CAPACITY BUILDING

The overall goal of the training and capacity-building component is to become the world leader in training and capacity-building serving the global community under the broad area of SI. Collaboration would be actively sought with other USAID ILS, NGOs, CGIAR personnel, universities, NARS personnel, extension professionals, and other relevant organizations. Our approach will closely follow the recommendations of the recent (May 2014) Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) commissioned report on Human and Institutional Capacity Development in request to address the needs in the FfF countries.

The SANREM CRSP was tremendously successful in long-term (PhD, MA, BS/BA) training and short-term training over the last five years of the project. A number of universities received assistance with curriculum and analytical issues. More recent analyses of long-term training and institutional capacity strengthening suggests additional interaction with trainees before, during, and after their degree programs coupled with targeted use of social media and other communication strategies will further leverage these efforts. A cohort strategy for long-term training, such as the BHEARD program, whereby a cohort from one country or institution is placed at one US university holds promise but has been difficult to implement because of the challenges in placing more than two students in any one location. Sandwich programs are a successful model but are under the control of individual institutions and therefore can be encouraged but not mandated. As per BIFAD 2014 report recommendation, SIIL ME in collaboration with USAID, will identify “flagship universities” in each of the target countries to serve as a partner for scientific excellence.

The SWOT analyses in Tanzania and Bangladesh supported the continued need for long-term training in the form of MS and PhD degrees for NARS scientists coupled with in-country research. The analyses also strongly demonstrated the need for training in the concept of SI and factors that influence adoption of new practices, geospatial tools, effective communication strategies, mechanization needs and options, gender issues, and nutrition for both long-term and short-term trainees. Our strong partnership with CGIAR centers and other regional organizations directly responds to BIFAD recommendations 9 and 12 by providing an opportunity for scientific and logistical support to the trainees from FfF countries as well as employment and/or collaboration opportunities. Untapped potential lies in communication strategies that use cellular and smart phones, apps, social media, and even simple list serves for text messages. Initially, this would involve personnel with NARS, extension, universities, and NGOs. Eventually, the technology could be used more extensively with smallholder farmers.

The training and capacity activities for the SIIL includes: 1) long-term training for PhD/MS/MA degrees at universities funded through SIIL; 2) participation by long-term trainees in joint training sessions in the US, focusing on soft skills and relevant technical topics; 3) short-term training by host country nationals as visiting scholars at relevant US universities and organizations; 4) short-term training in target countries aimed at NARS personnel and training the trainers on topics such as scaling up strategies, use of geospatial tools, and relevant results from SIIL funded research; and 5) short-term training in target countries aimed at smallholders reflecting the transfer of technologies from funded research to end users.

(1) Long-term training at universities funded through SIIL: The RFA for SIIL research sub-awards will give strong preference to projects that make provisions for graduate degree training for NARS scientists or other host country partner organizations. In addition, strong preference will be given when a portion of the thesis or dissertation research is conducted in-country (in collaboration with CGIAR centers) and for provisions that allow the PI to visit degree recipients at their home institutions during the active project. Favorable consideration will also be given to projects that involve sandwich programs
or that work directly with universities in capacity-building and curriculum development, or engage in short-term technical training visits to the US by host country scientists.

(2) **Participation by long-term trainees in joint training sessions:** The SIIL will conduct an annual joint training session in the US targeting soft skills such as grant writing, communication skills, gender issues, and cultural influences on adoption of new technologies, as well as technical training on geospatial tools, mechanization, nutrition, and other relevant topics. Each student supported under initiative 1 will be required to participate in at least one such training while in the US. When possible, training will be conducted in cooperation with other USAID ILs. This will assist in the transition of the trainees back to their home institution and will develop a cohort atmosphere among USAID-funded students. Emphasis will be placed on developing the trainees’ grant-writing skills for future funding opportunities with foundations, USAID missions, and other grant programs.

(3) **Short-term training by host country nationals as visiting scholars at relevant US universities and organizations:** As appropriate, and as funded by research sub-award projects, host country nationals will receive training as visiting scholars in the US. Visits may range from one week to six months in duration. Locations for such training would be identified in research sub-award proposals or approved by the SIIL Director. Institutions involved in the funded projects would be likely hosts, although other universities or organizations that have unique capabilities would be appropriate. The Land Institute in Salina, KS, USA; the E (Kika) de la Garza American Institute for Goat Research at Langston University in Langston, OK, USA; and the Agriculture and Food Security Institute at Columbia University, USA have agreed in advance to host visiting scholars. Attempts will be made to identify additional hosts, and a list will be made available as part of the RFA for research sub-awards.

(4) **Short-term training in target countries aimed at NARS personnel and training the trainers:** An annual workshop would be organized by the RCs and held in each region in one of the target countries. The agendas would be jointly developed with USAID, and the event would be open to all relevant organizations and limited only by the capacity of the venue. Initially, topics would likely reflect the use of geospatial tools, gender issues, nutrition, and other broad topics, while later in the SIIL term there would be more focus on research results from funded projects. Particular emphasis would be placed on developing the trainees’ grant-writing skills for future funding opportunities with foundations, USAID missions, and other grant programs.

(5) **Short-term training aimed at smallholders:** The RFA for SIIL research sub-awards require that each project have provisions for knowledge sharing with smallholders. This could occur in a variety of ways, including traditional extension-type activities as well as innovative delivery methods. All options will strive to create and maintain innovative and effective communication networks over the life of the project, with encouragement to institutionalize the utilization of the networks beyond the life of the projects. All options will strive to include approximately equal participation by men and women. Training and capacity-building activities will be tracked according to SIIL Monitoring and Evaluation procedures.