

HR Perspective

Number 1 – January 2007

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to CGIAR SAS HR's first edition of *HR Perspective*, an e-bulletin that will keep you informed of HR issues and events affecting CGIAR staff. *HR Perspective* isn't just for Human Resources professionals; the broad range of topics to be covered in future editions will be of interest to all CGIAR staff, regardless of position or location. By sharing relevant information from across the CGIAR System, *HR Perspective* will also improve communications between geographically dispersed Centers and offices, and help foster a strong CGIAR HR Community.

Topics to be covered by *HR Perspective* include the following:

- Annual activities affecting all staff
- Training events
- Collaborative efforts between the Centers
- Good Practice Notes
- Regulatory changes and other developments
- New faces
- Staff profiles
- The HR world at large
- Upcoming events
- Staff contributions

To optimize its effectiveness, *HR Perspective* requires your input. We want to hear about those activities and events at your Center that could be of interest to other Centers. Priority will be given to staff contributions that cover issues that might lead to Good Practice Notes or underpin the SAS HR Work Plan. Good Practice Notes are give advice on specific HR issues based on facts from research and practice. We would also like to hear about the sort of topics that you would like to see featured in *HR Perspective*. Please send your comments and contributions to sashr@cgiar.org.

Sincerely,

Unni Vennemoe, Director CGIAR SAS HR
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research,
Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources

In this issue:

HR Forum in Mexico

The last week in February 2007 will see HR specialist from across the CGIAR System gathering in Mexico to attend the first CGIAR SAS HR Forum. Participants will have the opportunity to take part in several interactive activities, and will be given a platform to exchange ideas and experiences with their counterparts from other Centers. To be held from 26 February to 2 March 2007 at CIMMYT, the HR Forum's various activities will lead to more efficient and effective HR operations at CGIAR Centers. Although details of this event have already been sent to all Centers, we are still open for registration.

[More](#)

We look forward to welcoming Centers' representatives to Mexico!

SAS HR Website Underway

The SAS HR website is being developed and will provide a space where staff can collaborate and share information and tools, exchange views, receive guidance and pursue development projects. In common with the SAS HR Forum (see previous article), one of the main goals of the website is to nurture a dynamic HR functionality.

The website will also provide a permanent home for *HR Perspective*. As well as being featured in the e-bulletin, articles will appear on the website's homepage before being archived for future reference.

Work Plan in a Nutshell

The SAS HR Work Plan 2007 has been formulated, with certain events already underway. Although Participating Centers, which influence the SAS HR strategic direction and priorities, are receiving preferential, Center-specific support, all Centers will benefit from the Work Plan's various activities/objectives:

- An **HR Forum** – see above
- **Strategic Staffing** will ensure that Centers have the people they need, with the right set of skills for present and future needs
- A **Competency Framework** will recruit, assess, use and develop the skills and competencies of staff optimally, thus ensuring demand-driven training and development programs.
- A **One-Stop Shop for Training and Development**, will offer training, and give you access to relevant training for all CGIAR Centers. In the next instance, the One-Stop-Shop will be offered through the SAS HR website.
- **Good Practice Notes** will be compiled as and when necessary
- Roles and responsibility of the G&D and SAS HR will serve the CGIAR in a clear manner
- A **One Model Policy** based on values will provide much-needed adaptability across Centers.
- An **Aligned Expatriate Package** will reflect modern needs
- The establishment of **Common Values** will develop the culture necessary for innovative and quality research

[More](#)



Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources,
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Our Mission

To devise HR strategies and set goals for each CGIAR Center, create Global Solutions for Local Applications, and strengthen the Human Resources network of the CGIAR.

The HR Forum

Monday 26 February to Wednesday 28 February,
closed session for the Participating Centers on 1 - 2 March.
Texcoco, Mexico, hosted by CIMMYT
sashr@cgiar.org

The active collaboration with Centers during 2007 will be of major importance for the scope of the results.

2007 is a very important year. Building good working relationship is given focus. Finding cost-effective ways to do so is given attention. The HR Forum will be an important milestone to move ahead. The more participating centers there are, the better we can perform. The demand for collaboration and efficiency gains is also in keen focus with the donors. The work we do together is to strategically work towards delivering the results in the complex and changing world of agricultural international research to alleviate hunger and poverty.

Why should you join the HR Forum?

Do you feel you could benefit from closer collaboration between the CGIAR Centers with regard to strategic HR matters, in much the same way as some staff benefit from existing collaborative, Cross-Center disciplines? Do you feel that your working day is consumed by so many demands that you lack the time to make real improvements? Do you feel isolated in your discipline? Do you feel in need of rejuvenation? Do you wonder if you are just reinventing the wheel and could find a better way to do things by tapping into the shared-experiences of others? Do you want to return after the HR Forum enabled to contribute better to your Center by tapping into HR resources in other international research organizations, often facing similar challenges?

If you answer yes to any of the above, you will benefit from the HR Forum's Open Session.

At the end of three days, HR Forum participants will come away with an increased knowledge of HR capabilities in the various CGIAR Centers. This knowledge will have the potential to reduce the possibility of HR personnel duplicating efforts that have already been carried out at other Centers, and will also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of HR operations. Interactions at the HR Forum will enable participants to take part in and contribute to a dynamic and living network, thereby boosting the HR functionality not only in a participant's own Center, but also across Centers.

The Forum will also look at the adaptive HR functionalities that are necessary if Centers are to achieve harmonization and efficiency of efforts. The many Centers that are expanding globally will benefit from harmonization of HR functionalities at their various regional offices.

Moreover, collaboration with hands-on operational activities, which the Forum promotes, is highly valued as a strategic direction and is strongly supported and given emphasis by key donors.

Who should join?

We already have a number of participants; Head of HR, Corporate Managers and Senior HR Professionals, as well as relevant staff from the CGIAR System Office. It is possible for a Center to be represented by several participants. And as it is important to have a broad CGIAR participation, we encourage you to join.

[Agenda HR Forum](#)

Sign up for the HR Forum!

sashr@cgiar.org

CGIAR SAS-HR
Strategy Advisory Service for Human Resources
HR Forum

26 – 28 February 2007

Draft Agenda

Day One, Monday, February 26th

- 08:30 – 09:30 **Opening Session.**
1. Welcome Speech by Dr. Masa Iwanaga, CIMMYT DG.
 2. Questions & Answers session of the importance of the CGIAR HR Community's ability to deliver results to help alleviate hunger and poverty. By Dr. Francisco Reifschneider, CGIAR Director.
 3. Practical issues. By Ms. Unni Vennemoe, CGIAR SAS HR Director.
 - Forum Agenda
 - Expectations regarding deliverables and working together.
- 09:30 – 10:00 **Getting to know each other.**
4. Short introductory session. All participants
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Coffee Break.**
- 10:30 – 11:15 **Global Solutions for Local Applications.**
5. Presentation of the CGIAR HR Strategy's main features. Q&A Session. By Unni Vennemoe
- 11:15 – 12:00 **CGIAR HR model.**
6. Explanation of the main principles of the CGIAR HR model. By Unni Vennemoe
 7. Input from participants.
- 12:00 – 13:00 **HR update from each Center.**
8. Each participant prepares a three-minute presentation covering the focus of their recent work, the current status of this work, and the possible tasks that lie ahead. Q&A Session. All

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (Cafeteria is open)
14:00 – 15:30	HR update from each Center. 9. Continued.
15:30 – 16:30	Tour of CIMMYT facilities by Ms. Caritina Venado.
16:30 – 17:30	Day one wrap-up session.
17:30	Time to fresh up
19:00	Social Activity Dinner hosted by SAS HR.

Day Two, Tuesday, February 27th

8:00 – 11:00	Social Activity Get to know your fellow participants better while visiting the Teotihuacán Pyramids. After your “walk and talk”, return to the CIMMYT campus.
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break.
11:30 – 12:00	Start of the session. All
12:00 – 12:45	Development of the CGIAR HR Community. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ideas and views. Small group discussions. By Alma Lopez, Head of Human Resources Services 2. Discussions and conclusions on priorities. All
12:45 – 13:00	Ideas for and HR website <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Brainstorming 4. Who are our customers, and what do they want? 5. Updating website content: who does what? All
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (Cafeteria is open)

14:00 – 15:00

Good Practice Notes.

6. Which topics should be focused on?
7. How to develop and apply the Good Practice Note.

15:00 – 15:45

Accomplishment 1.

8. HR work is almost like art – it is often difficult to do well, can be broad in possible approaches, and can involve a vast array of tools and techniques. Once in a while, though, possibly through the way you did something or your choice of tools or technique, the result is something to be really proud of.
This is a presentation of your accomplishments.
Share your experiences!

15:45 – 16:30

Accomplishment 2.

16:30 – 17:00

A moment to remember

9. Presentation of awards and photo session. All

17:00 – 17:15

Sharing session

10. Information and preparation for Day Three. All

17:15 – 17:30

Day Two wrap-up and evaluation. All

17:30

Social Activity

19:00

All participants are invited to a special dinner hosted by Dr. Masa Iwanaga, CIMMYT DG.

Day Three, Wednesday, February 28

8:30 – 9:30

Training and development.

1. Current status – overview of common training
 - FLDP – continued and follow-up
 - Building a modular-based training program
 - What is needed
 - Assessing the needs - methodology
 - Regional suppliers
 - Centers' experiences
 - One-stop shop for training and development
 - Next step: project outline – hub, selection group, evaluation group, and administration
 - Long-term goals

9:30 – 10:00

Sharing session

2. Discuss HR topics – one-on-one as needed.

10:00 – 10:30

Coffee Break.

10:30 – 12:30

Case Study: IWMI – Changing the Staff classification and job evaluation system. Finding ways to approach the change.

3. Short up-date of work done so far and lessons learned
4. Presentation of the expected outcome of the change ahead. Facilitated by Sharat Kumar, Director of Corporate Services and Jennifer Crocker, Human Resources Manager
5. Advisory groups prepare advice on how to move forwards
6. Presentation of groups' advice. 2 – 4 groups

12:30 – 13:00

The CGIAR HR Community

7. How do we see ourselves today?
How would we like to be seen?
How can we get there?
Facilitated by

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch (Cafeteria is open)

14:00 – 14:30

Performance indicators

8. Introduction by Unni Vennemoe
9. Give input on performance indicators. All

14:30 – 15:15

Accomplishment 3

15:15 – 16:00

Closing

10. Feedback session
11. Wrap-up
12. Acknowledgment/certificate of participation

16:00

Social Activity

Although it is departure time for some participants, those who are staying on are invited to visit the Mexico City Museum of Anthropology before having dinner in the city.

N.B. The time allocated for each of the above activities may be subject to change.

Thank you and have a safe journey home!

Activities with SAS HR 2007

HR Perspective 1

An **HR Forum** – See above

Strategic Staffing

Realizing that the most important asset of the CG Center is its people, a returning question for managers at all levels evolves around having the “right people with the right skills at the right time”. Good people will easily be wooed away by others if the Centers are not proactive enough. To envisage the need for skills and the necessary avenues to ensure that the right people are on board and performing is one of the most challenging and important functions faced by the management of the Centers. Strategic staffing will ensure that Centers have the people they need, with the right set of skills for present and future needs. Strategic staffing is a systematic approach to assess the need for functions and talents, including external recruitment and sourcing, internal capacity building within and between CG Centers.

A systematic approach is needed to assess the opportunities for adapting the organization, basic questions around strategic direction and changes ahead considering a number of different options and always asking if we are focusing on the best opportunities, having the right scope and using the possibilities ahead of us. The CGIAR is to remain at the forefront of international agricultural research, therefore it is important to identify the channels to obtain the necessary talent, including avenues such as recruitment, secondment, inter-Center staff mobility, training, etc.

A strategic staffing process can also give an organization a competitive advantage, define the culture that the organization is striving for, assess what is important to the people they want to have on board, etc.

The implementation of strategic staffing involves the application of a global model in a Center specific context. The reviews of strategic staffing, which will be conducted in the context of strategic planning and budgeting for the Centers, will answer questions about the staffing of the organization for the

The concept and process will be developed and commenced. While an extension to a comprehensive strategic staffing process and system will be in place within the short-term strategy. The following phase is a global roster that cover succession planning purposes as well as talent pools that will help the Centers win the necessary talent, as well as make them more attractive in terms of career options. Horizontal flow of staff from one Center to another is envisaged to increase.

Competency Framework

A Competency Framework will underpin all HR processes such as recruiting, assess, use and develop the skills and competencies of staff optimally, thus ensuring demand-driven training and development programs.

The Strategic Staffing project entails input through a competency framework, and a systematic approach to assess the need for functions and talents, considering external recruitment, sourcing, and internal capacity

building. Establishing a workable common concept based on best practices, existing procedures, tools and processes.

One-Stop Shop for Training and Development

A One-stop Shop for Training and Development, where you will have access to relevant training offered to all CGIAR Centers. In the next instance, the One-Stop-Shop will be offered through the SAS HR website. Making relevant training offered accessible in one web-site, and through one common training calendar. The development and operation of a one-stop shop for common training will facilitate the expansion of existing training programs and the sharing of experiences and common training options.

A number of Centers are providing training on topics that are relevant to all international agricultural research organizations, such as:

- Leadership; FLDP, Harvard executive leadership training, women and leadership
- Multicultural sensitivity and communication
- Project management
- Writing project proposals
- Conflict handling
- Negotiation skills

Synergies can be obtained, and a training calendar could be developed based on quality demands and aligned across the Centers. The Centers can share concepts and suppliers, and offer training to participants outside the offering Center, where appropriate. Coordination and communication is needed to enable this.

Good Practice Notes

Good practice notes gives advice regarding relevant issues from the SAS HR work program.

Roles and response G&D and SAS HR

The area of Gender and Diversity forms part of any organizations Human Resources considerations. In the CGIAR, both the G&D program as well as the SAS HR program is available to CGIAR. Close collaboration on overlapping issues and alignment of parallel issues ensures that the CGIAR users find clarity and adequate scope in the services and program.

One Model Policy

A One Model Policy based on values will provide much-needed adaptability across Centers. To position the Centers to meet the challenges of the future, an extensive harmonization of policies is needed. Some Centers are already in the phase of developing and implementing completely revised personnel policy manuals, in line with modern HRM and organizational management practices giving the adaptability needed. These personnel policy manuals are characterized by being non-bureaucratic, easy to access, and reflecting and underpinning the values of the Center.

The CGIAR Centers will benefit from reviewing and endorsing a Personnel Policy Manual based on One

Common Model Policy adapted to local or Center specific needs. Advice on establishing One Common Personnel Policy will be given.

Every few years, a comprehensive review of the Personnel Policy needs to be undertaken in any Center to ensure consistency and reflect current needs. A personnel policy that can adapt to an agile and innovative organization must be value-based, not rule- and regulation-based. The development of one common policy based on the needs of the international agriculture research environment today is timely if the Centers are to be in position to meet the challenges of the future.

Aligned Expatriate Package

The expatriate packages in the CGIAR are provisions often established on a post-war model and are very much patriarchic. When Centers were established, they were appropriate. However, many are long overdue for review, are outdated and do not fit with today's requirement. The package offered does not reflect the current needs and desires for expatriate staff and their families. In addition it has often become a mix of different elements of benefit. An Aligned Expatriate Package will reflect modern needs.

For the CG Centers, the expatriate staff member is vital for the delivery of research to alleviate hunger and poverty.

The Centers need an updated expatriate package based on modern principles in consideration of the needs of staff member accepting appointments for mobility and residing outside the country of Center of life Interest. Based on these principles, each region might need to translate the principle into practical arrangements taking local issues into consideration. A harmonization along these lines will underpin systems to find career paths between Centers, have internal comparisons and benchmarking as well as improve the equity for staff. The Center will gain by being more attractive as well as benefiting from efficiency improvements.

The development and implementation of a new expatriate package that mirrors present needs, and which is easily administrated through individual lump sum allowances, is recommended. Such a package, will also allow for easier salary surveys.

SAS HR will disseminate the principles, and when required; advice on local adjustments and implementation modalities.

Common Values

The establishment of Common Values will develop the culture necessary for innovative and quality research. SAS HR will advice the Participating Centers who requires it to define a process and mode of implementation of the establishment of organizational values. This will underpin the development of a culture which is prerequisite of the innovative and quality of research required.

Value as a driver to impact.

Strategic HR promotes proactivity, flexibility and adaptability, all of which are essential for success in a dynamic and changing world. The strategic approach avoids bureaucracy and rule-based ways of working. It

is based on respect for the individual and takes into account and brings forth our different capabilities so that we can work together as a harmonious team.

Common values are an important leverage, not only to attract and utilize the effective human resources that are necessary in any successful organization, but to also achieve the smooth, no-nonsense internal relationships and good organizational communications that are vital for the CGIAR to realize its goals.

It is important to identify and develop a clear, concise and shared meaning of values/beliefs; priorities and direction so that everyone understands them and can contribute. Once defined, values will impact every aspect of the CGIAR.

Once values are established, employees will have to think and make decisions that are not based on precedence, detailed rules or “the way things have always been done”, but by being proactive and thinking critically, even questioning the *modus operandi* to determine if it actually supports the values they want to develop in their Center. This is crucial for a critical, adaptable and innovative research organization.