

Evaluation of CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture, Nutrition and Health (A4NH)

Results of ‘minisurvey’ of CGIAR staff working with A4NH



Word Cloud: “the most positive aspects of working with A4NH”

Summary

There were 148 responses by CGIAR staff working with the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Agriculture, Nutrition and Health (A4NH) to a short ‘mini-survey’ on the pros and cons of working through A4NH/CRPs¹. More people agreed (51%) than disagreed (18%) that it is more effective to work through A4NH than directly through Centers, although a substantial fraction (30%) were “not sure”. Only a small fraction (about 3%) said that they “strongly disagree” that it is more effective working through A4NH, in contrast to the 20% who “strongly agree”.

In response to open questions on positive and negative aspects of working with A4NH, nearly half of those who commented cited better coordination across Centers and disciplines as a major plus point of working with A4NH. Other frequently-cited advantages were the inspiring mission and leadership in this CRP, the improved potential for practical impact of the research, the flexible funding supporting new areas of work, and the opportunities for learning and professional development.

Asked for the most negative aspects of working with A4NH/CRPs, nearly half of those who commented cited increased workloads due to the additional layer of planning, reporting and financial administration created by CRPs, while one in six comments highlighted the problem of unstable funding. (Reduced administration and stable funding were supposed to be among the gains from introducing CRPs, but they are very difficult to achieve unless donors make a significant behavior change towards harmonizing their systems or move away from individual bilateral projects to more core funding.)

The other important problem raised was failure of communication, and resulting tensions between and among CRP leaders and different Centers and areas of work. Many comments called for increased transparency around key decisions – particularly structuring A4NH and funding choices. Some researchers and technicians feel isolated and unaware of what’s going on in the CRP. Improving transparency of decision-making and cross-CGIAR (including within-Center) communications could be a useful area of focus for A4NH management.

Introduction

As part of the ongoing evaluation of A4NH (for background see the [evaluation webpage](#)), the evaluation team sent a short “mini-survey” to staff working with A4NH, using SurveyMonkey software. The survey closed on 25 February². The main purpose of the survey was to kick off the evaluation and give CGIAR staff an initial opportunity to state what they like and don’t like about

¹ 152 responses were originally received – 148 was the final number analysed after data cleaning (removing two duplicates and two responses missing key information).

² Preliminary results of the survey (an earlier form of this paper) were shared with A4NH Center Focal Points in mid March.

working with A4NH and CRPs in general. The raw survey data is confidential, and steps have been taken to protect the identity of respondents³.

This paper summarizes the results from the minisurvey.

Who responded to the mini-survey?

A list of “staff working with A4NH”⁴ was compiled with the help of the A4NH Management Unit and checked with A4NH Center Focal Points. A total of 148 people answered the survey, out of 449 who received the link. Unfortunately, we don’t have a reliable list of everyone working with A4NH and it is likely that many people who received the email link to the minisurvey (especially in IFPRI) were not actually in the intended target audience⁵. So we don’t have a clear idea of the overall survey response rate, although we believe it was not lower than 30%. We have a similar difficulty in calculating response rates for different Centers or groups of people. However, examination of responses by Center showed that there was broad representation across all the Centers represented in A4NH, roughly in proportion to the total budget in each Center attributed to A4NH activities⁶. We feel that the results are likely to be reasonably representative of CGIAR staff working with the CRP, although some groups may be under-represented⁷.

The distribution of respondents is tabulated in Annex 2. Almost half (48%) of minisurvey respondents had been with the CGIAR since before the CGIAR reforms started in 2009, while a quarter (26%) were relatively new, having joined the CGIAR only after the launch of A4NH in 2012. Nearly half (45%) of respondents identified their primary role as ‘researcher’, compared to 28% who identified their primary role as ‘research manager’ and 21% who were primarily administrators or service providers (e.g. finance, HR, IT services). Geographical representation was dominated by sub-Saharan Africa (39% of respondents) and North America (30%) with lower numbers from Asia,

³ The raw data is held in a confidential location and only accessible to external independent members of the evaluation team. SurveyMonkey only identifies people by code, but nonetheless it might be possible to identify some people – for example by personal remarks on their work made in their comments, or the fact that they were the only person responding from their Center. Data has therefore been cleaned and aggregated so that individuals are not identifiable, and once analysis is completed the whole dataset will be made available.

⁴ There is no official “staff list” for A4NH. CGIAR staff are normally employed by Centers, and work with A4NH on specific research projects. Our list also included administrative staff and other service providers (eg Human Resources, communications) of the 11 CGIAR Centers working in A4NH.

⁵ We asked people to email us to let us know if they had been contacted in error and were not actually working with A4NH (using a quick ‘two-click’ mechanism to facilitate response). We are very grateful to the 33 people who responded to our request; however we believe a larger number of people in that situation simply did not bother to respond to the survey. There is no Center Focal Point for IFPRI and we believe our initial list was seriously over-estimated for this Center. We later corrected this by asking the main PIs within each IFPRI division to send a list of staff within their division who are currently working on the projects mapped to A4NH.

⁶ Number of minisurvey responses by Center with (in parenthesis) percent of A4NH funding in 2013 as proxy measure of Center staff involved: IFPRI 52 responses (56% of total funds, of which the majority is for Harvest Plus); ILRI 24 (16%); IITA 19 (13%); Bioversity International 15 (10%); ICRISAT 12 (8%); World Agroforestry Centre 10 (7%); CIAT 6 (4% but this may under-represent CIAT as they are partners with IFPRI in Harvest Plus); Other Centers: CIP, CIMMYT, WorldFish, and Africa Rice 12 (8%)

⁷ Two groups that may be under-represented are: lab/field technicians (only 3 completed the mini-survey, despite encouraging emails), and CIAT staff (only 6 respondents, in comparison to the large amount of Harvest Plus funding going through CIAT).

Europe, Latin America and MENA. Men and women responded to the minisurvey in almost equal numbers.

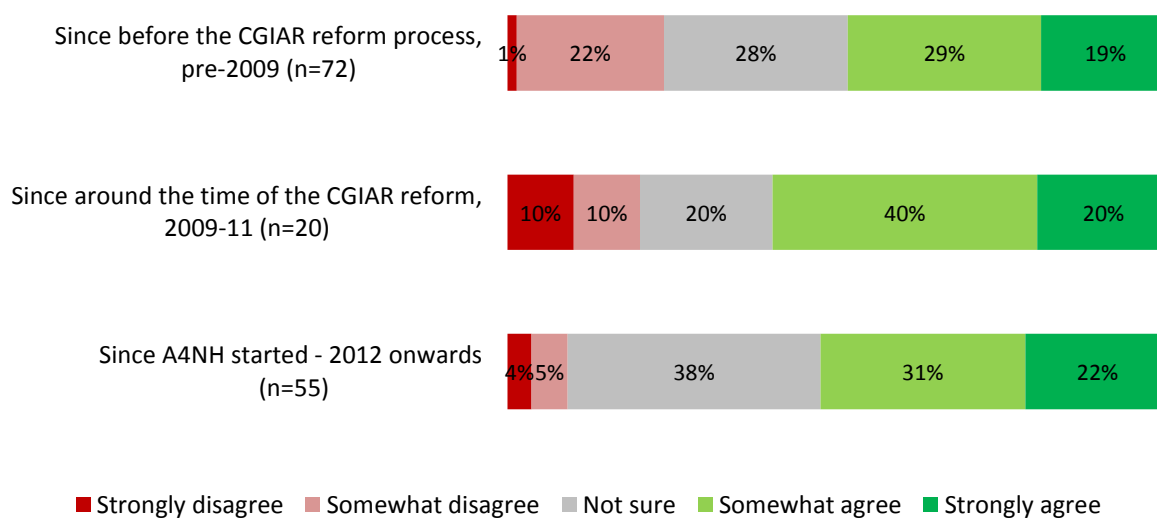
RESULTS

Is working through A4NH more effective than working through Centers?

Overall, more people answered this question positively (51%) than negatively (17%), although a substantial fraction (30%) were “not sure”⁸. Only a small fraction (about 3%) “strongly disagree”, in contrast to the 20% who “strongly agree” that it is more effective working through A4NH.

Figure 1 shows responses categorized by the length of time respondents had been in the CGIAR. About half of respondents who had been working in the CGIAR since before the reforms - and therefore have a clear point of comparison - agreed that CRPs (specifically A4NH) are a more effective way to organize research; while nearly a quarter of this group disagreed (albeit only 1% “strongly”), and the remainder were not sure. However, statistical testing (see Annex 3) did *not* show a significant difference in responses between those who joined the CGIAR before the reform process and those who joined the CGIAR only after A4NH started in 2012⁹.

Figure 1 “Working through the structure of a CRP (A4NH) is more effective than organizing research directly through CGIAR Centers.” Agreement/disagreement with this statement, categorised by how long respondents had worked in the CGIAR.



⁸ We have learned some lessons from this first minisurvey, including that in future we will give separate options for ‘neutral’ and ‘don’t know’.

⁹ Further investigation would be needed to understand how the comparison was framed in the mind of respondents who arrived in the CGIAR after 2012 (and therefore have no before/after comparison for A4NH). However, most respondents work for Centers, and are therefore in theory able to make some judgement on the likely situation with/without A4NH.

When responses were categorised by principal working role, nearly two thirds (64%) of research managers (n=41) agreed that working through the CRP is more effective, compared to just under half of researchers (n=65) and administrators/service providers (n=31), and nearly a third in the latter two groups were “not sure”. Such differences are plausible, as research managers are often in a better position to see the “big picture” on A4NH, whereas a number of researchers complained of being to some degree in the dark (see specific comments in Annex 1). However, analysis of the difference in response between researchers and research managers (Annex 3) did not show statistically significant difference between the two groups.

What are the positives and negatives of working with A4NH?

The survey asked open (free text) questions about the most positive and negative aspects of working with A4NH. To see how frequently certain views were expressed, each answer was allocated one or more codes¹⁰, and these were then amalgamated into broad category codes. The overall results are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Annex 1 contains many examples of specific comments.

Table 1 Positive aspects of A4NH: frequency of comments by broad category

Category of comment	Percent of comments
Better coordination of work e.g. between Centers, disciplines	47%
Inspiring mission/leadership of A4NH	27%
More potential for practical impact of research e.g. scaling up, links to policy	24%
Flexible funding and support from the CRP	18%
Opportunities for learning, e.g. on nutrition and health	12%
Good systems /management	11%
Improvement in partnerships	11%
Improved work on gender	2%
<i>Total number of comments</i>	<i>123</i>

Table 2 Negative aspects of A4NH: frequency of comments by broad category

Category of comment	Percent of comments
Increased admin/reporting workload	32%
Poor communications within the CRP /Centers	28%
Inefficiencies or lack of realism in management	28%
Lack of trust; tensions and competition e.g. between centers	19%
Disagreements on boundaries of A4NH and choices made	19%
Instability of funding	16%
Lack of opportunities for personal development	3%
Nothing/nothing negative to say	14%
<i>Total number of comments</i>	<i>118</i>

¹⁰ For example “DISC” – coordination across disciplines, “CENT” – coordination across Centers. See Miles, MB et al (2014) Qualitative Data Analysis: a Methods Sourcebook. 3rd edition, Sage More detail is available from the evaluation team if required – please contact Julia Compton, j.compton@cgiar.org

It is important to remember that the frequency of responses in this minisurvey reflects what is currently on people's minds rather than a structured analysis – for example, “improvements in gender” were only spontaneously mentioned by 3%, but if we had asked a specific question on improvements in gender, the percentage might have been much higher. Similarly, recent cuts in expected funding probably made “funding instability” a more frequent comment than it might have been in 2014¹¹.

Despite this caveat, the results were illuminating and the evaluation team hopes that they will stimulate some useful discussion, moving beyond simply reiterating the criticisms made in the minisurvey to looking at how some of the issues can be addressed.

Julia Compton, Mysbah Balagamwala and Diana McLean, 30 March 2015

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¹¹ Conversely, if the survey had been administered two weeks later, just after an unexpected mid-year funding cut of 20% which resulted in immediate losses of some research staff, funding instability might have been at the top of the list.

Annex 1 In their own words: examples of comments by survey respondents

“The most positive aspects of working with A4NH”

- a) **Better coordination:** Many people commented on A4NH promoting the increased working across Centers and disciplines, and some cited specific benefits. Examples included:
- *I am Working on [my specific area] since long time and A4NH gave the opportunity to link with other centres working on same aspect in large scale population. Working as a team from different centres reduces the overlapping of experiments and helps in sharing the knowledge and experience.*
 - *Discussing and sharing ideas with colleagues from other centers; seeing perspectives on Nutrition and Health that are not from your own discipline.*
 - *It is a CRP that has brought together scientists representing diverse disciplines. This has helped in broadening my perspective with regard to research.*
 - *A4NH work has stimulated me to work with groups or consider working with groups that I would not have otherwise considered.*
- b) **Potential for impact:** Although many comments referred to the potential practical impact of the research, only about a quarter of these actually linked this to the influence of A4NH (rather than simply the benefits of their own research area). Examples included:
- *Possible impact of the program on the CGIAR itself, especially in areas like gender and nutrition Forced to be more strategic about workplan and direction of research portfolio*
 - *...pulling together the critical mass needed to achieve the objectives;*
 - *The most positive aspect of working on the A4NH is the improvement of services delivered to communities and other stakeholders.*
 - *It has the possibility of a global perspective and global work*
 - *A4NH is specific to enhancing agricultural potential in helping improve nutrition and health, this aim facilitates the theory of change within which my work is oriented.*
 - *Provides a platform to think about [my specific area] in a much wider and possibly more policy relevant context.*
- c) **A4NH mission and leadership:** For a new CRP, winning people over to a new mission and inspiring people at all levels to contribute to a common vision can be a challenge. 20 comments (13%) referred to the inspiring mission of A4NH while 11 people mentioned inspiring personal leadership. Examples:
- *It's an exciting time to be part of research on nutrition and health as it relates to agriculture.*
 - *The rationale and theory of change for A4NH is pretty clear, so it's relatively easy to buy into it. ...*
 - *(from a respondent in biofortification):...The program is a very inspiring one, especially thinking about the impact that it could have ... [the Directors of A4NH and HarvestPlus] are both very enthusiastic leaders. Their passion for the programs drives my energy every day. ...*
 - *I'd like to ...commend the leadership of A4NH, especially [the CRP Leader]...he understands research and the work of researchers, and has managed to find ways to keep us engaged and supported.... The leadership has set the right tone and this has been very very important*
 - *Working with A4NH is the most beautiful experience to help fight hunger*
- d) **Flexible funding and support for research:** A number of researchers were full of praise for the flexible support they got from A4NH (see some examples below). However, some Centers felt more marginalised from A4NH and less able to access support (see point i below). There are also potential tensions between responding flexibly to research gaps and innovative ideas identified by individual researchers - versus getting researchers themselves to be more flexible and support a prioritised research agenda rather than their own interests.

- *I find A4NH to be truly supportive as a CRP and a real enabler. I have never felt bogged down or boxed in by A4NH and have found the structure and the team to be really flexible, understanding, respectful of us as researchers, and more. It is truly challenging to link the CRP and the work of the individual centres and individual researchers within centres, but A4NH has found a way to make this happen well.*
- *A4NH does a good job of merging its objectives and demands for its research with the research needs and interests of the researchers working on A4NH topics. A4NH has kept a clear research agenda, but also shown great flexibility at times to respond with support of research that researchers themselves have identified as important. This makes a big difference in promoting a strong culture of research innovation.*
- *[The A4NH Director] is extremely open-minded and reasonable with respect to ideas on how to move forward and is willing to put up adequate resources to support initiatives, which makes working in A4NH a pleasant and rewarding experience.*
- *I have been able to work on related and follow-up topics that under the Centers would have been more difficult to justify and find support for.*
- *The flexibility of the programme is great for supporting new ideas and supplementing other external donor funded work - this kind of flexibility is crucial for innovation in research*
- *It is not very dictatorial - there is a good degree of freedom in what one can work on. Thematically inclusive.*
- *Process to access funding is clear and simple; relative freedom in setting-up tasks and timeline; not too high pressure on the deliverable.*
- *At least the funds were made available in good time to complete our planned activities*

e) Professional development and growth: 12% of comments spontaneously mentioned this as an advantage of A4NH (although two other respondents mentioned under their negative points that there were no or insufficient opportunities for professional development) Examples included:

- *The CRP has also provided me with a lot of new opportunities to grow professionally, mainly, I think, due to its multi-Center and multi-disciplinary nature.*
- *...update on the professional knowledge and new tools*
- *Allows to tap into expertise (methods, tools, frameworks) that is not available within my own organization. A4NH is tackling important development issues that require much more research, so it is very interesting. It is also using innovative tools and methods*
- *It is an innovative topic for the CGIAR... Another aspect is the interaction among disciplines and centers. This is something that help us to think in a systematic way, not linear.*
- *This allows us access to latest methodologies and results relevant to planning our own work program in the country*

f) Good administration: Despite many complaints about the increased administrative burden generated by CRPs (see point h) below), 11% of comments did focus on positive aspects of A4NH administration. Many of these related to good personal experiences working with the A4NH Program Management Unit staff. Examples include:

- *There is a clear attempt from A4NH leadership to simplify reporting processes, not as burdensome as others.*
- *Very good monitoring of outcomes, outputs and milestones*
- *It has been great working with A4NH and especially the administration team who are always willing to assist and to respond to any queries. Financial reporting has been made easier by the user friendly reporting template.*
- *I use to contact many of finance people of a4nh, the people are very cooperative, helpful and kind nature*
- *[The A4NH finance and administration person] is always very helpful and friendly.*
- *program management team is very supportive and responsive*

g) Broader partnerships: Examples:

- *Good networking and increased portfolio of collaborators/ partners*

- *[The A4NH leadership] approach to partnership building is really appreciated, so I would like to flag this as a real positive at this point in time for A4NH.*
- *[A4NH] has provided me with more of a platform from which to discuss partnerships with other organizations that are more focused on a particular theme in their own work.*
- *The interaction between the A4NH center/partners/collaborators and seeing the outcome of partnerships come to life.*
- *the opportunity to work on issues/problems that may not necessarily be easily done within the context of my center's own mandate and focus commodity; working with an expanded range of collaborators/partners*
- *...stronger collaboration with non-traditional CG collaborators*

“The most negative aspects of working with A4NH”

- h) Increased administrative burden:** Many comments focused on the additional layer of administrative requirements (especially planning, budgeting and reporting) created by CRPs (including A4NH) and the fact that reporting to the Center and to bilateral donors has not declined as had been an implicit expectation in the CGIAR reforms. Bilateral donors within A4NH still have individual requirements including different reporting timetables and individual project evaluations. Some of the many examples:
- *Administrative reporting burden, difficulties in harmonizing between institutes and CRP management especially with respect to budgets*
 - *After CRPs reporting frequency has been increased and make bit dilution on concentrating our research*
 - *Additional time spent in reporting; additional layer of administrative structure.*
 - *Extremely cumbersome in terms of reporting requirements, meetings, evaluations, proposal writing, etc.; difficult to actually get the research done*
 - *Donor reporting and workplanning often repeating what has been done with other large programs which happen to be under the A4NH umbrella, often made more tiresome by the fact that different formats are used by different donors*
 - *There should be some uniformity/consistency across the CRP's in terms of reporting mechanisms and templates. The reporting structures should be made as straight-forward as possible and the template/format provided minimize the amount of time and resources that are allocated to reporting both within CRP's and across CRP's.*
 - *Logistically is confusing - e.g. obtaining project finances requires having several different CG finance departments all on board addressing your issue*
 - *Then too much work and duplication of efforts in reporting systems as some crops are cross cutting and you find yourself reporting to more than one CRP*
- i) Competitive tensions and lack of trust among some Centers and areas of research and the CRP leadership,** particularly through researchers in some Centers feeling they are not getting a sufficient share of the A4NH “cake”. (This of course raises the question of whether “a fair share of the cake for each Center” should be a principal consideration in research prioritisation for a CRP.) Failures in internal communication appear to be at the root of many of these tensions, and that is addressed in point j below. Another long-standing issue is that nearly all staff working “with” A4NH work *for* Centers, and their incentives are therefore linked to Centers rather than the CRP.

6 respondents (5%) were specifically critical of IFPRI which they saw as taking advantage of its lead position in the CRP to dominate the decision making and funding. It is worth noting that this is a low frequency of criticism of the lead Center in comparison to that seen in some other CRP evaluations! However, a couple of these comments (part of one is shown below) specifically raised the wider issues of transparency in management and governance of the CRP, including in

selection of research partners; selection of PMC and IAC members; and (it is implied, deliberately) poor communication and information dissemination, dominated by IFPRI and ILRI. These are potentially very serious criticisms, the veracity of which will be explored in the evaluation.

Examples of comments in this category include:

- *Experts are not ready to work together. They are always thinking of their centre.*
- *A4NH has so many "different" areas and somehow communication is not very good. Too many for the cake.*
- *Funding allocation amongst centers/partners is not equitable, and it leaves room for uncertainties.*
- *Is there enough mutual trust and trust in the lead centre/CRP leadership as an honest broker? making sure the leadership has no conflict of interest is key*
- *Lack of funding security, lead center taking majority of funds and making it difficult for other centers to have large scale projects*
- *The lead Center has performed poorly on transparency, governance (see report), and facilitation of the research agenda. The incentives are lacking for accountability to the broader CG and this has meant money being allocated to favored partners without any competitive process, for gender, and for capacity building. ...The Coordinator is answerable to the lead center and therefore the decision making has a fundamental conflict of interest. Significantly for the future, the design of the next phase is highly scripted serving the corporate interests of the lead Center...*
- *The original themes and specifically the sub themes or components do not seem to generate the same level of importance from the CRP management perspective. And many of the sub-themes with which we work in, and deliver on, are rather over-looked. Possibly the original A4NH 'themes' did not capture all the necessary elements of the diverse research that the various centres undertake and allow multiple priority areas of useful research. There should be some mechanisms in place for the CRP to support centres in resource mobilization through other funding Calls/ Opportunities.*
- *It is not always the same to get everyone on the same level of understanding for the same goal, as people will also have personal motives*

j) Poor communication within the CRP: Some respondents felt (as above) that there was a lack of transparency in decision-making and allocating funds and a feeling that decisions are ‘pre-cooked’ before being brought to discussion meetings. Others highlighted a lack of visibility of their own work. And some were simply in the dark. Clearly there are some communication failures, but it is difficult to diagnose at what level communication breaks down – between the PMU and the CFP, between the CFP and others in the Center, or elsewhere? Should CFPs be the only or main channel of communication? Do CFPs have access to adequate human resources to support all the communication they need to do? These would be useful issues to discuss in the meeting. Examples of comments include:

- *Uncertain exactly about how priorities are determined, at what level (center, A4NH, CG) determination of work program is made, and sustainability of funding over time*
- *Even though my work is closely tied to A4NH, sometimes I struggle to connect effectively with the A4NH structure*
- *As researchers, we are not even informed on how the A4NH functions, how it fits into our daily operations and what difference it brings to our operations*
- *I find it is somewhat confusing with the flow of money and how the system works.*
- *I have very limited knowledge of my division's involvement with A4NH. I know we receive funding from them, and I know we include our activity in their reports. Other than that, I don't understand how or if we influence them or they influence us.*
- *A little concern in that I've heard A4NH is expanding its activities and it's not clear (to me anyway) why the expansion and how it might affect existing activities.*
- *Remote control for research operation Communications flow top-to-bottom or vice versa when decision made and reach the bottom very late*

- *I was expecting that, through this platform, I will understand and learn from other CG Centers how they are using agriculture to respond to HN needs. I am not aware of any event of sharing learning on A4NH among Centers. I report what I do and achieve but I don't know how is my report being used.*
- *Almost no engagement with the Themes (formerly Components) or with Theme leaders. No real sense that these have an identity or organizational reality. It may be that they exist and have relevance more within IFPRI's and ILRI's A4NH work, rather than for the smaller set of A4NH activities involved in most other Centers.*
- *Not very transparent system in terms of how the finances are disbursed, it seems the CRP leader have a control on how they use and spend the money*
- *Often top-down decision and fund distribution. We will be informed after decisions are made and funds distributed*
- *Remotely operated and not listening bottom researchers voice/problems.*

And some specific suggestions:

- *A4NH has been communicating only with the focal points. It would be good if they could also have a contact list of the administrative assistants of those focal points, so admin issues could be dealt in a more efficient way rather than the focal point has to forward every single email to their assistant or spend their time in providing admin information.*
- *At times the work becomes a bit to jargon - and they fail to clearly communicate what is meant - for example, what is a "nutrition-sensitive landscape" - why should we care about this approach? why should we want this, why should donors want to fund it.*
- *Minimum interactions or none among different projects under the CRP, hence the objectives and goals are not clear for example for staff working in the laboratories. Improve in communicating CRP issues even to lower level staff.*

k) Disagreements or confusion about boundaries and limits of A4NH. This category includes a wide variety of comments. Many relate to previous points on communications and tensions about whether all impact pathways to nutrition and health are (or should be) given equal attention – what about trees, or animal source foods? Some comments reflect long-standing debates in the CGAR (should it focus more upstream or downstream?). Others relate to the role of A4NH and how it links to other CRPs. Here is a sample:

- *Focus on impact is too prominent and distracts from the CGIAR's main mission, which is to do high-quality research*
- *Limiting MOST of the work to producing evidence through research, there should be concerted efforts to transitioning research outputs to development interventions (promoting/showcasing the worth of the outputs, and not living the role to policy makers only since nothing much has happened on the implementation bit.*
- *Giving more importance to the basic science than applied research ... [is a problem]*
- *... even though capacity development is recognized in principle as being important in the impact pathway, the specific capacity development activities are few and ad hoc and primarily funded not by A4NH but by bilateral projects 'mapped' to A4NH.*
- *Engagement with government and private sector for significant investment has widely unexplored. Certainly there is an anticipated gap to connect distant dots of innovative research learning through A4NH and scope for scale up with increased out reach.*
- *the biggest challenge is trying to align with our commitments to other CRPs which overlap sometimes. The allocation of outputs to only one CRP or the other as well as mapping of projects to one CRP or another is not always easy.*
- *Some areas (after 3 years) are still under construction, this creates ambiguities.*

l) Inefficiencies in A4NH management. This category includes a mixture of points, relating to both higher and lower levels/aspects of management; examples are below:

- *No structured workplanning, no discussion within theme.*
- *The so called "seed grant" funding of small A4NH projects was badly organised with no clear guidelines, structure and communication (timing was not clear, no reporting guidelines etc.) and no possibility to apply for a larger project which was announced in the beginning.*

- *Sometimes I have the feeling the activities being carried out [in my area] are not completely integrated in the framework of the A4NH, and I do not know what I could do in order to better integrate in the A4NH team.*
- *Staff time was not adequately covered as the activities took more time than the staff time covered. Expected deliverables did not match with time allocated to staff (e.g. a publication when staff time is only one month. It takes time to do good research work and write a journal paper) Allocated funds were revised downwards (reduced) at some point after approval*
- *The negative effect is the absence of supervision and discussion on the protocol before implementation. I think in future there is a need to meet with supervisor for discussing before implementation of the project. The shortage of the project is negative aspect for country where there is medium term project align to A4NH.*
- *Separating A4NH from the main stream breeding restricts the potential benefits of incorporating other desirable traits into final products to promote adoption of nutritious cultivars.*
- *Unfortunately, this working together does not happen easily and the management of the CRP and the strategic work going forward could be more efficient. There are too many meetings without clear outcomes.*

m) Unstable and fragmented funding: The comments below highlight some of the practical effects of unstable funding. Some of the comments reflect a sense of betrayal since one of the main selling points of CRPs for many CGIAR researchers, was more stable and sustainable core (Window 1 and 2) funding, which has not come to pass.

- *The constant changes in the way budgets are done, in retrospective budget cuts, in uncertainty in the future (despite the advertised certainty when CRPs came in) etc all make for a rather stressful management of programmes.*
- *Instead of guaranteeing funding, the[CRP] structure created the opposite. Not only did it create uncertainties of future funding, funding was reduced mid-year after we have already committed funds to partners. This resulted to us having to fund "supposed A4NH funded activities" from other sources.*
- *Unstable situation year after year for funding*
- *Severe financial uncertainty - never know how much funding the program will have until mid year or so*
- *Partners are made to pre-finance activities of the CRP due to the perennial delays in disbursement of funds.*
- *Fight with the uncertainty of not knowing which are the real funds for the year, until at the end of the year; is another negative aspect.*
- *the budget allocation is too fragmented and does not allow to build up a strong A4NH research component within my unit; I can only do small studies and cannot develop a longer term (multi-year) topic.*
- *On the finances, it took a long time to get clear answers on budget available for this year and we then saw our budget cut quite significantly which creates a number of challenges - having confidence on budgets over a longer time frame would be helpful for planning. Much of the work we do under the A4NH umbrella is funded by external donors, with very limited financial input from A4NH. Our outputs contribute to A4NH intellectually.*

Annex 2: Characteristics of respondents to the minisurvey

The following tables report some of the characteristics of survey respondents. Overall total number of participants varies from table to table, as some respondents chose not to answer some questions.

CGIAR Center where respondent based

Response	Count	Percentage
AfricaRice	1	1%
Bioversity International	14	10%
CIAT	7	5%
CIMMYT	4	3%
CIP	4	3%
ICRISAT	12	8%
IFPRI	52	35%
IITA	18	12%
ILRI	24	16%
World Agroforestry Centre	10	7%
WorldFish	1	1%
Overall	147	100%

Region where respondent currently based

Response	Count	Percentage
Asia	19	13%
Middle East and North Africa	1	1%
Europe	15	10%
North America	44	30%
Central America and the Caribbean	3	2%
South America	9	6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	57	39%
Overall	148	100%

Gender

Response	Count	Percentage
Male	69	47%
Female	76	51%
Decline to state	3	2%
Overall	151	100%

Length of time with CGIAR

Response	Count	Percentage
Since before the CGIAR reform process, pre-2009	72	49%
Since around the time of the CGIAR reform process, 2009-11	20	14%
Since A4NH started – 2012 onwards	55	37%
Overall	147	100%

Primary role in A4NH

Response	Count	Percentage
Researcher	65	44%
Research Manager	41	28%
Administrator or service provider	31	21%
Lab or field technician	3	2%
Other	5	3%
Overall	148	100%

Work time spent on A4NH programming

Response	Count	Percentage
< 10%	45	30%
10-50%	56	37%
> 50%	38	25%
Don't know	11	7%
Overall	150	100%

Annex 3: Numerical and statistical results

The following tables report the response to the question on whether respondents feel that working under A4NH is more effective than working directly through Centers. Answers were provided on a Likert scale (in the tables, green indicates agreement and red disagreement).

Results of statistical tests have been reported after each table. The Mann-Whitney test (MW test) was used to test whether the variation in responses between two groups of respondents was statistically significant. Where respondents have been classified in more than 2 groups (e.g. centers), the Kruskal-Wallis test (KW test) was used.

By gender

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Gender		1	2	3	4	5	
Female	76	5%	11%	34%	33%	17%	100%
Male	69	1%	19%	28%	29%	23%	100%
Overall	145	3%	14%	31%	31%	20%	100%

There is no statistically significant difference in response between men and women (MW test, $p = 0.74$)

By CGIAR Center

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Center		1	2	3	4	5	
ICRISAT	12	0%	8%	8%	17%	67%	100%
ILRI	24	0%	17%	29%	25%	29%	100%
IFPRI	52	6%	12%	44%	17%	21%	100%
World Agroforestry Centre	10	10%	10%	10%	60%	10%	100%
Bioversity International	14	0%	14%	21%	57%	7%	100%
CIAT	6	0%	17%	0%	83%	0%	100%
IITA	18	6%	22%	50%	22%	0%	100%
Other (including no ID)	12	0%	25%	8%	50%	17%	100%
Overall	148	3%	15%	30%	31%	20%	100%

There is a statistically significant difference in response between at least two Centers (KW test, $p = 0.02$). However this is hard to interpret, as the results from some Centers are from a small number of people and they may not have been fully representative of that Center.

IFPRI (A4NH lead Center) versus other Centers

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Center		1	2	3	4	5	
IFPRI	52	6%	12%	44%	17%	21%	100%
Other	96	2%	17%	23%	39%	20%	100%
Overall	148	3%	15%	30%	31%	20%	100%

There is no statistically significant difference between responses of staff belonging to IFPRI (lead Center of A4NH) and those belonging to other A4NH centers (MW test, $p = 0.23$).

By time

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Time in CGIAR		1	2	3	4	5	
Since before the CGIAR reform process (pre 2009)	72	1%	22%	28%	29%	19%	100%
Since around the time of the CGIAR reform (2009-11)	20	10%	10%	20%	40%	20%	100%
Since A4NH started - 2012 onwards	55	4%	5%	38%	31%	22%	100%
Overall	147	3%	14%	31%	31%	20%	100%

There is no statistically significant difference in responses between those who joined CGIAR before, during or after the formation of CRPs (KW test, $p = 0.596$).

By role

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Main role		1	2	3	4	5	
Researcher	65	2%	15%	37%	25%	22%	100%
Research manager	41	7%	12%	17%	44%	20%	100%
Administrator/Service provider	31	3%	13%	35%	26%	23%	100%
Other	8	0%	25%	38%	25%	13%	100%
Not specified	3	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%	100%
Overall	148	3%	15%	30%	31%	20%	100%

There is no statistically significant difference in responses among different types of staff within the A4NH centers (KW test, $p = 0.89$).

By proportion of time dedicated to A4NH

	N	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Don't know	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total
Time in A4NH		1	2	3	4	5	
< 10%	43	0%	16%	33%	26%	26%	100%
10-50%	55	9%	18%	25%	36%	11%	100%
> 50%	38	0%	11%	26%	32%	32%	100%
Don't know	11	0%	0%	64%	27%	9%	100%
Overall	147	3%	14%	31%	31%	20%	100%

There is a statistically significant difference in responses between at least two groups but only at the 10% significance level (KW test, $p = 0.08$).

Annex 4: Mini-survey questionnaire

The survey was administered through SurveyMonkey. Options for the multiple choice questions are shown in the table below each question. Questions 2, 3 and 4 were open (free text) questions.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

Working through the structure of a CRP (A4NH) is more effective than organizing research directly through CGIAR Centers.

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Not sure
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree

2. Thinking specifically about your own work, please comment on the most positive aspects of working in/with A4NH.

3. Thinking specifically about your own work, please comment on the most negative aspects of working in/with A4NH.

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us at this initial stage of the evaluation?

5. How long have you been working in the CGIAR (please choose the longest time category applicable, e.g. "2012 onwards" if you just joined)?

Since before the CGIAR reform process (pre 2009)
Since around the time of the CGIAR reform (2009-11)
Since A4NH started - 2012 onwards
Other (please specify)

6. Which best describes how much of your work time is spent on A4NH programming?

< 10%
10-50%
> 50%
Don't know

7. In relation to A4NH, do you primarily think of yourself as a:

Research manager
Researcher
Lab or field technician
Administrator or service provider (Includes services such as finance, admin, HR, IT, communications, facilities support)
Other (please specify)

8. In which Center are you employed?

AfricaRice
Bioversity International
CIAT
CIFOR
CIMMYT
CIP
ICARDA
ICRISAT
IFPRI
IITA
ILRI
IRRI
IWMI
World Agroforestry Centre
WorldFish
Other (please specify)

9. In what region are you principally based?

Asia
Middle East and North Africa
Europe
North America
Central America and the Caribbean
South America
Sub-Saharan Africa
Australia and Oceania

10. What is your gender?

Male
Female
Decline to state