



**Sub Saharan Africa  
Challenge Programme**

*Securing the future for Africa's Children*

**PROGRESS REPORT**

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## **ACRONYMS**

ARD	Agricultural Research for Development
CIAT	Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical
CRST	Cross-site research support team
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
G & M	Governance and management
IAR4D	Integrated Agricultural Research for Development
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Innovation Platform
KKM	Kano-Katsina-Maradi
LI	Lead Institution
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NRM	Natural Resource Management
MTP	Medium Term Plan
PLS	Pilot Learning Site
PM & E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
SC	Science Council (of the CGIAR)
SRO	Sub-Regional Organization
ToR	Terms of Reference
ZMM	Zimbabwe-Mozambique-Malawi

## SUMMARY

At its 2006 Annual General Meeting, the CGIAR granted approval for the SSA CP to commence its three-year research phase, starting in January 2007. As its first research phase task, the CP was charged with developing an Action Plan that addressed concerns raised by the CGIAR's executive and science councils on findings of the latter's inception phase review. The Action Plan was submitted to the relevant CGIAR organs (secretariat and science council) in May 2007 as the Programme's medium term plan (MTP) for the three-year research phase. In addition to completion of the Action Plan, commencement of SSA CP research was contingent on availability of sufficient funds to sustain continuity of field research activities for at least half of the year, and contractual arrangements for managing activities at sub-regional and site level. Thus, the programme devoted the first half of the year towards not only developing the action plan but also fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions. It devoted the latter half of the year to implementing actions stipulated in the Action Plan as well as responding to unforeseen, albeit crucially important issues, that emerged during the year, notably a review of the programme's governance and management arrangements.

The programme registered several achievements in 2007. The first set of achievements it realized were aimed at putting in place all the requirements for initiating the research (including defining the research design, entering contractual arrangements for managing the programme's operations and funds at sub regional and site level, mobilizing the funds to finance the programme's activities, and assembling the required expertise). The second set of achievements resulted from implementation of the Action Plan, which is still ongoing for 2007. It is very important to note that the outputs from field-based research which are stipulated in the Action Plan were expected to be achieved under the assumption that this type of research would start in September 2007. However, by the beginning of September 2007, most of the programme's funds for the first research year had not yet been released. In order to assure continuity of activities for at least 6 months, FARA deferred commencement of research activities until October 2007 when it received sufficient funds to sustain activities for such a period.

Thus FARA is commencing the field-based research in earnest in early November 2007 (two months behind the original schedule). Accordingly some of the outputs expected by December 2007 will most likely be realized in February 2008. Nevertheless, most of the requirements for embarking on the field work such as a methods guide, indicators, research protocols, site selection criteria, sampling designs, database structures and the necessary human resources are in place. FARA is confident that by the end of the year the research sites will have been delineated, sample households will have been identified and baseline data will have been captured. The actual expenditure for January to September 2007 and the projected expenditure for October to December 2007 reflect the intensity of field activity over the two periods – moderate followed by intensive.

There remains a divergence of view between the CGIAR science council and SSA CP on what constitutes IAR4D and how its effects relative to alternative approaches should be evaluated. The science council favours a reductionist approach whereas the SSA CP considers a middle-of-the road approach to be more appropriate and feasible. The SSA CP has made efforts to engage

with the science council on this matter and refreshingly the SC has been fairly accommodating and as a result there is now greater convergence of view. However, more dialogue is required to harmonize the views held by both sides.

The total amount of funds available for the programme at the start of 2007 was the US\$2.3 million that it carried forward from 2006. The programme's budget for the first year was US\$9.9 million, thus FARA was faced with the task of mobilising the balance of US\$7.6 million. These concerted efforts in engaging with the programme's donors were rewarded with confirmation of funding pledges by most of them such that by October 2007 the programme's funding for the first year was fully secured. FARA wishes to thank the Programme's donors for their confidence in the Programme, which they have demonstrated through their contribution towards its implementation. It also acknowledges the immense support and guidance extended by the various organs of CGIAR (secretariat, science council, ExCo and members) towards ensuring that the SSA CP lives up to the very high expectations of its African stakeholders.

FARA and its stakeholders in Africa strongly believe that the SSA CP presents them with a unique opportunity to test an approach that promises to radically transform the way agricultural research for development in SSA is organised in order to improve its capacity to deliver development impact. It is refreshing to report that after enduring persistent delays, the SSA CP has finally commenced implementation of its research phase.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sub Saharan Africa stands out as the region with the gloomiest development indicators. Agriculture is recognised as a fundamental instrument for stemming and reversing the worsening poverty, food insecurity and natural resource degradation trends in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, at the current performance levels of the SSA agricultural sector, it is unlikely that the region will attain either the first millennium development goal (MDG) target of halving poverty and hunger by 2015 or the seventh MDG of ensuring environmental sustainability. The SSA CP was initiated in response to the need to dramatically increase the development impact of agricultural research in SSA.

The extensive consultations that led to the formulation of the SSA CP (from 2002 to 2004) concluded that the principal shortcoming to date of African agricultural research and development has been its failure to achieve impact beyond the locality in which it is conducted and the accumulation of so called 'improved technologies' on research shelves rather than in farmers' fields. These consultations hypothesized that for agricultural research to play a more effective role in catalyzing development, it should be appropriately located within a broader system of agricultural innovation that facilitates interaction and enhances flows of knowledge among all key actors in agricultural systems and value chains. This systemic and innovation-focused approach to agricultural research has been referred to as "Integrated Agricultural Research for Development" (IAR4D). This approach entails a transformation of the institutional architecture for conducting agricultural research and development. The SSA CP seeks to establish the principles for conducting IAR4D in dynamic and heterogeneous contexts and to evaluate the relative effectiveness of this approach compared to other agricultural research for development (ARD) approaches.

The overall goal of the SSA CP is to contribute to improved rural livelihoods, increased food security and sustainable natural resource management throughout SSA, by adapting, evaluating and catalysing the uptake of IAR4D. The programme commenced in January 2005 with an 18-month inception phase. It was initially designed to demonstrate best practices for carrying out IAR4D. However, an evaluation of its inception phase by the CGIAR Science Council (SC) in June-July 2006 recommended a shift in its focus. The Programme now aims to devote its three-year research phase to the following:

- establishing principles and options of how processes for systemic innovation can be organized among researchers, practitioners, policy actors, market chain actors, and rural communities, so that new technologies, techniques and policies will be appropriate to the needs and capacities of all actors in agricultural systems and value chains thus increasing their development impact.
- developing strategies for improving the innovation capacity of actors across agricultural value chains;
- establishing the causal connections between stakeholder interaction, learning, innovation (technical and institutional) and development outcomes.
- evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of IAR4D over other research and development approaches.

In pursuing the above objectives, the SSA CP is focused on answering the following research questions.

- Does the IAR4D concept work and can it generate deliverable international and regional public goods for the end users?
- Does the IAR4D framework deliver more benefits to end users than conventional approaches?
- How sustainable and usable is the IAR4D approach outside the test environment (i.e. issues of scaling out for broader impact)?

The Programme seeks to answer the above questions by applying IAR4D on the following four aspects of agricultural systems and particularly on the interactions among them: (i) technologies for improving productivity; (ii) sound natural resource management (NRM); (iii) accessibility and efficiency of markets for smallholder products; and (iv) formulation and adoption of policies and institutional arrangements that foster innovation to improve livelihoods of smallholder farmers and pastoralists.

The SSA CP is structured to operate at three interlinked levels: programme-wide (regional); at three pilot learning sites (PLS) (sub-regional); and through nine projects (three per PLS). The SSA CP's three PLS are: (i) Kano-Katsina-Maradi (KKM), which straddles southern Niger and northern Nigeria (West Africa); (ii) "Lake Kivu," located on the borders between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda (East Africa); and (iii) Zimbabwe-Malawi-Mozambique (ZMM), a transect through these three countries (Southern Africa). Its overall coordination is vested in the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), while management of its sub-regional operations is vested in sub regional agricultural research organisations (SROs).

At its 2006 Annual General Meeting, the CGIAR granted approval for the SSA CP to commence its three-year research phase starting in January 2007. As its first task the CP was charged with developing an Action Plan that addressed concerns raised by the CGIAR's executive and science councils on findings of the inception phase review. The Action Plan was submitted to the relevant CGIAR organs (secretariat and science council) as the Programme's medium term plan for the three-year research phase. This report summarises the achievements registered by the Programme in 2007. It also highlights the challenges it has faced and outlines its programme of work for 2008.

## **2. SSA CP ACTIVITIES IN 2007**

The new Action Plan was an important landmark in the SSA CP's work programme for 2007. Because its development involved the formulation of a new research design for the programme, the commencement of research activities was necessarily deferred until the Action Plan was in place. The additional significant conditions that determined the commencement of research were: (a) availability of funds to sustain continuity of research activity for at least half of the year, and (b) contractual arrangements for managing activities at sub-regional and site level – the importance of these arrangements is underscored by the multi-institutional character of the

research and the subsidiarity premise upon which its management rests. Thus, the programme devoted the first half of the year towards developing the Action Plan and fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions. It devoted the latter half of the year to implementing actions stipulated in the Action Plan (see Table 1) as well as responding to unforeseen, albeit crucially important issues, that emerged during the year, notably a review of the programme's governance and management arrangements.

## **2.1. Development of the SSA CP's Action Plan**

At its 11th meeting in October 2006, the CGIAR Executive Council (ExCo) recommended a new Action Plan for the SSA CP. The council further recommended that the CGIAR should accept this Action Plan as the CP's medium term plan (MTP). The task of developing this research plan was structured into the five steps outlined below and took into account all the observations and additional recommendations made by the ExCo.

- (i) engaging with the CGIAR Science Council (SC) in identifying expertise for developing a research design for proof of the IAR4D concept;
- (ii) evaluating the skill gaps at programme level and mobilising a cross-site research support team (CRST)
- (iii) consultations among SSA CP research actors (taskforces, lead institutions, CRST and FARA) over the research design proposed by an expert recommended by the SC, to assess its feasibility at the research sites;
- (iv) Aligning the existing site projects to the framework developed through stages (i) and (iii) above through a workshop involving the programme's main research actors; and
- (v) finalization of the Action Plan, involving writing up of the plan and its review and approval by the Programme's steering committee.

The SC recommended several experts, but only one (Prof. Marcel Fafchamps from Oxford University) was available to contribute towards the design of the proof of IAR4D research. The research design for the SSA CP drew upon his contribution as well as contributions from other research actors. The final step of this exercise was completed on 23 May 2007 when the research plan/MTP was submitted to the CGIAR secretariat, and to SSA CP stakeholders who hailed it for increasing clarity about the SSA CP's research and for laying down, albeit in broad terms, the methods/approaches that would be employed to achieve the programme's objectives.

The May 2007 version of the Action Plan was however revised in September 2007 when SSA CP researchers met to agree on and flesh out the research methods. They noted that aspects of the Action Plan concerning evaluation of the effects of IAR4D required strengthening and accordingly made appropriate changes. A further exercise to address the SC's observations on the research design is planned for 5-8 November 2007. Evidently, the development of the programme's research design has followed an evolutionary path that is consistent with the principles of IAR4D. This is hardly surprising since the type of research proposed by the SSA CP is unprecedented at its scale. Nevertheless, we are now confident about the robustness of its research design.

The Action Plan stipulates the actions (mostly research) that were planned to be carried out in 2007. They are summarized in Table 1 below. Most of the activities carried out in the second half of the year focus on implementation of these actions and a summary of achievements realized from their implementation is presented in Table 3.

## **2.2. Mobilization of funds to Finance the Action Plan**

The total amount of funds available for the programme at the start of 2007 was the US\$2.3 million that it carried forward from 2006. The programme's budget for the first year was US\$9.9 million, thus FARA was faced with the task of mobilising the balance of US\$7.6 million. FARA initiated dialogue with donors that had financed the inception phase and reached out to new potential ones over funding for the SSA CP. These concerted efforts were rewarded with confirmation of funding pledges by most of the donors such that by October 2007 the programme's funding for the first year was fully secured. Further details on the programme's finances are presented in section 4.

## **2.3. Entering Agreements with Lead Institutions and Taskforces**

Lead Institutions were appointed by SROs to manage inception phase activities in the pilot learning sites. IITA served as the lead institution for both KKM and ZMM while CIAT discharged the same function for Lake Kivu PLS. After the inception phase, both centres were invited to carry on serving as Lead Institutions in the research phase. As expected their research phase roles were bound to change, taking on a significantly increased research and research-coordination character that included financial management of taskforce funds. The increased scope of LI functions called for negotiation by the LIs of new agreements with FARA. Once initiated, these negotiations took no less than five months. The main point of contention voiced by the LIs, in particular IITA, centred on the 10% overhead rate proposed by FARA, which the LIs considered insufficient because it was significantly lower than their standard overhead rates which are approximately twice this rate. FARA however upheld this rate in order to curb the level of the Programme's management costs. As a result IITA limited its tenure as the LI for KKM and ZMM to only one year. CIAT entered agreement with FARA to serve as the LI for Lake Kivu PLS over the entire three years of the Programme's research phase.

After entering agreements with FARA, the LIs negotiated sub-agreements with their respective taskforces.

## **2.4. Development of the SSA CP's research methods guidelines**

The development of the SSA CP's Action Plan highlighted the need for reasonably homogenous methods to enable cross-site comparisons and consistency over the entire Programme. The exercise further highlighted the cutting edge nature of some of the SSA CP's research which in turn demands the development of novel methodologies or adaptation of existing ones. Under the above circumstances it was essential for the Programme to develop a guide of the methods it was set to use. The strategy to develop a methods guide entailed synthesis of potential methods and convening of a one-week workshop for taskforces, lead institutions, the coordination unit and the cross-site research support team to harness their collective expertise.

This exercise achieved its objective of developing a first draft of the SSA CP's research methodology guide. It also revisited the Programme's research design and strengthened aspects

concerned with the comparative evaluation of the benefits of IAR4D and the associated indicators. The guide will be treated as an “open source” resource, that is, it will be subject to continuous revision drawing upon lessons and insights emerging from its implementation. When completed at the end of the Programme’s research phase, the guide is envisaged to constitute one of the SSA CP’s principal international public goods.

**Table 1 Planned research actions and outputs expected by December 2007**

Actions	Tasks	Expected Outputs
1. Methods Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire the necessary expertise,</li> <li>• Develop a draft methods guide for the SSA CP’s research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First version of research methods guidelines.</li> </ul>
2. Site selection including the counterfactual sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop criteria for site selection based on initial baseline conditions that will affect the performance of the IAR4D process</li> <li>• Identify the broader geographical domains within the PLS over which the research will be conducted as well as the local areas and households that will be used as samples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site selection and household sampling criteria</li> <li>• Report-narratives of site selection and household sampling procedures and maps of selected sites</li> </ul>
3. Baseline surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop indicators to include in baseline data collection</li> <li>• Develop the baseline survey protocol, hire the necessary expertise, conduct baseline surveys in both the intervention and counterfactual sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline survey protocols including indicators</li> <li>• Database of starting conditions (according to defined indicators) in intervention and counterfactual sites</li> </ul>
4. Assembly of field teams/level 3 team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Terms of Reference (TORs) for all level 3 (cross-site research) positions, and “missing” level 2 positions and conduct recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required human resource for cross-site research mobilised, i.e. the cross-site research support team, post-docs and seconded NARS professionals.</li> </ul>
5. Initiation (strengthening) of Innovation Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stakeholder profiles, compare to research guidelines,</li> <li>• Conduct “before” assessment of platform stakeholders, facilitate emergence of coalitions, train process (IP) facilitators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation platforms (IPs) in place</li> <li>• Institutional mechanisms for sustaining IPs defined</li> <li>• Database of IP actor baseline characteristics</li> </ul>
6. Commencement of research interventions indicated in pilot learning site and task force logical frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct action research on the interfaces i.e. interactions among (i) increasing productivity, (ii) natural resource management, (iii) improving access and efficiency of agricultural markets, and (iv) supportive agricultural policies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interface research priorities for each taskforce defined</li> <li>• Action Plans for research on interfaces (the level 1 research) drawing upon the innovation platforms</li> </ul>

Actions	Tasks	Expected Outputs
7. Continuous monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build capacity for monitoring and evaluation,</li> <li>• Develop Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation plans</li> <li>• Define indicators over and above the “strategic indicators”, develop monitoring protocols/agreements, carry out monitoring and analyse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation plans</li> <li>• Context-specific process monitoring protocols including indicators</li> <li>• Database on process indicators monitored</li> </ul>
8. Analysis of “before”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse monitoring and baseline data with respect to the SSA CP’s overarching hypotheses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary report on starting conditions (according to defined indicators).</li> </ul>

## 2.5. Streamlining Cross-Site Research

The operationalisation of the CRST advanced through the steps of clarification of its roles in relation to other research actors and its mode operation. The initial team members were identified but it is expected that membership of the team will change in response to the Programme’s needs which will evolve as the Programme advances.

## 2.6. Side Event at the FARA General Assembly: Sharing Experiences on Multi-Stakeholder Approaches in Agricultural Research

The SSA CP organised a side event during the FARA General Assembly and Agricultural science week held from 10-16 June 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The theme of the side event was “fostering partnerships in sub Saharan Africa’s agricultural research for development”. The side event served as a forum for harvesting and sharing experiences on multi-stakeholder approaches in agricultural research for development. Two noteworthy points highlighted by the experiences shared at the event are: (i) building effective partnerships is a long term undertaking whose impacts are usually gradual; and (ii) working through partnerships involves high initial costs, which however are more than offset by the much larger benefits attributed to this mode of operation. The meeting also highlighted the need for greater understanding about the impact pathway for multi-stakeholder approaches, which is necessary for fine tuning such approaches and existing ones. This is precisely on the public goods the SSA CP aims to generate.

## 2.7. Review of the Governance and Management Structure to Reduce Transaction Costs

In response to concerns raised by several stakeholders over the level of transaction costs<sup>1</sup> for the SSA CP, FARA commissioned an internal review of these costs to explore ways of curbing them, but without compromising the Programme’s efficiency or effectiveness during its research

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of transaction costs adopted by this review is the one used by the CGIAR Science Council (SC) where transaction costs are defined as the overall cost of governance and management including costs incurred by steering or advisory groups, evaluation panels and operations of secretariats. The SC makes a distinction between transaction costs and overhead costs. It defines overheads as the costs of resources used by an organization just to maintain its existence such as rent on the office space; cost of utilities and maintenance of essential facilities, and cost of retaining the organization’s core administrative staff.

phase. This review revealed that the Programme's transaction costs were high (22.7%) in the first year (2005), albeit comparable with other CPs during their inception. These costs however shot up to 35.3% in 2006. FARA attributes this exceptionally high figure to the nature of SSA CP activities carried out in 2006 – most of them fell under the transaction costs category even though they were fundamental to the development of the CP. These activities included the review of concept notes and proposals; the consultative development of the Programme's strategy and medium term plan and expenses associated with external reviews of the Programme.

The review recommended phasing out the PLS management committees and PLS lead institutions by transferring their functions to the SROs at the end of the first year of the research phase. It further recommended the transfer of the CP's Steering Committee functions to the Programme sub-Committee of FARA's Executive Board, thus phasing out the Steering Committee as well. The review estimated that these changes would cut the transaction costs to 9% and free up approximately US\$1.3 million per year, which the Programme would re-allocate to direct research activities carried out by taskforces at project sites. These recommendations were approved by FARA's Executive Board in October 2007.

## **2.8. Development of the SSA CP's Communication Strategy**

A first draft of a strategy for enhancing communication among the SSA CP's stakeholders and with actors external to the Programme was developed in July 2007. The strategy will be progressively refined drawing upon lessons learned from its implementation. Early products of this strategy are already in place. They include: (i) a quarterly newsletter entitled "Inside the SSA CP"; (ii) a wiki site and a blog site – the increasingly familiar Web 2.0 tools for facilitating interaction and collaboration by SSA CP researchers.

## **3. SSA CP ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007**

The narrative on research activities in section 2 provides indications on achievements registered by the SSA CP in 2007. In this section the achievements are summarized in Table 2 which is divided in two parts: (i) achievements from preparatory activities prior to commencement of research (see Table 2) and (ii) achievements resulting from implementation of the Action Plan (see Table 3).

The outputs stipulated in the Action Plan were expected to be achieved under the assumption that cross-site activities, notably the development of the methods guide would commence in July and be completed in August 2007, and the field research would follow starting in September 2007. However, by the beginning of September 2007, most of the programme's funds for the first research year had not yet been released (see section 4). In order to assure continuity of activities for at least 6 months, FARA deferred commencement of research activities until October 2007 when it received sufficient funds to sustain activities for such a period. Thus FARA is commencing the research in earnest in November 2007 (two months behind the original schedule). Accordingly some of the outputs expected by December will most likely be realized in February 2008. Nevertheless, most of the requirements for embarking on the field work such as indicators, research protocols, site selection criteria, sampling designs, database structures and the necessary human resources are in place. FARA is confident that by the end of the year the research sites will have been delineated, sample households will have been

identified and baseline data will have been captured. The level of activity between January and September and the intensification of field research activities in November and December are reflected in the expenditures (actual and projected respectively) over the two periods (see table

**Table 2 Expected Outputs versus Achievements from Preparatory Activities**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Achievement by December 2007</b>
1. Development of Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Plan, which will be treated as the programme's MTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Plan finalised in May 2007. It has been continuously improved. Latest improvement aimed at addressing concerns raised by the Science Council.</li> </ul>
2. Resource Mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover the funding gap for the first research year (US\$7.6 million)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds for the first research year secured.</li> </ul>
3. Contractual arrangements for management of research phase activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements entered between FARA and Lead Institutions (IITA and CIAT) and between the LIs and the taskforces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements entered and in force.</li> </ul>
4. Streamlining the cross-site research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRST established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRST in place and functional.</li> </ul>
5. Side Event at FARA General Assembly on sharing experiences on multi-stakeholder agricultural research approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report of lessons and experiences in multi-stakeholder agricultural research approaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report in place and findings summarised in newsletter.</li> </ul>
6. Development of a communication strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft communication strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft communication strategy in place. It will be continuously refined. Implementation of the strategy commenced with two issues of a quarterly newsletter and application of Web2.0 tools for intra-SSA CP communication.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 Outputs Expected from Activities in Action Plan versus Achievements realized 2007**

Actions	Expected Outputs	Achievement by December 2007
1. Methods Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First version of research methods guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First version of the research methods guide in place</li> </ul>
2. Site selection including the counterfactual sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site selection and household sampling criteria</li> <li>• Report-narratives of site selection and household sampling procedures and maps of selected sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site selection criteria and household sampling criteria were defined as part of the methods guide development exercise and have been refined</li> <li>• Report narratives of site selection and household sampling procedures and maps of selected sites are part of the taskforce Action Plans for November /December 2007. We are confident that they will be generated.</li> </ul>
3. Baseline surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline survey protocols including indicators</li> <li>• Database of starting conditions (according to defined indicators) in intervention and counterfactual sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline survey protocols are already in place</li> <li>• Implementation of baseline surveys has just commenced, but data structure for recording baseline data has been developed.</li> </ul>
4. Assembly of field teams/level 3 team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required human resource for cross-site research mobilised, i.e. the cross-site research support team, post-docs and seconded NARS professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRST mobilised and mode of engagement defined. Terms of Reference for post-doctoral fellows and seconded NARS professionals have been developed. Recruitment is set to be completed in the second quarter of the research phase.</li> </ul>
5. Initiation (strengthening) of Innovation Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation platforms (IPs) in place</li> <li>• Institutional mechanisms for sustaining IPs defined</li> <li>• Database of IP actor baseline characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilisation of coalitions of stakeholders will be carried out in November – December 2007. It is a starting activity. Institutional mechanisms for sustaining IPs will be defined once the platforms are in place.</li> <li>• A database structure for IP actor characteristics has been defined and database awaits to be populated with data</li> </ul>
6. Commencement of research interventions indicated in pilot learning site and task force logical frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interface research priorities for each taskforce defined</li> <li>• Action Plans for research on interfaces (the level 1 research) drawing upon the innovation platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commencement of research interventions on the interfaces will take place after the innovation platforms have been established. Same for the Action Plans which will be developed by the innovation platforms</li> </ul>
7. Continuous monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&amp;E) plans</li> <li>• Context-specific process monitoring protocols including indicators</li> <li>• Database on process indicators monitored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PM&amp;E plans and protocols for collecting monitoring data are already in place</li> <li>• A database structure for recording and organising the monitoring is also in place</li> </ul>
8. Analysis of “before”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary report on starting conditions (according to defined indicators).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be carried out after collection of “before” data</li> </ul>

## 4. SSA CP FINANCES

### 4.1. Budget for Three (3) Sites for the period 2007-09

The SC recommended that the research phase of the CP (2007-2009) be limited to three (3) sites instead of the initial 9 sites. The SC further recommended that the financial plan for 2007-2009 be revised to reflect this scaling down of scope and instead increase the resources allocated to the 12 projects. The additional resources are to ensure that necessary partnerships (especially inclusion of civil society and private sector) and required expertise (particularly the ARIs) are mobilized as well develop capacity for implementation of the projects.

FARA welcomed the SC recommendations noting that the SSA CP will draw on them to re-focus its research agenda. FARA also expressed the opinion that proof of the IAR4D concept will require more than three years operating at three sites. It however noted that a three year period would enable key milestones and output targets to be attained, which could be used to assess the IAR4D concept. FARA further called for flexibility to be built into the Programme so that, based on its performance and lessons learned, decisions could be taken to expand to new sites, should this be found necessary before the end of three years

The revised SSA CP's budget for 2007-09 is divided into 11 items (see table 1), which are organised into two broad categories, namely (i) sub-regionally managed activities (items 1 to 6 in table 1) and (ii) FARA coordinated activities (items 7-10 in table 1). The last item (number 11) concerns FARA's administration costs.

- Sub-regionally managed activities are carried out at the project site level (within the pilot learning sites and by taskforces), or at the sub-regional level through Lead Institutions or sub regional agricultural research organizations (SROs). FARA will disburse funds for these activities directly to the relevant organisations responsible for accounting for the funds and their use. Approximately 72% of the SSA CP's budget passes through FARA onwards to the sub regionally managed activities.
- FARA-coordinated activities are directly managed by FARA. Approximately 21% of the SSA CP's budget falls under this category. The remaining 7% of the budget is retained by FARA as administration fees.

Except for the programme's coordination unit and the steering committee (items 9 and 10), annual budgets for each of the other items are uniform over the three years. The total budget amount over the three years is US\$29,947. Out of this, approximately 72% of the budget is allocated to direct research; 11% to capacity building and 17% to management.

**Table 4 Revised SSA CP Research Phase Budget (US\$000)**

Item	2007	2008	2009	3 Year Total
<b>Sub-Regionally-managed activities</b>	<b>7,149</b>	<b>7,149</b>	<b>7,149</b>	<b>21,447</b>
1. Research at project sites (by taskforces)	4,500	4,500	4,500	13,500
2. Cross-site research managed at PLS level	1,014	1,014	1,014	3,042
3. Lesson synthesis and IAR4D capacity development at PLS	375	375	375	1,125
4. PLS Management Committees	150	150	150	450
5. Research support by Lead Institutions	930	930	930	2,790
6. Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs)	180	180	180	540
<b>FARA-coordinated activities</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>2,212</b>	<b>6,294</b>
7. Cross-site research managed at programme level	765	765	765	2,295
8. Cross-site capacity development in IAR4D	255	255	255	765
9. Programme Coordination Unit	877	842	992	2,711
10. Governance: (Program Steering Committee)	143	180	200	523
<b>11. FARA administration (overhead)</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>2,206</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,914</b>	<b>9,916</b>	<b>10,117</b>	<b>29,947</b>

#### 4.2. Overview of Financial Update

In 2007, the advance contributions from 2006 to the SS CP was US\$2.3 million. By October 2007, the Programme's secured funding and confirmed pledges amounted to 97.1% of the first year budget (US\$9.9 million--see table 4). The funding status for the first year of the SSA CP's research phase is therefore good with the balance of funds expected from the WB/CGIAR. This level of funding sharply contrasts with the situation at the beginning of the year (2007) when the SSA CP's funding status was a major cause for concern and threatened the survival of the Programme. This prompted FARA to urgently initiate dialogue with the Programme's donors and to cast the net wider in search for additional donors and funds. The donors responded positively to FARA's appeals by confirming their pledges made to FARA.

**Table 5 Funding status of the SSA CP for the research phase (in US\$000)**

Donor	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Budget Requirements	9,914	9,916	10,117	29,947
<b>Funding:</b>				
Balance carried forward from 2006	2,327	0	0	2,327
DFID (United Kingdom)	4,053	3,800	3,800	11,653
European Commission <sup>1</sup>	2,445	-	-	2,445
Government of Italy	604	-	-	604
The World Bank	200	-	-	200
<b>Total Cash/Pledges</b>	<b>9,629</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>3,800</b>	<b>17,229</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>285<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6,116</b>	<b>6,317</b>	<b>12,718</b>

1. Funds pledged by the European Commission for 2006 and 2007 amount to €1.80 million (approx US \$2.45 million). FARA expects these funds to be disbursed in November 2007.
2. Balance of funds for year 1 expected from CGIAR Secretariat

Following the meeting between FARA management and the CGIAR Secretariat on 3rd October in Washington, an invoice for the budget gap has been sent to the CG secretariat and funds will be expected any time before the end of the year. On behalf of all the programme's stakeholders, FARA Management and Programme Coordination unit wishes to register deep appreciation to the CP donors for their generous contributions. Concern, however, persists about the funding outlook for the second and third years because current funding pledges for these years cover only 37.9% of the sum budgets for the two years. FARA is currently finalising discussions with the development partners on signing an MOU/JEFA by February 2008 which is expected to cover funding to the Secretariat and the FARA Core programmes which include the SSA CP.

#### 4.3. SSA CP Expenditure/Disbursement for 2007

The total expenditure for the 2007 financial year is estimated at US\$4.5 million (see table 6 – US\$0.9 m from January to September and US\$3.6m from October to December). The implementation of research is set to earnestly commence in November 2007 following FARA's signing of agreements with the Lead Institutions and disbursement by donors of sufficient funds to sustain uninterrupted research activity for two quarters. Under these circumstances the budget for the first year is projected to stretch up to the end of June 2008. Accordingly, FARA proposes to shift the budgeting periods for subsequent years of the three-year research phase to July 2008-June 2009 and July 2009-June 2010.

**Table 6 Disbursements of SSA CP funds in 2007**

Institutions/Recipients	Disbursements/Projections	Jan- Sept 2007 Actual Disbursement	Oct- Dec 2007 Projected Disbursement
CGIAR -IITA	Kano/Katsina/ Maradi PLS transfers for year 1 implementation activities		930,000
CGIAR - CIAT	Lake Kivu PLS 3 transfers for year 1 implementation activities	265,000	665,000
CGIAR - IITA	Zimbabwe/Malawi/Moz. PLS 3 transfer for year 1 implementation activities		930,000
	Cross-site research activities		500,000
Other Partners	– Development of research method guidelines	31,155	
	– Development of the Research Plan/ (MTP)	55,631	50,000
SROs	SRO Support	34,971	145,029
Programme Coordination	FARA General Assembly	75,239	
Programme Coordination	Staff costs	276,479	100,000
Programme Coordination	Supplies and services	23,760	25,000
Programme Coordination	Travel	27,303	15,000
Programme Steering Committee	Steering Committee	30,807	45,000
	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>820,345</b>	<b>3,405,029</b>
	<b>Cost recovery</b>	<b>113,212</b>	<b>198,101</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>933,557</b>	<b>3,603,130</b>

## **5. CHALLENGES AND MEASURES TO ADDRESS THEM**

The challenges faced by the programme in 2007 and the measures taken to address them are summarized below:

- There remains a divergence of view between the CGIAR science council and SSA CP on what IAR4D constitutes and how its effects relative to alternative approaches should be evaluated. The science council is calling for a reductionist approach whereas the SSA CP favours a middle-of-the road approach. The SSA CP has made efforts to engage with the SC on this matter and refreshingly the SC has been fairly accommodating and as a result there is now greater convergence of view. However, more dialogue is required to harmonize the views held by both sides.
- The programme's transaction costs shot to an alarming 33.5% in 2006, which called for a review of its governance and management arrangements. The review recommended the transfer of functions discharged by PLS management committees and lead institutions to the SROs. It also recommended the transfer of steering committee functions to the programme sub-committee of FARA's Executive Board. In overseeing the SSA CP, this sub committee will however be supported by a few key members of the phased out steering committee.
- FARA recognizes that three years is a relatively short time to prove that IAR4D works and delivers greater development impact relative to alternative agricultural research for development approaches. For this reason, the SSA CP has identified indicators that it will use to demonstrate progress towards this objective.
- The coalitions of stakeholders on which the programme is counting to test IAR4D lack the capacity to innovate. To address this challenge, the programme has made provisions to strengthen their capacity in this respect.
- Though the SSA CP has enjoyed tremendous good will from its donors, the disbursement of funds was carried out very late in the calendar year, which in turn delayed commencement of activities by two months. Refreshingly, the joint financing arrangement, which the donors have undertaken to enter with FARA, provides a mechanisms for meeting the cash flow requirements of FARA and its programmes including the SSA CP, and thus insures FARA from re-occurrence of such delays in the future .

## **6. NEXT STEPS FOR 2008**

- Implement the Action Plan according to detailed workplans of taskforces and the cross-site research support team
- Review progress with implementation of activities and synthesise of early lessons
- Continuously refine the methods guidelines and communication strategy (iterative learning)
- Develop a plan for carrying out changes to the governance and management arrangements and implement it.

- Continue and reinforce dialogue with the Science Council
- Continue engagement with donors and policy makers to update them on findings and experiences
- Prepare a “white paper” on IAR4D as an instrument for facilitating discussion about IAR4D at the highest policy levels.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

FARA and its stakeholders in Africa strongly believe that the SSA CP presents them with a unique opportunity to test an approach that promises to radically transform the way agricultural research for development in SSA is organised in order to improve its capacity to deliver development impact. It is refreshing to report that after enduring persistent delays, the SSA CP has finally commenced implementation of its research phase.

FARA acknowledges the sustained support of its stakeholders towards the SSA CP and their patience in the long wait for the implementation of the Programme to start. FARA also thanks the Programme’s donors for their confidence in the Programme, which they have demonstrated through their contribution towards its implementation. Further, FARA acknowledges the immense support and guidance extended by the various organs of CGIAR (secretariat, science council, ExCo and members) towards ensuring that the SSA CP lives up to the very high expectations of its African stakeholders.