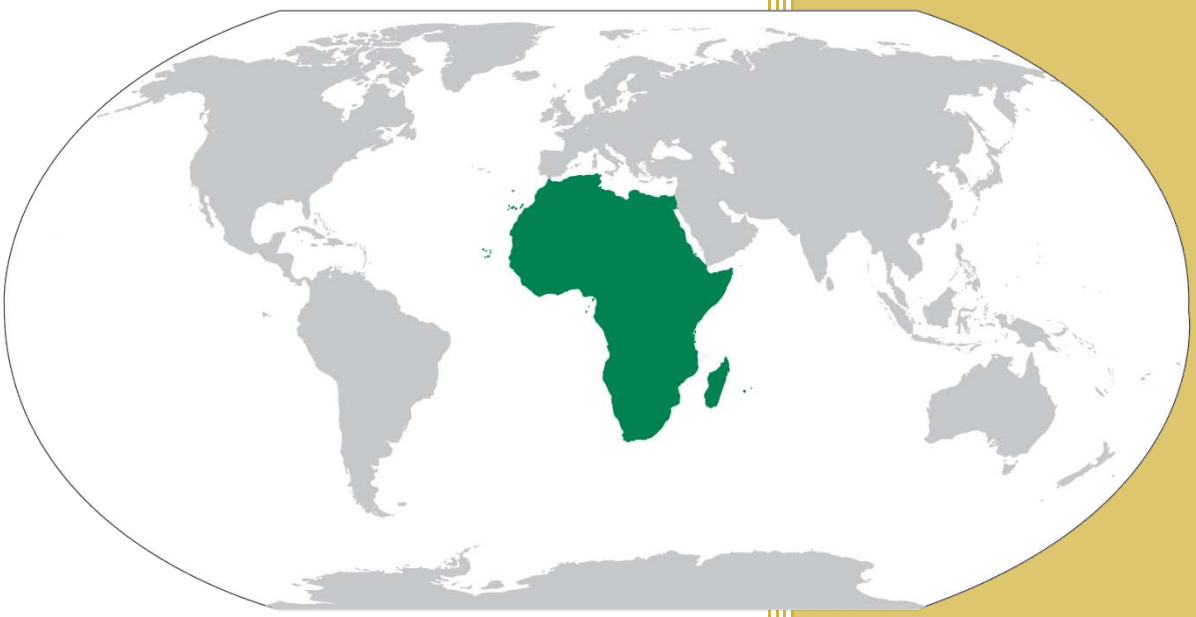
INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty
Supported by the CGIAR

IFPRI's Strategy for Africa

November 2009



IFPRI's Research and Capacity-Building Strategy in Africa

Overview

In January 2007, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) published its first Africa Strategy, the first of any region. That first edition of the strategy was completed after a thorough review of the institute's activities in the region and a series of consultations with policy researchers and analysts and other key stakeholder groups in Africa, including a major dissemination conference held in Dakar, Senegal in January 2007. The last edition was completed against the backdrop of several major initiatives that had brought renewed attention and commitment to economic development and food and nutrition security in Africa, and emergence of the longest economic and agricultural growth recovery in the continent since the 1960s. The strategy emphasized the needs and challenges of sustaining and accelerating growth to reach the poverty and hunger reduction Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Since then, new developments in the global food and financial markets, responses by African countries to these developments, and their progress in efforts to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) have resulted in changes with potential long term strategic consequences. The current edition of the Africa strategy document describes: recent developments in IFPRI's work in Africa; recent trends and prospects for growth and food and nutrition security in Africa; IFPRI's strategy for Africa; research, communications, and capacity-building priorities; IFPRI's operational emphasis; and the institutional response.

Recent developments in IFPRI's work in Africa

In preparation for the first edition of the Africa Strategy, IFPRI established an Africa Task Force which, among others, carried out an inventory in 2006 of its research activities across Africa. The results are reproduced in Figures 1a and 1b below.

Figure 1a—Number of IFPRI projects by division, 2006

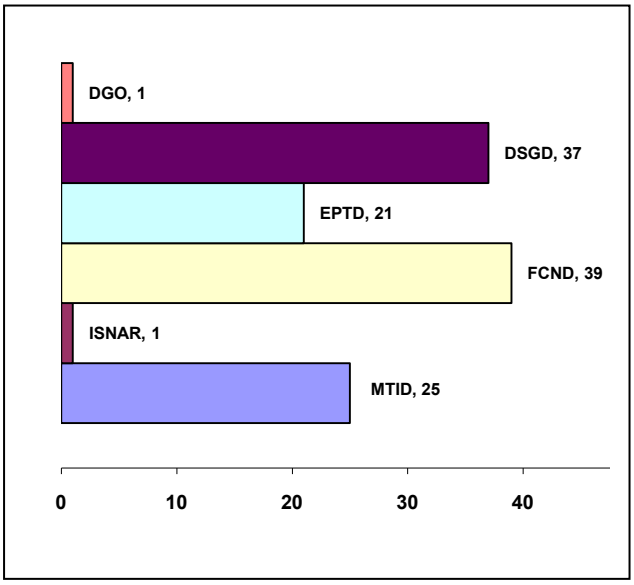
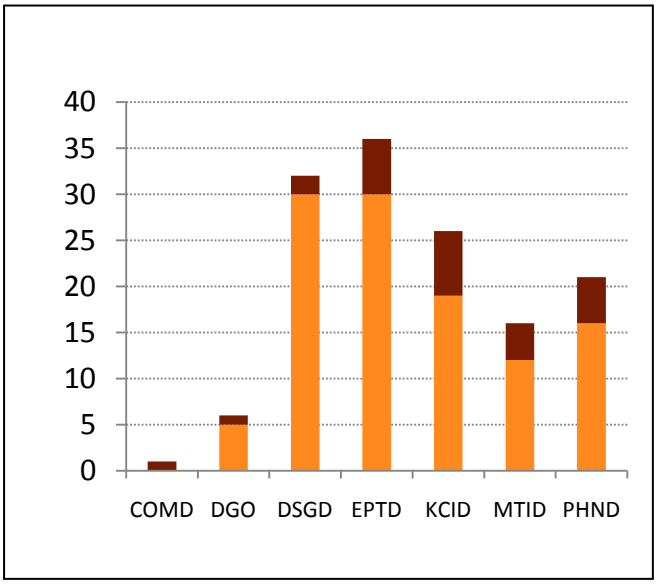


Figure 1b—Number of IFPRI projects by division, as of July 2009



The same inventory was carried out again in 2009 to show the changes that have taken place since the adoption of the first strategy. The distribution of projects across divisions, as illustrated in Figure 1a, shows that from 2004 to 2006, the Poverty, Health, and Nutrition (formerly the Food Consumption and Nutrition Division) and Development Strategy and Governance Divisions (PHND and DSGD) had the largest number of projects in Africa, with a total of nearly 40 projects each. They were followed by the Markets, Trade, and Institutions and Environment and Production Technology Divisions (MTID and EPTD), with project numbers in the mid- and low-20s.[1] The Knowledge Capacity and Innovation Division (KCID)—formerly the International Service for Agricultural Research (ISNAR)—had few activities. The latest survey (July 2009) indicates that EPTD has significantly raised its level of activities, jumping from 21 to more than 35, or a 75 percent increase, to now lead the Institute. DSGD is just behind, with a slightly fewer number of projects. KCID also has had a strong increase in level of activities, going from nearly none to about 15 projects since the first strategy. PHND exhibits the sharpest decrease in overall level of activity, from nearly 40 projects to about half of that number over the same period.

[1] A research project is considered a specific research activity with defined goals, objectives, and outputs that is funded by a donor or group of donors and undertaken by IFPRI, whether singularly or in collaboration with other organizations. Research projects as they appear here do not include general research covered by IFPRI core funds nor do they include articles, reports, or book contributions produced by IFPRI researchers that are not part of a specific IFPRI research activity. For instance, global activities like the IMPACT modeling work are excluded even though they generate useful Africa-wide results. It is important to note that this report considers only numbers of projects and does not differentiate according to size (in terms of budget, duration, or breadth).

Figures 1c and 1d also show the geographic distribution of IFPRI projects across Africa. While Eastern and West Africa both show strong growth, the dominance of the former region in the Africa research portfolio has remained.

Figure 1c—Number of IFPRI projects by region, 2004–06

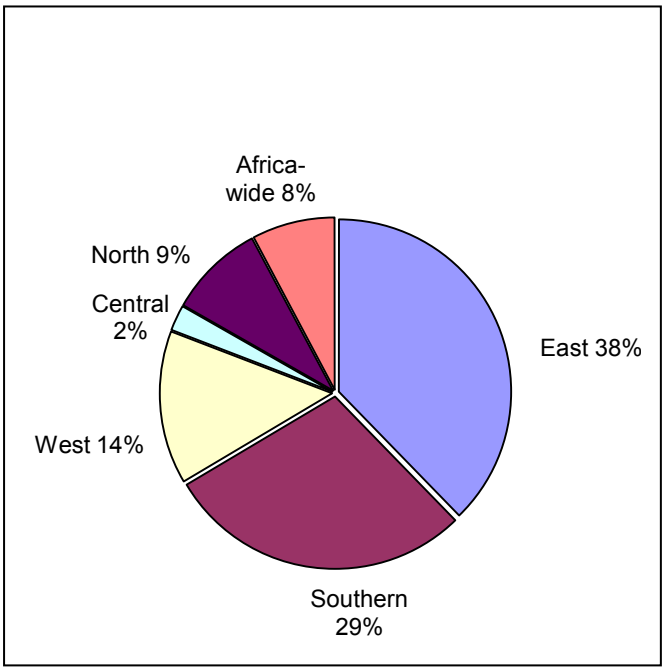
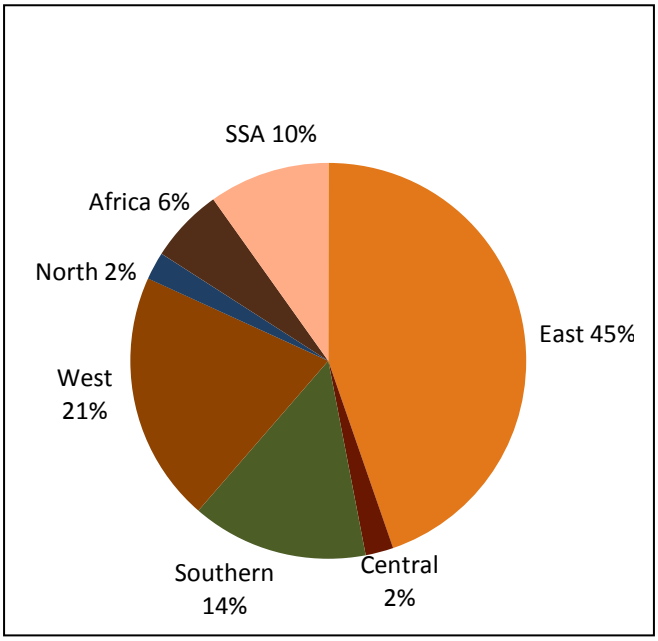


Figure 1d—Number of IFPRI projects by region, as of July 2009



Notes: There are some projects that have work in more than one country and therefore might span more than one region. In these cases, the project is included once per each region. If a project spans multiple countries within a region, it is counted only once for that region. *Projects that are Africa-wide or are not associated with specific countries or regions.

One objective during the last strategy period was to expand IFPRI's presence in West Africa, which has been achieved, as shown by the increase in the share of activities from 14 to 21 percent, despite the fact that the regional imbalance continues to persist. Another category that has gained significantly is the Africa-wide category, which has doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent of IFPRI's total Africa portfolio. North Africa, in contrast, has seen a sharp decline in activity level, from 9 percent to currently merely 2 percent. Activities in Central Africa have remained at a low 2 percent

The end of conflicts in several West and Central African countries, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Liberia, and Sierra Leone should provide opportunities to restore the balance between West and Eastern Africa and expand activities in the Central Africa region. IFPRI will need to pay specific attention to North Africa, however, in order to increase the Institute's presence in that region.

Recent trends and prospects for growth and food and nutrition security in Africa

African countries have experienced almost two decades of economic stagnation and even decline throughout most the 1970s, the 1980s, and the first half of the 1990s. The succession of global economic booms and crises during this period did not significantly alter the growth dynamics in African economies, which failed rather strikingly to implement the necessary adjustments to maintain their positions in the global economy. Such adjustments were rendered even more difficult by macroeconomic and sectoral policies that were not aligned with the needs of open and competitive agricultural sectors. The consequences were falling living standards, widening poverty, and growing food and nutrition insecurity.

Since the middle of the 1990s, however, African countries have turned the page and have witnessed the longest period of economic growth since independence (Badiane 2008). The extent and breadth of the recovery are demonstrated by the trends shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4.

Figure 2—Trends in agricultural growth performance, 1992–2006

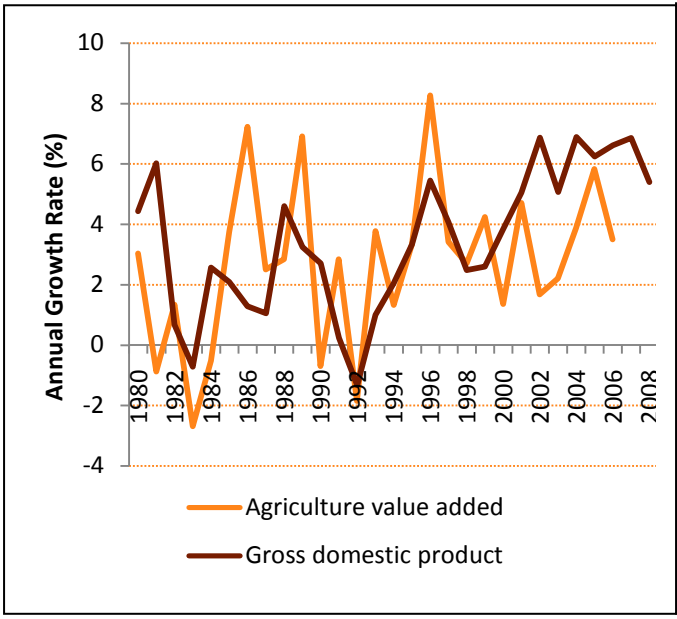


Figure 3—Trends in agricultural export performance, 1970–2006

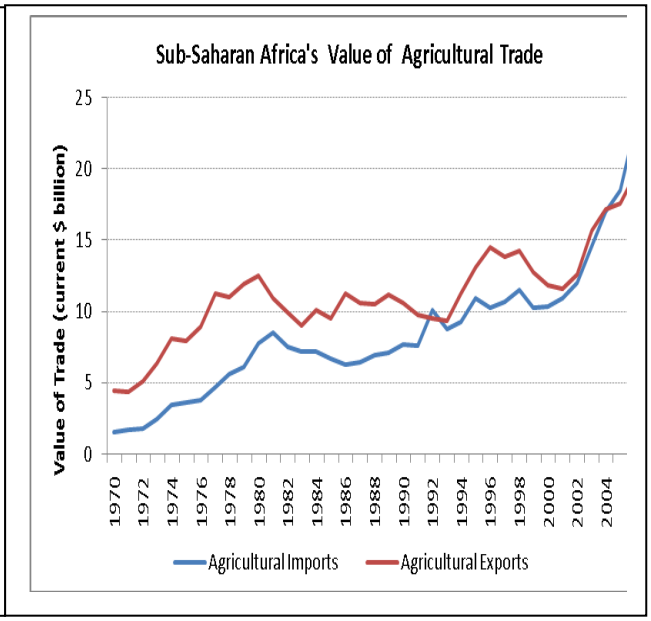
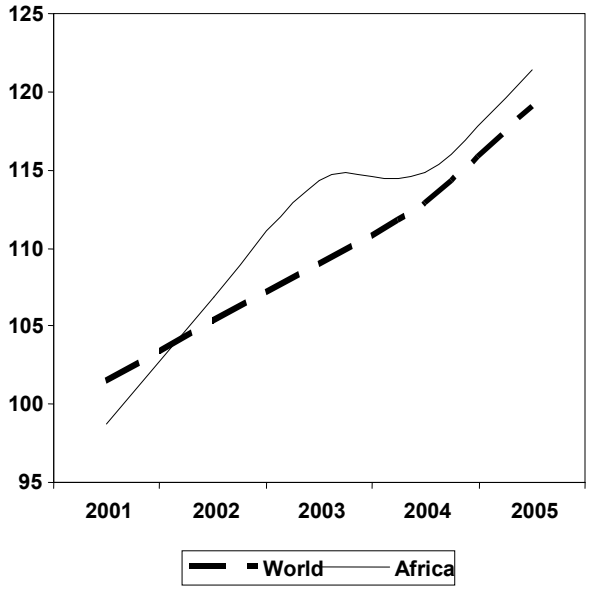


Figure 4—Trends in export competitiveness, 2001–05

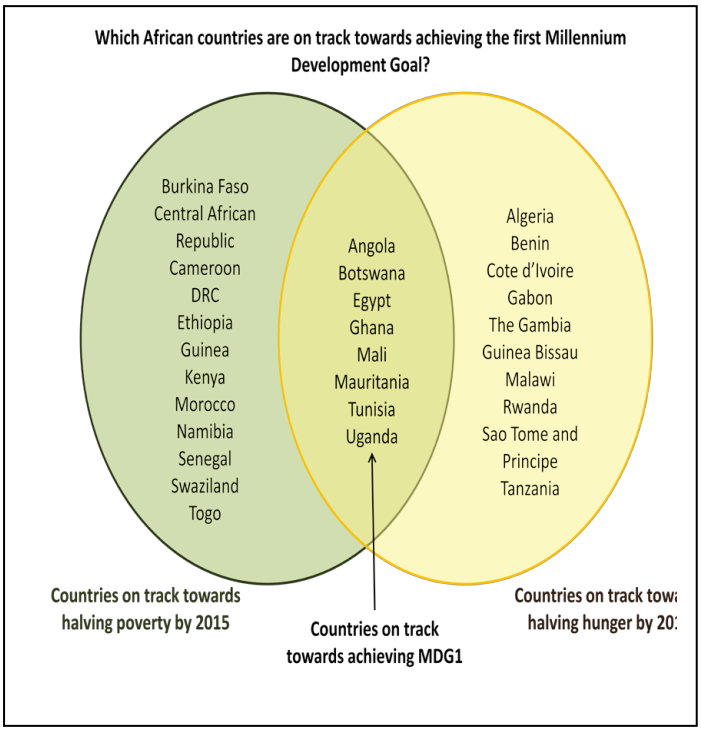


As illustrated in Figure 2, the average annual growth rate of agriculture as well as overall GDP has increased steadily among African countries to reach 6 percent. Figure 3 shows that the value of agricultural trade has more than doubled over the same period, a phenomenon which is not explained just by rising global agricultural prices. African exporters have also gained in terms of export competitiveness during that period. Figure 4 indicates, for instance, that the growth rate of the volume of agricultural exports from Africa has steadily exceeded the world average between 2001 and 2005. Moreover, total agricultural factor productivity has gone up by 50 percent since the late 1980s, with its growth rates shifting from a negative rate (-2.0 percent) between the 1960s and the 1980s to a positive rate of close to 1.7 percent from 1985 to 2003 (Nin-Pratt 2008).

It is important to note that the pace of growth has not just accelerated, but the recovery has also spread to more countries. Between 2003 and 2005, a total 13 countries had achieved annual agricultural growth rates greater than 5 percent, of which 9 had exceeded the CAADP target rate of 6 percent. The recovery has started to turn around the poverty and nutrition performance in Africa. Since 2003, more than 70 percent of Africans have lived in a country with positive per capita income growth (Cord 2005). Furthermore, in contrast to the very pessimistic predictions of the late 1990s, a growing number of African countries are on track to meet either or both of the poverty and nutrition components of the

first Millennium Development Goal, as illustrated in Figure 5. The number is still small but far greater than anyone had expected.

Figure 5—Trends toward meeting MDG1, selected countries



The implications of the above developments for IFPRI's strategy in Africa are laid out below and deal with the operational emphases. A main implication is the need for IFPRI's researchers to understand the factors behind the above changes and how they can be replicated and scaled up more broadly and sustained in the coming decades.

IFPRI's strategy for Africa

Vision and mission

IFPRI's vision for Africa, based on the human right to adequate food and freedom from hunger, and the recognition of the dignity inherent in all human beings, is the realization of the following goals:

1. Every African has secure access to sufficient and safe food to sustain a healthy and productive life; and
2. Food-related decisions are made transparently, with both consumer and producer participation.

IFPRI's mission in this context is to provide locally relevant solutions through scientific research and research-related activities that will enable African countries to reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition. The underlying target is to provide policy solutions that allow African countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger and poverty and go beyond it to eliminate hunger and poverty. In order to fulfill the above mission, IFPRI will focus on identifying and analyzing alternative regional and national policies to improve food and nutrition security and the management of the natural resource base that supports African agriculture; strengthening the capacities of institutions and agents involved in food policy research and analysis; and informing and improving the design and implementation of food and nutrition policies, and supporting policy dialogues to link research to policy actions in African countries.

Conceptual framework

The framework for the Institute's research in Africa aligns with IFPRI's overall strategy and is designed to reflect the current and emerging policy and institutional context in Africa. Figure 6 presents IFPRI's overall strategic framework (Figure 6a) and the framework as applied to Africa (Figure 6b). Figure 6c presents the priority and partnership framework within the food policy research component of the strategy.

Figure 6a—IFPRI's overall strategic framework

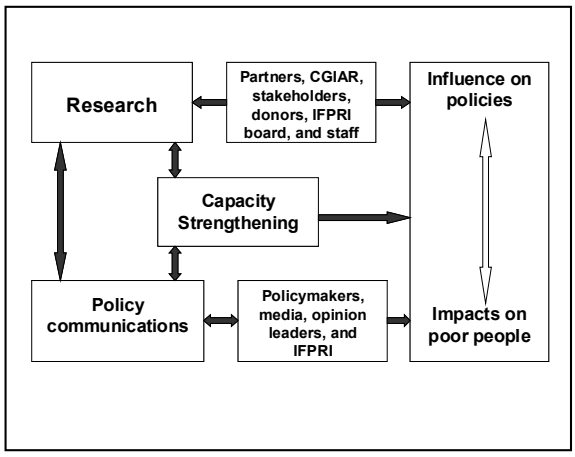
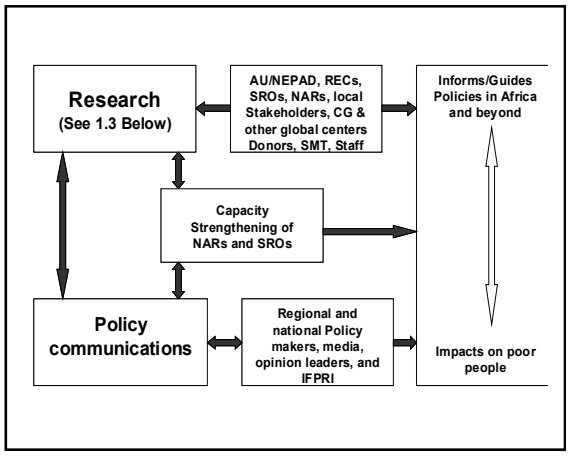


Figure 6b—Strategic framework for activities related to Africa

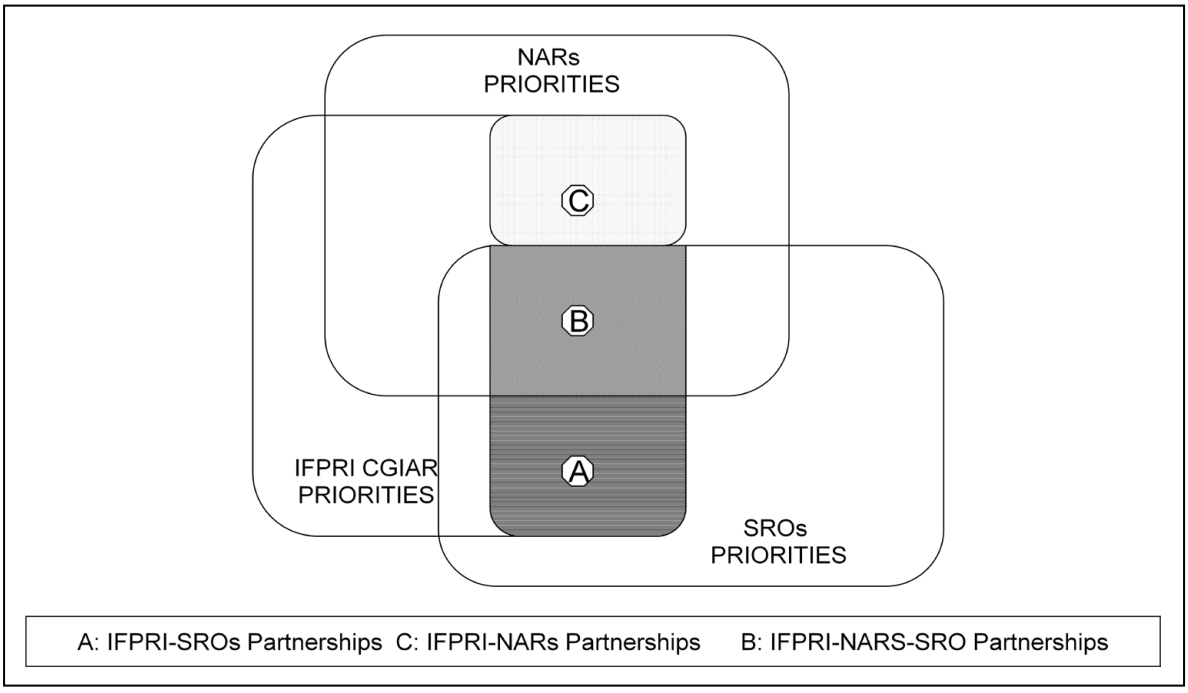


IFPRI will continue to address basic and long-term food policy research gaps to inform and guide regional and national policies, including those defined under CAADP as part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an initiative of the African Union (AU). While doing so, the Africa strategy will also seek to satisfy IFPRI's primary role of creating and providing access to locally and globally relevant information—as international public goods—to positively influence food policy not just

within but also outside Africa. In return, the strategy will take advantage of the opportunity provided by IFPRI's presence in other regions of the world, particularly in Asia and Latin America, for comparative analyses, to broaden the Institute's understanding of the issues and ability to devise more comprehensive policy solutions.

In carrying out its strategy, IFPRI will actively engage and partner with leading policy and research institutions and groups of actors such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Secretariat; regional economic communities (RECs); leading subregional research organizations (SROs); national agricultural research systems (NARSs); and local stakeholders such as farmer associations, private sector organizations, parliamentarians, and local governments (see Figure 6c).

Figure 6c—Framework for research priorities and partnerships in Africa



Note: IFPRI will establish targeted partnerships with other CGIAR centers as well as with other international development research agencies working in Africa.

Other key actors in terms of research partnerships include other centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), particularly those based in Africa, and leading international research organizations and universities that are active in the region**.** Major partners and stakeholders on the policy communications and capacity building components of the strategy include regional and

national decisionmakers, leading farmers' organizations, agribusiness and trade associations, civil society organizations, the media, and other opinion leaders.

IFPRI's research priorities for Africa fit within the overarching priorities of the CGIAR. They are defined within three priority spaces, leading to three clusters of partnership opportunities:

1. priorities and partnerships at the regional level, with corresponding collaboration with SROs (Figure 6c, area A);
2. priorities and partnerships at the national level, involving collaboration with national research systems or NARSs (Figure 6c, area C); and
3. priorities and partnerships that cut across individual regions and countries, which create opportunities for joint partnerships with NARSs and SROs (Figure 6c, area B).

Context for devising IFPRI's priorities in Africa

The identification of IFPRI's research, capacity building, and policy communications priorities in Africa follows the same criteria that determine the Institute's overall priorities:

1. Conformity with IFPRI's mission to provide policy solutions that reduce hunger and malnutrition.
2. Innovation and focus on impact in addressing current and emerging issues that affect poverty and food and nutrition security.
3. Alignment with the Institute's dynamic comparative advantage to produce results applicable to many countries as global public goods.

IFPRI's priorities in Africa emphasize African issues and are guided by local institutional and policy developments, including Africa-wide agendas, such as those that form the focus of CAADP and the CGIAR, and agendas set by the primary regional organizations, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), their member countries, and the related regional research and technical organizations. Maximizing IFPRI's contribution to the efforts underlying the above agendas—namely, the search for sustainable solutions to end hunger and poverty in Africa soon and sustainably—requires, on one hand, that IFPRI takes a fresh look at old and persistent policy and strategy questions and, on the other, that the Institute gears up to tackle new and emerging questions.

For the foreseeable future and in the majority of African countries, agriculture will remain the most important sector in the battle to reduce poverty and achieve food and nutrition security. Before the recent acceleration and expansion of the recovery process, growth among African countries was expected to lower poverty and malnutrition levels but not enough to meet first MDG. The stronger growth over the last few years, if sustained, would markedly improve these outcomes. The challenge is to devise and implement policies and strategies to sustain this growth in the medium to long term and even accelerate it over the next few decades.

In addition to persistent food policy issues such as sustainable land and water management, property rights and collective action, and operation and efficiency of domestic markets, policy research, communications, and capacity building priorities need to address a range of new and re-emerging issues affecting African countries. These include population growth and employment generation; post-conflict and disaster management; governance in the context of increasingly pluralistic and decentralized decisionmaking; aspects of globalization such as quality information and management systems and safety norms, standards, and certification services; climate change and its implications; and biotechnology and biosafety.

The recent spike in world food prices and the crisis in international financial markets are bringing again to the forefront perennial issues of global trade and its interaction with the national economy. Although world food prices have come down from their extremely high levels of about a year ago, the factors underlying their increase, that is a relatively slow growth of global supplies against rapidly expanding demand fueled by income and population growth as well as changing dietary patterns, will continue to exert a long term upward pressure on prices. Despite the fact that price increases among African countries were much more modest than at the global level and that real prices were not extraordinarily high in historical terms, it is clear that the world is entering a period of high and increasing global food prices.

The impact of the financial crisis on African banks may be just one aspect of the repercussions for African economies and perhaps not even the most important. As global demand for food and agricultural raw materials falls under the pressure of lower liquidity, slow economic activity, and lower incomes associated with the developing global recession, African countries will have to deal with the potentially significant macroeconomic implications. The falling export demand and depreciation of major export currencies will lead to declining foreign exchange revenues while the liquidity constraint

will sharpen constraints for global financial resources and thus lower the flow of foreign direct investments into Africa.

The strategic food policy issues for African countries emanating from the above developments in global food and financial markets are related to:

a) the policies adopted by governments in response to these developments, and their potential impact on the short- and long-term supply of and access to food. These policies range from various types of subsidies seeking to dampen the effect on domestic prices and boost supply response; direct interventions in food market operations; price controls; and export prohibitions as well as other forms of trade restrictions. As the financial crisis worsens, some countries may eventually resort to sharper foreign exchange controls. Such developments would constitute a reversal of the gradual improvement in the policy environment among African countries which has contributed to the recent growth recovery in Africa. They may also slow down progress in the current policy renewal process under the CAADP agenda, which is seeking, among others, to improve policy planning and implementation in order to boost and sustain agricultural growth.

b) the anticipated increase in the volatility of global markets and its potential macro-economic implications in terms of changes in the balance of trade, foreign exchange revenues, fiscal imbalances, and the management of country exchange rates. These potential developments, together with the risks of policy reversal alluded to earlier, may raise the profile of trade and macroeconomic issues in the growth and poverty reduction agenda closer to where they were back in the 1980s and early 1990s.

c) the expected rise of social protection programs as part of the external assistance efforts to mitigate the impact of the global crises. Such programs likely will further the public expenditure bias in favor of social sectors and against productive sectors, in particular agriculture. In addition, depending on the level and pace of expansion of these programs, they may raise demand and thus prices of local staples and nontradables, while prices in the tradable segment of the agricultural sector continue to be under pressure from stagnating demand in global markets. This would further emphasize the importance of trade and macroeconomic issues as already indicated above, in particular in relation to the management of social protection programs and their impact of competitiveness and long term growth.

Research, communications, and capacity-building priorities

Priority research themes

IFPRI's priority research themes, along with suggested programmatic and operational changes, are summarized in the table below. The arrows indicate the direction of suggested changes in the level of efforts compared to the last edition of the strategy. These changes reflect the need to respond to the developments highlighted above and their implications for food policy research in Africa. The suggested weights and direction of change in the table therefore differ in some instances from the directions indicated in IFPRI's overall strategy.

Table 1—IFPRI's priority themes in Africa with weights and directions of level of effort

Focus area	Research theme	Weight and direction of level of effort
A. Efficient and fair *functioning* of global and national food and agriculture systems	**1.** Outlooks and global change	⇧
	2. Globalization, trade and markets	⇧
	3. Natural resources policies	⇧*
	4. Risks and emergencies	⇔
B. Effective strategies and *governance* at the global, national, and regional levels	**5.** Governance and policy processes	⇔**
	6. Development strategies	⇧
	7. Poverty, nutrition, and social protection	⇔***
C. Enhancing pro-poor food and agriculture system *innovations*	**8.** Diet, health and food safety	⇧
	9. Science and technology	⇔
Policy communications		⇔
Capacity strengthening		⇧

Notes: ⇔ indicates maintenance of current level of effort; ⇧ indicates an increase in current level of effort.

* The incremental effort here should be on climate change and its implications. ** Any needed additional effort can be carried out as part of the work on development strategies. *** The social protection component in particular needs to be scaled up, partly in order to address the risk and emergency issues.

For instance, the overall strategy maintains the level of efforts for themes 1, 2, and 3, whereas the Africa strategy proposes increases in the level of efforts. On the other hand, the Africa strategy is proposing, contrary to the Institute's overall strategy, constant levels of efforts for themes 4 and 5, and dealing with the related, Africa specific issues under themes 7 and 6, respectively.

Table 2—IFPRI's priority themes in Africa with weights and directions of level of effort compared to IFPRI's overall strategy

		Weight and direction of level of effort:	
Focus area	**Research theme**	**IFPRI**	**Africa**
A. Efficient and fair *functioning* of global and national food and agriculture systems	**1. Outlooks and global change**	⟺	⇑
	2. Globalization, trade and markets	⟺	⇑
	3. Natural resources policies	⟺	⇑ *
	4. Risks and emergencies	⇑	⟺
B. Effective strategies and *governance* at the global, national, and regional levels	**5. Governance and policy processes**	⇑	⟺ **
	6. Development strategies	⇑	⇑
	7. Poverty, nutrition, and social protection	⟺	⟺ ***
C. Enhancing pro-poor food and agriculture system *innovations*	**8. Diet, health and food safety**	⟺	⇑
	9. Science and technology	⟺	⟺
Policy communications		⟺	⟺
Capacity strengthening		⇑	⇑

Notes: Levels of effort: ⟺ = maintenance of current level of effort; ⇑ = increase of current level of effort.

Budget allocation: ☐ = Low ▨ = Moderate ■ = High

* The incremental effort here should be on climate change and its implications. ** Any needed additional effort can be carried out as part of the work on development strategies. *** The social protection component in particular needs to be scaled up, partly in order to address the risk and emergency issues.

Focus areas within research themes

The focus areas under each of the priority research themes are listed below. They have been defined to emphasize concerns and issues that are critically relevant for African countries.

a. Efficient and fair functioning of global and national food and agriculture systems. This area focuses on policies and strategies to enable African economies to further integrate into the global economy in a way that maximizes the positive effects in terms of improved growth and food and nutrition security outcomes, as well as sustainable management of the natural resource base:

Outlooks and global change

Global food and agriculture outlooks, focusing on changes in global food and financial markets and their implications for sustaining Africa's recent growth recovery;

Globalization, trade, and markets

Globalization processes and their effects on trade and domestic market policies for inclusive growth, in particular the development of competitive, smallholder friendly value chains;

Natural resources policies

Sustainable and efficient natural resource management (water, land use, soils, biodiversity, and energy), with particular focus on the impact of climate change and mitigation of its impact.

b. Effective strategies and governance at global, regional, and national levels. This area focuses on policies that improve regional, national, and local governance among African countries, and enhance political participation in and institutions for the development of pro-poor and smallholder friendly food, nutrition, and agricultural sector policies:

Development strategies

Improving governance and policy processes in food and agriculture, including through CAADP as a sector governance and policy renewal effort, with a focus on the role of agriculture, the transformation of smallholder farming, enhanced urban–rural linkages, and nonfarm rural employment;

Poverty, nutrition, and social protection

Policies and interventions for poverty reduction, social protection, and nutrition improvement, including during emergencies and post-crisis situations as well as the development of broader social protection policies in Africa.

c. Enhancing pro-poor food and agriculture system innovations. This area focuses on policies that foster scientific and institutional innovation and technology use to benefit consumers and producers in African countries:

Diet, health, and food safety

Policies to enhance food and diet quality, health, and food and water safety, in rural communities as well as among the fast growing urban centers, and in the context of rapidly changing food distribution systems;

Science and technology

Food- and nutrition-related science and technology policy and innovations to modernize and integrate smallholder farming into the emerging local and global value chains.

The gender dimension of IFPRI's strategy in Africa

The Assembly of the African Union issued, at its Third Ordinary Session in July 2004, a Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa, reaffirming the Decision on Gender Parity adopted in 2002. Women are strongly represented in Africa's agricultural sector, which is a major sector of employment and source of wealth for households and national economies alike. Consequently, policies and strategies affecting this sector should explicitly consider the gender dimensions, in particular in areas where gender related factors are expected to play a significant role. The strategy, therefore, requires activities under the above focus areas to systematically review whether and where gender is a real determining factor, and to consider the implications for policy and strategy planning and implementation, as well as the related outcomes. In particular, gender is expected to be a critical factor with respect to issues around access to and control of assets, access to services, and participation in policy and decisionmaking processes.

Policy communications

The objective of the communications component of the strategy is to forge an effective two-way communication with key stakeholder groups across Africa and their partners outside in order to ensure continued relevance of the Institute's agenda in the region and to facilitate the provision of factual,

timely, and competent information on all questions related to food and nutrition security and natural resource management on the continent. The Institute's communications work is carried out through the Communications Division in close collaboration with the research and outreach divisions, and in particular the 2020 Vision Initiative. The communications component of the current strategy will be implemented as part of the Institute's overall communications effort, with a focus on issues of particular interest to Africa and in line with the institutional environment of the region.

Capacity strengthening for policy and research

The capacity-strengthening activities of the Institute are consolidated under the Knowledge, Capacity, and Innovations (KCI) Division, which cooperates with all IFPRI research and outreach divisions to provide an institutional focal point for learning, training, and capacity building. A major component is capacity strengthening of NARSs, with special emphasis on African countries. The strategy also targets efforts to develop the capacity of researchers, policymakers, trainers, practitioners, administrators, extension workers, students, community leaders, and others to address food policy issues through research, analysis, communications, policy formulation, institutional change, and organizational management, including the strengthening of effective networks.

IFPRI's operational emphasis: Understanding and supporting positive change

From a food policy perspective, sustainable strategies aimed at reducing poverty and hunger and improving nutrition in Africa have two requirements: first, access to high-quality information that allows decisionmakers to anticipate and plan for the long term and, second, policy options and solutions that are rooted in the African experience. IFPRI's long-term simulation and projection activities, such as the IMPACT work or occasional analysis of global trade trends (as indicated under the second priority area above) adequately address the first requirement. In the future, these simulations and analyses will be disaggregated to regional and national levels to increase their relevance. Part of these efforts will include the development of an Africa Growth and Development Policy (AGRODEP) modeling consortium, in collaboration with SROs and other research networks in Africa, to link leading experts and create the critical mass of local modeling expertise. To satisfy the second requirement, IFPRI's research in Africa will focus more on learning from what has already demonstrably worked in Africa and on using that knowledge to stimulate broad positive change by identifying options for improving and scaling up these successes. Consequently, in addition to evaluating and understanding causal relationships, the

Institute's research activities will focus more directly on identifying entry points for change, ultimately providing better guidance on strategic and sector-specific policy choices.

IFPRI is currently completing collaborative work with African researchers in more than a dozen countries to examine long term growth and poverty reduction options to guide investment programs under the CAADP implementation process. The expertise that is being mobilized and the tools that are being developed are providing part of the foundation for the modeling consortium referred to above.

Learning from what has worked

The earlier section on the recent trends and prospects for growth and food and nutrition security stressed the unparalleled recovery process that is going on currently among African countries. According to recent estimates, five African countries had already achieved the poverty MDG by 2005, while another ten were on track, and eight others had recorded reduced poverty head counts (ADB/OECD 2005; World Bank 2005). Furthermore, African countries recorded higher average overall and agricultural export growth rates between 2001 and 2005 than the world average (WTO 2005). Similarly, growth of agricultural exports by volume was higher during that period than any time since the 1960s (UNCTAD 2005). The strong growth and trade performance has continued until now and is expected to remain positive, albeit diminished by the current crisis in the global food and financial markets. Looking into the factors driving growth in various agricultural sectors and countries, Haggblade (2003) and Gabre-Madhin and Haggblade (2003) identified a number of commodity-specific, institutional, and technological successes, which, together with the sweeping reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, underlie the improvement in growth and trade performance across Africa over the last decade or so.

A research strategy to encourage and support positive change requires that, in addition to their usual technical inquiries, research projects undertaken by IFPRI help African countries to determine what works, do more of what works, and make improvements where possible. In other words, projects should also seek to:

1. understand and document demonstrated solutions in their area of inquiry based on what has been found to work on the ground;
2. devise packages of options, as well as points of entry, aimed at improving and propagating successes to other sectors and countries; and
3. identify actions to spread benefits as broadly as possible, particularly among the poor and

food insecure.

Research to support positive change therefore calls for more targeted design of and approaches to research, focusing on learning from successful experiments and experiences on the ground, particularly related to critical success factors, including institutional innovations.

Creating knowledge synergies

The extrapolation of success stories is not just constrained by growing complexities in the process of up-scaling beyond a certain sector, geographic area, or a group of agents but also by weaknesses and deficiencies in related policy areas. Hence, a strategy of positive change also calls for the creation of knowledge synergies through increased collaboration between IFPRI's research divisions, more direct integration of capacity building and policy communications into research activities, and strategic partnerships to facilitate learning and the transfer and adoption of policy success factors. In part, the need for synergy also explains the clustering of related research issues under a limited number of priority areas in the current strategy. The Africa strategy will ensure that available expertise and experience is systematically integrated into comprehensive policy solutions, thereby enhancing such solutions.

Partnerships

Strong operational and strategic partnerships are a critical aspect of the Africa strategy in terms of supporting positive change and the learning and adoption process. In addition to the large number of projects that the Institute carries out in collaboration with NARS across Africa, it has established long term country programs in selected countries to provided direct support to national strategy efforts while gaining deeper understanding of and gathering lessons on success factors for replication in other countries. Furthermore, the Institute is working in a more targeted fashion with leading African institutions to assist in the development of CAADP pillar framework documents which offer strategic guidance to RECs and their member states for the adoption of best practices and the scaling up success stories. Together with other Africa-based CGIAR centers, IFPRI is collaborating with leading RECs on the establishment of Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), web-based platforms to facilitate the documentation and tracking of policy and strategy planning, implementation and outcomes, benchmarking, and learning among African countries.

Over the last two years, the Institute's emphasis has been on consolidating the above partnerships, which involve institutions and organizations such as AUC, NEPAD, two RECs covering more than two

thirds of African countries—COMESA and ECOWAS, leading SROs and research networks—ASARECA, CORAF, FANRPAN, leading technical institutions designated by AU/NEPAD to facilitate the implementation of CAADP Pillar agendas—the African Center for Food Security of the University of KwaZulu Natal and the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of West and Central Africa. The establishment of the AGRODEP modeling consortium will build upon and deepen the above partnerships on the collaborative research side.

Going forward, the Institute will continue to expand its partnerships to encompass a wider range of agents—such as those involved in pro-poor agricultural innovation processes as well as the users of policy information—thereby broadening the learning and replication process. Such agents include regional economic communities, parliamentarians, leading farmer organizations, private-sector professional associations, and local governments. The relative weakness of policy research institutions in Africa implies a greater need for policy communications and targeted capacity building, in particular, activities linked to the extension of policy solution models emanating from IFPRI's research.

Institutional response

Successful implementation of the IFPRI Africa strategy, as described in this document, requires certain institute- and division-level actions, as well as actions involving partners and processes in Africa. Significant progress has been made in the thematic, geographic, and operational realignment of divisional activities that was called for in the last edition of the strategy. Part of the institutional response will continue to consist of further strengthening: (a) the incentive framework to deepen cross-divisional collaboration, and the skills for team-building and team work, and (b) the resource-mobilization strategy to support the necessary joint divisional fundraising.

Actions to align with processes and deepen partnerships in Africa

The establishment of the position of director for Africa has created a focal point for the Institute to ensure that: (i) issues specific to and of particular strategic interest to Africa are brought to the attention of management and reflected in the Institute's activities; (ii) the necessary cross-divisional collaboration to attend to such issues takes place; and (iii) partnerships with the various groups of stakeholders are managed efficiently. Furthermore, the creation of the IFPRI office in Dakar provides a foundation for greater proximity to the Institute's partners and stakeholders and a future base for better coordination of efforts on the ground.

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