

Africa RISING

Ethiopian Highlands Project

Project Implementation Plan: 2012 – 2013

Background

This document describes the research plan for the Africa RISING – Ethiopian Highlands Project's (AR-EH's) research activities for the period October 2012 – September 2013. It may be read in conjunction with the programme document, prepared by partners in the three Africa RISING projects, as the approaches and activities described here represent our attempt to implement this higher level conceptual framework at a field level. Key considerations from the programme research framework that have informed the design of this plan are:

- The focus of the research is on sustainable intensification (SI) at the household scale, albeit with an appreciation that changes at this scale can influence issues at wider (community and landscape) scales.
- The research process is designed around three core research outputs (Figure 1) that basically ensure that the research is targeted (i.e. relevant; Research Output [RO] 1), is integrated with and builds upon endogenous practices (Research Output [RO] 2) and is scalable (Research Output [RO] 3).

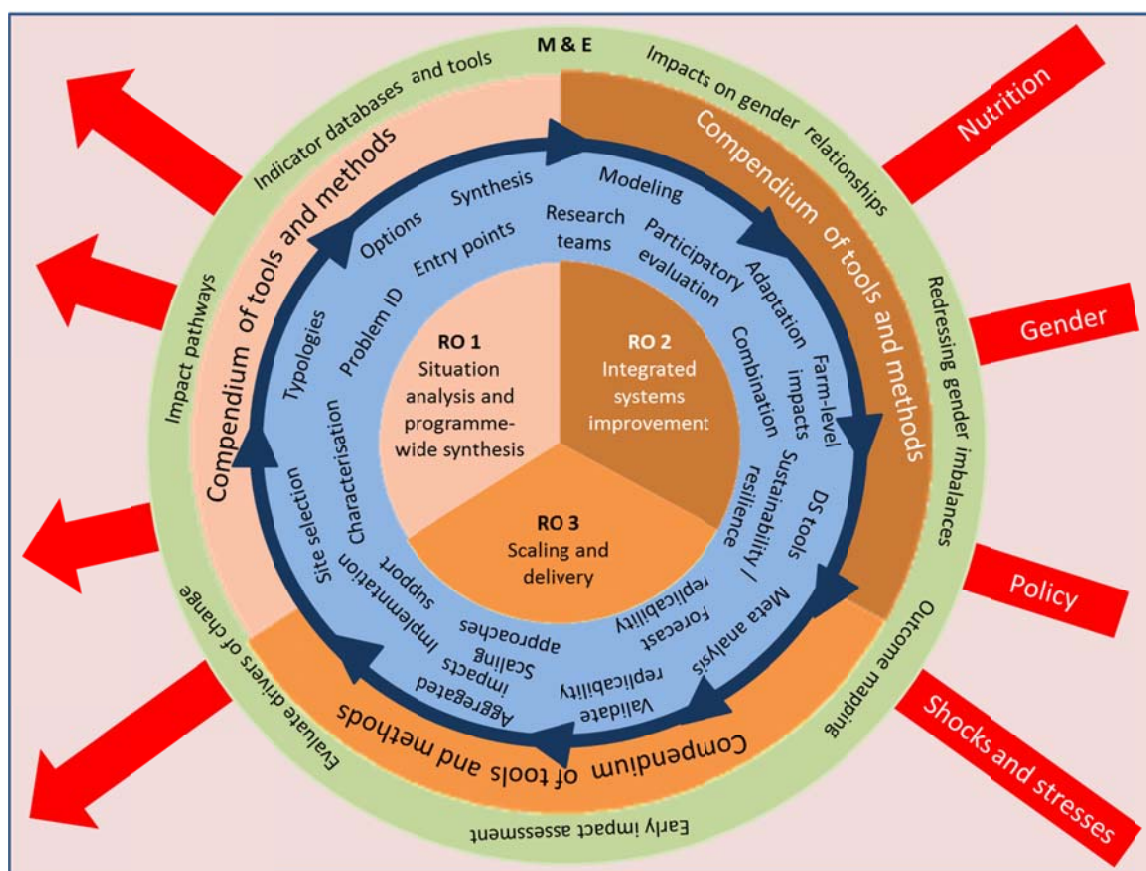


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the Africa RISING Research Framework.

- The research is not purely technology-driven but might also include questions that address innovation around knowledge management, social and financial capital and the market and other institutional forces that can drive SI at the household scale.

The Africa RISING research Framework was designed to establish the principles underlying an R4D approach to SI. It was not intended to be prescriptive beyond the level of the research outputs that lie at its core. However, the programme level research activities (outlined in the blue circle of Figure 1) do represent a consensus of the authors of the framework as to the broad steps that are likely to be necessary for this approach to be successful. Accordingly, the project level engagement described in this document is built on the implementation of these activities across the selected sites in the Ethiopian Highlands.

Project Management and Governance

The principal actors and project level institutions involved in AR-EH and their respective roles and responsibilities are summarised here.

Project Coordinator / Chief Scientist

The role of the Project Coordinator / Chief Scientist (PC/CS) rests in the overall management of the project and the provision of its intellectual leadership. Specific responsibilities include:

- Timely financial and technical reporting
- Review of technical quality of research components
- Contribute to the implementation of research components as necessary
- Facilitate resolution of disputes amongst partners when possible or provide binding arbitration when it is not.

Project Coordination Committee

The Project Coordination Committee (PCC):

- Provides advice and coordination to the PC/CS and project teams on project activities including,
 - science guidance to project implementers;
 - guidance on project planning and activities;
 - advice on annual project workplan and budget;
 - oversees coordination between project components and partners;
 - liaises with the IFPRI Information Systems Team to oversee programme level M & E;
 - keeps the Africa RISING Programme Coordination Team informed of activities and reporting via the PC/CS.
- Reviews and makes suggestions to PC/CS on semiannual technical progress reports to USAID.
- Plans yearly stakeholder meetings with support from Program Communications Team.

The PCC meets annually in person and virtually as called by its chairperson.

Partner Research Forum

The Partner Research Forum (PRF) is constituted to ensure the equitable participation of all AR-EH core partners in planning and executing the project's research. All core partners (see below) are represented on the PRF even during periods when that organisation's staff may not be active in the research components. The PRF will also include representation from the Communications team and the national M and E focal point on an *ex officio* basis.

Site Selection

Site selection at the woreda level has been informed by the activities of our partners in IFPRI. For more details of the woreda selection criteria and activities, see the report prepared by IFPRI's consultant ([Ethiopia Site Selection Report](#)). This section outlines the process that will be adopted for moving towards a selection of kebeles that will form the basic site unit within AR-EH. We anticipate an initial engagement with eight kebeles, expanding to 16 or more kebeles over the period October 2012 – September 2013.

The Process

- Engagement will be staggered. Initially, it will be limited to two kebeles in each of four woredas (one each in Tigray, Amhara, SNNPR and Oromia). This will allow us to test and refine our methodological approaches for RO 1 and RO2 before applying these more widely.
- Clear candidate woredas exist in Tigray, Oromia and SNNPR (highlighted in bright yellow in Table 1)

Woreda	Zone	Cereals	elevati	rainfall	popder	TLU_P	Targets
Goro	Bale	wheat	1516	837	33	0.87	potential
Ginir	Bale	wheat	1720	974	53	0.97	potential
Oflla	Southern Tigray	Wheat-barley	2383	772	147	0.54	AGP target
Gasera	Bale	wheat	2140	1099	138	0.54	AGP target
Limu	Hadiya	Wheat-maize	2166	1029	411	0.59	AGP target
Yem	Yem Special Woreda	Teff-wheat	1902	1246	115	0.67	AGP possible
Misha	Hadiya	wheat	2007	1107	321	0.54	potential
Soro	Hadiya	wheat	1858	1227	300	0.54	potential
Endamehoni	Southern Tigray	Wheat-barley	2607	742	174	0.44	AGP target
Endagagn	Guraghe	wheat	2527	1013	0		AGP target
Sinanana Dinsho	Bale	Wheat-barley	2743	1050	104	0.88	AGP target
Dendi	West Shewa	Teff-barley	2445	1143	149	0.86	AGP possible
Tena	Arsi	Wheat-barley	2724	1103	176	0.90	potential
Degeluna Tijo	Arsi	Wheat-barley	2835	1125	142	0.89	potential
Hulla	Sidama	Wheat-barley	2494	1430	387	0.90	potential

Table 1: Africa RISING Candidate Woredas.

- No suitable candidate woredas were identified for Amhara region in the original IFPRI site selection study for AR-EH. In order to do so, we will need to relax some of the selection criteria. It is proposed that we attempt to identify AGP target woredas in Amhara with less than 25% wheat of the growing area. This should allow us to produce a shortlist of woredas that meet the other criteria and are in the range 15 – 25% wheat of the cereal growing area.
- Due to the topography and localised variability (climatic, population density, road access) within woredas that can cover large land areas, there would appear to be no need to select more than one woreda per region, at least at this stage. We can encompass any gradients that we wish to target within woredas
- For this first level of engagement, a pragmatic approach is proposed for moving to the kebele level
 - Engage with officials in the shortlisted woredas (see above)
 - Identify candidate kebeles based on the criteria listed below
 - Undertake site visits to engage with local officials and review kebele level data
 - Identify two kebeles per woreda for site characterisation, stratification etc. (RO 1)
- We will consider later expansion, within budget, to:
 - Incorporate further stratification of factors likely to influence intensification gradients / trajectories (agricultural potential, road access etc.)
 - Initiate our research activities in relation to pilot-level scaling (RO 3)

- Accommodate the M and E plan when this is finally agreed.

At first, expansion is likely to be within the four initially engaged woredas but, particularly as we move into scaling activities with partners, this could move beyond these woredas at a later stage.

Kebele Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to inform the selection of participating kebeles:

- “Representativeness”.
- Stratification. It is proposed that the two kebeles selected in each woreda should be differentiated in terms of market access. Other strata can be introduced as further kebeles are recruited. An initial stratification on market access is appropriate as this is one of the major drivers of intensification that is relatively easily and rapidly assessed. As a result it offers a strong basis on which to be able to explore some of the research hypotheses.
- Previous engagement with Quick Wins. Amongst the candidates in Table 1, only Sinana Dinsho was also a Quick Win woreda. The project needs to look at opportunities for at least short-term follow up in the Quick Win kebeles that are not located in the candidate woredas.
- Previous and current NARS engagement.
- Extent of previous and current engagement with partner programmes; particularly, identifying potential synergies with existing activities.
- Engagement with AGP activities and previous / current USAID-supported initiatives.
- Potential synergies with CGIAR Research Programmes (1.2 particularly and 1.1 / 3.7 / 5)
- Private sector linkages.
- Capacity of local extension services who are likely to be key partners in implementing and monitoring on-farm research activities (RO2).

Implementing the Site Selection Process

Site selection will be implemented by four site selection teams (one for each region). Each team will be made up of 4 – 5 representatives of the core partner organisations. These teams should be agreed during the first meeting of the PRF. The composition of each team should, where possible, capitalise on partners previous engagements in the region and in candidate woredas.

Action: Site selection finalised, i.e. eight initial kebeles identified and their agreement to participate secured by October 31, 2012.

Research Action Plan

The Research Action Plan (RAP; Figure 2) has been informed by:

- The discussions of the original AR-EH Project Design Workshop held in January 2012 ([AR-EH: Project Design Workshop](#)).
- Alignment with the research activities specified in the programme research framework (see Figure 1). This also ensures alignment with the three programme research outputs so that the research conducted by the AR-EH project will contribute to Africa RISING’s impact pathway (under development).
- The discussions of a number of national level workshops conducted during September 2012 ([Africa RISING: Events List](#)), including the annual review and planning meeting ([AR-EH: Review and Planning](#)).

- The final sanction of the PRF (meeting to be held during the first week of October) and circulation to the members of the PCC for comment.

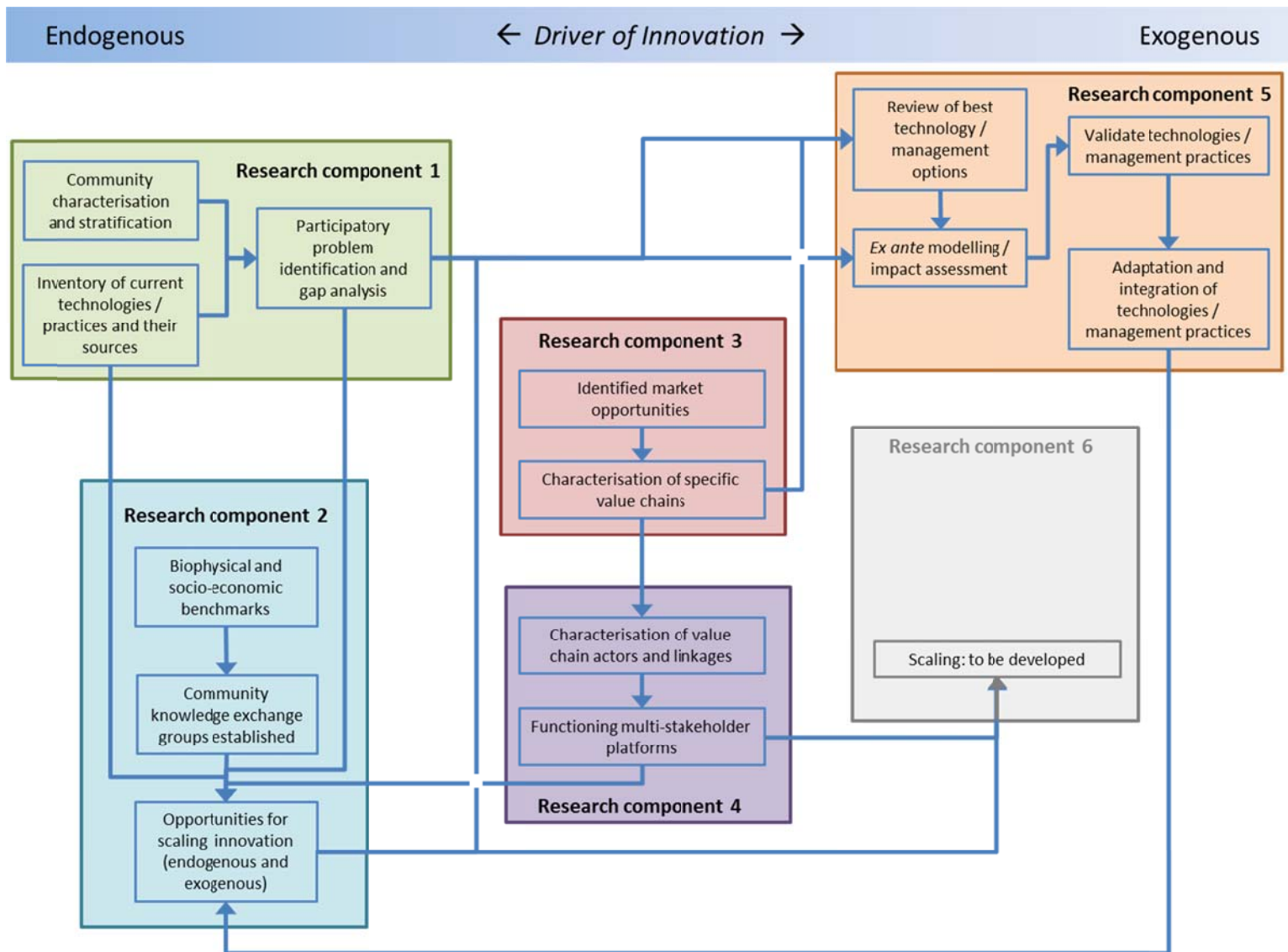


Figure 2: Outline of the Research Action Plan for Africa RISING – Ethiopian Highlands

The bulk of AR-EH's financial resources will be channeled through one, integrated project that will implement the RAP described here. A small fund, established alongside the RAP, will allow us to commission focused research activities that support the overall objectives of Africa RISING but may lie outside the framework itself. The core elements of the RAP are:

- **Research Components:** The component is the main operating unit for AR-EH. These will be operated by multi-disciplinary teams whose members are drawn from the core and other partner organisations. These teams will include the skills that are required to produce the research deliverables that are defined for the component.
- **Research Deliverables:** The research deliverables are designed to provide answers to specific research questions formulated by the teams responsible for each research component.

Research activities will be implemented by research teams drawn from the core partner organisations, *specifically to meet the needs of the components that are defined in the RAP*. These teams may be augmented, as required, by partners from other organisations who may be able to provide skills that are not offered by the core research partners. A timeline for the implementation of the RAP over AR-EH's first year of full operation is shown in Table 2.

Action: A meeting, the first, of the PRF will be held 5 October (to be agreed) to finalise and agree the RAP and to initiate site selection and team building for implementing the research components.

Implementing the Research Action Plan

The following process is proposed for implementing the RAP:

- Core partners will form teams to implement each research component. Proposals for implementing research components 1, 2 and 3 should be submitted to the PC/CS following the guidelines in the *pro forma* at Annex 1, by October 25, 2012.
- Proposals for research components 4 and 5 will be developed by partners before the end of March 2013 as these will need to be informed by the on-going activities of research components 1, 2 and 3
- Each submission led by one core partner organisation with *at least* one other core partner (and possibly non-core partners) involved.
- Submissions may wish to suggest amendments to deliverables but not to the fundamental components. These are [will have been] agreed by the PRF and they align with the activities defined in the Africa RISING programme research framework. Any amendments must still be able to demonstrate that they support the requirements of the research component and, by implication, the wider aims of the Africa RISING programme.
- Proposals can be developed in dialogue with PC/CS as required. This will help to ensure that activities under different research components are effectively coordinated.
- Teams do not have to be fixed. We can review and revise partnerships as the project proceeds (adaptive management).
- If more than one submission is received per component, these will be reviewed by the PC/CS and members of the PCT.
- All submissions will be reviewed by the PC/CS and members of the PCT. Amendments may be requested to ensure coherence with the Africa RISING programme's aims on the basis of recommendations.
- The RAP is not necessarily a fixed plan. The PRF and the PCT will review it periodically and revise as required.

Research components / deliverables	2012			2013								
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
<i>Research component 5</i>												
Review of best technology / management options												
<i>Ex ante</i> modelling / impact assessment												
Validate technologies / management practices												
Adaptation and integration of technologies / management practices												
<i>Research component 6</i>												
Scaling: to be developed ...												

Table 2: Timeline for the implementation of the Africa RISING – Ethiopian Highlands Research Action Plan, October 2012 – September 2013

Implementation Timeline

In summary, in order to implement the RAP from November 1, we need to have completed the following tasks:

- October 5: RAP finalised and agreed by the PRF.
- October 5: Four site selection teams formed
- October 25: Proposals for the implementation of research components submitted to PC/CS.
- October 31: Initial kebeles selected and participation agreed

Wider Engagement

Particularly as the project moves towards its scaling activities, it will rely on the active participation of non-research partners. These are partnerships that we need to consider early on even if they do not become active immediately. We need a tapered strategy for including the development partners in the research process so that they are fully engaged by the time the project starts to address RO 3 components in earnest.

Currently, there is a number of entry points defined for this:

- The project is aligned with the broader activities of USAID's Feed the Future initiative in terms of the Africa RISING programme's purpose and its focus on AGP woredas.
- As the research components are implemented, it is likely that existing partnerships at the selected sites can be built upon and new partnerships identified.
- Development practitioners will be engaged as key participants in the multi-stakeholder platforms through which the project will operate.

This issue needs further discussion and development.

Knowledge, Communications and Information

Providing access to excellent knowledge sharing, communication and information exchange facilities and expertise is a key input to ensure that the project operates effectively and has its intended results. The overall approach is set out in the 'Program Framework' and this section summarizes specific 'Ethiopia' elements. As with the overall Program, this project will put this communication expertise to work in five main areas:

1. External communication – Informing and engaging with wide audiences
2. Research for impact – Translating outputs into outcomes, getting knowledge into use
3. Knowledge sharing and learning – Enriching project learning interaction and exchange
4. Publishing – Capturing, organizing and disseminating research products and outputs
5. Internal communication – Linking the project teams

Deliverables include:

1. Contributing news, updates and stories from the field to the overall 'external' web presence for the Program – and onwards to Feed the Future, USAID and other stakeholders.
2. Ensuring that all project products and outputs satisfy CGIAR guidelines on branding and that they are fed into wider knowledge bases and digital dissemination systems.
3. Publishing and disseminating project results in various forms – print, digital, video or audio – and contributing these to the sharing platforms and tools established by the Program.

4. Supporting and facilitating internal collaboration and communication across the Project. This includes support for online tools, face to face meetings, workshops and facilitation, as needed.
5. Organizing and facilitating regular country learning meetings bringing together project partners.
6. Supporting networking and engagement activities with other actors in Ethiopia – as a specific contribution to the project's wider alignment and scaling objectives.
7. Stimulating and supporting the innovative use of information, communication and knowledge-based interventions and approaches across the project, making use of, for example, participatory communication approaches, emerging ICTs, and working with partners in these areas.

Resources and Budget

We will recruit a national communication specialist to work 50% on the project (the other 50% would be dedicated to the Program as a whole). This person would be backstopped and supported by other ILRI staff in Addis Ababa (facilitation, publishing, online tools, etc).

Core Partners and Contact Points

The core partners and the contact points for each are listed below. These contact points, and / or their nominated representatives, are co-opted to the PRF.

Organisation	Contact point	e-mail address
CIAT	Robin Buruchara	r.buruchara@cgiar.org
CIMMYT	<i>Bruno Gerard to nominate</i>	
CIP	Steffen Schulz	s.schulz@cgiar.org
EIAR	Getnet Assefa	getnetassefa@yahoo.com
ICARDA	Geletu Bejiga	g.bejiga@cgiar.org
ICRAF	Aster Gebrekirstos	A.Gebrekirstos@cgiar.org
ILRI	Alan Duncan	a.duncan@cgiar.org
IWMI	Simon Langan	s.langan@cgiar.org
Communications (ILRI)	Peter Ballantyne	p.ballantyne@cgiar.org

Higher level staff from the core partner institutes might wish to sit as observers at PRF meetings but problems that cannot be resolved at the PRF or by the PC/CS should be channelled through the PCC.

Annex 1: Pro Forma for Proposals to Implement an Africa RISING Ethiopian – Highlands Research Component

Research Component

Which of the six AR-EH research components does this proposal address?

Partnerships

List all core and non-core collaborating partners along with a brief description of the skills that they will bring to the team.

Research Questions / Hypotheses Addressed

Summarise the specific research questions that will be answered by the work proposed.

Approach

Describe the methods and approaches that will be used to generate each of the component's deliverables.

Linkages

This is important. The components are intended to structure the programme not to create silos in which teams can operate in isolation. Describe here how your team will manage the linkages (organisational and intellectual) with other AR-EH research components that are addressing complementary deliverables.

Budget

At this stage an outline budget will be adequate. However, this will need to be developed in more detail and evaluated in terms of value for money before a component can be implemented so try to be realistic. Remember, we don't have a huge budget for AR-EH and the aims of the Africa RISING programme are ambitious.