3. A Framework for Managing Strategic Planning Processes

From the foregoing, strategic planning processes will have to be focused on the continuous process of orientation, adaptation and navigation in a rapidly changing environment rather than on a 'strategic plan'. The document itself will be a secondary output, which will be of short validity. The primary outcomes of strategic planning will be:

- A plan which guides daily decision making strategically
- Maximized synergy with partners and leverage in obtaining mutual goals
- Provision of a frame and direction in strategic choices of donor
- Synchronization of Center activities with current, real world situation
- Enhanced consistency of programmatic activities with agreed goals and focus
- Enhanced staff and stakeholder buy-in and partnership
- Identification and validation of assumptions and research approaches used by the Center and a stimulus to innovation
- Provision of a foundation for future adaptation

Benefits can be drawn not only from the product of the strategic planning process, i.e. the strategic plan itself, but also from the planning process. If it is well conducted, a strategic planning process is an asset in itself and provides a number of spin-off products. It increases the participating parties' awareness of the issues at stake. Ownership of the process by intended beneficiaries inside and outside the Center will lead to institutional integration, acceptance of and adherence to the Center's principles and values, and changes that may become necessary to adapt the Center to upcoming challenges.

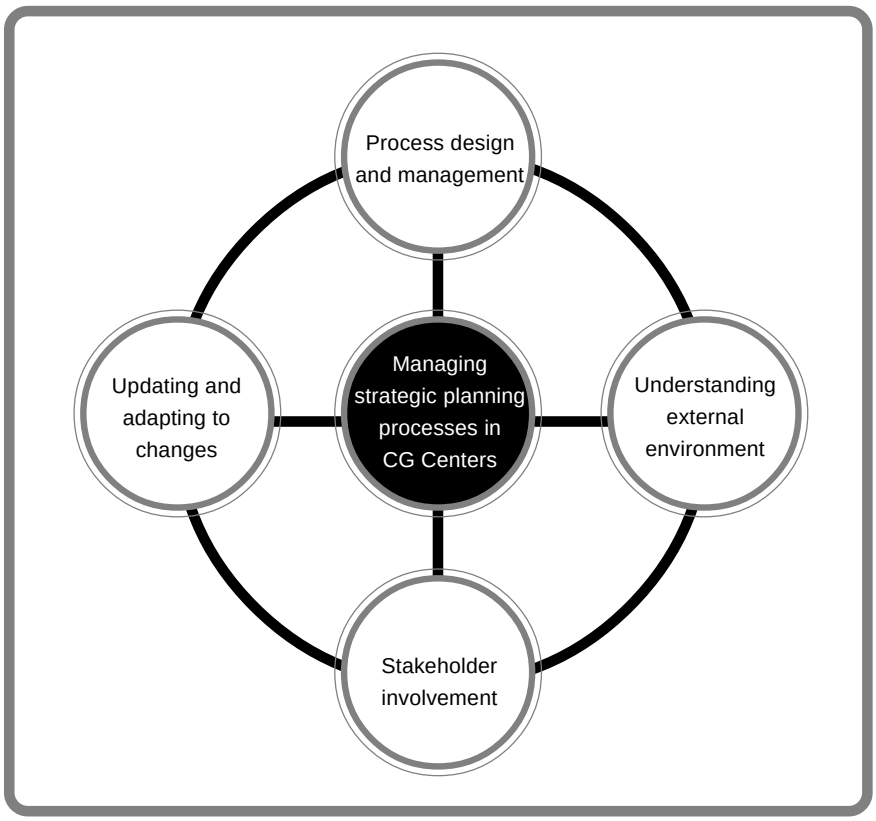
The impact of a strategic plan on a Center's activities can be measured on daily, medium term and long-term scales. It provides guidance for daily decisions and helps align them with the overall strategy and with the declared goals. It will help provide a rational basis for establishing alliances with donors, and maximize leverage and synergy with partners. Centers' activities can be synchronized with the changing reality in a more efficient way when the activities are guided by a coherent long-term vision. Buy-in and adherence by operational partners, as well as donors, will be enhanced by the availability of a clearly defined mission, identified goals, and a clear and legible strategy.

A strategic plan is a reference document intended to provide binding guidance in all operative questions over the entire planning period, yet must be sufficiently flexible and general to allow for unforeseen changes and developments. It should provide a concise, concrete yet broad framework for the operation of the Center. Clear boundaries and criteria are essential ingredients of a useful strategic plan although there must be room for a certain "drift", within those boundaries, of the main thrust and objectives in response to changing environment. Consequently, a strategic plan needs to be very clear about the mission and the goals, and about the target areas and the general nature of the means mobilized to achieve those goals. However, planning in too great a detail is counterproductive.

3.1 Cornerstones of Strategic Planning Processes

The planning process is influenced by a number of factors that contribute, to different degrees, to the success or failure of the overall process. Although these factors or components need to be assembled in a logically coherent way in order to produce a useful final document, they can also be considered as systemic building blocks. These can be constructed individually before the final assembly – as long as the individual and systemic interactions between blocks are recognized at all times. Building on an analysis of success factors from the planning experiences of the CGIAR research managers, several factors were considered to be greatly influenced by the specific context in which the planning exercise is conducted. Depending on the context, some factors may prove of marginal importance while others

Figure 1. Learning Wheel for Strategic Planning



become decisive. However, a number of factors are of fundamental importance under all circumstances - inappropriate means of dealing with these factors will invariably lead to failure of the entire process or significant parts of it. We have defined these four fundamental elements as 'cornerstones' (see Figure 1). They are:

- Process design and management
- Understanding of the external environment
- Stakeholder involvement
- Updating and adapting the strategic plan to change

Cornerstones are (by definition in the Learning Wheel methodology) indispensable. Analysis and understanding of these cornerstones, and the cross references between them, will largely contribute to the ability to organize an efficient and successful strategic planning exercise. In order to facilitate the design of the overall process, the participants in the Workshop analyzed the cornerstones in a systematic way and organized the results in tables (for a working example see the Appendix: Item 6). This facilitates analysis of the necessary components and the design of a systematic approach for mobilization of resources. Every component of the matrix can be checked individually for its availability, soundness of the respective background data and relative importance in the specific context of the planning exercise. Once all elements are in place and conform to the specified quality standards, the process can be completed and the strategic plan assembled (see section 4 and the checklist approach in the Annex).

It will be important for any new planning process to determine whether these cornerstones are in place or need to be developed by the Center. For example, if a high-quality monitoring system for external trends is part of an existing monitoring and evaluation system in a Center, this cornerstone might not require very much focus as the information might be there already. In this sense, the cornerstones and the components defined below serve as a 'checklist' ensuring that important components and their interlinkages are not forgotten.

In the following, the individual cornerstones and their components are analyzed separately.

3.2 Cornerstone 1: Process Design and Management

Essential elements of this cornerstone are given in Cornerstone 1 and include:

- Institutional commitment
- Leadership
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Assembly of skills
- Framework for priority setting
- External inputs (solicit stakeholder inputs)

Cornerstone 1: Process Design and Management

Objective: to identify the general framework for the planning process, the actors in the planning process, and availability of the means required for the efficient conduct of the exercise.

- Institutional commitment
  - ~ Send a clear message that emphasizes the commitment of top management and Board of Trustees (BoT) to all stakeholders and all staff categories
- Planning team
  - ~ Establish clear Terms of Reference
  - ~ Define roles clearly
  - ~ Maintain motivation through frequent feedback
- Skills
  - ~ Assess skills available in-house
  - ~ Identify skills that must be acquired from outside

➢ **Focus: Clearly define the objectives and purpose of the planning process**

Additional explanations:

- Board and Director General (DG) provide commitment and resources. External forces drive their involvement. They should be involved throughout the process, provide constructive feedback, be committed to consultation and commit resources within their Center, or commission them externally, appropriate to the agreed task.
- Staff provide content and direction to the strategy through volunteering, being nominated/tasked, put on task forces and through providing and managing the large amounts of information involved in the work of developing the strategy.
- External facilitator can provide neutrality to help the consultative process and by giving a "bird's eye view". Important to hire a good one identified by track record.
- Partners provide content and direction through consultative process including questionnaires, workshops etc.
- Writer – possibly identified amongst staff, possibly hired from outside – to develop the message in a style suitable for all audiences.
- Architect – responsibility for process design – could be a staff member or a consultant.
- Champion – responsible for implementation and providing momentum. Could be external but ideally internal (DG).

The elements will be described in more detail in the following section.

3.2.1 Institutional commitment

Strong commitment by the driving forces within the planning institution is one of the most important factors for success. Without conviction and active support by the BoT, the DG, and top management, a strategic planning exercise is doomed for failure from the outset. Only strong commitment from the top can mobilize the forces and create the adherence and dynamics necessary to complete the demanding process.

Commitment in all these layers must be verified and, if necessary, solicited and reinforced before the start of any further planning activity.

3.2.2 Leadership, roles and responsibilities

Successful completion of the planning exercise critically depends on strong leadership. The complex process needs dynamic and careful coaching through its different phases. Key actors must be identified internally and externally, and their respective roles and responsibilities clearly defined from the outset. Only a clear and transparent process conducted by accepted leaders can yield a quality process and product (and see paragraph 4.3) which is compelling and authoritative enough to orient staff and stakeholders.

3.2.3 Skills and framework for priority setting

The skills necessary for the successful completion of the diverse tasks throughout the process must be assembled carefully. Availability of the necessary competences within the Center is a first step. Missing skills will then have to be complemented by acquisition of external competence.

Once all necessary skills are available, the framework for priority setting must be established[2]. It consists of logical steps, building one upon another. Clear criteria are necessary for the decision-making process, and mechanisms for the resolution of possible conflicts must be established from the outset.

3.2.4 External inputs

Involvement of stakeholders at an early point, and in critical phases, is an important component of a successful planning process (see below). Which inputs, and how they are to be solicited from stakeholders, are to be carefully considered in the phase of setting up the planning process.

These elements of the first cornerstone (Process design and management) are integrally linked with all the other cornerstones, as the process design and sequencing depends on the state of knowledge in the other cornerstones.

3.3 Cornerstone 2: Understanding the External Environment

Essential elements of this cornerstone are given in Cornerstone 2 and include understanding of:

- Socio-economic trends
- Environmental trends
- Political/institutional context
- Science and technology context
- Implications of lessons learnt from impact assessment studies, reviews, self reflection/ evaluation.

Cornerstone 2: Understanding the external environment

Objective: to position the Center with respect to its present and future environment and partners

- Assess trends
  - ~ Socio-economic trends (poverty)
  - ~ Commodity and farming systems
  - ~ Environmental changes and global processes
- Understand the political and institutional context
  - ~ International conventions and issues
  - ~ Funding trends
  - ~ Institutional changes
  - ~ Changing partnerships
- Evaluate the scientific and technological context
  - ~ Assessment of progress and methodology
  - ~ Matching of tools with objectives
  - ~ Identification of key actors upstream and downstream
- Make a self-assessment and definition of your Center's own position, knowledge, strengths and weaknesses

➤ **Interpret your assessments and custom-tailor the results in the light of the objectives and purpose of the planning process as defined according to cornerstone 1**

2 Although this document does not deal with the mechanisms of priority setting one very useful publication based on the ILRI experience is: "Ranking Programmes: A framework for priority setting in international livestock research." Randolph, T.F., P.M. Kristjanson, S.W. Omamo, A.N. Odero, P.K. Thornton, R.S. Reid, T. Robinson and J.G. Ryan. 2001. Research Evaluation. 10(3):142-160. As with other Center-specific examples given in this document, it is provided as useful key experience to draw on, and not as a definitive prescription for all Centers.

Box 1. Understanding the External Environment: The SAT Futures Approach (ICRISAT)

The agricultural environment in the semi-arid tropics (SAT) is constantly changing, in terms of cropping patterns, income opportunities, trade externalities, liberalization, etc. In order to remain relevant, International Center for Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) continually monitors these changes, and their implications for the research agenda. This monitoring process is formalized as a global research theme (one of six themes at ICRISAT) titled *SAT Futures and Development Pathways*. This global theme has three broad objectives:

- To track changes in the external environment, and better understand the factors driving these changes
- Correspondingly, review (and adjust where needed) ICRISAT's research agenda, priorities, and funding allocations among alternative research areas
- Provide an analytic, objective basis for research management decisions, i.e. a decision support system for senior management.

The SAT Futures project will include strategic socio-economic research in specific areas, for example commodity trends and market outlooks for our mandate crops, input supply and access constraints, patterns and determinants of technology adoption, institutional innovations, and the dynamics and determinants of poverty. These studies will help identify technological, policy, and institutional alternatives and development pathways to enhance the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the SAT. They will also inform and direct ICRISAT's research investment towards the most crucial areas.

The project uses a participatory approach. ICRISAT has organized a series of brainstorming meetings to discuss poverty-related (or poverty-inducing) problems and their implications for research priorities. All key stakeholders were involved; national and international institutes, development investors, universities, the private sector, extension, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and farmer organizations, ensuring that the final outputs reflected the diversity of views and experiences. This broad involvement also enabled us to tap a large, multidisciplinary pool of expertise – policy and planning, sustainable development, rain-fed agriculture, agricultural economics, farming systems research, germplasm enhancement, environmental conservation, etc. Focus group meetings were also conducted in each region (East Africa, West and Central Africa, Southern Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia), involving scientists from ICRISAT and partner institutions.

The SAT Futures approach follows a systematic procedure: literature survey, data analysis, stakeholder consultations, and synthesis of the major issues. It seeks to identify the unique features of the SAT, and understand the differences in agricultural trends between the SAT and other regions of the developing world. During ICRISAT's recent research priority setting and visioning exercise, the process was supported by a review of major trends in SAT agriculture using available data from 1960 to 2000. The review summarized the major constraints limiting income growth, poverty alleviation, food security and environmental sustainability now and towards 2020, the implications for future R&D strategies and priorities for the SAT, and the roles for ICRISAT, NARS, NGOs and the private sector in implementing these R&D strategies.

In sum, these consultations have led to:

- Development of guidelines to harmonize the participatory process (better methodology to enhance participation).
- Clear identification of key issues and external factors affecting SAT agriculture; emerging challenges and opportunities; strengths as well as gaps in existing research systems.
- Documentation: synthesis report summarizing responses from the baseline survey, as well as collation of relevant literature from other sources (e.g. World Bank, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)).
- Development of framework that underpins the critical issues in SAT agriculture, linking productivity, food security and poverty reduction.
- Construction and analysis of micro-level data and macro-level statistics (both demographic and agricultural) to support further analysis. The database is being expanded to include changes in biodiversity and estimates of the nature and extent of land degradation.
- Design of appropriate development strategies for the SAT.

Continue next page

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Several important position papers have been published or are under preparation:
- Future challenges and opportunities for agricultural R&D in the SAT.
- Future of agriculture in the SAT of Africa: an issues paper.
- Vision on SAT agriculture for Asia.

The SAT Futures project too has evolved in response to this consultative exercise. Research now focuses on three areas:
- Strategic assessments for agriculture and economic growth in the SAT of Asia and Africa and implications for agricultural research priorities.
- Development pathways and policies for rural livelihoods.
- Synthesis studies: lessons learned from impact studies, institutional arrangements and implications for research spill-overs across regions.

The key question is, "How can agricultural research improve the payoffs to diverse and changing investment opportunities?" The ultimate objective is to steer development towards a more sustainable pathway, that directly addresses poverty and environmental degradation.

Box 2. Understanding the External Environment: Determining "Mega-trends" (provided by ICARDA)

One approach to understanding the externalities to a Center's current and future activities was pursued at International Center for Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) through a workshop geared to assist the Center chart its way forward. The occasion was provided by the Center's 25th Anniversary in May 2002 attended by the heads of all National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARI) in the region. A workshop was held in conjunction with the anniversary entitled "Agriculture, Environment and Human Welfare in West Asia and North Africa: The Search for Sustainability" which was organized to allow the attendance of ICARDA senior management, the Board of Trustees and scientists, to ensure their 'buy-in' through their active participation. The workshop explored the links between agricultural land use, factors affecting production systems and associated research, human welfare and poverty agendas in the region.

The goals of the workshop were:
- To explore the medium term implications of global, especially climate, change to agricultural production scenarios and human livelihoods for the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region.
- To seek to develop an approach to sustainable natural resource use which creates a common cause between the agricultural research for development and the global (climate) change/environmental and sustainable development agendas.
- To examine the current interdependencies between the rural and urban populations in WANA, to consider the roles of agricultural research and rural/agricultural development in regional economic development and to identify some of the most critical issues for medium term socio-economic sustainability.
- To seek to build a research/policy/applications framework to deliver science based sustainability policy through the partnerships between the biophysical and the socio-economic research communities, and between the public and private sectors, required to tackle the major inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral problems.

The workshop was designed to promote a dialogue, and to develop a set of outcomes/recommendations, which will help guide ICARDA's strategy and generate new partnerships to enhance the Center's contribution to improve human well being in the region.

3.3.1 Socio-economic trends

Necessary information on important socio-economic trends includes information about poverty distribution, markets, commodities, production trends, price trends etc. Knowledge about production conditions such as farm size (e.g. large farms vs. smallholder production, input levels etc.) and credit availability is also necessary.

3.3.2 Environmental trends

The importance of environmental issues and foreseeable changes in natural resources (including land and water, biodiversity and genetic resources) and risks from processes such as climate change, are central in the planning of the long-term perspective of a Center engaged in agricultural and environmental research.

3.3.3 Political and institutional context

The relevant political/institutional context includes issues such as changes within the CGIAR (present and anticipated), funding trends within the community of traditional donors, and possibilities to solicit novel, non-traditional funding sources. International conventions may be very significant for the planning of the activities of a Center engaged in developmental activities – and treaties negotiated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) or FAO may have consequences for the free flow of goods or resources. Changes in international policy, or in the public conscience, can have profound influences on the way a Center will do business in the future. Specific current examples include the discussions on intellectual property rights and genetically modified organisms. More generally, ethical issues and the evolution of values can be anticipated to have subtle but important influences on developmental approaches. The landscape of the traditional alliances with partners – be it collaborative or funding partners – merits close scrutiny and possible developments should be anticipated with the best possible precision. Notably, the relations of a Center with the evolving private and NGO sectors merit evaluation. In many disciplines, notably the so-called high-tech disciplines, the innovation potential and the investment capacity of the private sector largely exceed that of the public sector.

3.3.4 Science and technology context

The technological basis is and remains the driving force for all knowledge improvement in the sector of agricultural research and development. Where, and to what degree, recent technological progress can contribute to advances in research on poverty reduction merits close scrutiny. Some modern fields of science are costly to implement and high-tech solutions could preferentially benefit cost-efficient high-input production systems. It will be necessary therefore to not only review new developments in science but also their applicability. Similarly, old alliances and new possibilities for extended collaborations need to be explored carefully.

3.3.5 Implications of lessons learned from impact assessment studies, reviews, self reflection/evaluation

Information for the understanding of the external environment does not only come from external sources. Knowledge, or lessons learned from past experiences or studies completed by the Center itself are often neglected. It is important to be aware of the existence of such information (through project and knowledge management systems), because its use will greatly improve the quality of the planning process and contribute to reducing its cost. Examples of how Centers have tackled reviews of the external environment can be found in Boxes 1-4.

The cornerstone 'Understanding the external environment' described here is closely linked to the next one on 'Stakeholder involvement'. Studies on the external environment provide the information, but the negotiation to create a common perspective together with stakeholders is essential for a sound foundation in collaboration with stakeholders.

3.4 Cornerstone 3: Stakeholder Involvement

Essential elements of this cornerstone are given in Cornerstone 3 and include:

- Process design and management: identify key stakeholders.
- Define roles of stakeholders in the planning process.
- Create common perspective of the future direction of a Center – assemble information, synthesize different world views, exchange key information and agree on its interpretation.
- Approval of strategic plan – staff ownership, stakeholder acceptance, final approval by BoT , iSC.

Cornerstone 3: Stakeholder involvement

Objective: to create a common sense of commitment of all personnel, partners and stakeholders.

- Identify all stakeholders
- Assure a common understanding and interpretation of Center's role and position in stakeholder community and the current and future external environment
- Define common objectives together with all stakeholders and personnel
- Define roles, partnerships and respective contributions.

➤ **Negotiation: During the negotiation phase, maintain your focus on the objectives and purpose of the planning process as defined according to cornerstone 1**

3.4.1 Stakeholder involvement and acceptance

Stakeholder involvement and acceptance are factors in a strategic planning process that are often neglected yet are of utmost importance. A strategic plan is only as good as the adherence it can solicit. Within the Center, a widely accepted long-term and compelling vision can mobilize unexpected enthusiasm and resources. General acceptance in the donor community will certainly translate into a greater appreciation of the Center's program and stability of funding. The Center will also gain in visibility, and credibility with its collaborating partners, both Advanced Research Institute(s) (ARI) and National Agricultural Research and Extension Services (NAR(E)S), if its long-term strategy sets clear and acceptable boundaries for future collaboration.

Essential elements for the acceptance of the strategic plan by the stakeholders include (i) a careful identification of the key stakeholders, (ii) a clear definition of their roles in the different stages of the planning process, (iii) an open attitude towards their contributions and (iv) an acceptance without prejudice of the information and views provided by the stakeholders.

All the three cornerstones previously described provide inputs into a continuous learning and adaptation process towards a clear strategic orientation. The next cornerstone is equally essential.

3.5 Cornerstone 4: Updating and Adapting to Change

Essential elements of this cornerstone are given in Cornerstone 4 and include:

- Re-evaluation of key assumptions (periodic or event-related evaluation of strategic assumptions – boundaries, modalities, partner efficiencies)
- Consciously detecting important changes (constant review of the sector's development; new scientific developments; analysis of mega-trends and their implications for strategy; funding situation)
- Learning from experience (capture both positive and negative experiences; extract implications for key assumptions and rate of progress)
- Allowing for innovation (survey external environment and incorporate changes; maintain space and opportunity for creativity and innovation; provide means to stay in touch with new developments).

Cornerstone 4: Updating and adapting to changes

Objective: to keep the planning process on target in a world of moving targets.

Put in place the mechanisms for:

- Continuous monitoring for important changes
- Periodic evaluation of key assumptions
- Capturing experience and implications, and incorporating lessons learned in the planning process
- Keeping the process fluid and adaptable as planning proceeds and assuring a flexible product

➤ **Evolution of the planning process: adapt the planning process to the new information and experiences arising from the process itself but maintain your focus on the objectives and purpose of the planning process as initially defined according to cornerstone 1**

Box 3. Periodic review of specific commodities (provided by CIMMYT)

As part of its continuing scan of the external environment and technological opportunities for its research, Centro International de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo (CIMMYT) conducts periodic, formal, crop-specific planning exercises. A review for wheat was conducted in 1998/9, and a review of maize trends in 1999/2000[3]. The reviews were designed to contribute to the strategic direction of research taken by the Center on these crops. The maize review was a collaborative effort of two CIMMYT programs (the economics and maize programs) in consultation with the DG and the Center's Research Coordination Committee. The analytical process used formal scoring and ranking methods for identifying priority research activities to pursue. Trade-offs between multiple objectives such as efficiency, poverty and subsistence were explicitly considered in the evaluation of alternatives. Where possible, ex ante impact assessment methods were also applied. An iterative link between the analytical and consultative processes is an important issue for all Centers to bear in mind in planning. A wide, participatory regional planning exercise was also undertaken in Asia to help CIMMYT, as well as the countries of the region, assess the implications of a rapid growth in maize demand, primarily for livestock, as well as the rapid growth in private sector investments in maize R&D in the region. The consultative processes and the published documents are considered successful, albeit demanding of heavy investments of senior staff time. The crop-specific reviews have been used to influence Center strategy and medium term plan development.

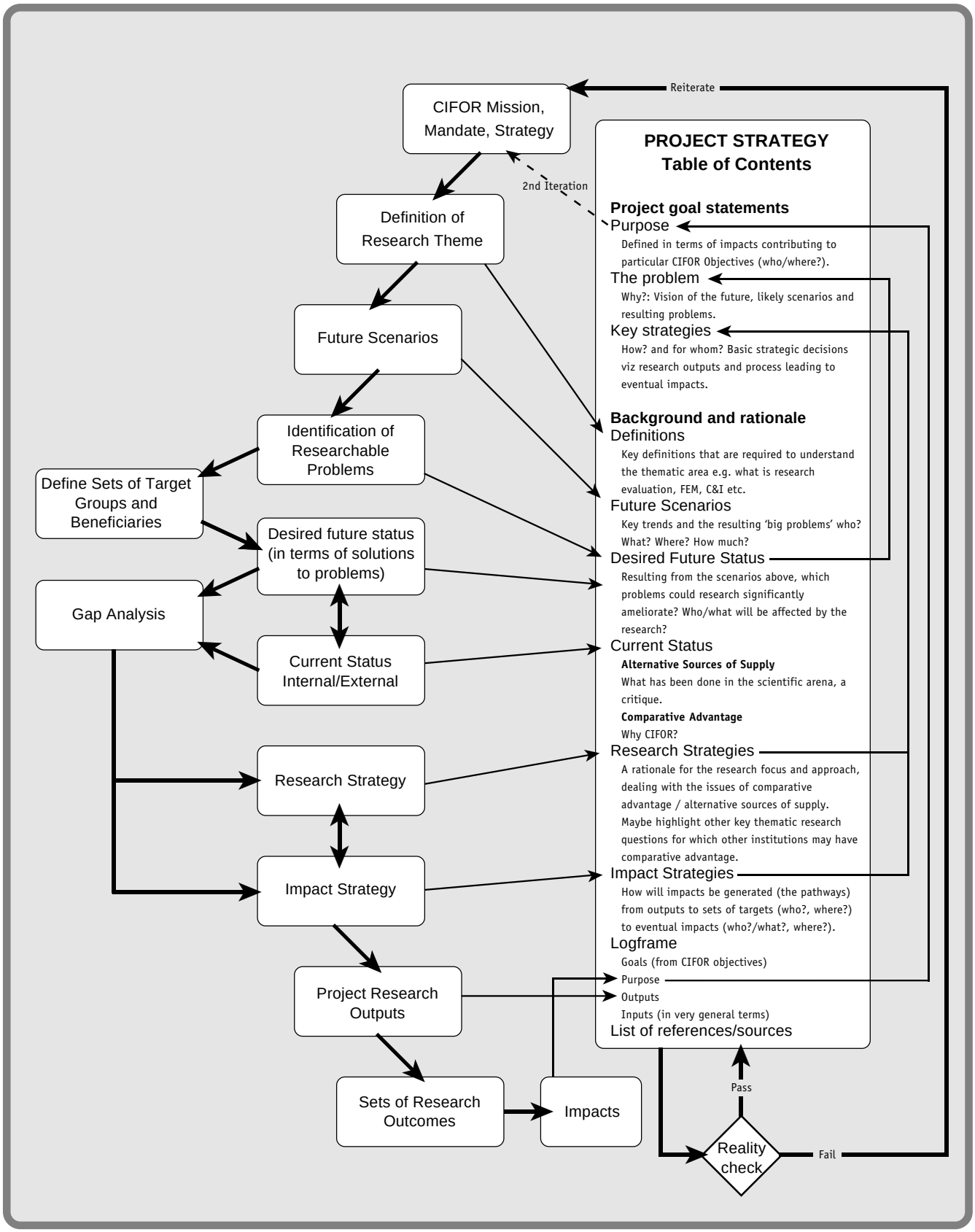
Box 4. Review of the sector and resource systems (provided by WorldFish)

As a preface to the development of The WorldFish Center's strategic planning for the early part of the new century, WorldFish adopted an aquatic resource system approach to attempt to analyze trends in the wider fisheries sector. It was necessary to unpack global and national statistics so as to separate capture fisheries from aquaculture, marine from inland water production, water issues in continental states from those in island and archipelagic countries, national population/poverty levels from populations most dependent on aquatic resource issues etc. Amongst other things, the analysis highlighted the stagnation of global capture fisheries and the tremendous growth of aquaculture and its relevance to developing country livelihoods since WorldFish Center's first strategic plan was developed in the early 1990s. The data so assembled was analyzed both by resource system and by geographical region[4], and the data used to inform staff and partner groups as a common preface to a facilitated Delphi approach to priority setting. Simple scoring approaches provided general priorities by regions and resource systems, and identified potential research areas through consideration of four criteria: potential benefits, ability to utilize benefits, scientific potential and research capacity. A fully quantitative approach was not feasible at the time, as whilst impact studies for production technology research were available it was not felt that these could be easily compared against economic returns to INRM research where the methods for determination are more tenuous. The participatory process, and the wide-spread sharing of the products of the planning workshop, helped refine the outcomes of the planning phase which were used to develop a successful Strategic Plan. The change in the planning unit, from the large continental groupings or terrestrial production systems used by much of the CGIAR, to a more "aquatic resources dependent" approach to nations and regions, made the process more relevant to the sector, and more approachable to the WorldFish Center's partners. Because of the number of dimensions to be considered in any aquatic resources research portfolio, continuous work on data collection and analysis by aquatic ecosystem (generally not the means by which global data sets are developed), beneficiary populations, and environmental methods development, will be required to move to fully quantitative priority setting in the future.

3 Pingali, P.L., Editor. 2001. CIMMYT 1999-2000 World maize facts and trends. Meeting world maize needs: technological opportunities and priorities for the public sector. 60p. D.F.: CIMMYT, Mexico.

4 ICLARM. 1999. Aquatic resources research in developing countries: data and evaluation by region and resource system. Supplement to the ICLARM Strategic Plan 2000-2020. ICLARM Working Document 4, ICLARM, Penang, Malaysia.

Box 5. An example of an iterative planning framework (provided by CIFOR)



A strategic plan is not a document cast in stone. It reflects the appreciation and interpretation of the signals received by a Center from its environment at a given point in time, and the conclusions drawn from the available information at that particular time. However, the environment of a CG Center is fluid and in constant change. A projection that is lucid and valid at a particular moment may become insignificant in the light of changes occurring after its formulation. It is extremely important that the analytical processes operating during the different phases of the strategic planning process remain activated and operational and that the scanning of the environment continues in order to adapt the plan according to needs (see Box 5).

This need for possible adaptation of more or less important portions of the entire plan requires that the formulation of the strategic plan take this necessity into account from the early phases of its planning. It must be formulated as a broad, flexible, modular framework that supports and encourages changes in certain parts while maintaining the validity of the overall document. Incremental changes are more easily incorporated than great leaps necessitated by the rigid structure of a plan that did not envisage the possibility for future development.

Section 3 discusses the development of cornerstones for best practice in strategic planning and Section 4 treats these cornerstones as the basis for a practical implementation framework. More specific implications for the CGIAR are found in Section 5.