will contain some projects of more upstream/innovative nature and targets may be more aspirational.

Factor	Issues to examine	Document review	Country visit sample
	See separate annex for full list of issues to consider in country project sample		X
Financing	Adequate resources for planned activities		X
	Stability and timeliness of funding	(X)	X
Human resources	Adequate human resources for planned activities See separate annex for full list of issues to consider in country project sample		X
Performance management	Roles and responsibilities Clear	X	X
	Use of monitoring for performance management and changes of course	(X)	X
	HR performance management issues (see separate line)		
Other inputs	Procurement of goods and services Support facilities, IT		X
Coordination and partnerships (EQ2)	Mention of A4NH or other partnership strategy/ guiding document	X	X
	Documentation of any formal agreements among Centers or partners	X	X
	Job description for any roles with specific responsibility for partnership/s	(X)	X
	Use of any partnership management tools e.g., capacity assessment, review framework	X	X
	See separate annex for full list of issues to consider in country project sample		
Capacity development	Use of any capacity development strategy or framework	X	X
	Capacity development budget line/s	X	X
	Job description or terms of reference for capacity development / CapDev related activities	X	X
	Evidence of CapDev - internally and external partners	X	X
	See separate annex on issues to be considered in country project sample		
Monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning	What monitoring was planned (GE)	X	X
	What monitoring and reporting was carried out, how resourced, to whom reported, how used.	X	X

Factor	Issues to examine	Document review	Country visit sample
	Were any reviews/evaluations commissioned and by whom, what did they cover, process, how used (GE)	(X)	X
	Other learning from/managed by project		X
External communications	What external communications were carried out by project/ evidence of results	(X)	X
Exit strategy	Existence of written exit strategy (or equivalent) or informal plans	X	X
Other implementation and management issues	Specific issues in EQ2 (transaction costs, expectations of researchers)		X
	Look for other efficiency issues	(X)	X
	Look for other implementation issues (payment of farmer/collaborators, research or ethical issues arising etc)		X
	Other issues raised by A4NH, researchers or partners		X
Gender and equity	Crosscutting across many questions above (GE) See separate annex of issues to be considered	X	X

The quality of science (EQ2) can be assessed by looking at processes, resources, and outputs, evaluated at both program and project levels, both of which have strategic and operational functions. The quality of strategic research management is the foundation for the impact pathway to program results. It includes applying state-of-the-art thinking to problem identification, prioritization, and research design, and ensures that institutional resources and support services are adequate to implement the research program. It also reinforces information sharing and knowledge management and coordination/collaboration among research teams and partners. The principal focus for strategic management in this evaluation will be on CRP program and Flagship management, with consideration given to project management within each Flagship for chosen research lines. At an operational level, the quality of science is reflected in the qualifications and composition of research teams, good team leadership, coordination, facilities and support services, resources, and staff conditions which motivate performance. For high performing science organization, evaluations seek to identify innovative and novel approaches and the generation and dissemination of research results.

The overall science quality of a research project is only as strong as its weakest link: for example a strong design may be let down by poor data collection. For this reason, our assessment of science quality brings in evidence from other Evaluation Questions, including capacity development and partnerships.

Table 4: Assessment of science quality

Questions to examine	Metrics / issues	Sources of evidence
1. Are research issues, questions, hypotheses and designs clearly articulated, informed by high quality scientific input and reviewed through internal or external peer/expert review process? **Unit of Analysis**: • sample of research projects/lines from each Flagship	• Research outputs and outcomes identified and clearly relate to strategic impact pathways (see EQ1.1) • Research team has clear expectations about research quality and how measured (2.4.a) • Evidence of innovative/novel approaches • Research design includes references to current scientific literature and/or incorporates views from expert consultation • Research design incorporates lessons learned from prior or similar research, including process lessons (e.g., partnerships, capdev) • Research design includes clear workplan and budget • Risks to research outcomes clearly identified (linked to impact pathway) and managed	**Document review**: CRP and Flagship planning documents; research proposals; peer and/or expert reviews; technical consultation reports; evaluations **Interviews**: key management staff, researchers, partners, sector specialists/reviewers **Observation**: Meetings of CRP focal points and gender and nutrition network**.**

Questions to examine	Metrics / issues	Sources of evidence
	• Research design clearly addresses gender and equity issues • Research design examines capacity and identifies CD needs • Research proposal is reviewed by peers/experts and views considered	
2. To what extent do A4NH, IFPRI and participating Centers create the conditions and incentives to ensure high quality scientific output? **Unit of Analysis**: • IFPRI and participating Centers/A4NH • sample of research projects/lines from each Flagship	• A4NH has a strategy for enhancing research quality and quality standards are designed and managed to align researcher incentives with objectives of A4NH • Performance management system(s) rewards high quality research • Capacity development is provided to upgrade staff skills • Researchers use appropriate methods to address issues of gender equity, environmental sustainability and access to information and technologies	**Document review**: HR policies/processes (E3.1.b); research quality standards/values/priorities; CapDev analysis **Interviews**: key management staff, researchers, advisory groups for research quality (if available) **E-Survey:** key researchers
3. Does A4NH have the number, quality and level of researchers and research leaders to deliver relevant, high quality scientific output? Do research teams and partners have clear roles and responsibilities? Are reporting and networking functions clear? **Unit of Analysis**: • IFPRI and participating Centers/A4NH • Country project sample • Pre/Post project sample	• Research teams, including principal investigators, and partners have appropriate qualifications and clear roles and responsibilities, including leadership functions • Reporting and networking functions are clear • Job descriptions, staff orientation, performance assessments, scientific track records • Vacancies filled in timely manner • Diversity within research teams (gender, nationality, seniority) • Research management/team building CD, if needed • Incentives/motivations for team work/networking	**Document review**: HR staff records; CGIAR Research Output and Collaboration Study 2014 by Elsevier; awards/recognition; evaluations. **Interviews**: key management staff, researchers

Questions to examine	Metrics / issues	Sources of evidence
4. Does A4NH have access to the facilities, resources and other inputs to conduct quality research? **Unit of Analysis**: • IFPRI and participating Centers/A4NH • Country project sample • Pre/Post project sample	• Effective financial planning/ allocation/management (resources adequate, timely and predictable) • Adequate facilities for IT, data management, conferencing, communications • Existence and use of publication policy/plan/protocols: trial registries, publications, documentation of negative results, publication of data (evidence from A4NH, triangulated) • Publications make clear methods, data sources and limitations (replicability) • Quality of data and publication handling on sample of pre/post (as per EQ2.1) • Adequate research facilities: offices, labs, equipment, transportation, mobility, field locations, etc.	**Document review**: internal audit; administration reports; publications policy/plans; CGIAR Research Output and Collaboration Study 2014 by Elsevier; research progress reports. **Interviews**: key management staff, financial and admin staff, support services managers, researchers **Analysis of a sample of research lines**: focus project/research lines in up to five countries (see sampling table) **E-Survey:** key researchers
5. What is the quality of research outputs? Do research outputs address A4Nh objectives? **Unit of Analysis**: • IFPRI and participating Centers/A4NH • Country project sample • Pre/Post project sample	• Well-targeted research outputs addressing the scope of A4NH / research project objectives (e.g., publications, policy briefs, models, databases, guidance materials, capdev events, varieties and technologies) • Extent to which A4NH research is innovative in terms of methods, partnerships and expectations of uptake • Research outputs consider gender and other equity issues	**Document review:** output database; progress reporting; CGIAR Research Output and Collaboration Study 2014 by Elsevier; publications and/or other research communications; workshop proceedings; evidence of policy-research-development linkages; value chains **Interviews:** A4NH and Flagship research managers; senior researchers; partners **Self-assessment on research quality and results:** Flagship, Cluster and project managers, senior researchers **E-Survey:** key researchers

Gender and equity issues are important cross-cutting issues for the evaluation, and analysis of these areas also contributes to answering specific Evaluation Questions – for example 1.3 and 2.1.   Here we outline the main issues to be addressed and proposed sources of information.

1. Equity

Equity and discrimination are important issues for A4NH outcomes (GNR, 2014; Haddad, 2015). Equity issues are explicitly addressed in some A4NH research projects and are implicit in many others (e.g. via the concept of "access" of poor people to value chains). However, equity issues are given little explicit attention in A4NH proposal documents (with the notable exception of the Agriculture-Associated Disease cluster), and there is no specific CGIAR or A4NH strategy or framework for addressing equity issues other than those related to gender (below).

The evaluation will look at how equity issues are conceptualized, addressed, and measured (including disaggregation) in A4NH overall, in A4NH Flagships and in a sample of individual research projects and other activities, through document review and interviews.

2. Gender

Background

Gender is recognized as a key area for A4NH, because the relationships between women and men, boys and girls, and the practical roles that they undertake inside and outside the household (for example as farmers and traders, cooks and caregivers) strongly affect nutritional and health outcomes. Apart from this, 'Gender equality and women's empowerment' is one of the Millennium Development Goals (now Sustainable Development Goals) and the CGIAR is committed to promoting this.   The concept of 'gender' is therefore complex, and encompasses two different paradigms/approaches: **gender differences** (sometimes called 'practical gender needs') which addresses current differences in male and female roles and relationships, and '**transformational' aspirations** to promote changes in gender equity (sometimes called 'strategic gender needs').

IFPRI – the lead Center for A4NH - is an acknowledged world leader in gender and agriculture research (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011), and inter alia has been instrumental in developing the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index WEAI   (Alkire et al., 2013; IFPRI, 2012) .   The CGIAR more widely, however, has had a patchy track record on gender, with gender reportedly being "de-emphasized in CG research since mid 2000s" (Ashby, 2012).

The reformed CGIAR has a strong focus on gender, supported by a gender specialist based in the Consortium Office and a gender and agricultural research network which started in 2012.

Two gender strategies: Consortium and A4NH

The Consortium Gender Strategy (CGIAR Consortium Board, 2011) has two components:

- Mainstreaming gender research in the CRPs
- Diversity and Gender in the workplace

The targets for the Consortium strategy are:

a) *All CRPs have an explicit gender strategy* that is implemented within 6 months of their inception. This should include inter alia, clear impact pathways, an explanation of how gender will be considered in all aspects of the research cycle (targeting, priority setting, and design of the research, implementation and impact assessment); a monitoring and evaluation plan with clear targets; budgeted activities; clear management accountabilities; and an assessment of CRP capacity.

b) *Research outputs in all CRPs bring demonstrable and measurable benefits to women farmers* in target areas within 4 years following inception of the CRP.

c) *By 2014 Staff training and strategic partnerships ensure all CRPs have sufficient gender expertise.*

d) [Also a Human Resource target? to be determined]

The A4NH Gender Strategy was approved in the first year of the CRP (A4NH, 2012a). The objectives of the A4NH strategy state that "*The AN4H does not conduct strategic gender research (it is not a separate component of the CRP's agenda) but rather ... gender analysis is integrated throughout the research to inform and deepen the relevance of other research themes.*"

The objectives and outcomes for each of the four A4NH Flagships are summarized in Table 5. The strategy also identified specific researchable gender questions for each Flagship area (p.26). A budget of $358,000 has been allocated from W1/2 funds to support the implementation of the strategy from 2013-15. In the Gender Strategy, A4NH has provided an estimate of the amount used for gender research in each Flagship.

Table 5: Objectives and expected outcomes of gender research in A4NH flagships

Flagship	Objectives and expected outcomes of gender research
1. Value chains for enhanced nutrition	Women benefit, both as producers and consumers, from the development of nutrition-sensitive value chains (because often benefits mainly flow to men)
	Women have increased capacity for decision-making in the production, marketing, and consumption of nutrient-rich and safe foods
	Both men and women can improve nutrition along the value chain esp. women's access to better processing technologies, capacity building, or organization
2. Biofortification	Development of biofortified foods takes into account the unique nutrient needs of women and girls;
	Marketing and messaging on biofortified crops tailored to women, as primary household decision makers regarding food
	Data gathered on gender/ life-cycle differences in nutrition and health.
3. Agriculture-associated diseases (AAD)	Men's and women's differential exposure to agriculture-related risks and health outcomes better understood
	Women have increased capacity to manage risks and are more involved in the surveillance of risks
	Women directly benefit from interventions designed to reduce agriculture-associated diseases
4. Integrated agriculture,	Gender included in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of nutrition and health programs

Flagship	Objectives and expected outcomes of gender research
nutrition and health development programs and policies. (IPP)	Gender-disaggregated indicators developed to assess the impact of ANH programs on women's social, health, and nutritional status in an integrated way
	Cross-sectoral, gender-sensitive policies developed.

Source: A4NH gender strategy (A4NH, 2012a) pp 7-8

The A4NH gender strategy also identifies a number of concrete areas for action including:

- *Value chain partnerships*: *"Gender work in A4NH will partner with the other CRPs working on nutritious and safe food value chains... especially PIM and [the commodity-focused CRPs'] work on high value and staple commodities."*

- *Policy*: *"A4NH will focus its gender policy efforts on two areas: 1) examining agricultural policies more broadly to identify where they enable or disable women, and where they contribute to closing (or widening) the gender gap relative to nutrition and health outcomes; and 2) promoting crosssectoral policy and decision making that promotes gender equality across agriculture, health and nutrition, and social sectors." (p. 15)*

Monitoring and evaluation: The A4NH strategy (p. 20) includes ambitious plans for cross-CRP monitoring and evaluation, as follows:

"We will track our progress toward achieving gender-responsive objectives by monitoring the achievement of deliverables in each of the four components. We will use participatory methods, such as outcome mapping and net mapping, tailored to each of the impact pathways and their associated theory of change. This ex ante assessment will be followed by an evaluation. …The evaluation will focus on achievement of integrated, gendered intermediate development outcomes (IDOs) at CRP and system level through the three impact pathways and associated theories of change. We will review our progress towards reaching our outcomes and impacts annually and update the associated theories of change in each impact pathway accordingly."

Baselines for gender-related capacity and mainstreaming:

The strategy includes some baseline data on capacity in gender issues based on information provided by Centers. This (current) evaluation will seek to use this information where possible, although it is incomplete.

The strategy also contains questionnaire results on the state of mainstreaming gender into the main research processes.   Although interesting, this cannot be used as a baseline due to insufficient responses (18 projects) and the likelihood of variable interpretation of many of the questions in the questionnaire.

Activities

The gender specialists in A4NH have been very active in trying to mainstream gender issues and build capacity across the A4NH portfolio and more broadly across the CGIAR and partners (also building on the gender capacity in the PIM CRP). For example (this is not a complete list) they have set up a Gender and Nutrition network, which includes a blog (Gender Nutrition Idea Exchange -

GENIE), managed two annual meetings; and carried out an analysis of the approach to gender in all project plans.

Starting in 2014, A4NH started systematically collecting project-level information about the gender research focus (or lack of focus). For example, a section was added to the work plans asking each Center to classify the level of gender focus of each project deliverable (none, some, significant). With the 2015 work plans, A4NH is collecting additional information about the gender research dimension of projects including, but not limited to, gender research questions and the type of gender-disaggregated data being collected).

Issues to examine in this evaluation

Some of the broader evaluation questions (see Annex A) are also relevant to the work on gender:

a) **Is the scope and focus of the A4NH gender strategy appropriate?** The A4NH Independent Advisory Committee has repeatedly raised questions about whether the A4NH research strategy for gender is sufficiently focused, or whether energies are too dispersed – and has also asked whether the strategy is too focused on women, ignoring men and youth.   How has the strategy worked in practice? Were expectations of the 2012 strategy realistic, e.g. breadth and depth of coverage, rate of progress, capacity for monitoring and evaluation? What lessons have been learned?

b) **What is the linkage between the A4NH strategy and the Consortium strategy**? Do they reinforce each other appropriately?

c) **What have been the main effects of the CRP and the reform process on the way gender is integrated into research projects and programs**?

d) **Is the balance right between the three main work areas**: improving the way gender is addressed in A4NH research, improving the integration of gender into research-policy linkages and strengthening what the whole CGIAR does on gender/ANH?

e) **Is the CRP appropriately resourced and structured for work in gender?** Does the CRP have enough financial resources and staff with the right skills in the right places? There is also a potential tension between the pressure on individual researchers to produce and publish high quality research and the time they need to invest to develop the capacity of other colleagues and partners: how is this being managed?   Are gender researchers carrying out any work that could be handled by the broader HR/capacity development system, or outsourced?

f) **Does the way in which gender is being mainstreamed represent high-quality research?** (Ashby, 2012) identified the "risk of mainstreaming a quick, low-cost 'gender fix' versus an evidence-based research process that uses quality social science" – this may be accentuated by a pressure to report rapid progress on mainstreaming.

g) **How are other equity issues handled in gender?** Focusing only on gender may lead to missing other important equity issues (for example, not all women are equal).

Proposed approach

This evaluation has insufficient resources for a full gender audit of A4NH. Instead, it will seek to:

a) Promote self-evaluation of the issues by the people most closely involved, and triangulate using other evidence
b) Use evidence already generated inside and outside A4NH, including monitoring by the A4NH gender group and the Consortium, the Strategic Gender Audit of biofortification (HarvestPlus, 2014) and others
c) Integrate gender and equity questions into the main approaches used by the evaluation team (in particular analysis of a sample of research projects)
d) Wherever possible use harmonized measures and indicators to promote comparability across CRPs.   Where possible (given limited resources) we will attempt to benchmark with other CRPs, if relevant monitoring and evaluation evidence is available (no primary data collection from other CRPs)

Proposed sources of information

Self-assessment of the issues raised above: by the gender group and A4NH management. The views and evidence produced will be triangulated through:

Document review: Key CRP documents and communications; gender evaluations/audits; Gender monitoring and reports; HR metrics

Analysis of samples of research lines as outlined in Annex YY.   How are gender and other equity issues integrated into key parts of the research process including: targeting, priority setting, design of the research, selection of partners, capacity building, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment?   Does the collection and analysis of disaggregated data follow CGIAR guidelines (Doss and Kieran, 2013)? Are there differences in the way gender/equity is treated now in research projects that started before the CRP?

Interviews: key management staff, researchers, partners of sample projects

Observation: of A4NH-sponsored gender-nutrition network meeting and follow-up with participants

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ANNEX H: ASSESSMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Partnerships are fundamentally important to the CGIAR in the delivery of its CRPs. Strengthening the capacity of partners and other stakeholders, as well as strengthening the institutional capacity to deliver ambitious projects, are recognized priorities but are sometimes in competition for resources (such as time) with other priorities such as publications.

A4NH has categorized partners into five broad categories, depending on the partner's role (A4NH, 2012b):

1. **The CGIAR:** The research centers who are partnering with A4NH
2. **Enablers:** Policy and decision makers as well as investors who are all involved in the creation of enabling environments at different national, regional, and international levels.
3. **Development Implementers:** Government departments and ministries, the United Nations and other global initiatives, NGOs, civil society organizations, and farmers' groups that all play critical roles in development programming
4. **Value Chain Actors:** Private-sector companies, public-private initiatives, associations, and groups that focus on the quality and safety of foods in value chains.
5. **Research Institutes:** Developed and developing-country research institutes and academic institutions at the national and international level that are involved in ANH.

Another layer of A4NH partnership is with the farmers, traders, consumers and households that participate in A4NH research. As CGIAR research is aimed at producing global public goods, these people are not always intended "beneficiaries" in the way that similar people might be seen in a development program, and they may in fact not benefit immediately and directly from A4NH research (for example, people in trial 'control' groups).

The evaluation will analyze the operationalization of partnerships in A4NH, including identification and assessment of partner capacity, developing partner capacity and managing the ongoing relationship and communications with partners. This will include an assessment of the A4NH partnership strategy and its use. It will also look at partnership innovations by A4NH, such as the secondment of an A4NH expert to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) headquarters.

Capacity Development: The evaluation will also analyze the way in which A4NH has met internal and external capacity gaps. The CGIAR Capacity Development Community of Practice has developed a number of tools and frameworks to inform Centers and these will be used, along with other appropriate frameworks, to guide the evaluation.

Table 6: Partnerships: proposed issues to examine and sources of evidence

Issues to examine (and indicators if relevant)	Sources of evidence

Partnerships
 	
• Effective and consistent operationalization of A4NH partnership strategy
• Effective involvement of partners (e.g. orgs, projects, individuals) in research and activity programming, i.e. at project level
• Transparency and effective communication
• Clear criteria for partnering and evidence of their use or expanding or contracting partnerships
• Extent to which partner capacity has been appropriately assessed and developed by CRP (refer capacity development)
	Document/s
	
	• Partnership strategy (A4NH – CRP)
	• Partnership policy / guidelines and tools[4] to select, support and develop partners
	    – Needs assessments / capacity assessment tools for use at outset and at review
	    – Induction
	    – Agreements
	    – Survey frameworks
	    – Guidance / manual for managing the partner relationship
	• Corporate risk register (Center/s, A4NH) – has reference to partnerships
	• Job descriptions (A4NH staff) - evidence of responsibility for managing partner relationships / capdev of partners (A4NH, project sample)
	• Database of partners including key data, contact information and records of dialogue/communication (Center/A4NH)
	• Record of terminated partnerships and reasons (sample projects)
	• Record of partner growth (impact, credibility, profile, new jobs) (Sample projects)
	• Budget/s for partners as appropriate (may include evidence of allocation to partner for Internal Cost Recovery (ICR) / contribution to overhead)
	
	Interviews
	
	• Interviews with CRP senior management at center level and at country / flagship level, and key partner representatives (for project samples and country visits)

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[4] Frameworks from the Partnering Initiative, IFPRI (Transform Nutrition), and the CGIAR Capacity Development (CapDev) Community of Practice (Partnership Enhancement Tool.pdf, n.d.) Capacity strengthening | Transform Nutrition, n.d. ; Practice, C.C.D.C. of, 2014. Capacity Development Framework Working Draft (Working Paper).

Table 7: Capacity development: proposed issues to examine and sources of evidence

Issues to examine (and indicators if relevant)	Sources of evidence
Capacity development Effectiveness of capacity development, considering three groups of stakeholders: 1) Internal, CRP and Center staff 2) External partners 3) Others (which may include governments, policy makers, private sector) • Operationalization of CRP's capacity development principles, framework and/or strategy • Existence and implementation of staff and capacity development plans for research management, organizational skills, innovation	*Document/s* • Framework (strategy) for capacity development that is adequately resourced (budgets and people/time) (A4NH • Detailed CRP and Flagship capacity development **plans** (A4NH and with partners), especially for research management, organization skills and innovation; This should include for example induction of researchers new to particular areas, and means of handing over skills of those leaving. • Re**cord/**s of capacity assessment/s • Record of capacity development activities – training, workshops, toolkits (A4NH, Centers, partners, sample projects) • Capacity development platforms (e.g. training, workshops, e-learning); • Evaluations of capacity development activities and impact / effectiveness (A4NH, partners) • Budgets – record of budget/resources allocated for capacity development related activities (A4NH, project sample) *Interviews* • CRP management, capacity development group/point persons, researchers and partners (sample projects and country visits) *e-Survey* • Key researchers/staff on extent/effectiveness of provision

Human resource (HR) management underpins performance. Analyzing HR issues contributes broadly to several EQs including EQ1 (factors favoring and constraining delivery of planned outputs) EQ2 (the value added and drawbacks of the CRP in comparison to pre-reform structures) and EQ 3 (whether the CRP has adequate systems and resources to deliver).

The CRPs present a number of potential challenges to CGIAR human resource systems, including:

1) **Matrix management**

    CRPs themselves are not legal entities and do not normally recruit and manage staff; this task falls to CGIAR Centers. Thus staff members working on A4NH are contracted by their respective Centers, each with its own HR and performance management system. Questions to explore include whether the expectations of staff, incentives and management support given to staff are consistent across Centers and between Centers and A4NH.

2) **New ways of thinking and working**

    CRPs are challenging many CGIAR researchers to think and work in new ways: for example to focus more on achieving impact at scale, gender and equity, to identify and involve new partners or work with partners in different ways. Are the right teams being recruited, with the right skills? Are skills of existing staff being developed to enable them to function effectively in new CGIAR? Do the performance management and HR systems work to align staff incentives with these new objectives?

3) **Staff time and morale**

    Some questions to address include: Do staff have enough time for their core activities, or are they being pulled in other directions, e.g., by additional administrative demands? Does the HR system monitor and address such issues? Have HR systems kept pace with new demands and expectations?

Table 8: Issues in Human Resource management

Issues to examine (and indicators if relevant)	Sources of evidence
Effective HR systems which support the delivery of the CRP, and staff, and align staff incentives with objectives of CRP • HR strategy (Center/s, A4NH) • HR Policies – focus on four key areas 1) Performance management (inc alignment with objectives of CRP, incentives, appraisals), 2) staff development, including training, management & leadership development, mentoring, 3) stress mgt and wellbeing, and 4) staff engagement (Center, A4NH) • HR procedures and implementation (A4NH project sample) for the 4 key areas above • See separate sheet on capacity development	• CRP proposals and documents • HR organogram and HR strategy (Chartered Institute of Personnel, 2014) • HR manual / staff handbook for CRP / Centers • IEA evaluations of other centers • Policy documentation including pay policy and implementation guidance, and specific HR policies e.g., wellbeing, stress, training / learning, time off, talent management, succession • Metrics / report from HR information system e.g., training records, appraisal records, record of progression through career paths or recognition of performance, diversity metrics and evidence of performance against gender and diversity targets

Issues to examine (and indicators if relevant)	Sources of evidence

Specific focus on performance management.
 	
[Extent to which the CRP has led to more effective performance management at Center level i.e. aligning incentives for individuals and teams with the objectives and targets of the CRP]
 	
    – Clear performance management policy and supporting documentation
    – Evidence of trained managers
    – Data records showing how many staff have had performance reviews in any one year
    – Performance management approach used by different Centers in A4NH and linkages with staff incentives
    – Details of any merit related / performance related pay policy (and criteria for pay increases)
• Training / learning policy and operationalization (including metrics)
• Wellbeing at work and stress management policies, and operationalization
• Mechanism/s for prioritizing work and ensuring effective time management and allocation of resources
	• Evidence from samples of projects (document reviews, interviews…) and progress memos from semi-annual meetings
	• Interviews with A4NH focal points and HR management in 4-5 A4NH Centers to help understand what alignment means and whether activities relating to capacity development, and working with partners (i.e. demonstrating skills necessary to achieve CRP results, such as effective communications with wide audience of stakeholders, and capacity support to weak partner institutions) are valued as highly as publishing.
	• Interview/s with key HR management staff, compensation & benefits specialist or payroll management, and with staff rep or Union rep
	• Staff perspective could be gathered through some specific e-survey questions based on statements and Likert scale for example: standard questions) such as kept informed, information , including standard engagement type survey questions (Likert – 5 point - scale Strongly agree > strong disagree, for example 3 questions:
	    – 'I am kept informed of what is happening elsewhere in the organization';
	    – This organization practices open, honest communication and shares information',
	    – 'I am clear how my role contributes to the organization's objectives

There are four main evaluation questions to address in the A4NH evaluation, due to report in June 2015. The Expert Panel is being asked to look at one of the four evaluation questions: "Is the scope and focus of A4NH relevant and appropriate?" While the evaluation will include some retrospective analysis of this issue, the Expert Panel will focus on a forward-looking perspective.

The Expert Panel will contribute to answering the following evaluation sub-questions:

4.1   Within the changing national and international context and architecture for ANH, how could the focus of A4NH be improved to increase its value-added?

4.2c   Is the current/planned configuration of A4NH judged to be appropriate to the current and future context?

The expert panel will consider the current state of knowledge on major research gaps in agriculture, nutrition and health[5], the comparative advantage of A4NH and the CGIAR, and the roles of other international players, and produce a short report on the pros and cons of the current scope and focus of A4NH, and on options that the CRP could consider in planning its second phase. The evaluation team will provide the Expert Panel with background documentation and a summary of issues, based on the available literature plus additional information and references provided by A4NH research leaders and members of the expert panel themselves.

The Expert Panel will be facilitated by Diana McLean, supported by Julia Compton.   Julia Compton and Mysbah Balagamwala are responsible for producing the summary of issues for the panel to discuss.

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[5] Regarding health issues in agriculture, A4NH has international expert consultation meetings under way in 2015 and we will look for opportunities for relevant Expert Panel members to participate in these.

Confidential, anonymous e-surveys are useful for giving a wide range of stakeholders a voice in the evaluation, as well as collecting quantitative data on specific evaluation questions. However, surveys which are very long and difficult to complete can result in low response rates and sometimes dubious data quality. A short 'mini-survey' with only a few questions also has the advantage that it can be rapidly completed and analyzed and the results widely shared, generating interest and participation in the evaluation.

In the first draft of this inception report, the evaluation team proposed a 'mini-survey' of CGIAR staff working with A4NH, with only one main question[6] and some optional supplementary questions. This pilot mini-survey has now been administered through SurveyMonkey software, and it closed just before this inception report went to press. It appears to have a reasonable response rate and has generated many useful comments.   The analysis should be completed within a week.

The team now plans to conduct at least two more mini-surveys:

- one of A4NH partners; and
- at least one more mini-survey of CGIAR staff working with A4NH.

We will incorporate design lessons from the first mini-survey, including pre-testing of wording with a wider variety of respondents.   While English seemed to work adequately for the "staff" survey (English is the main working language across the CGIAR), language could be an important issue in the partners' survey and we will decide how to address this.

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[6] This was a closed question using a 5-point Likert scale about the pros and cons of working through A4NH as opposed to working directly through a CGIAR Center (as was the case pre-CGIAR reform)