

Workshop Report # 4

Business Meeting of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University (GO-AFU) Task Force¹

Washington, D.C.

August 25, 2004

Organized by IFPRI

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¹ Compiled by Karin Roskopf and Valerie Rho

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 25, 2004, the Task Force of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the implementation of this CGIAR program (see participant list in Appendix A). The agenda (Appendix B) reflected the objectives of this meeting, which were to:

- review the Global Open Agriculture and Food University concept;
- provide a briefing on the Global Open Agriculture and Food University Concept and Initial Implementation E-Conference held in May 2004;
- identify mechanisms for collaborating with other CGIAR Initiatives
- identify the Global Open Agriculture and Food University funding strategy;
- select needs assessment methodology for determining postgraduate education gaps in agriculture and natural resources;
- discuss methods for assessing existing resources within CGAIR for implementing the Global Open Agriculture and Food University; and
- discuss the Global Open Agriculture and Food University's Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) Strategy

The discussion highlighted 3 broad areas of issues: Learning from others, implementation, and course development. It was suggested that this program consults with others that have undertaken similar activities to understand the costs associated with such a program as well as to learn from their successes and failures. Implementation issues include funding and human resources, demand and scale of operation, beneficiaries and their access to appropriate technology, delivery mechanisms and lack of face-to-face interaction, linkages with other CGIAR initiatives, partner selection and roles of partners, accreditation issue, ownership of the initiative, needs assessment, comparative advantage, and governance structure. Issues related to material development include quality control, information technology standards, and the role of CGIAR centers and partner institutions in developing course content.

The next steps for this program include further discussing the issues raised during the meeting and then prioritizing the activities for addressing these issues, developing a fundraising strategy for supporting the prioritized activities, and setting up a program advisory committee to guide these activities. A detailed discussion amongst the Task Force members has occurred since this meeting. A summary of this discussion will be available on the Dgroup site soon.

² Compiled by Karin Roskopf and Valerie Rhoe

WELCOME - *Joachim von Braun, Director General, IFPRI*

The Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) welcomed the participants to the Global Open Agriculture and Food University Task Force Business Meeting. In his welcoming address, he first outlined current problems of agricultural growth in developing countries, including the lack of capacity and human resource base. The motivation behind establishing the Global Open Agriculture and Food University, von Braun stated, is addressing the problems that exist.

Von Braun pointed out that he is extremely enthusiastic about the planning efforts of this Task Force. In regard to this enthusiasm, he discussed the skepticism some have felt about the new program especially when translating the idea into reality. He stated that this is a normal reaction, but it indicates the importance of the translation process being organized and priorities being set. Problems in such a process can only be solved step-by-step. One role the Task Force can play is to remove the tension from the initiating process and enable people to participate in planning this program. Individuals and institutions that become interested in the program later, von Braun stated, should also be embraced.

He underlined the fact that the CGIAR Center Directors' Committee endorsed the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program proposal in their last meeting. The Director General regarded this as a very important collective action step, which has laid the way forward for the University's coordinating team and Task Force. The decision of the CGIAR Center Director's Committee is a step of very high value for the future of the program.

The Director General mentioned that he received very encouraging remarks about the Global Open Agriculture and Food University from Ian Johnson, Chairman of the CGIAR, and from people around the world. In his opinion, this business meeting will have to prepare the groundwork for moving from idea to reality. He pointed out that there exists a small risk that the group here might move too quickly, but this risk can be considered minimal because time will catch up with the work done on the program. The agenda of the meeting outlined very important steps towards the implementation of this vision, von Braun noted. He thanked all of the participants for coming and for their contributions and their engagement in the debate. He gave special thanks to the preparation team of the meeting.

THE GO-AFU CONCEPT AND OVERVIEW: ACCREDITATION, PEDAGOGY

Chair: John Dodds, Deputy Director General for Research, CIMMYT

John Dodds highlighted the importance of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program and expressed his pleasure and sense of privilege in participating in the business meeting. He also mentioned that he only recently joined CIMMYT again. In his introduction, Dodds referred to the great success of the Green Revolution, with one of its greatest achievements being capacity building. Having learned from this experience, he stated, capacity building will have to play a crucial role in present and future national programs of the CGIAR system. He regarded the Global Open Agriculture and Food University as a very important step for capacity building in this respect.

Presenter: Suresh Babu, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI

Suresh Babu outlined some of the objectives of the business meeting, such as debating the concept of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University, identifying the next steps, and outlining the grounds for future cooperation. He raised the concern that not all of the existing problems can be tackled during the

present meeting. Babu stated that with his presentation he wants to lay common ground for the discussions that take place later in the day.

According to the presenter, the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is addressing a large set of problems related to agricultural development: capacity and knowledge base constraints, low quality of higher education, high cost of postgraduate education, high mobility of trained people, and limited scaling up of capacity development efforts by traditional means. Distance education, Babu argued, can address these problems by providing cost- and time-effective programs by using modern technologies.

Babu recounted his experience at an agricultural university in India. He explained how his professors were trained during the Green Revolution and this enabled them to provide high-quality education to their students. In India today, however, the quality of education has been deteriorating. In agricultural economics the contents and teaching methods are lagging 20 years behind. This is partly a result of the second generation of professors after the Green Revolution still teaching the old knowledge. The same trend can be observed in African universities. Another problem is the rise in the cost of education and the decline in scholarships for students. Furthermore, in developing countries, many qualified people die in the early years of their professional life.

Therefore, there is a need to tackle these problems. In the past, insufficient amount of action had been taken to address these problems, and in the future more action will be required. Efforts of the international community should be multiplied to move ahead and tackle these problems. One appropriate way is the introduction of distance education in agriculture. It can connect people in developing and developed countries, and with new technologies it is a cost- and time-effective way to train people. Distance education is growing. In Washington D.C. today there are 12 universities offering distance education in a variety of fields, but distance education for agriculture is lagging behind because of a lack of organization.

The CGIAR centers are in the position to deal with the problems and should do so because they have the knowledge—collectively, enormous experience, and are located all around the globe. For example, the CGIAR has a large number of training materials available, which is not being used in the classroom as much as it could be. The system also has over 1,000 senior researchers. The role of the CGIAR centers should be to provide professional instruction in partnership with regional and national institutions. The CGIAR's major strength would lie in content development and delivery support. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University will be able to occupy a niche by reducing the cost of education and making the material more effectively available.

For getting started, the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program requires a sound assessment of needs and information-delivery requirements, careful planning, and strong partnership with educational institutions. Within the CGIAR system, the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will be able to cooperate with other initiatives such as ICT-KM and the Knowledge Banks.

The Global Open Agriculture and Food University will:

- Provide applied postgraduate teaching in agriculture, natural resources, livestock, forestry, and fisheries;
- Provide quality, flexible, accessible, and affordable education;
- Collaborate with national and regional universities; and
- Enhance research and analytical capacity

Babu addressed the question of converting the idea of the program into a reality. Key factors that will enable this conversion are identifying and building key partnerships, learning about efforts in agriculture distance education already underway, and developing high-quality material. The CGIAR centers should embrace the idea of being in the business of helping local faculty to teach. With all the centers already hosting and working with M.Sc. and Ph.D. students, the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will supplement these efforts.

The idea behind this University is to build an open-source program that people could not only use, but also improve upon. New legal concepts, such as knowledge commons, will be able to provide the framework for this program. The CGIAR's main task will be to make the training material available to universities in the developing countries. Some of the CGIAR centers are already involved in this business. An important step will be the translation of the material into different languages so that material is more accessible.

The primary beneficiaries of the program will be universities with postgraduate students being secondary beneficiaries. The characteristics of the postgraduate students could be mid-career professionals, civil servants, NARS researchers, university faculty, and participants from international organizations, the private sector and non-government organization. An example of a possible beneficiary is the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which wants to reach its extension workers around the country.

In the process of developing the program document, partners were invited to provide their ideas and many contributed their suggestions. The program has developed to the point that recently the Global Open Agriculture and Food University became an official program of the CGIAR. A subcommittee of 5 center's directors has been formed to support this project. The CGIAR also received very positive feedback from partners and donors. Babu provided a list of events that have led up to the present stage of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University (Appendix C).

The steps taken so far include the initiation of contacts, three needs assessment, an E-discussion, discussions with donors, the business meeting, and the forming of partnerships and coalitions. Regarding needs assessment, regional assessments have been initiated in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Eastern and Southern Africa.

Babu outlined the time frame for the next steps. Within the next year, the activities will include an inventory assessment, offering of existing modules, coalition building, more detailed needs assessments, and the formulation of the initial oversight and quality-control structure. In the second year, help to local universities will be provided so that they may offer M.Sc. programs, and monitoring and evaluation will take place. Following this, material will be translated, and an impact assessment will be necessary. The development of a Ph.D. program is also planned. The presenter also outlined some indicative M.Sc. programs and the foreseen governance structure of the program, which should be simple and effective.

The GO-AFU program is about investing in development and sustainable food security to create global synergies by using new emerging technology, Babu stated. Capacity in developing countries needs to be built through using CGIAR's hidden strength in higher education capacities.

Discussion

Jan Beniast made a comment that we should be careful not to generalize the statement on the poor quality of education in developing countries since this may alienate a number of our national partners'. He suggested that 'variable quality' is more appropriate than 'poor quality.'

Klaus von Grebmer wanted to obtain some information about the estimated number of beneficiaries of the program in developing countries. Also he asked about the expected outcome of the program. In reply, Suresh Babu said, that the number could be estimated using the existing numbers of M.Sc. and Ph.D. students. Furthermore he referred to the table in appendix 1 of the GO-AFU program document on the assessment of global need for such a program. In it, the results of a rough calculation are given, based on the estimate that only 10% of undergraduates go on to graduate studies in developing countries. Doubling this number would be a great achievement. Some concerns about the validity of the data were raised and discussed. It was agreed that the sources for the data would be provided to the Task Force. The comment was also made that the table does not cover all the regions. As the data is from different sources, a very careful interpretation is needed.

One comment referred to the cost of the program. Students will not get the courses for free, but will have to pay tuition. However, they might not be willing or able to pay. Veyrl Adell saw some problems in estimating the actual costs of the program. The costs need to be worked out before the course-development process can start.

Elizabeth Goldberg raised the following questions and concerns about the proposed project and project document:

- Needs assessment
 - o How will data collected by ICARDA on the number of M.Sc. and Ph.D. students that received thesis research support from CGIAR centers be used in the Global Open Agriculture and Food University needs assessment?
 - o Is the comparison between developing countries today and developed countries in the 1960s an appropriate approach on which to base the global needs assessment?
 - o Will there be an assessment on technology needs or capabilities of target audiences?
 - o Where are the actual gaps? They need to be looked at, prioritized, and understood in relation to what the market is already offering (i.e., other universities, open universities, distance learning providers, etc.)
 - o Will connections with the job market be examined?
 - o Are areas for content development already specified? What is the demand for the proposed courses/ programs and to what extent is this linked or should it be linked to priorities of regional or sub-regional fora and national development plans for agricultural research?

Issues raised by the Task Force about the program include:

- o Will national plans for agricultural research be developed?
- o Will the University be a degree program or a non-degree program?
- o What strategic partnerships are already identified?
- o Are memorandums of understanding already developed?
- o Issue of cost: What will the budget be?
- o Can we assume intellectual donations? Centers would need to be reimbursed in order to dedicate staff resources for developing courses or teaching.
- o Issue of accreditation was not addressed in the document or the presentation.

Jan Beniast expressed interest in preparing a slide on the potential financial and non-financial contributions and implications of the funding structure. His experience with the OLR-project is that inter-

Centre collaboration in capacity strengthening activities relies heavily on 'goodwill' and 'interest' on behalf of individuals. No serious project can be based on this type of contribution.

Referring to resources, John Dodds raised the concern that the true cost will include the cost of staff time and the cost of socialization or face-to-face interactions. Also, in his opinion, to get more value out of this university, the integration of single course modules into M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs is extremely important. It cannot be assumed that the program will attract people when it first emerges: marketing efforts will be necessary.

BRIEFING AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE GLOBAL OPEN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD UNIVERSITY CONCEPT AND INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION E-CONFERENCE

Presenter: Edith Hesse, Head, Information and Capacity Strengthening Unit, CIAT

Edith Hesse presented the results of the initial implementation e-conference held in May 2004 and expressed her thanks to Valerie Rhoe for organizing the e-conference. The first objectives of the e-conference was to build consensus about course-delivery mechanisms, models for collaborating with local partners, partner selection, fundraising strategy, incentives for researchers, and human resource requirements.

Some issues that arose during the e-conference included the organization of tutoring and teaching and different levels of tuition in the North and the South. If universities in the North collaborate with universities in the South, the tuition level of the universities in the North might negatively affect the ability of the people in the South to attend. Then there is no tuition neutrality for students. One concern raised was that not all students would be flexible enough to adjust to the mode of distance learning. Regarding fundraising, researchers have to be compensated for the time they invest; otherwise they will not be able to put much work into course development. Also, their performance indicators will have to be adjusted. Hesse mentioned that under current circumstances a trade-off would exist for a researcher between teaching and writing a proposals as well as leading international research projects. Incentives to researchers can include equipment or technological support.

Hesse remarked that the current program document of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University has already incorporated many concerns and remarks from the Task Force, e.g. that the partner institutions, not the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will grant degrees. However, more elaboration is needed on tutoring activities, administrative and logistical support, faculty support, and evaluation. To illustrate why these issues are important, she gave the participants an example of a course that had been developed at CIAT. A one-week training course became a 12-week course after it was converted for distance education. More than 100 people registered for the course. REDCAPA helped with student, faculty and administrative support. The course started in August 2004 and is currently in its second month. CIAT is learning a lot from the students' and professor's comments.

In the Global Open Agriculture and Food University there must be room for students to think and to contribute to the virtual campus and to learn from the comments of other course participants and the tutor. The role of virtual universities in developing countries in course development should be clarified. Not only students, but professors as well will learn through the Global Open Agriculture and Food University courses, even on minor areas, e.g. how to track changes in documents or create ZIP-files.

Hesse noted that the second objective of the e-conference was to share experiences on existing distance-learning programs and initiatives, on the CGIAR centers' experience with distance learning and the technologies in use. The needs assessment was the third objective and collaboration the fourth. It was also noted that a customized approach that takes into account the situation, needs, content priorities, partner expertise, etc. in each region, rather than a 1-size fits all approach should be used.

Discussion

Rex Navarro raised the following issues, which he felt should be tackled in future discussions:

- Socialization (e.g. student activities and exchange, student support);
- Quality of course material;
- Time and resources required for development and delivery;
- Development of instruments to avoid high drop-out rates in online learning systems;
- Incentives for students to take Global Open Agriculture and Food University courses; and
- Demand for postgraduates in their respective country's job markets.

Samir Ahmed made comments about the marketing of the courses, e.g. course announcement, course subscription processes, and the roles of the universities in developing countries. He stated that there must be a mechanism that will not only allow the program to accept students, but also to deny those that are not qualified.

HOW DOES GO-AFU LINK WITH THE CGIAR ICT-KM INITIATIVE'S ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER AND VASAT?

Chair: Elizabeth Doupé Goldberg, Director, Documentation, Information and Training Group, IPGRI

Presenter: Jan Beniést, Principal Training Scientist, Training Unit, ICRAF

Jan Beniést's presentation was about the CGIAR's On-line Learning Resources (OLR) and how it can collaborate with the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. He first outlined the challenges in dealing with the resources:

- CGIAR 'training' is in high demand by national partners and clients;
- Reduction in human and financial resources for capacity strengthening;
- Centers work mostly in isolation often leading to duplicated efforts;
- Learning materials are dispersed and in many different formats; and
- Focus remained on more traditional learning approaches.

The centers have a lot of interest in and significant demand for the OLR project. Ideally, the individual efforts of the centers should be put together for optimized results. The opportunity the OLR project presents is the creation of a CGIAR training community of practice that works together to address the learning needs of our partners in research, development, training, and education. The OLR seeks to make use of recent advances in information and communication technology to avail CGIAR learning resources in agriculture and natural resources management for the international learning community.

After outlining the existing ICT/KM projects, Beniést concentrated his presentation on the OLR project. The concept of the OLR project had been written by ICRAF and IRRI to establish a virtual CGIAR training community. The first steps include the creation of a CG-Learning resource Center (LRC) pilot site (based on IRRI knowledge banks) and proposal development, review, approval, and implementation. Currently, the project is in the implementation stage.

The specific objectives of the OLR project are the transfer of public goods (learning resources); development of state-of-the-art learning resources; a coherent, harmonized platform and approach using international standards; and national partners' capacity strengthened in training and education.

The OLR activities include:

- A start-up 'planning' workshop
- An inventory of available CGIAR learning resources
- Development of future formats and standards based on international standards
- Development of an OLR portal site
- Adding value beyond learning resources
- Involving national partners
- Evaluating and assessing impact

The OLR portal site will have an inventory of available CGIAR learning resources. It will also allow calendar sharing and will facilitate national and international cooperation. IRRI has already taken some important steps to move ahead in this project. On the technical side, learning objectives and metadata for training material will be developed using common international standards. The learning site will be the gateway to CGIAR learning material and metadata. The OLR project has linkages to the VASAT project, the Virtual Library, E-publishing, the Virtual Resources Center, and the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Most importantly is the need for the work done in each individual project to be linked to the other projects.

Presenter: Rex Navarro, Special Assistant to the Director General and Head, Communication Office, ICRISAT

Rex Navarro explained how the Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics (VASAT) is a capacity-building program that focuses on the problem of drought in the semi-arid tropics. The mission of VASAT is to reach the "unreached" and giving voice to the voiceless in the semi-arid tropics through:

- Timely information and appropriate knowledge to improve drought preparedness
- Capacity building and social mobilization to overcome poverty in the semi-arid tropics
- Innovative knowledge sharing to empower vulnerable farmers

The strategic objective is to collect, process, package, and share the right information and knowledge with the right people at the right time. The specific objectives include generating international public goods on the interface of ICT and distance learning to educate and mobilize stakeholders, communicating relevant and timely information for decisionmaking, and establishing and sustaining a virtual network of policymakers, researchers, educators, and farm communities. The intended learners are primarily rural communities and their intermediaries, and secondarily policymakers, local government officials, and rural development managers. VASAT's content is generic as well as local and facilitated by the web and online discussion spaces. A model for content development could be that the key contributors are the communities of practice in the CGIAR and leading national and international institutions.

Navarro gave more information on VASAT sample modules. He also outlined VASAT partnerships with agricultural information-knowledge centers, ICT4D initiatives, private service providers, and open distance learning institutions and methodologies. The major technical partner of VASAT is the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). Other partners include the United States National Academy of Sciences which is making online publications available to VASAT without restrictions and SUN Microsystems Corporation.

The differences between VASAT and the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is coverage, content, and stakeholders. While the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is a global approach, VASAT is a regional one, focusing on South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The subjects the Global Open Agriculture and Food University deals with are agriculture, fisheries, livestock, forestry, nutrition, and food security, while those of VASAT are drought, desertification, and climate literacy. The stakeholders of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will be universities and postgraduate students. VASAT is addressing farm families and intermediaries. One area for collaboration between the two projects is the learning object repository. A consensus about the role of the OLR in both programs is necessary so that the repository can benefit both.

At the regional level, VASAT's working groups deal with content development, learner support, and outreach. The existing linkages VASAT has can be very beneficial for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Furthermore, cooperation on the policy level in these countries might also benefit both, VASAT and the Global Open Agriculture and Food University.

Discussion

Veyrl Adell raised some questions about the fundraising strategy for each program since the focus of each is similar. One difference is that VASAT is already a program in operation. Adell remarked that donors might be approached to fund both initiatives. There is thus a need for a fundraising strategy for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. In reply to Adell, Suresh Babu suggested that there be collaboration between the two programs in seeking funding rather than competition.

John Dodds expressed his opinion that a tight focus within the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program will help get it started.

Elizabeth Goldberg relayed a message from Enrica Porcari, Chief Information Officer of the CGIAR, of her interest in ensuring good collaboration and complementarity between the Global Open Agriculture and Food University and the relevant projects of the ICT-KM Initiative (Online Learning Resources, VASAT, Virtual Library, among others). Goldberg referred to the similarity between the two programs in the way they make resources available. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University should find a way to make use of VASAT's successes. For example, OLR, VASAT and the Global Open Agriculture and Food University could share a repository. She pointed out that the different target groups, farmers and students/professionals would have different needs in terms of learning material and asked how the learning material in the repository is referenced and linked. Because some materials may be useful for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University while others are not, some changes may be needed. One important lesson is to think about the usability and reusability of material. The idea of "one size fits all" might be misleading. Goldberg suggested that this program should consider using the already World Bank funded OLR and VASAT projects as partial completion of the first output (developing a "repository"), which would demonstrate an attempt to harmonize across system-wide projects and good leveraging of funds.

Luz Marina Alvare referred to the ICT-KM projects. For OLR it is not necessary to put all documents in one repository; every center can build its own repository. What is important is that there is an agreement on the use of the same metadata, which can be harvested by everyone. The metadata definition should be based on international standards.

Rex Navarro clarified that the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will not be in the business of granting degrees.

Suresh Babu stated that one of the main functions of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University would be to make course contents available to national universities. Through the OLR, learning material will be available, but not necessarily ready to be used for M.Sc. courses. Another difference between the OLR and Global Open Agriculture and Food University is that the OLR content will be freely available, whereas the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will charge fees for its courses that are offered by the national universities.

GLOBAL OPEN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD UNIVERSITY'S FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Chair: Elizabeth Doupe Goldberg, IPGRI

Presenter: Mark Bell, Head, International Program Management Office, IRRI

Mark Bell started his presentation with figures about the tuition levels and budgets of different universities around the world. Whereas the University of the Philippines has an annual budget of US \$86 million and 40,000 students, Stanford University has a budget of US \$2.6 billion and 8,000 students. Tuition is thus often only a small share of the income of universities. Bell also pointed out that some universities today charge more for online courses than for traditional ones.

The challenge for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is to generate support for itself. This will be difficult since the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will not be a degree-granting institution. Bell then outlined some questions for discussion, the answers to which would provide more clarity on the fundraising strategy for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University:

- What need is there for the program and what will the impact be if the need is addressed?
- Why the Global Open Agriculture and Food University – what unique role will it play?
- Partners – who? Roles?
- How much funding is needed? What will the spending pattern be?
- Income models – Donor? User pay? Project?
- Who would fund this type of program and why would they fund Global Open Agriculture and Food University?
- Contacts - Who has them?
- Next steps?

Discussion

John Dodds prefaced his comment with a bit of humor. He stated that if you want to get rich, start a university or church; both have amazing business models if you do it right. His message was that a business model for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is important.

Bharat Sharma questioned the willingness of people to take the risk of getting a degree based partly on Global Open Agriculture and Food University modules. He said he knows of business graduates from virtual universities who had serious difficulties in finding jobs because the government agencies did not recognize their degrees as equal to those of traditional universities. He suggested that the Global Open Agriculture and Food University link with state universities rather than with private ones in the developing countries. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University program document should state that the goal would be to provide quality education, achieve high standards, and receive accreditation.

Suresh Babu said that accreditation would be left to national partners because the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will not grant degrees. Veyrl Adell expressed confidence that many universities specializing in food and agricultural issues recognize the experience of the CGIAR and the quality of its work. A new training program initiated by the centers will be well appreciated.

John Dodds stated that the program should have only the best possible partners. It will also be necessary to ensure that partners do not risk their reputation by supporting the new initiative of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Trust building and creating relationships are therefore important. Using a name for the program that is not associated with the CGIAR can also help to minimize the risk for partners and the CGIAR. An independent name will help to build consensus around the fact that a quality product has been developed.

Mark Bell noted that partners might impose residency requirements on students, which could be a problem or an opportunity. He then drew the attention to Appendix 2 of the program document, which is the list of partners. Elizabeth Goldberg also raised concerns about the list. The Task Force should be careful in interpreting the partnerships and using the list because the universities were not asked if they want to be on the list. John Dodds claimed that the list is not detailed or appropriate. A revised list should be drafted. Suresh Babu agreed with this point.

Manuel Lantin asked if there already exist terms of collaboration. He also wanted to know the existing gaps at partner universities and how the Global Open Agriculture and Food University can address them. Lantin posed the question “what do they want us to offer them?” Our comparative advantage might not be to offer courses in micro- and macroeconomics, but to rather supplement courses at the graduate level.

John Dodds raised some concerns about the approach of helping universities with specialty courses. This would imply that local universities provide about eighty-five percent of the courses. Will the Global Open Agriculture and Food University then really benefit the universities greatly? Elizabeth Goldberg commented that it is important to discuss the content-development process further.

Dodds also stated that there is a need to encourage collaboration between universities in the South, and that the income model needs to be more specific.

John Dodds commented on the idea of the CGIAR centers having a strong comparative advantage in course delivery. is a significant difference between providing training materials and compiling course material for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. The two approaches should not be mixed. He stated that by the end of the meeting it should be clarified whether the CGIAR centers have a comparative advantage in establishing an institution like the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Bharat Sharma stated that in his opinion the program document points out the comparative advantages clearly. Developed training material could be used for Global Open Agriculture and Food University courses.

Rex Navarro mentioned that after AGM, immediate consultation with the universities is necessary.

Bharat Sharma raised the point that some subjects will need the students to have face-to-face interaction. The CGIAR centers should possibly accept registered students and have them visit the centers to help the latter in further reputation building. Inviting the students to the centers will be something unique and different in this program. Suresh Babu said that this type of cooperation is currently not mentioned in the program document, and he informed the group that Ian Johnson also expressed the opinion that this could be a very useful addition to the program. Elizabeth Goldberg mentioned that this cooperation could be

linked with scholarships for thesis research at CG Centers associated with the University's degree courses, but the GO-AFU would not offer the scholarships.

Suresh Babu made some comments about the program document. He expressed his thanks to the Task Force for pointing out some gaps in the document and admits that course delivery being only vaguely defined in the document, more clarity will be necessary.

SELECTING NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION GAPS IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair: Veyrl Adell, Public Relations Manager, ILRI

Presenter: Prof. Levi S. Akundabweni, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Levi Akundabweni presented his thoughts on an appropriate needs assessment (NA) methodology for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. His objective, as he stated, was to elaborate on key principles of the needs assessment methodology with respect to this initiative. He suggested looking at the "signs on the ground" and examining ways in which useful data for different regions may be found.

Akundabweni remarked that he sees a strong potential for this initiative to succeed in Southern and Eastern Africa. The general trend of governments today is to adopt policies in support of open and distance learning, and Kenya will play a lead role in this area.

The most important starting point for the needs assessment is the identification of vertical and horizontal links with the local universities. The heads of functional units at local universities should not only be one set of collaborating partners, but also consultative units. Every study program has to be approved by the senate. A study program designed outside the regional universities will have to go through the official university structures to get approved. This process can be very long. A lot of lobbying will be necessary for this process. It is important for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University team to understand the structure of the local university, acts of parliaments, university statutes, the council approval process, the role of strategic apex managers, the senate as the supreme academic body, and the basic operating units (colleges, faculties, institutes, departments and various boards & committees).

The university setting thus provides the modus operandi in terms of:

- Program financing;
- Infrastructure development;
- Curriculum development, production of course units (modules, etc), and programming;
- Quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation tracking for internal self-adjustments;
- Acquisition and maintenance of tools of the trade (i.e. teaching materials and modes); and
- Processing admissions, certification, and clearance.

Education and training offered by the Global Open Agriculture and Food University can be for teaching, research and development, extension, or a repository of knowledge. It will have to be a strategic partner for the local universities focusing on postgraduate open distance learning in food and agriculture, and it will need to address the problems local universities face. For this a gap analysis is very useful. One gap is that traditional universities do not offer open and distance learning because of capacity constraints. Another constraint is supervising and teaching the current number of students with very restricted resources. Also, compared to the number of undergraduates, the number of graduates is very low.

Akundabweni outlined the methodology for the need assessment and the gap analysis. Several questions arise in the assessment process, such as “who is managing the problems?” and “who would the consumers of the program be?” In pursuing the methodology, a close examination of the signs on the grounds will help in understanding what people think. To assess gaps, gaining more knowledge about the learning resources available at local universities is necessary. In the needs assessment, university decisionmakers should also be involved because their opinion will be crucial for the future of the collaboration. Furthermore, talking to students should be considered. They will raise the question of the need for the program for their professional career. Other groups to include in the needs assessment will be the potential students and the student alumni.

He outlined three key principles in needs assessment: Listening, retrieval from archives, and communication technology. The process of listening to the problems of universities in developing countries should be organized in four directions: To the inside, from the inside, to the outside, from the outside. He also warned us to watch out for the “Big Brother” image and that the role for the GO-AFU would be to “bless” the training modules from the Centers.

Discussion

Mark Bell asked how the needs assessment will be implemented. Elizabeth Goldberg wanted to know to what extent employability of future graduates should play a role in the needs assessment and how important is it that the needs assessment identify linkages between the sub-regional, regional and national agricultural research organizations (and their research priorities) and the actual curricula in different universities.

John Dodds stated that it would be helpful to ask universities “what is it that you think we can bring to the university that would be valuable for you and that you can’t get somewhere else?”

Veyrl Adell asked “What is the reaction to the Global Open Agriculture and Food University initiative from university colleagues?”

Levi Akundabweni responded to these comments. The people who will need the results of the needs assessment will drive its implementation. Regarding the inclusion of a study of the job market in the needs assessment, he stated that it is often difficult for students to recognize the employment opportunities that exist for them. In Kenya, for example, there is no experience in looking at the issue of how many students are unemployed a year after graduation. For getting information on unemployment of recent postgraduates, it would be necessary to interview key people in the country about the job market potential for postgraduates. Akundabweni stated that he is positive that many opportunities do exist, but that they are not marketed very well. Postgraduates also have opportunities for self-employment.

The question of what the CGIAR centers can bring to the local universities is a very good one. The reputation of the CGIAR centers varies from one country to another and some students and staff members at a local university might not know much about the CGIAR because there is little proper interaction with them. One problem is that universities do not always recognize the value of work done by students in CGIAR centers (e.g. during their Master thesis). Close collaboration will help to increase the level of understanding. It is also important to note that there will be local professors who do not want to take-up new course material offered to them.

DISCUSSING METHODS FOR ASSESSING EXISTING RESOURCES WITHIN CGIAR FOR IMPLEMENTING GO-AFU

Chair: Veyrl Adell, Public Relations Manager, ILRI

Presenter for IT Resources: Thomas Zschocke, Head, Training Department, CIP

Thomas Zschocke gave a presentation about methods for assessing information technology (IT) resources for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. He focused on the role of IT resources in strategic planning, industry standards for IT asset management, and IT service and quality management. If the Global Open Agriculture and Food University provides services using IT, a close look at the role of IT resources and the quality of the services is necessary within the context of the overall business plan. If the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is delivering its learning content through IT, then it has to be designed and deployed by taking into consideration the opportunities and constraints of IT.

It will be important to build an IT strategy for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University alongside its business plan, describing the IT system and its technology components. This would need to include a mission and a description of how IT will be used for courses and curricula, teaching and learning strategies, communication, local support, management and administration, facilities, and evaluation. In general, the IT infrastructure consists of different layers and protocols: application (e.g., HTML), transport (e.g., TCP), Internet (e.g., IP), network (e.g., ethernet), and hardware (e.g., cable), where each of these layers requires different treatments within an organization. One model which can be used to build the IT strategy is the strategic information system planning (SISP). This situation analysis model helps to identify the processes of the IT portfolio by organizing the planning around the process dimensions of comprehensiveness, focus, participation, formalization, flow, and consistency.

If the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is to employ learning objects, an appropriate learning object strategy would have to be formulated. One important element of IT-strategy building is a framework for assessing IT Investment Management (ITIM). For instance, with the ITIM model investment oversight refers to the collection of data on actual performance, a review of the performance of IT projects and systems, appropriate corrective actions, and the tracking of implementation of corrective actions. Taken responsibility for investment oversight is a steering group that leads the process to determine what type of data we need to collect. The collected information should be made available across the system.

Investment information should be captured by:

- Acquiring pertinent information
- Storing information in a retrievable format
- Repository of IT investment information
 - Track the organization's IT resources
 - Provide insights and trends about IT cost and management drivers
 - Highlight lessons
 - current & future investment decisions;
- Maintaining repository forms, e.g., a catalog, a list, IT system and software inventories, or a balance sheet
- A collection method that identifies each IT investment and its associated components
- An organization's "as-is" architecture as a resource for developing a list of existing investments
- Documenting policies and procedures to
 - Assign responsibility

- Outline processes to be followed; and
- Clarify data elements required: cost, owner, physical location, logical (e.g., architectural) location.
- Tools and equipment for tracking IT assets:
 - IT information database;
 - IT data reporting, updating, and query tools; and
 - Method for communicating changes in IT information.

Zschocke displayed some examples of information capture, specifically a network diagram (useful to display connections) and tools for asset management. He concluded by introducing the IT infrastructure library (ITIL), which is a methodology to better manage and monitor IT resources and IT support services. Finally, he outlined the importance of the ISO quality management system standards (i.e. ISO 9000:2000, 9001:2000) as applied to organizations that provide educational services (i.e. IWA 2:2003 Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001:2000 in education).

Presenter for Learning Resources: Samir Ahmed, HRDU Head, ICARDA

Samir Ahmed's topic was the existing learning resources at the CGIAR centers that could be used for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Learning and training material can be in the form of training manuals, books, field/laboratory guides, lecture notes, modules, synchronized slide/tapes, computer based audio-visual material, or web-based training material.

He stated that some of the CGIAR material is out of date. Furthermore, few of the centers have acquired and used distance-learning technologies. For example, CIP, ICRISAT, IRRI and ISNAR have strong experience in distance and E-Learning. In general, close collaboration and partnership between centers and other organizations are needed for effective use of material in order to convert them into relevant distance-learning modules. ICARDA has signed more than 50 Memorandums of Agreement with universities to pursue joint postgraduate research. In the past, around 4,000 postgraduate students worked on their theses in collaboration with the CGIAR centers.

A strategy for the use of learning/training resources is required to secure commitments of all partners and collaborators, conduct an inventory of the available learning materials, convert the relevant learning/training material into modules, develop new material, and translate the existing and new modules into other languages. It will be important that we agree about our partners and that we consider that different strategies for developing countries and least developed countries might be required. Also, the role of the CGIAR should be catalytic and coordinating the efforts of partners and other collaborators.

Discussion

Rex Navarro suggested changing the role of ILRI and IWMI as partners in the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program document, because their involvement in the program is limited. He also commented that we need more adaptation of the training material, not just translation. However, before developing a training material inventory, the demand for material has to become clearer.

Suresh Babu referred to the role of international standards in developing strategies for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. The standards have to be understood to determine their actual relevance for the program. The use of learning objects appears to be very useful given that it is based on the idea of breaking down learning contents into parts. Each learning object will be characterized (described) by a set of metadata. A video without the necessary accompanying material would be a learning object. A learning object can be a package of different pieces, e.g. a report, a video, and an interactive exercise.

Thomas Zschocke responded that in the Global Open Agriculture and Food University collecting several modules and bringing them together in a course would build learning components. A set of metadata will be used to describe in detail the individual learning objects including statements about interactivity, complexity, copyright statements, and location, among others

CGIAR resources should meet international standards to ensure interoperability, data harvestability, and the use of a standardized search interface. Whatever the Global Open Agriculture and Food University develops should be reusable for different purposes and various distance learning systems. Learning material should be reusable as different units and at different places.

John Dodds referred to the open-source issue and asked Zschocke for clarification about his copyright sign in his presentation. What does it mean in terms of usability? Thomas Zschocke responded that the presentation is a global public good that can be used by everyone. The legal side of the reuse of material is more complicated.

Samir Ahmed raised the concern that the IT requirements for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University might cause problems at some centers because of the very poor communication facilities at some centers, for example ICARDA. Also, at present new technology is not available in some countries and the access to electricity and telephone is limited in rural areas such as those in Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University will also have to produce something that is useful for these countries. He expressed his fear that the program will meet the needs of the rich and not the poor in the developing countries. In the business models, the delivery mode should be outlined and specified regarding how it will reach the local poor people and what the technological requirements will be. Rex Navarro stated that the CGIAR system cannot support new technology adoption in poor countries.

Elizabeth Goldberg argued that the approach to course design and delivery in this university would have to meet the demands of countries with different technology capacities and would need to fill the existing gaps. Goldberg also asked how the Virtual Resources Centre project (Intranet/Extranet) of the CGIAR centers would interface with the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program, since the VRC will be the backbone or portal for entry into most other information systems. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University should also discuss how to interlink directly with the CGIAR Virtual Library project since this will provide access to valuable reference materials and research documentation to complement its courses.

Mark Bell referred to the knowledge banks at IRRI, where the Internet is the source for content. He mentioned that IRRI has had a good experience in taking material and putting it on a CD-Rom to bring to the classroom.

Jan Beniast expressed concern that there are many CGIAR capacity building/strengthening activities going on (VASAT, GO-AFU, individual Centre training and education) and that most of them have implications related to learning resources. There is a risk that each project/activity will develop its own learning resources repository thus leading to confusion at the level of the users who would be better off with a single CGIAR On-line Learning Resources repository.

Levi Akundabweni closed the discussion with the statement that the structures for using the existing IT and learning resources will be very important.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR DISTANCE-LEARNING TRAINING MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY IN THE GO-AFU

Chair: Manuel Lantin, Science Advisor, CGIAR Secretariat

Presenter: Karin Roskopf, Visiting Research Fellow, IFPRI

Roskopf stated that the objective of this implementation plan for distance learning training material development and delivery is to collect preliminary ideas and knowledge about course development and delivery in order to address concerns and obtain feedback. The plan is available to the Task Force members and is meant solely for discussion. When transforming traditional learning material into distance learning material, the following points should be considered:

- Student characteristics
 - Educational and cultural background
 - Technological knowledge
- Course topic and objectives
 - Adjustment to local needs
 - Interactive development process between different CGIAR centers
 - Based on the results of the needs assessment
- Course content
 - Curriculum content quality
 - Production quality
 - Format
 - Completeness
 - Technological aspects of development
- Course assessment and evaluation
 - Multiple assignment formats (i.e. essay, multiple choice, true/false, matching)
 - Importance of evaluation
- Teaching/learning activities and resources
 - Level of interaction
 - Didactic approach to learning

A course developer is the person who puts the course contents together. A support structure for course developers should be established. One element will be a course-writing workshop to train writers for this specific function. The coordination center could also help with organizational and technical problems. After course implementation, the feedback from students and course teachers will provide valuable input for course improvement. A quality-control mechanism reflecting an appropriate set of quality measures will also be established.

Roskopf addressed the issue of organizing the course delivery process. All course delivery arrangements require contracts. A legal contract protects both the producers and the users of the material. What will be the best way to organize course delivery in the Global Open Agriculture and Food University? Courses could either be delivered by local universities in developing countries, from the Global Open Agriculture and Food University coordination center directly to the students, or both. The course delivery mode will influence student administration and support, flexibility in course material adjustment, accreditation arrangements, and the financing model.

A model for the phases of distance learning training material production was displayed. The presenter outlined the process needed for writing, editing, and translating course content into e-learning courses. National and international partners can support the processes of course development and delivery through funding, involvement of local and regional partners, or students and professionals. Some non-financial input can also be expected.

Discussion

Mark Bell commented on his experience in course development. He remembered that it took one person a full month to develop an e-learning course with 40 lessons. He also brought up the point again that universities in developing countries might not have an incentive to teach Global Open Agriculture and Food University courses and students may not want to take them since the institution will not be degree-granting. Universities will need to own courses and give degrees. The comparative advantage of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will have to be discussed further.

Samir Ahmed reported his experience from ICARDA where the staff is teaching courses in integrated pest management and other subjects at local universities. Furthermore, students and professors come to the center to expand their knowledge. In this arrangement, the universities are full partners. Regarding the development and delivery of content, Ahmed stated he is in favor of a joint effort, with the CGIAR providing the facilities and having as its objective meeting the needs of different universities.

Elizabeth Goldberg also shared her experience in developing a learning module for conventional delivery in which it took five years from needs assessment to delivery of the product. Important lessons were learned about time, true cost, testing and re-testing and the need to involve the stakeholders or beneficiaries in the development of the materials to ensure their relevance and uptake. After testing the first product of the course by policy experts, comments on the methodology and technology helped to redevelop and expand the curricula. The results of the test highlighted areas for significant improvement. The evaluators of the module were experts from developing countries with rich experience in the field. The final product after consultation was much better than the tested product. The exercise, using real cases, provided a good learning experience. The bottom line is that the users have to be involved in the design of the courses to ensure its acceptance.

Goldberg stated that the mission of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University should be capacity building and the Task Force should not get sidetracked from this mission. The plan of this university should be to start small in one or two geographic areas and to work with key partners in course delivery that already have a track record, national, regional or international recognition and a comparative advantage for education. For example, REDCAPA might be such a partner in South America. Recently IPGRI and CIAT have had experience partnering with the National University of Colombia and REDCAPA in course delivery by distance. The network with different universities and content providers is already there and REDCAPA is well-known in the region. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University initiative should move with partners and not alone.

Mark Bell regarded the comparative advantage of the CGIAR centers as offering research in the relevant environment. The CGIAR centers are locally distributed around the world and therefore able to address local problems by locally relevant research.

Manuel Lantin stated that the importance of accreditation cannot be overstated. In his opinion, it will take up to two years to get a course accepted by a local university through the academic committees. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University will have to work closely with local universities to identify

the needs and gaps. Lantin remarked that the CGIAR comparative advantage in terms of course content is at the system and center's levels.

GLOBAL OPEN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD UNIVERSITY'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STRATEGY

Chair: Manuel Lantin, Science Advisor, CGIAR Secretariat

Presenter: John Dodds, Deputy Director General for Research, CIMMYT

John Dodds focused his presentation on the ownership of ideas, materials, and delivery modes in the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. He stated the paradox that universities always like is to have all contents other than their own available in an open-source manner.

The following legal tools will have relevance for this initiative:

- Copyrights
- Trademarks
- Patents
- Trade Dress
- Data Protection Contracts
- Material Transfer Agreements
- Disclosures and Warranties

Dodds mentioned the importance of the brand image of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. As soon as the CGIAR centers participate in this initiative, they expose their image. When things go successful, the CGIAR's image will be retained. If the program does not go well, no institution will want to take responsibility for the failure and the CGIAR's image will be adversely affected.

He also referred to the process of adapting course material to local conditions. Quality at all levels has to be ensured and a local person will need sound knowledge of the issues involved in order to adapt the learning material. An open-source environment for the course material will make it more difficult for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University to protect its image. There are also the issues of exclusivity and adoption. If something is freely available, few parties make use of it.

Dodd raised the questions "who is going to own the content? What issues have to be addressed in a relationship with a partner? Who is contributing what to the content? And, who has control over the content?"

In his opinion, the CGIAR centers have a great human resource base of scientists, but do not have the content for degree training. Researchers will also need incentives to develop content. The skills for course development exists, but are not easily on hand. Other advantages the CGIAR centers have are their various locations, experience, and practicability in research and transferring research into training.

Dodds noted that the issue of content ownership will arise and strict ownership rights and control will be necessary. The Global Open Agriculture and Food University will have to take control; otherwise some other institution will take it. Licensing is an option for distributing the material, which would allow the Global Open Agriculture and Food University to sell its services. A fee-based system would also be possible. What is needed is a clear business plan. The quality of content and the Global Open Agriculture and Food University brand will both be crucial in determining whether the program reaches its intended

impact or not. In cooperating with our partners, we will have to make sure that modified content is marked as such and not with the original institution logo. After content has undergone several rounds of change, it may be very different.

Discussion

Edith Hesse made the comment that the new version of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program document should be made available to the members of the Task Force because some of the ideas have already materialized. She also stated that caution is necessary when talking about open-source public good materials. More universities are forced to generate income and will not always want to make their materials available freely. There is a general risk in setting up and running the Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Hesse furthermore referred to the issue of funding and suggested that a percentage of the tuition fees be used to generate a scholarship fund for poor students. Other resources to pay the costs will also be required.

John Dodds raised some concerns about funding and scholarships. If a revenue source is going to be developed, then it has to be done correctly. Otherwise accountant and lawyers will take more money than the actual revenue. Revenue issues should be discussed after a business model is developed. Our next step should be a business plan, which would give us a tighter focus. Suresh Babu agreed with the arguments that a business model is needed. Afterwards, issues regarding content and intellectual property will have to be resolved.

Mark Bell outlined the handling of intellectual property at IRRI. There are two options: if IRRI is pleased with the use, the party is asked to indicate the source of the material (i.e., IRRI); otherwise, the party is asked to remove the content. Veyrl Adell mentioned that intellectual property practice is to make contracts with the content users. Samir Ahmed stated that the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will have to get the acknowledgement and recognition for the content. It is therefore important to choose the right partners and enter into a dialogue with them.

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS MEETING – Bharat Sharma, Senior Researcher, IWMI

Sharma reminded the group that the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is driven by a desire to tackle problems, and it will have to gradually go from idea to reality. He stated that the following issues were raised during the meeting:

1. Course contents and delivery

There is a major need to clarify what the CGIAR centers and their strategic partners will actually be doing in relation to course content and its delivery. As many people noted, considerable material already exists within CG centres for non-degree training. However, most centers do not have the time or expertise to start pulling together graduate-level course material in a suitable e-Learning format. A better estimation of the required time and expertise for putting the course content together in modules and courses and provide feedback in order to sustain degree level training is required.

2. Student access and activities in the University

Some concerns were raised about the socialization process (face-to-face interaction) of students in a distance learning environment. Furthermore, due to a lack of student face-to-face interaction the dropout rate might be high. Some information on the completion rates in other similar initiatives would be very helpful. It has not been determined yet how access issues for students to take courses at the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will be handled.

3. Needs assessment

A solid needs assessment and situation analysis must be the basis for further activities of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University program. The potential market demand for graduates should be included in the needs-assessment activities as well as a gap analysis. The University should be value-added. Regarding the estimation of needed graduates in developing countries through the global needs assessment presented in the program document; some number manipulations do not seem to be appropriate – better numbers are required.

4. Partnerships

During the meeting, there was much discussion of the issue of partnerships. First, criteria for selecting partners should be developed. This should be based on a clear idea of what the different roles for partners are (and I am not sure that has been defined yet.). Second, in working with partners, their respective governance structures will have to be understood to achieve the best results. Third, the list in the program document of institutions that have supposedly expressed interest in collaboration is only a list of higher education institutions that the various CGIAR centers presently work with and not a list of those that have actually expressed interest in the GO-AFU. The list needs to be updated.

5. Quality assurance

Quality assurance of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will be crucial. It will also determine the reputation and image of the university. Quality assurance mechanisms will have to be developed.

6. Business model and finance

A business model for the University, containing the program's calculations, the costs of governance, and other funding issues will have to be drafted. The contributions from different centers in course development will not come without costs. Most center representatives have indicated that any material development would need to be financed. The project should build outputs from closely related CGIAR initiatives already funded, such as ICT-KM OLR, VASAT and the Virtual Library, into the project as counterpart funding already on the table.

7. Learning and information technology resources strategy

A strategy for the development of the learning and information technology (IT) resources for the Global Open Agriculture and Food University is required to identify the relationship between this program and other ongoing projects in the CGIAR centers. There must be full collaboration with the ICT-KM Initiative for building the resource repository and other related activities. In assessing IT resources, international standards for development and delivery of educational material should be adhered to. The limited IT resources or telecommunications connectivity in some centers and countries have to be addressed in the strategy. Delivery mechanisms should be region specific.

8. Legal issues

Legal issues are very important. From the beginning, the Global Open Agriculture and Food University will have to make sure the IPRs for the developed course content is clear. Another issue is the liability of content quality after evolution and use of the material.

CLOSING COMMENTS - Joachim von Braun, Director General, IFPRI

Joachim von Braun expressed his thanks to the Task Force members for their productive work. He gave a few remarks on the summary of the meeting, which he stated he hoped would help the group move

forward without much hesitation. It will be a challenge to identify an approach that permits learning by doing. We need a good business and governance structure: not too small or too extensive, and one that is flexible and permits expansion. Von Braun warned against creating a business plan that might create walls.

The Global Open Agriculture and Food University, von Braun remarked, will get its strength from the cooperation that exists in the CGIAR system. The world should know that the CGIAR centers could work together to become a totally different and more influential player that produces a greater impact on the ground. He referred to the problem of quality control and outlined that this is a critically important aspect of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University concept. Currently, some questions exist regarding the open-source approach, the protection of property rights, and the inclusion of the initiatives courses in classroom teaching and these need to be tackled. In the future, it will be necessary to have more clarity about these issues for the program.

The Global Open Agriculture and Food University should be a public good and the goal is to stimulate the best minds in the world to contribute. Therefore, it will have to be reasonably open. It will not be open source in the same way that a software package is and will have different mechanisms for quality control. In an open source system, the community comes to learn over time who is doing good work in furthering the quality and development of the program. The community will pick up the innovations of good people. For the Global Open Agriculture and Food University different complementary approaches in quality control might be needed.

Regarding the issue of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University brand, von Braun referred to the “creative common” approach for the distribution of material. In this approach, there exists a specific deal between the user and creator of the material. The modification of material is encouraged, but the changes have to be submitted to the author of the course material. A panel, in close collaboration with the course author, will decide if the changes should be accepted and incorporated into the material. For this approach, license agreements between developers and the users of course material will be necessary.

The Director General also commented on the question of demand in the job market. Regional labor markets must finally absorb the well-trained graduates of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University partners. In his opinion, timidity should not guide our future work on the project. For example, only 15 years ago, in Mozambique, there were only two or three people graduating each year with a Masters in agriculture. The country’s weak human resource base haunts the development of the country. If we wait for the labor market to respond to this initiative, then nothing would ever happen. The labor market is partly a function of the human labor base: human capacity also drives the labor market. We have to educate people so that the labor market and the economy can be expanded rather than asking whether there is a demand from the labor market.

The Director General thanked the participants once again for their participation in the business meeting of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University Task Force.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX B: AGENDA

Business Meeting of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University Washington, D.C. August 25, 2004

- 8:30-9:00 **Registration and Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome** - *Joachim von Braun, Director General, IFPRI*
- 9:10-9:25 **The GO-AFU Concept and Overview: Accreditation, Pedagogy**
Chair: John Dodds, Deputy Director General for Research, CIMMYT
Presenter: Suresh Babu, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
- 9:25-9:45 **Discussion**
- 9:45-10:00 **Briefing and Follow-up of the GO-AFU Concept and Initial Implementation E-Conference**
Chair: John Dodds, Deputy Director General for Research, CIMMYT

Presenter: Edith Hesse, Head, Information and Capacity Strengthening Unit, CIAT
- 10:00-10:20 **Discussion**
- 10:20-10:40 **Tea/Coffee**
- 10:40-11:00 **How does GO-AFU Link with the CGIAR ICT-KM Initiatives Online Learning Resources Center and VASAT?**
Chair: Elizabeth Doupé Goldberg, Director, Documentation, Information and Training Group, IPGRI
Presenter ICT-KM links: Jan Beniést, Principal Training Scientist, Training Unit, ICRAF
Presenter VASAT links: Rex Navarro, Special Assistant to the Director General and Head, Communication Office, ICRISAT
- 11:00-11:30 **Discussion**
- 11:30-11:45 **GO-AFU's Fundraising Strategy**
Chair: Elizabeth Doupé Goldberg, IPGRI
Presenter: Mark Bell, Head, International Programs Management Office, IIRRI
- 11:45-12:00 **Discussion**
- 12:00-13:15 **Lunch**
- 13:15-13:30 **Selecting Needs Assessment Methodology for Determining Post-Graduate Education Gaps in Agriculture and Natural Resources**
Chair: Veyrl Adell, Public Relations Manager, ILRI

Presenter: Prof. Levi S. Akundabweni, University of Nairobi, Kenya

- 13:30-13:50 **Discussion**
- 13:50-14:10 **Discussing Methods for Assessing Existing Resources Within CGIAR for Implementing GO-AFU**
Chair: Veyrl Adell, Public Relations Manager, ILRI
Presenter for IT Resources: Thomas Zschocke, Head, Training Department, CIP
Presenter for Learning Resources: Samir Ahmed, HRDU Head, ICARDA
- 14:10-14:40 **Discussion**
- 14:40-15:00 **Tea/Coffee**
- 15:00-15:15 **Implementation Plan for Distance Learning Training Material Development and Delivery in the GO-AFU**
Chair: Manuel Lantin, Science Advisor, CGIAR Secretariat
Presenter: Karin Roszkopf, Visiting Research Fellow, IFPRI
- 15:15-15:35 **Discussion**
- 15:35-15:50 **GO-AFU IP Strategy**
Chair: Manuel Lantin, Science Advisor, CGIAR Secretariat
Presenter: John Dodds, Deputy Director General for Research, CIMMYT
- 15:50-16:10 **Discussion**
- 16:10-16:20 **Summary – Bharat Sharma, Senior Researcher, IWMI**
- 16:20- 16:30 **Closing Comments - Joachim von Braun, Director General, IFPRI**
- 18:30-21:30 **Dinner Reception**

APPENDIX C: CHRONOLOGY

September 2002

Initiated development of concept note

February 2003

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) proposed the concept of a Global Open University under the CGIAR system to the Center Directors Committee (CDC).

May 2003

Concept note was presented to the CDC meeting in The Hague.

June 2003

A task force was formed consisting of staff from 15 CGIAR Center

July 2003

CGIAR Open University Program Development Business Meeting, Washington, D.C., July 28-30

October 2003

Draft program document presented at the CDC/CBC and CGIAR Annual General Meeting (AGM) meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, October 24

February 2004

Concept presented at the CGIAR Secretariat, Washington, D.C., February 3

Initiation of Preliminary Needs Assessment in South Asia

March 2004

Participation in VNU Learning 2004 Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, March 1-4

Participation in the webinar “How to select the right learning management system for your needs,”
March 11

Workshop on Assessing the Needs for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for Postgraduate Education in Agriculture in South Asia, New Delhi, India, March 29

April 2004

Meeting with Task Force members at CGIAR Centers in East Africa, Nairobi, April 5

Meeting with Dr. Speranza Ndege, Director, African Virtual University (AVU) Center at Kenyatta University, April 6

Initiation of Preliminary Needs Assessment in Eastern and Southern Africa

Four Letters of Intent signed (Imperial College, London; Indira Gandhi National Open University, India; University of Nairobi, Kenya; Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, India)

Meeting with Dr. Peter Materu, Former Executive Director, African Virtual University (AVU), Washington, D.C., April 15

Participation in the webinar “On Assessment and Learning”, April 22

Meeting with Dr. Günter Podlacha, Project Leader, Capacity Building International, Washington D.C., April 28

May 2004

Presentation of updated at the CDC meeting in Aleppo, Syria, May 4-5, program approved

Participation in the webinar “How to select the right learning content management system for your needs,” May 5

Formation of CDC support group for this Program (Direct Generals of CIAT, ILRI, ICRISAT, ICARDA, and IFPRI)

Meeting with delegation from NORAGRIC, Washington, D.C. May 11

Meeting with delegation from Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Washington, D.C., May 13

Meeting with Mort Neufville, Executive Vice President, National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), Washington, D.C., May 13

Task Force E-Conference: Global Open Agriculture and Food University Concept and Initial Implementation, May 17-26

Three Letters of Intent signed (African Virtual University, Kenya; Ain Shams University, Egypt; University of South Africa)

June 2004

Initiation of Preliminary Needs Assessment in Southeast Asia

One Letter of Intent signed (Agricultural University of Norway)

Presentation of concept at CGIAR Donors Breakfast Meeting, Paris, France, June 15

August 2004

Business Meeting of the Global Open Agriculture and Food University Task Force, Washington, D.C., August 25

Dialogue with Partners on the Global Open Agriculture and Food University of the CGIAR, Washington, D.C., August 26