FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

ANNUAL REPORT

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security, Policy Research, Capacity and Influence

July 2019 - September 2020

INNOVATION LAB FOR FOOD SECURITY POLICY RESEARCH, CAPACITY, AND INFLUENCE (PRCI)

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

IFPRI INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Cornell University

ReNAPRI

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

ISSER Knowledge for Development

KU

RIS Research and Information System for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

This Report is the Year 1 Annual Report of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Research, Capacity and Influence (PRCI) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Grant No. 7200AA19LE00001. The contents are the responsibility of the authors of this report (i.e., PRCI team) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID, the United States Government, Michigan State University, IFPRI, Cornell University, ReNAPRI, University of Ghana, Kasetsart University, and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

Published by the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics, Michigan State University, Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture, 446 West Circle Dr., Room 202, East Lansing, Michigan 48824, USA

PRCI Program Partners

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Research, Capacity, and Influence is a consortium of research partners including Michigan State University, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Cornell University, ReNAPRI, University of Ghana, Kasetsart University, and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). Michigan State University is the institutional lead and manager of PRCI.

- Michigan State University, 426 Auditorium Road, East Lansing, MI 48824
- International Food Policy Research Institute, 1201 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005-3915
- Cornell University, 616 Thurston Ave. Ithaca, NY 14853
- Institute of Statistical, Social & Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, P. O. Box LG74 Legon, Accra Ghana.
- Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI), 26A Middleway, Lusaka, Zambia
- Kasetsart University (KU), 50 ซอย สุวรรณวาวกสิกิจ Lat Yao, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand
- Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), Core IV-B, Fourth Floor India Habitat Center, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003, India

PRCI Executive Committee

David Tschirley serves as Director of the Lab. He is counseled by an Executive Committee constituted as outlined below. ExComm members can name delegates to represent them in meetings, as indicated (where relevant) in parentheses.

Table 1. Executive Committee Membership

Name	Institution		Name	Institution
Emily Weeks	USAID		John Medendorp	MSU
Kristy Cook	USAID		Nicole Mason-Wardell	MSU
Chris Barrett	Cornell		Saweda Liverpool-Tasie	MSU
Elizabeth Rose Bageant	Cornell		Steve Longabaugh	MSU
Danielle Resnick	IFPRI		Thom Jayne	MSU
Elizabeth Bryan	IFPRI		Alphonse Akouyu	ReNAPRI
Ruth Meinzen-Dick	IFPRI		Lulama Traub	ReNAPRI
Suresh Babu	IFPRI		Miltone Ayieko	ReNAPRI
Xinshen Diao	IFPRI		Nalishebo Meebelo	ReNAPRI
Andrew Agyei-Holmes	ISRA			
Peter Quartey	ISRA			
Cait Goddard	MSU			
David Tschirley	MSU			
Eric Crawford	MSU			

PRCI Director Tschirley is assisted in his logistical and financial management of the program by one program assistant and a business office consisting of one manager and three additional staff dealing with contracting, accounting, and travel.

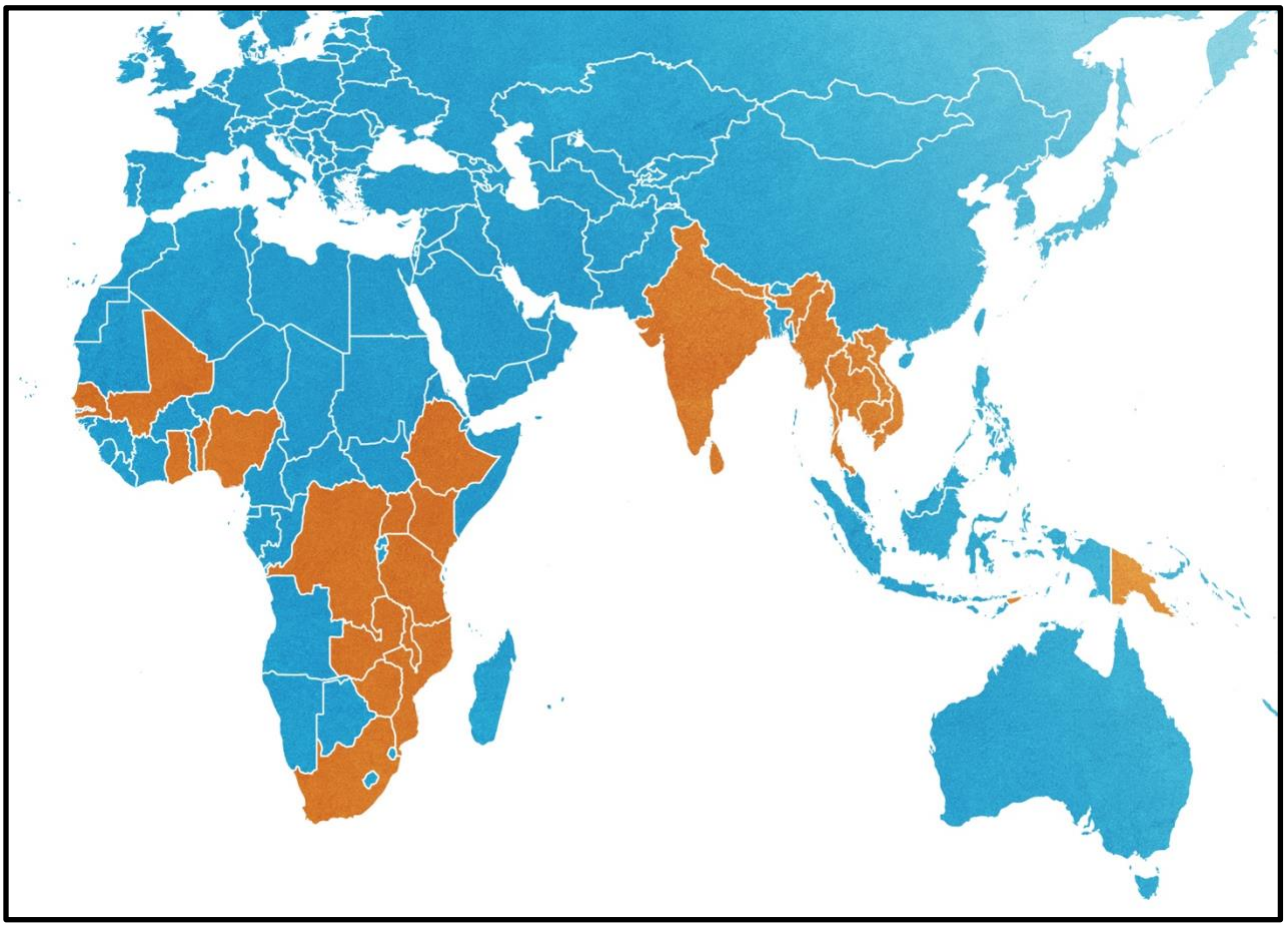
List of Countries Where PRCI is Active

Centers for Policy Leadership (CPLs): Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda
Core Center Research: Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Tanzania
Participating in Training:

- **Asia**: Cambodia, East Timor, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, India, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Sri Lanka
- **Africa:** Senegal, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia

STAAARS+: Uganda, Senegal, Ethiopia, Benin
Collaborating on other Research: Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Thailand
ReNAPRI full network: Democratic Republic of the Congo**,** Ghana, Kenya**,** Malawi**,** Mozambique**,** South Africa**,** Tanzania**,** Uganda**,** Zambia**,** Zimbabwe

Figure 1. Map of PRCI Activities



Acronyms

AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
BACI	des bases de données de commerce
BAME	Bureau d'analyses macro-économiques (Senegal)
BFAP	Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (South Africa)
CARD	Center for Agricultural Research and Development (Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Malawi)
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CEPAD	Center of Studies for Peace and Development (East Timor)
CEPPAG	Research Center for Agricultural and Food Policies and Programs (Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique)
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
COVID-19	2019 novel coronavirus
CPEEL	Center for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law (Nigeria)
CPLS	Core Centers for Policy Leadership
DAERD	Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (Nigeria)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMMP	Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Center (Uganda)
FTFMS	Feed the Future Monitoring System
IAPRI	Indaba Agriculture Policy Research Institute (Zambia)
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIDS	Institute for Integrated Development Studies (Nepal)
ILLC	Internal Lab Launch Consultation
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies (Sri Lanka)
IRES	Institute of Social and Economic Research (University of Kinshasa, DRC)
ISRA	l'Institut sénégalais de recherches Agricoles (Senegal)
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social & Economic Research (University of Ghana)
KU	Kasetsart University (Thailand)
LPM	Linear Probability Model
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Malawi)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSU	Michigan State University
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PIM	CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets
PMO	Ministry of Agriculture (East Timor)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRCI	Policy Research, Capacity, & Influence
PICA	Policy Influence Capacity Advancement
Q&A	Question and Answer
R2P	Research-to-Policy
ReNAPRI	Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes
RIS	Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries (India)
SAEBS	School of Agricultural Economics and Business Studies (Sokoine University of

	Agriculture, Tanzania)
SIDO	Small Industries Development Organization (Tanzania)
STAAARS+	Structural Transformation of African and Asian Agriculture and Rural Spaces
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania)
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute (Thailand)
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WEAI4VC	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index for Value Chains

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Executive Summary

Activities and Successes

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity, & Influence (PRCI) successfully navigated a tremendously challenging first year of operation in the midst of a global pandemic, managing to make major adjustments to its way of doing business while effectively implementing the core processes needed to put each of the partner centers in charge of their own capacity development – a central goal of PRCI.

With COVID-19 disrupting activities from March, 2020, the Lab implemented all elements of its workplan, including competitive selection of three Centers for Policy Leadership; launch of the STAAARS+ program training and research and the Core Center research program, both with strong mentoring of local researchers; launch of PICA, the Lab's institutional capacity strengthening program; selection of Asian lead centers and initiation of collaboration with them and more junior centers in the region; and launch of its webinar series with six webinars during the year. Gender featured strongly in multiple pieces of the work.

Going beyond its workplan, partly in response to COVID-19, the Lab undertook three very ambitious and entirely unanticipated activities: design and implementation of a Core Center technical training program with all materials available online; design and launch of a Special Topics training technical program that will segue to a research program in Year 2; and assistance to ReNAPRI to carry out a highly interactive five-year strategic planning exercise. In keeping with the challenges of COVID-19, all this work was delivered online.

PRCI met or exceeded four of its five agreed indicators and, at the end of Year 1, added two additional indicators in consultation with its AOR.

Selected CPLs were BAME from Senegal (l'Institut sénégalais de recherches Agricoles (ISRA) / Bureau d'analyses macro-économiques), CPEEL/DAERD from Nigeria (Center for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law / Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development – University of Ibadan), and EPRC from Uganda (Economic Policy Research Center). All three won competitive bids for mentored research support during Year 1, along with Sokoine University of Agriculture, and 20 center researchers were paired with seven mentors from MSU and IFPRI.

Two CPL teams – from BAME and EPRC – won competitive proposals as STAAARS+ fellows, and were joined by teams from Bahir Dar University IDRM in Ethiopia and African School of Economics in Togo. Eight mentors from Cornell, MSU, and Syracuse University were paired with these researchers. Both the Core Center and STAAARS+ teams made strong progress on their research with typically bi-weekly or at least monthly meetings with mentors.

Core Center research teams engaged in nine training modules designed to prepare them for their research, and STAAARS+ teams engaged in six modules and intensive interactions across teams. In Asia, Kasetsart University worked with the PRCI Asia lead to organize and present three 2-hour trainings on trade flow analysis related to COVID, which will segue into mentored research in Year 2. PRCI also won a $200,000 buy-in for a cross-country cellphone survey of citizen experience with COVID and its impact on their livelihoods and access to food.

The ReNAPRI secretariat was trained and guided in bringing its network together to successfully

develop a five-year strategic plan entirely online. The Lab's institutional capacity strengthening team then led one of the CPLs (CPEEL/DAERD) through a fully redesigned PICA process and started the process with the other two CPLs. ReNAPRI secretariat staff participated in PICA with an eye to mainstreaming it in their own network.

The Lab's gender team organized two specialized trainings, reviewed the CPL candidate center proposals and Core Center research proposals, mentored two of the Core Center research projects, participated in the PICA process with CPEEL/DAERD, and launched a gender community of practice on Slack.

Challenges and Responses

PRCI faced challenges due to the nature of its program and the special conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By eliminating travel from early March, COVID-19 imposed three types of challenges. First, moving interactions that had been planned to be, and historically have been, in-person or in some cases a mix of online and in-person to 100% online puts real limitations on the ability to build rapport and adequately engage trainees during training sessions to maximize their learning. Second, "zoom fatigue" combined with many Lab events (training sessions, research meetings, institutional capacity strengthening sessions) exacerbates this challenge. Third, the inability to travel meant that leadership of PRCI and STAAARS+ could not as effectively build relationships with center leadership in order to better understand their needs, identify commonalities and differences across centers, and respond appropriately in programming.

More structurally, PRCI faces two essential challenges. First, it has a very far-flung consortium with very high coordination costs. The fact that we stress institutional capacity building together with research, and are promoting learning across platforms and continents, further increases the coordination costs. Here, technology such as zoom provides a huge advantage, but that advantage is best grasped if it is deployed together with sufficient in-person engagement, which has not been possible since March. Second, though PRCI is a research program, its funding available for research, after meeting its heavy human and institutional capacity building mandate and the coordination that implies, is very limited. Beyond modest support for salaries and grants to centers, the Lab's core budget has no room for primary data collection, which is an essential aspect of an active, responsive, relevant research program.

PRCI has responded to these challenges in X ways. First, the technical training teams have solicited constant feedback from trainees and made continuous adjustments in how they design and present the training sessions. Second, PRCI leadership instituted monthly calls with its Executive Committee, with ReNAPRI, and with each of the CPL directors, in order to discuss issues and "nip problems in the bud." Third, PRCI late in Year 1 modified its operational structure to spread the responsibility for coordination and drive more learning across platforms. See section XI for more detail on this restructuring. Finally, PRCI sought and won two buy-ins to its core award and continues to seek associate awards. Such funding will provide a partial solution to the limited research funds, though synthesizing across topics and continents will continue to be a challenge.

Future Directions

PRCI intends to build on its Year 1 success and make adjustments as follows. First, at the broadest level, the Lab will work to ensure more learning, borrowing, and coordination where relevant between its various platforms. This will include encouraging Africa-Asia joint research where

interest is detected, for example in the trade flow analysis that was launched in Asia under the Special Topics program and could be very relevant for example for India and countries in East and Southern Africa; adopting aspects of the STAAARS+ approach to benchmarking and mentoring in the Core Center research program; creating platforms for STAAARS+ fellows to engage with other researchers in the consortium; familiarizing all participants with the rich set of online training materials that PRCI has developed under its Core Center, STAAARS+, and Special Topics platforms and promoting their use.

Second, as outlined in section IX, the Lab will seek scaling of its efforts. It will do this through (a) ReNAPRI engagement with PICA for rollout in year 2 or 3 among ReNAPRI centers; (b) a more explicit training of trainers approach in year 2 and beyond in all three of its training platforms; (c) partnership with Asian lead centers with an explicit objective of building their capacity to build capacity in their subregion; and (d) fully launching R2P to achieve policy impact, which is the ultimate scaling mechanism with potential to affect all citizens in a country and, through that, many in the region.

Third, PRCI will ramp up its research output and bring this to bear on policy deliberations. It will do this by (a) finishing the first cohorts of Core Center and STAAARS+ research outputs and organizing research- and policy outreach around them; (b) building policy outreach around COVID using results from its cross-country survey; (c) extending the mentored research model into Asia starting with the trade flow analysis for which analysts have already been trained and emphasizing mentoring from the two Asian lead centers, and (d) seeking additional buy-in and associate award funds.

I. Program Activities and Highlights

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity, & Influence's (PRCI, or "the Lab" henceforth) first year of operation was June 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020. This first year featured successful implementation of the processes that the PRCI consortium had laid out to ensure local leadership of research and training activities within a consultative framework, and adaptation to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which involved moving every aspect of the Lab's work online from March forward. PRCI's activities during year 1 were:

- Competitive selection of three Centers for Policy Leadership (CPLs) and launch of the program: PRCI received 11 applications across Africa, selected three CPLs, and brought them together with all consortium partners in the Lab's Internal Lab Launch Consultation in November 2019. The selected CPLs are (1) From Senegal, l'Institut sénégalais de recherches Agricoles (ISRA) / Bureau d'analyses macro-économiques (BAME), (2) From Nigeria, Center for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law (CPEEL) / Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (DAERD) – University of Ibadan and (3) From Uganda, Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC)
- Launch of the Core Center research program in Africa: Eight proposals were reviewed and four selected by the Executive Committee, one each from the three CPLs and one from Sokoine University of Agriculture, a ReNAPRI member;
- Launch of a fully online Core Center technical training program for researchers at the four centers involved in the Core Center research program: Twelve training modules were designed and nine implemented through the end of year 1;
- Competitive selection of four Structural Transformation of African and Asian Agriculture and Rural Spaces (STAAARS+) research fellow teams (eight fellows across the four teams) and launch of training and research: The competition resulted in two STAAARS+ fellows teams from outside the PRCI network and two from within (BAME and EPRC);
- Selection of two lead centers in Asia and execution of a Special Topics training program: Asian lead centers are Research Information Systems (RIS) in India and Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand. KU spearheaded the Special Topics training across nine centers in South- and Southeast Asia;
- Facilitating ReNAPRI's five-year strategic planning exercise: PRCI's institutional capacity strengthening team helped ReNAPRI conduct its five-year strategic planning exercise entirely online. This resulted in an approved five-year strategic plan and one-year action plan;
- Completion of the Policy Influence Capacity Advancement (PICA) process with one CPL: PICA was completely redesigned for online delivery, CPEEL completed the process, and BAME and EPRC were ready to start as the year ended;
- Creation of a research-to-policy (R2P) coordinator position: Dr. Danielle Resnick of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was named R2P coordinator and began work with Core Center and STAAARS+ research teams;
- Launch of a PRCI webinar series with over 524 participants across five webinars
- Design and launch of a multi-country cellphone survey of citizen experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on their livelihoods and access to food: The Lab applied for and won $200,000 for this survey work.

II. Key Accomplishments[1]

- Mentored research (C1 in the MEL Plan): PRCI used a competitive process to engage 20 African researchers (Year 1 target = 10) in mentored research – 12 through its Core Center program with four centers and 10 through STAAARS+ with two researchers participating in both programs. Fifteen mentors and research partners from Michigan State University (MSU) (7), IFPRI (2), Cornell (5) and Syracuse University (1) were paired with these African researchers. PRCI complemented this mentored research with these training programs:
  - Core Center training program: 329 participants (205 male, 123 female), and 30 unique participants, from four African centers participated in nine online training modules. Three to six modules will be delivered during Year 2 for this cohort of researchers, before the next cohort is selected, begins work, and the technical training program is adapted for their needs.
  - STAAARS+ training program: Ninety-five participants (57 male, 38 female) and 18 unique participants (10 males, 8 female) from four African centers participated in six fully online training modules on multiple research and analytical topics
  - Special Topics training program: Forty-four unique participants from nine Asian centers participated in a set of three, 2-hour trainings around use of the global trade database BACI. In the final training session, participants presented initial proposals for their own research that would use the database and be responsive to local needs. Mentored research around the selected topics will begin early in Year 2
- Stakeholder Forums (C3): PRCI organized five learning forums / webinars (Year 1 target = 2) in which research findings or best practices were presented. See Annex B for a list of each forum, the presenter, and title of the presentation.
- Requests from national/regional/global organizations (C4): PRCI-affiliated researchers were called on 13 times (Year 1 target = 3) to provide information, analysis, data, or presentations on policy issues within PRCI's remit. See Annex C for a list of each request.
- CBLD-9: Though two organizations – one of the CPLs (CPEEL) and the ReNAPRI network – saw improvement in one of the eight component indicators of CBLD-9, PRCI is not claiming any "improved organizations' at this point, preferring to make a fuller assessment in Year 2 on completion of the full PICA process. The target for Year 1 was zero organizations.
- EG 3.1-d – Improved Institutional architecture for policy: This indicator was recently added and the details of its calculation will be finalized in November, 2020. PRCI will report on this indicator but will not establish targets, per agreement with AOR.
- EG 3.2-7 - Number of technologies, practices, and approaches under various phases of research, development, and uptake as a result of USG assistance: Eight potential policy areas entered into the research phase (Phase 1) under PRCI, four through its Core Center program .and four through STAAARS+. This is also a new indicator with no target for Year 1; Years 2-5 targets will be established in November.

III. Research Program Overview and Structure

PRCI's research program is organized around three related streams of work. All feature multi-institutional teams with mentoring at their core, focus on the Lab's three overarching research themes, and are designed to contribute to PRCI's objective of developing a locally grounded but globally relevant research program.

[1] See Annex A for list of indicators, definitions, baseline values, Year 1 target, and Year 1 actual.

Three related research programs

PRCI's first research program is the Core Center research program. This features competitive selection of research topics proposed by any center that is a member of ReNAPRI or a CPL or (in Years 2-5) an Asian center associated through PRCI with one of the two lead centers in Asia – KU in Thailand and RIS in India. During Year 1, the selection process unfolded between January, 2020, when calls for proposals were released, and March, when final selections were made. Because Asian centers were not yet fully integrated into PRCI by this time, Year 1 Core Center research program participants came only from Africa.

The second program - STAAARS+ - is based on Cornell University's successful STAARS (Structural Transformation in African Agricultural and Rural Spaces) program, with three modifications to make it consistent with PRCI's objectives and approach. First, competition for a STAAARS+ fellowship is open to Asia and Africa, while STAARS was focused only on Africa. Second, candidates for STAAARS+ fellowships must be associated with and have the support of a policy research center in their country, while STAARS is focused only on individual researchers without requiring any institutional affiliation. Third, institutions eligible for STAAARS+ were, during Year 1, based on a "ReNAPRI +" model that included all ReNAPRI centers, all three CPLs, and policy research centers in African countries where ReNAPRI was potentially interested in expanding. The limit of eligibility to African centers was due solely to the nascent stage of engagement of Asian centers at the time of the call for proposals (February, 2020); Asian centers associated through PRCI with the two lead Asian centers will be eligible during year 2. Like the Core Center research program, STAAARS+ fellows and their topics were chosen based on a competitive process.

Special Topics is PRCI's third research program. This program emerged shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a way to allow PRCI to respond to new and urgent analytical needs created by the pandemic and country response to it without disrupting the Core Center and STAAARS+ programs that had already been launched, with topics already proposed by the onset of the pandemic. This Special Topics program currently includes two streams of work. One is trade flow analysis based on the global BACI dataset[2]. As COVID-19 emerged and the possibility of major trade disruptions came to the fore, PRCI's Asia team identified the importance of introducing centers to the valuable BACI database and building research around it. Through the end of year 1, researchers from nine Asian centers were introduced to the database in two online training sessions. In the third sessions, some of the centers proposed research relevant to their center and country using the database. This research program will be fully developed during Year 2, with possible participation of African centers as well.

The second topic of research under the Special Topics program is a cross-country study of the impact of COVID-19 on citizen livelihoods and access to foods. As noted in section II, PRCI applied for and won $200,000 to carry out a two-round cellphone survey in six countries of Africa and Asia. During Year 1, the questionnaire was designed and pre-tested, and data collection began. Data will become available early in Year 2, and data analysis and report writing will be carried out in

[2] BACI is a global public good data base of trade covering more than 200 countries and 5,000 products, between 1994 and 2006. It is based on the well-known COMTRADE database but features reconciliation of bilateral export-import figures to ensure consistent data across all countries. See Gaulier, Guillaume and Zignago, Soledad (2009): BACI: International Trade Database at the Product-level. Published in: CEPII Working Paper No. 2010-23.

conjunction with PRCI partner centers. Emphasis will be on producing easily digestible policy research briefs and engaging with policy makers on their implications.

Overarching themes and topic identification

One objective of PRCI is to develop a locally grounded but globally relevant research strategy. To avoid each Center selecting issues that are very specific to their country context, with little connection to a research agenda focused on higher level issues, Centers in Africa were asked to identify a research topic that is relevant to one or more of the following themes:

- **Inclusive agricultural and rural transformation** to raise rural household incomes and to create decent jobs, particularly for young women and men;
- Development of **healthy food systems**, including addressing regulatory issues and engaging with the private sector, in ways that address food safety and the triple burden of malnutrition; and
- **Enhanced resilience** at individual, household, national, and regional levels (to climate and other sources of shocks) to achieve economic and environmental sustainability

All CPLs and ReNAPRI centers were eligible to submit proposals in these three areas, with the anticipation that the PRCI Executive Committee would choose four topics for inclusion in PRCI's Core Center Research Program. Center researchers from the winning topics would be paired with two senior researchers from MSU or IFPRI to serve as mentors and active research team participants.

The need to root proposed topics in these overarching themes was reinforced by the creation of a research proposal template that each Center was asked to follow in drafting their project ideas. In that template, the Centers had to articulate which of the above themes their project would help address. Since gender is a cross-cutting theme of PRCI, Center researchers also were asked to take this component into account in their identification of topics. Other considerations that researchers were asked to address included alignment with existing activities and priorities of their center, availability of data, ability to apply an appropriate methodology, and anticipated deliverables.

Initial Core Center research proposals were submitted in January 2020. Following review by the Executive Committee, four proposals were accepted – one each from the three CPLs, and a fourth from Sokoine University of Agriculture. Each of these four Centers then pursued iterative rounds of engagement with their research mentors to refine the topics and methods. In June 2020, each Center presented their final research topic to PRCI and STAAARS+ colleagues and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partners in the Global Lab Launch Webinar. Subsequently, mentors and Centers have held numerous meetings to ensure that the research stays on track, and deliverable dates for initial drafts and final papers have been communicated to the Center teams. The final topics selected for Year 1 and notes on progress are reviewed in Section 5.

To increase the probability of high-quality, technical analysis, Drs. Mason-Wardell and Liverpool-Tasie of MSU designed a Core Center technical training program focusing on cross-cutting topics such as gender analysis, data transparency, and ethics, and quantitative data analysis methods (see Section VI for more information on the Core Center training program, and section VII for more information on gender).

The STAAARS+ call for proposals was launched in early February. Four teams of two fellows each were selected in late April, following a first round of review of proposals by Cornell program leadership and its mentor pool and a second round of engagement with PRCI leadership and Executive Committee. This research program has been carefully integrated with a technical training program described in more detail in Section VI. Like the Core Center program, STAAARS+ has included frequent engagement between mentors and the Fellows against a defined set of benchmarks for completion of drafts and final versions of papers.

Specific topics to be addressed and papers and policy notes to be produced under the Special Topics research program will be defined early in Year 2. Progress in that direction during Year 1 is reviewed in Section V.

IV. Theory of Change and Impact Pathway(s)

As elaborated in the original PRCI proposal, the ultimate aim of this Innovation Lab is to "Influence global, regional, and national policy that advances food security through high quality research from credible policy research institutions." To achieve this aim, PRCI relies on the following theory of change, with a set of corresponding assumptions:

- **Building the organizational and research capacities of local and regional research institutes will lead those institutions to provide robust and credible evidence for decision-making.**
  - *Assumption 1:* The way we are going about strengthening capacities, including through regular technical training sessions, co-creation of research papers between center researchers and MSU/IFPRI/Cornell mentors, and the PICA process, are effectively changing the quality of research outputs.
- **In turn, policymakers will increasingly turn to these institutes for empirical research for food security policymaking.**
  - *Assumption 2:* There is adequate outreach by the institutes with policymakers to increase the Centers' visibility and reputation.
  - *Assumption 3:* There are few alternative sources of credible information about food security policy in the country/region
  - *Assumption 4:* Policymakers in the country/region are committed to evidence-based, rather than ideologically- or politically driven, policymaking.
- **Policymakers will then adopt policies that improve the food security for their populations**
  - *Assumption 5*: Policymakers are motivated by improving social welfare
  - *Assumption 6*: Policy recommendations for improving food security are economically, politically, institutionally, and socially feasible

Assessing this theory of change and the assumptions that undergird it will be an important component of PRCI's MEL agenda. In particular, some of the MEL indicators will be specific to the actions of the PRCI consortium and the CPLs (e.g. assumptions 1, 2, and 6). Others will need to be more directly focused on the policy system to contextualize the setting in which the CPLs are operating (e.g. assumptions 3 -5). For the latter, a comparative analysis can be conducted focused on

the agricultural and food policy systems in the countries in which the Centers are located. Metrics for characteristics of policy systems could be defined with regards to structural features such as, but not limited to, degree of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. These metrics can be tracked over the life of PRCI to identify whether providing rigorous research and building stronger research institutions has an influence on policy because of—or in spite of—the underlying policy system.

V. Research Project Report

This section identifies the specific research topics being pursued under each of PRCI's three research programs, the team members (including mentors), and progress to date.

Core Center Research Program

Four teams will produce 4-5 research papers under the Core Center research program, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Core Center Research Topics

Local Center	Research Topic		Team Members (including mentors)	Global research theme(s)
BAME	Contribution of horticulture value chains to healthy and sustainable food systems in Senegal	Analyzes: 1) consumption of fruits and vegetables by consumer income strata and urban city-type; 2) patterns and determinants of consumption; and 3) determinants of prices.	Center Researchers: Ndèye Fatou Faye Mané, Talla Fall, Mouhamed Rassoul Sy, Yacine Ngom, Mamadou Bobo Barry Mentors: Veronique Theriault (MSU), Tom Reardon (MSU), Danielle Resnick (IFPRI)	Inclusive agricultural transformation; Healthy food systems
		Examines the structure, conduct, and performance of midstream segments of the horticulture value chains, focusing on wholesalers and retailers.	Center Researchers: Mor Ngom, Yacine Ngom, Papa Abdoulaye Kane, Pape Bilal Diakhaté, Chérif Syaka Assembène Mané. Mentors: Veronique Theriault (MSU), Tom Reardon (MSU)	
		Investigates the marketed surplus and channel choice, combined with technology choice for chosen horticulture products, by strata of farmers.	Center Researchers: Amy Faye, Astou Diao Camara, Moussa Sall, Diatou Ndiaye, Mamadou Bobo Barry Mentors: Veronique Theriault (MSU), Tom Reardon (MSU)	
CPEEL	Energy poverty, food security and diet-related health outcome nexus		Center Researchers: O. Alaba, A. Adenikinju, T. Sesan. A. Adekoya, O. Adeniyi, I. Ogunbayoiyi, N. Oranye, O. Oyeranti, A. Faluyi S. Mentors: S. Liverpool-Tasie (MSU), N. Mason-Wardell (MSU)	Healthy food systems; Enhanced resilience
EPRC	Institutional arrangements in the sugarcane value chain for sustainable and inclusive rural transformation		Center Researchers: Swaibu Mbowa, Madina Guloba, Francis Mwesigye, Mildred Barungi and Florence Nakazi	Inclusive agricultural transformation

Local Center	Research Topic	Team Members (including mentors)	Global research theme(s)
		Mentors: Elizabeth Bryan (IFPRI), David Mather (IFPRI)	
SUA	Constraints to and opportunities for women's empowerment in the cashew value chain in Tanzania	Center Researchers: Zena Mpenda, Aika Aku, and Venance Mpunde, Mentors: Elizabeth Bryan (IFPRI), David Mather (IFPRI)	Inclusive agricultural transformation

Achievements: As capacity building is central to PRCI's objectives and mentoring is a central strategy used in this capacity building, the *process* by which the teams have engaged with their mentors is central to PRCI's success. All four teams have had regular zoom meetings (at least bi-weekly) with their mentors, some after initial delays (see below under challenges). These meetings have been used to provide customized input to each team based on their proposal and capacities, and to refine research questions, link them to gaps in the literature, and link methods more closely to those questions. This process of engagement led to all teams presenting refined research proposals during the PRCI Global Lab Launch Webinar held in June. Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and EPRC, the two teams undertaking primary data collection, have made progress designing their field work activities and stand nearly ready to go to the field when conditions permit. All teams using secondary data have made progress defining and generating variables, with descriptive and econometric analysis underway or soon to follow. At this point, all teams are ready to present initial results to the entire set of Core Center teams in January, 2021 and to revise the work and have a complete paper, ideally ready for submission to peer review, done by May.

Challenges and lessons learned: The key lesson learned across all Core Center teams is the need to set clear expectations and explicit benchmarks at the outset of the research process. In this regard, the Core Center program is learning from STAAARS+, which incorporated learnings over several years from the STAARS program on how best to support teams and keep them on task and on schedule. For example, the CPEEL team initially wanted to meet with Drs. Liverpool-Tasie and Mason-Wardell on an as-needed basis (as opposed to regularly scheduled standing meetings). There may also have been lack of clarity on the relationship that was intended between CPEEL team members and their mentors. Several weeks into the process, it became apparent that CPEEL was viewing Liverpool-Tasie/Mason-Wardell as "supervisors" or "reviewers" as opposed to peers, collaborators and co-authors, albeit in a mentoring role. These issues were discussed among the mentors and PRCI leadership, then with CPEEL leadership, leading to buy-in by the CPEEL team on a more team-oriented approach. The team moved to standing, bi-weekly meetings starting in late September. (Several meetings took place before that but on an ad hoc basis.)

Another lesson learned relates to more critically assessing whether a proposal is overly ambitious. This is especially the case for the two research topics – from SUA and EPRC – that require primary data collection. In one case (EPRC), it was not clear when the proposal was submitted whether primary data collection would be needed. In the other (SUA), it was clear that qualitative data would be needed, but this was considered feasible within the allotted timeframe. In each case, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the difficulty of conducting all the work in a one-year timeframe. As of this writing, SUA is planning to go to the field in November and complete its qualitative data collection in time potentially to meet benchmarks of presentation of results in January and completion of a paper by March, for submission in May. In the case of EPRC, COVID-19

combined with a looming election means that its quantitative data collection will not be possible until March. As a result, the team, with the support of PRCI leadership has decided to break the effort into two papers. The first will focus on institutional arrangements for production and marketing sugarcane in Uganda drawing on literature review, key informant interviews that can be done at the national level over the phone (given current COVID conditions and EPRC restrictions on field work at present), and engagement with farmers and other key stakeholders at the local level. Data collection will occur in March and contribute to a second paper potentially to be included in PRCI's second cohort of Core Center research topics.

One potential approach for PRCI in future years is to support only proposals that clearly show that existing secondary data is adequate to carry out the research or for whom any required primary data collection was already planned by the center and is at least partially supported by other funding,.

In Senegal, the lead author on the farm segment working paper will start a postdoctoral program at the University of Bonn in mid-November, though she indicates that she will continue to collaborate with the team to completion of the paper.

Presentations and publications: Presentations during year 1 were limited to those done internally among all Core Center teams and selected other PRCI participants during the Global Lab Launch Webinar. Public presentation of research results will take place in Year 2.

STAAARS+

Four STAAARS+ Fellow teams will produce four papers as outlined in Table 3.

.

Table 3. STAAARS+ Fellow teams research topics

Local Center	Research Topic	Team Members (including mentors)	Global research theme(s)
BAME	Domestic or imported rice: An empirical analysis of consumer choices in Senegal	Center researchers: Amy Faye, Ndeye Fatou Faye, Mouhamed Rassoul Sy Mentors: John McPeak (Syracuse University), Seungmin Lee (Cornell)	Inclusive agricultural transformation
EPRC	Resilience to climate shocks and its implications for food security: Evidence from Uganda	Center researchers: Nathan Sunday, Rehema Kahunde, Blessing Atwine Mentors: Adesoji Adelaja (MSU), Justin Kappiaruparampil (MSU)	Resilience; inclusive agricultural transformation
Bahir Dar University IDRM	Climate shocks and resilience in rural Ethiopia	Center researchers: Birhan Demissie, Tesfahun Kasie Mentors: Joanna Upton (Cornell), Sylvia Blom (Cornell)	Resilience; inclusive agricultural transformation
African School of Economics	Dynamics of agricultural heterogeneity, productivity and technical efficiency in sub-Saharan Africa: A geometric approach	Center researchers: Karim Nchare, Marcel Vitouley Mentors: Yanyan Liu (Cornell/IFPRI), Heidi Kaila (Cornell)	Inclusive agricultural transformation

Achievements: During Year 1 of PRCI, STAAARS+ teams have built relationships with their mentor team and STAAARS+ leadership around their research as they honed their topics, clarified

ideas and set to work carrying out the research. STAAARS+ leadership worked closely with each team to assess their individual strengths and constraints at the outset, account for COVID-19 related work disruptions, and adjust capacity development activities and research timelines to suit the cohort's needs. Each team's accomplishments are viewed in light of their individual situation, as well as challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. With one exception, all teams have met expectations of the STAAARS+ research activities in Year 1, though some have done so with more apparent ease. Significant research milestones included delivering a detailed paper outline; presenting their work to peers, mentors and STAAARS+ leadership in July 2020; and developing a detailed and realistic work plan that contained specific tasks, a clear division of labor and timeline to completion of the project; and giving a second presentation in September 2020. Additional milestones including further presentations and delivery of draft papers will occur in Year 2. The EPRC team was not able to present their work in September 2020 and their mentors are working with the STAAARS+ leadership team to assess their performance and underlying challenges and respond appropriately.

Challenges and lessons learned: The COVID-19 pandemic drove a complete re-design of the launch and training activities, a majority of which were intended to be held during two intensive in-person engagements. Presentations and work planning activities that were intended to be in person were held remotely. To adapt in-person feedback and iteration on ideas and work plans to an online format, we re-designed the activities to include a mix of synchronous and asynchronous online meetings and follow-up activities. While creation of the new design was labor intensive, each team was able to give and receive substantive feedback on the four research topics as well as develop a detailed and realistic work plan.

An outcome of the lack of in-person launch activities was difficulty building strong relationships between host institutions and STAAARS+ leadership and mentors. Originally, we had planned for the mentors and STAAARS+ leadership to travel to the host institutions for orientation and work planning activities. We substituted the institutional orientation with a meeting attended by host institution leadership, PRCI Director, STAAARS+ leadership, fellows and mentors. During this meeting we answered questions and outlined expectations of the program to ensure that all parties understood and shared objectives. In the future we hope to reinstate early in-person engagement with the institutional leadership in order to deepen relationships, build rapport, and facilitate lines of communication between STAAARS+ leadership and the institutions that teams operate from, particularly for institutions that are new to engagement with PRCI and/or STAAARS+.

The EPRC team faces multiple constraints related to the events of 2020. Specifically, the team faces difficult working conditions under COVID-19, significant time constraints and competing priorities, poor internet connectivity and computing hardware, and limited prior training in key research skills. They have made less progress than other teams despite receiving more intensive mentorship and additional support from STAAARS+ leadership. We will continue to work within the scope of the program to support this team in moving their research forward during Year 2.

The Bahir Dar University Institute for Disaster Risk Management team also faced challenges. Political instability led to a country-wide internet shutdown in June 2020 and the team was not able to communicate with STAAARS+ leadership or their mentors for several critical weeks of STAAARS+ launch activities, which proceeded without them. The team moved the project forward during this time based on initial meetings they had with their mentors and were able to catch-up and re-engage. The archive of virtual program materials allowed this team to view recordings of sessions they had missed and complete the assigned work from each session. They are currently completely caught up and meeting all expectations.

A key lesson from the most turbulent months of this year is that constant communication between STAAARS+ leadership and the teams and mentors is crucial to allow us to flexibly adapt to the needs of teams under a variety of conditions as they evolve. Communication modes and channels were adapted to individual teams' needs and included email, zoom and WhatsApp messages, calls and videos.

Presentations and publications: Presentations during year 1 were limited to those done internally among all STAAARS+ teams. Public presentation of research results will take place in Year 2.

Special Topics

Both special topics are set to enter their research phase early in Year 2. The COVID-19 cross-country cellphone survey questionnaire was designed, pre-tested, and programmed and survey firm GeoPoll was contracted to carry it out. Data collection began in October 2020. Research topics around the trade flow analysis training, using the BACI database, will be collaboratively identified with selected Asian centers during the first quarter of Year 2.

VI. Human & Institutional Capacity Development

All elements of PRCI's human and institutional capacity development (HICD) program are focused on helping participating research centers generate better quality research that feeds more directly into policy thinking and policy and program design. The *Policy Impact Capacity Advancement (PICA)* approach originally outlined in the PRCI proposal was carried out as planned, though somewhat delayed and with major adjustments due to COVID-19. Beyond PICA, the Lab added two major new elements to its HICD portfolio, in response both to our evolving understanding of partner needs and to the impacts of COVID-19: (1) an ambitious technical training program, and (2) assistance to the ReNAPRI network in its strategic planning exercise. We first describe the institutional capacity strengthening component (PICA and ReNAPRI strategic planning) then turn to the technical training component. We close this chapter with the webinar series that PRCI launched during Year 1

Institutional Capacity Strengthening

ReNAPRI Strategic Planning

Background: A key aspect of PRCI support to ReNAPRI was the creation and financial support of its secretariat. This secretariat was formed in 2019 following the recruitment and contracting of two highly qualified staff members. As demand for ReNAPRI's services in the African continent has increased over time, the network planned one of its first activities to be the development of a strategic plan to provide better coordination and coherence in its future pan-African operations. These strategic planning activities were initially planned to take place in-person in Lilongwe, Malawi from 13-14 March 2020, in collaboration with the PICA processes to be implemented under PRCI. However, as the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, this in-person engagement had to be cancelled at the last minute, even after some ReNAPRI members had travelled to Lilongwe for the workshop. Faced with the prospect of either conducting the exercise fully online or waiting an unknown period of time, ReNAPRI leadership requested assistance from

PRCI's institutional capacity development team (Dr. John Medendorp and Ms. Cait Goddard) in moving the effort to an online platform. Together with the ReNAPRI Secretariat, PRCI developed and later launched the virtual strategic planning modules in April 2020.

Structure: Online and offline activities were held over three and a half months with participation from all 10 ReNAPRI members[3] including Board Members and Research Directors. The live sessions were conducted using Zoom. This process included plenary discussions and group work via breakout rooms. Network members discussed a number of issues including a review of the vision, mission, and objectives of ReNAPRI; an analysis of the internal and external environment as well as existing partnerships and key stakeholders; and ReNAPRI's internal and external communication strategy.

The program was organized as follows:

1. Offline official launch of the strategic planning processes with videos from some ReNAPRI Board Members and the Secretariat.
2. A historical view of ReNAPRI involving a game organized through an online tool called Kahoot.
3. **Live Online Session 1** looked at ReNAPRI's definition of an ideal state for agriculture and food policy research in Africa. This session requested participants to describe the future that they envisioned for agriculture and food policy research in Africa. The groups synthesized their contributions into one statement to inform the vision and mission of ReNAPRI and propose key roles and strategic themes for the network.
4. **Live Online Session 2** focused on understanding the policy system and strategic priorities by region. This session introduced the kaleidoscope model in the context of the policy system and interrogated ReNAPRI's location within the various segments: agenda setting, research design, policy adoption, implementation, and evaluation and reform. Outcomes of session 1 and 2 were blended to enable the participants to establish how ReNAPRI's strategic themes align with ReNAPRI's potential strategic focus for the regions and continent.
5. **Live Online Session 3** involved an analysis of ReNAPRI's internal and external environments (its strengths, opportunities, and challenges) and how the strengths and opportunities could potentially be utilized to overcome the challenges. This session an analysis of strategic partners and resource mobilization, with outputs including identification of key strategic partners by region; top 3 public, private, and donor stakeholders by region; and a plan for engaging strategic partners.
6. **Live Online Session 4** focused on developing a process to address the barriers to effective internal coordination and inform modalities for better communication within the network.
7. **Live Online Session 5** was collated and organized information received during the live online strategic planning sessions held from 28th May 2020 to 18th June 2020, while also referring to other related ReNAPRI information in order to review ReNAPRI's initial vision and mission statements and establish 5- year Strategic Goals/Objectives for the network.
8. **Live Online Session 6** presented the outcomes of all sessions to the network for their endorsement before the drafting of the strategic plan.

[3] Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), South Africa; Center for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi; Indaba Agriculture Policy Research Institute (IAPRI), Zambia; Institute of Social and Economic Research (IRES) at University of Kinshasa, DRC; Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana; Makerere University, Uganda; Research Center for Agricultural and Food Policies and Programmes (CEPPAG) at Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique; School of Agricultural Economics and Business Studies (SAEBS) at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania; Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development at Egerton University, Kenya; University of Zimbabwe (UZ), Zimbabwe; and the ReNAPRI Secretariat.

Achievements: The outstanding achievement is that ReNAPRI was able to carry out a highly interactive strategic planning exercise entirely online, with a resulting plan that enjoys a high level of buy-in from members. Members provided rich and insightful inputs to their 5-Year Strategic objectives which have informed how the network will influence policy. The plan also identified 5 key Pillars or Intervention Areas that will shape the network's annual work plans over the next 5 years, while directing its existing and future partnerships, pan-African objectives, and the network's resources mobilization endeavors.

Challenges, lessons learned, and brief plans for year 2: Moving what needs to be a highly interactive process to a fully online platform with participants that have varied connectivity and online experience was not without challenges. First, though participation overall was very strong, some participants did not attend certain sessions due to other important engagements. Second, we realized that the break-out sessions were too short for a process that required more time. A lot had to be covered in a short space of time, putting at risk the ability to collect critical information. However, our experience thus far has demonstrated that virtual breakout rooms work very well for certain trainings compared to others.

With these challenges in mind, plans over the next two years are as follows. First, the plan will be reviewed by ReNAPRI leadership, finalized, and officially launched at the annual ReNAPRI conference on the 18th of November 2020. Second, the plan will be project-managed via Smartsheets with a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) component. Third, the plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is meeting the vision, mission and objectives set by the network. Finally, the plan will be used for partnership building and resources mobilization.

PICA Process

Stages of the process: Last November, leadership of each of the CPLs and PRCI team members met in Kampala, Uganda to present their organizational goals and capacity needs at the Lab's Internal Lab Launch Consultation (ILLC), where PICA was first presented to the organizations. Originally, PICA was designed as a weeklong, intensive session resulting in a collaboratively built organizational strategic action plan, followed by quarterly reviews to support adaptations and updates to the plan. However, with the abrupt halt to travel due to COVID-19, PICA was redesigned to allow its key components to be delivered to the Centers over six weeks via Zoom. Each day of the weeklong process became a 2-3-hour session, ending with a presentation of the capacity development plan to the full Center and PRCI team members.

PICA uses the Kaleidoscope Model of Policy Change developed by PRCI team members from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Michigan State University (MSU) as a foundational tool when considering where and how to influence the national agricultural policy system. The Kaleidoscope Model, "offers a practical framework through which practitioners and researchers can assess when and where investments in policy reforms are most feasible given a country's underlying political, economic, and institutional characteristics."

The online version of PICA begins with Center administrative and technical staff completing one survey each which aligned with one of the five stages of the Kaleidoscope Model: Agenda Setting, Design, Adoption, Implementation, and Evaluation and Reform. Based on their responses, a map is built of the agriculture policy system within the country highlighting key stakeholders, critical linkages - both effective and missing - and the Center's current influence within the system. Sessions

two and three focus on the Center's technical and administrative leaders, respectively. These sessions look internally at the Center's technical and organizational gaps and begin to prioritize Center needs. In sessions four and five, focus moves from prioritization to action: together, representative administrative and technical leads develop a specific, time-bound capacity development plan, prioritizing organizational and technical needs that most effectively tackle bottlenecks preventing the Center from reaching their strategic objectives.

PICA's final session is a presentation of the action plan to the full Center and PRCI team members (research leads, gender specialists, etc.) where feedback and additional comments are encouraged. Presenting the plan to the full Center offers an opportunity to validate the input many others have provided to get to this final session. Center colleagues will need to see the ultimate objectives of their Center's organizational strengthening work and also how each person ssee his/herself playing a participatory role. PRCI capacity development specialists will continue to meet at least monthly with Centers (compared to the quarterly meetings that were originally conceived) once their action plan has been developed to support revisions and adaptations due to internal or external factors.

CPEEL is the first center to complete the full PICA process and is currently revising their action plan prior to investing funding in their initial workshops and Center infrastructural improvements. EPRC will begin workshops at the end of October with ISRA-BAME following shortly after.

Achievements: Moving such an interactive process 100% online was a major undertaking. We consider simply reconceiving the approach, fully implementing it with one center, then adapting the follow-up from anticipated quarterly meetings to at least monthly, to be a major achievement. This can be primarily credited to the Centers and their openness to move from an in-person, intensive weeklong process to one that takes several weeks and significant coordination. A second important achievement is that ReNAPRI played an observational role in the first PICA process with CPEEL and will play a larger and more facilitative role in the process with other Centers, ultimately taking ownership of PICA and operationalizing it within their own network.

Challenges and lessons learned: We are optimistic for the future of each Center and their ability to address institutional barriers. At the same time, there were significant challenges. These are operational, including the redesign and delivery of material initially created for an in-person experience, and logistical, such as scheduling, multiple time zones, login locations, etc. We have learned that PICA can be done successfully online, but that such an approach requires more intensive engagement once the formal process is over to be sure the plans can be adjusted as needed and implemented. PRCI's institutional development team will continually seek feedback from other PRCI and Center colleagues and incorporate this into 2nd year activities supporting the ongoing progress of action plans. Additionally, we plan to work closely with ReNAPRI as they consider how best to incorporate and adapt PICA to fit the needs of their network.

Technical Capacity Strengthening

PRCI's technical capacity strengthening was built around its three research streams: Core Center, STAAARS+, and Special Topics. We review progress of each during Year 1 in order.

Core Center Technical Training

Table 4 provides summary information on the nine (out of 12 planned through 12/31/20) Core

Center training modules carried out during the Lab's first year. Three-hundred and twenty-nine total participants (205 male, 123 female), and 30 unique participants, from four African centers participated these fully online training modules. The participating African centers were those whose research topics were selected for the Core Center research programs: the three CPLs and SUA.

Table 4. PRCI Core Center Short-Term Trainings Held, Year 1

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained[4]	Number Trained (accessing materials ahead of time)		
					M	F	Total
Integrating Gender in Policy Research & Outreach	06/09/20	Virtual / Synchro-nous	To share plans for integrating gender into PRCI research activities, reflect on potential for further gender integration based on learning from the webinar or other interactions, elaborate on gender-focused research areas including research topics, methods, and data collection strategies, and identify needs for further capacity strengthening for integrating gender in center's research	Researchers	18	18	36
Stata Basics-Working with Complex Data & descriptive Statistics	06/19/20	Online / asynchro-nous	To familiarize users with: Working with complex survey data in Stata; How to create basic tables, graphs, and descriptive statistics in Stata	Researchers	11	6	17
Overview of Human Research Protection" and "Ethics and Regulations in Human Research	07/07/20	Online / asynchro-nous	To familiarize participants with: MSU's Human Research Protection Program and associated requirements; Important ethical and regulatory issues that must be taken into consideration when conducting research with human subjects.	Researchers	13	8	21
Avoiding Unintentiona l Plagiarism	07/29/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To revisit what constitutes plagiarism, discuss common pitfalls, and discuss effective strategies for avoiding unintentional plagiarism	Researchers	31	20	51
Reproducible & Transparent Research	07/15/20	Virtual / Synchro-nous	To understand how the scientific method should guide core center researchers on the research process on every level, understand the difference between exploratory and confirmatory research, identify and	Researchers	23	15	39

[4] Such as farmers, government officials, women entrepreneurs

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained[4]	Number Trained (accessing materials ahead of time)		
					M	F	Total
			recognize common research failures, understand what transparent and reproducible research processes look like in practice, reflect on and identify personal and institutional barriers to implementing transparent and reproducible research processes, and access practical tools to implement transparent and reproducible research processes				
Ordinary Least Squares Regression	08/13/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To provide a review on the most commonly used linear regression approach, ordinary least squares (OLS)	Researchers	23 (2)	15 (7)	38 (9)
Binary Response Models	08/27/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To provide an overview on binary response models its challenges, and alternatives to the LPM including the Linear Probability Model (LPM), Probit & Logit models.	Researchers	27 (7)	10 (8)	37 (15)
Impact Evaluation	08/31/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To provide an overview of concepts, challenges and methods of impact evaluation and some practical considerations in doing impact evaluation.	Researchers	27 (7)	15 (6)	42 (13)
Testing and Correcting for Endogeneity in Linear Models	09/21/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To provide an overview of the endogeneity problem in linear models, and ways of identifying and correcting for endogeneity.	Researchers	16 (3)	9 (3)	25 (6)
Panel Data Methods	10/12/20	Online / asynchro-nous and Virtual / synchro-nous	To provide an overview of linear panel data models as well as testing and correcting for attrition bias	Researchers	16 (0)	7 (2)	23 (2)

Purpose, design and achievements*:* In Africa, the technical training activities offered during the reporting period targeted the three PRCI Core Centers for Policy Leadership (CPLs)[5] and SUA. This is in line with the PRCI objective to enhance the policy influence of PRCI-affiliated policy research

[5] These centers are BAME (Senegal), CPEEL (Nigeria) and EPRC (Uganda).

centers and networks using a trainer of trainers (ToT) approach[6]. The technical trainings were designed to support these centers in conducting the approved topics of their research teams.

The technical training team started with a needs assessment of the research centers. The needs assessment and status of each center's on-going research has been the basis for the technical trainings offered. During the reporting period, PRCI created nine training modules covering various topics from research ethics to applied econometrics, and incorporating gender in research and policy activities. Materials from each module can be downloaded via the PRCI website.

The outstanding achievement of this effort was creating a highly ambitious technical training program 100% online, with all training materials (including videos, powerpoints, and other) available online ahead of each synchronous session, and edited recordings of each session available online within days of completion. Though with some challenges, overall participation was strong and contributed directly to the quality of research being undertaken by each team.

Challenges and lessons learned: The key challenges faced during the reporting period (and lessons learned/adjustments made) can be summarized under three categories (a) internet connectivity, (b) participant preparation and engagement for training sessions, and (3) use of break out rooms. Poor internet connectivity for training participants has been a challenge with participants falling off Zoom calls and or not being able to hear the facilitators or other trainees or to be heard when they speak. This is despite PRCI providing funds for all four centers to invest in modems to ensure mobile connectivity and zoom subscriptions with up to three hosts, to ensure flexibility in establishing zoom meetings. Participants have been encouraged to be in a location with good connectivity. To deal with these connectivity problems, PRCI records each Zoom meeting and makes this available after the training. It also makes the training materials available asynchronously ahead of Zoom meetings to allow participants to prepare.

A second challenge has been limited review of the asynchronous material ahead of time by participants, particularly for the econometrics sessions. This significantly affected participation during the synchronous sessions. To address this, the technical training sessions have moved from briefly reviewing key concepts and then having small group discussions in breakout rooms to a strategy of covering more of the core material during the synchronous sessions. The team hopes that this will ensure that the key concepts for each training are communicated, but we continue to stress the value of the asynchronous material and encourage participants to consult those materials before and after each session.

A final challenge has related to the use of break out rooms. While these out rooms proved useful for participant engagement and learning in particular sessions (e.g., the sessions on plagiarism and on incorporating gender into research and policy), they did not work well for the econometric training sessions and were discontinued.

Following each training, the training team conducts a debrief, which is then combined with feedback from post-training evaluations completed by training participants to adjust our approach and improve subsequent trainings. The team plans to continue modifying training sessions based on feedback and reflection.

[6] The TOT approach starts off with a deep focus on the core centers with the aim of supporting their core research capacity but also supporting their ability to train others in the future.

To facilitate learning and sharing across platforms, the technical training team invited staff from the RENAPRI and PRCI Asia centers to all training sessions. The training leads also met with the RENAPRI leadership to discuss making training materials useful to RENAPRI centers. Following the discussion, the training team has offered to make available all training material for centers in Asia and RENAPRI to adapt for their use. The PRCI technical training team collaborated with STAAARS+ to offer one training on reproducible and transparent research and was in close contact with the STAAARS+ leadership to share insights on best practices for virtual trainings.

Going forward, Core Center researchers will be encouraged to take advantage of the online special topics training materials developed by the PRCI/Asia leads. We will also work with the leads of each CPL to further implement the ToT model – i.e., plans for CPL researchers that participated in the Core Center training to facilitate similar trainings for (i) others at their institution that did not directly participate in the PRCI Core Center trainings; and (ii) researchers at other institutions in their country/region. We will also continue to work with the ReNAPRI and PRCI/Asia leadership to facilitate their use of the Core Center training materials that have been developed. Trainings for the current set of Core Center researchers will continue through Spring 2021 with a focus on mixed methods, publishing a journal article, navigating the peer review process, and giving effective research presentations. We will also work closely with R2P lead Danielle Resnick and PICA leads John Medendorp and Cait Goddard to ensure that capacity building activities related to effective policy outreach strategies and grant proposal development are implemented.

STAAARS+ short-term training

Like the PICA process and Core Center technical training efforts, Lab staff (in this case from Cornell University) made a major effort to turn what had been a fully in-person set of trainings into a 100% online approach. Table 5 provides summary information on the six training modules carried out under STAAARS+ during the Lab's first year. Ninety-five total participants (57 male, 38 female) and 18 unique participants (10 males, 8 female) from the four African STAAARS+ centers participated in these fully online training modules.

Table 5. STAAARS+ Trainings Held

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained	Number Trained		
					M	F	Total
Work planning	7/7/20	Virtual	Outline principles of effective and realistic work planning and put them into practice on their own projects	STAAARS+ Fellows and mentors	10	8	18
Transparent and reproducible research	7/10/20	Virtual	Expose fellows and mentors to principles, tradeoffs, challenges and practical skills for transparency and reproducibility in their research process	STAARS/STAAARS+ Fellows and mentors	10	7	17
Transparent and reproducible research	7/15/20	Virtual	Expose Core Center Researchers to principles, tradeoffs, challenges and practical skills for	Core Center Researchers	20	10	30

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained	Number Trained		
					M	F	Total
			transparency and reproducibility in their research process				
Data management	1:1 sessions on various dates June - July 2020	Virtual	Outline key data management practices and how to access Cornell resources to support good data management	STAAARS+ Fellows	6	4	10
Making the most of your time	8/21/20	Virtual	Identify common barriers and learn new ways of thinking about productivity and expose fellows to practical tools.	STAARS/STAAARS+ Fellows and mentors	4	4	8
Writing structure	9/1/20	Virtual	Learn about underlying structure of a good research paper and apply those principles to their introductions	STAARS/STAAARS+ Fellows and mentors	7	5	12

*The numbers reported above count the number of people at each training. Many attended multiple meetings. The number of unique people attending these trainings was 18 people (10 men and 8 women).

.

Purpose, design and achievements: The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant programmatic challenges that gave way to positive innovation and growth in the design of the STAAARS+ training program. The original program contained major in-person elements which required translation to virtual formats, involving a big redesign effort. This redesign was aided by idea-sharing and collaboration across PRCI elements (e.g. Institutional Capacity Strengthening teams and Core Center Research Capacity Strengthening teams).

STAAARS+ individual capacity strengthening activities are broken into three blocks: (1) Launch; (2) Technical trainings; and (3) Seminars. Launch activities were all held virtually, with initial activities focusing on orienting mentors and fellows and the fellows' institutions to the structure and expectations of the program. Teams introduced themselves to each other's work through a short presentation and structured feedback discussion, during which the teams received and documented substantive feedback on their research from other fellows, mentors and the STAAARS+ leadership team. Fellows also practiced giving constructive, substantive feedback on others' work during this time. The launch activities included a panel discussion facilitated by past STAARS fellows to orient them to the program from the fellows' perspective, provide advice and insights, and build relationships between the past STAARS fellows and the new STAAARS+ fellows.

Further technical trainings are planned during Year 2. Seminars began at the end of Year 1 and will continue into Year 2.

Challenges and Lessons Learned: One notable drawback to the entirely virtual format was the limits it places on our ability to build rapport and deepen engagement with the teams' home institutions. We were able to hold a virtual discussion with leadership from each institution, but ideally we will revert to the original planned in-person visit by mentors and STAAARS+ leadership

to the host institution for future cohorts as they launch in Years 3 and 4, particularly if they are new to PRCI.

STAAARS+ training activities in Year 2 will include an Intensive Feedback Seminar in which the fellows provide and receive feedback on each other's work, with participation by mentors and invited guests; training on Navigating Peer Review and Grantsmanship. Year 3 will be rich in training activities for the newly selected second and third cohort as much of the training takes place in the first 6 months of each cohort's 18-month program period. These cohorts will include teams from Asia. While we do not anticipate dramatic adjustments to the training materials or timelines due to the addition of the Asia teams, we will assess each cohort's needs and adapt accordingly.

To ensure convergence across STAAARS+, Core Centers and special topics trainings, the STAAARS+ team plans to share materials from existing online trainings for Core Centers and other PRCI affiliates to adapt to their needs, possibly with the assistance of interested STAAARS+ fellows as co-developers or co-facilitators. STAAARS+ fellows will also be invited to join Core Center technical trainings on topics that are relevant to their work or interests over the life of the PRCI project. Finally, we will integrate the planned R2P activities into the STAAARS+ training program for the first cohort in early 2021, with planning for full integration of these activities into the second cohort launch workshops early in Year 3. These activities, led by Danielle Resnick, will align with those implemented with the Core Centers in late 2020.

Special Topics Short-term Training

The Special Topics training series was PRCI's adaptation to the need to integrate Asian centers into the Lab's research and training in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and a later start for Asia compared to Africa. As noted earlier, PRCI initially focused its efforts on launching its activities in Africa given that ReNAPRI was a core consortium member and had been involved in the design of the program from the proposal stage, resulting in a clear course of action in Africa that could be started as soon as the award was in place. As PRCI leadership moved ahead in Africa, it also identified an Asia lead (Suresh Babu of IFPRI, working with Xinshen Diao) and began working together to identify partners and put together the program in Asia. With regional leads KU and RIS chosen by March, other collaborating centers began to be identified in subsequent months. Table 6 provides summary information on the three Special Topics training modules carried out during the Lab's first year. Forty-four unique participants from nine Asian countries participated in three 2-hour sessions.

Table 6. Special Topics Trainings Held

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained	Number Trained		
					M	F	Total
Trade Flow Analysis Part I	9/14	All trainings involved synchronous and asynchronous elements and were done fully online. They	This training module provided a basic knowledge of trade flow analysis and the ability to use trade flow data for trade flow analysis.	Agricultural economic researchers in India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea,	NA	NA	44 (Total unique participants in all three training sessions)
Trade Flow Analysis Part II	9/20		This training module introduced the "des bases de données de commerce"				

Topic of training	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained	Number Trained		
					M	F	Total
		were coordinate out of the US (PRCI Asia leads) and Bangkok (KU)	BACI dataset and provided an example of how to use the BACI dataset for trade flow analysis.	Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, and Nepal			
Trade Flow Analysis Part III	9/27		This training module provided practical insight and feedback to participants' assignments on using BACI dataset for their country trade flow analysis.				

Purpose and structure: Trade flow among countries determines the economic benefits countries gain from trade. For many Asian developing countries, agricultural and food trade is an important engine for agricultural growth. The global COVID-19 pandemic and responses from different countries to contain the outbreak can have profound implications for trade in Asia. With concern about trade disruptions emerging in response to the pandemic, PRCI's Asia leads conceived the trade flow analysis as a way to get Asian centers up to speed on a valuable global database and use it to inform policy making at this time.

Kasetsart University played a major logistical and substantive role in the training, working closely with PRCI's Asia leads. This is consistent with PRCI's objective of training trainers to carry on project activities over time. The training was organized into three 2-hour modules held on September 14, 21, and 28. The first module involved introduction to trade flow analysis and group exercises and discussions. Module 2 introduced participants to the database and included exercises working with it. After the second module, teams were to choose a potential research topic relevant to their country and of priority for the center and use the BACI data to present basic analysis around their proposal during Module 3. The intention in year 2 is to select several of these proposal for further development and integration into PRCI's research program

Challenges and lessons learned: To prepare for the training and maximize the benefits from the online training workshop, participants were expected to read the workshop materials and get familiar with the shared trade datasets in advance of each training. The number of participants was restricted to three from each country in the PRCI consortium so that appropriate support in online training could be guaranteed.

Response from participants was very positive, with most reviewing materials ahead of time and being prepared for the synchronous sessions. Feedback surveys were done after the first two workshops with positive responses dominating. The country participants feel that the datasets and approaches introduced during the workshops are highly relevant to their policy analysis and easy to be used. Some of them have already started to use the dataset and the approaches introduced to them for their own analysis, which are shown both by high submission of assignments for Module 3 and presentation during that module. There is a strong case for diving deeper into this topic through more rounds of technical training or backstop Q&As. Additionally, there is potential for future collaborations with a team from each of the countries on these issues.

In keeping with the desire to ensure learning and productive borrowing across all PRCI platforms, ReNAPRI's research lead participated in two of the modules and is now keen to provide similar training within the network and to identify opportunities for joint work across Asian and African centers.

Webinars

PRCI launched a webinar series (Table 7) to extend its capacity building reach beyond participating centers to the broader development community. Since February, PRCI has presented six webinars with a total of 524 participants across the US, Africa, and Asia. The third webinar, on June 23, was the PRCI Global Lab Launch webinar in which Core Center researchers presented their research plans to an audience of colleagues, STAAARS+ fellows, other researchers at MSU, IFPRI, and Cornell, and USAID. The last two webinars, held in September, were organized by TDRI with assistance from the PRCI communications specialist, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand. Webinars will become an increasingly important means of dissemination of PRCI research results as analysis of the cross-country COVID data takes place and research teams begin to produce papers under the Core Center, STAAARS+, and Special Topics research programs. See Annex E for more details on each webinar. (*See webinar table on next page).*

VII. Cross Cutting

PRCI's cross-cutting activities include integration of gender into all program activities, and a R2P program launched late in Year 1.

Gender

Activities: PRCI's gender team integrated gender into the program in five ways. First, the team organized two specialized trainings designed to support greater gender integration in research conducted under PRCI. The first was a webinar in February that provided basic training on the motivation, tools, and data sources to conduct gender research. This webinar was open to the public and the event announcement was share widely via the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM). The recording of the webinar remains online.

A second webinar was held to discuss phone surveys as a tool for conducting research during the global Covid-19 pandemic. Though not focused solely on gender, Ruth Meinzen-Dick discussed the importance of including women and men in phone surveys to understand the gendered impacts of Covid-19 despite gender-related (and other) biases that phone surveys may introduce. The recording of the webinar is available online.

Table 7. PRCI Year 1 Webinars

Topic of webinar	PRCI staff presenting	Date of training	Country of Training	Brief Purpose of Training	Who was Trained	Number Trained		
						M	F	Total
COVID-19 Impact on Thailand's Economy and Agriculture	Nipon Poapongsakorn Urairat Jantarasiri	September 30, 2020	Thailand	Researchers from the Thailand Development Research Institute discussed the impact of Thailand's efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19 and to provide economic relief.	It was an open invitation but was mostly attended by agricultural economic researchers in Asia	NA	NA	37
COVID-19 Policy Analysis and Responses in Thailand		September 17, 2020	Thailand	Researchers from the Thailand Development Research Institute discussed the measures used by the Thai government to successful prevent the spread of COVID-19		NA	NA	38
PRCI Global Lab Launch Webinar	David Tschirley Danielle Resnick	June 23, 2020	USA, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Ghana	To inform USAID partners and other members of the PRCI consortium about the research projects of each of the Centers for Policy Learning (CPLs)	Researchers from the PRCI Core Center Research Institutes and members of the STAAARS+ Fellowship Program, along with program mentors	NA	NA	62
Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research in the Time of Covid-19 Lockdowns and Beyond	Mywish Maredia Ruth Meinzen-Dick	May 28, 2020	Global in scope	To discuss and provide an overview of the best practices for conducting mobile phone survey research	It was an open invitation; but researchers and development practitioners from the following types of organizations would have joined: government, universities, research institutes, donor and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	NA	NA	306
Integrating Gender in Policy Research and Outreach	Ruth Meinzen-Dick Elizabeth Bryan	February 6, 2020	Global in scope	This webinar discussed key gender issues and entry points for policy research and outreach h		NA	NA	81

Second, the gender team reviewed the CPL candidate center proposals and Core Center research proposals, with special attention to gender. The proposal templates for CPLs and for the specific research activities were designed to include a section on how the proposed research would integrate gender. As a result, the selection of core center partners included criteria related to gender. Moreover, research proposals were reviewed by the gender team for the strength of gender integration into their research. As a result of this process, two proposals with strong focus on issues related to gender and inclusion were selected.

Third, the gender team mentored two of the research projects. One member of the gender team was assigned to support two core center research projects that had strong interest in issues related to gender and inclusion. These projects focus on women's empowerment along agricultural value chains: sugarcane in Uganda (EPRC) and cashew in Tanzania (SUA). Both projects will build on the research done using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index for Value Chains (WEAI4VC) as a starting point to explore opportunities and constraints along each node of the value chain. EPRC will focus more on institutional arrangements and the implications for women's meaningful participation, the degree to which they benefit, and the extent to which these value chains provide a pathway for women's empowerment. Similarly SUA will explore opportunities for women's empowerment in the cashew value chain, focused on an intervention to support women engaged in small-scale processing activities.

The fourth area of engagement by the gender team was their participation in the PICA process. In preparation for the Core Center technical capacity building workshops, the team participated in planning meetings and designed a gender audit that was integrated into the needs assessment led by the technical capacity building team. The results showed varying levels of research and organizational capacity on gender across the selected centers. The results of the gender audit are available in power point slide decks presented to the centers during their PICA workshops.

Gender team members agreed to participate actively in sessions designed to identify research and organizational capacity needs, and to develop plans for filling identified capacity gaps. The first series of virtual workshops was carried out with CPEEL in Nigeria, where gender audit results were presented and participants were encouraged to consider research and organizational capacity needs related to gender based on their own responses to the audit. A similar approach will be followed with the remaining two centers.

Finally, a gender community of practice has been set up in Slack where the gender team has begun to post announcements about events, funding opportunities, and other gender resources. We hope to expand this community of practice over the coming years of the project to promote more cross-center dialogue, sharing and engagement on gender research activities, methods, and findings. ReNAPRI in particular has responded appreciatively to this.

Achievements: The two main achievements of PRCI's gender work have been **s**trong interest in the gender webinars and strong gender attention in two of the four Core Center research projects. Both the webinar on "Integrating Gender into Research and Policy Outreach" and "Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research" attracted considerable attention with 306 and 81 participants, respectively. We received positive feedback on the integrating gender webinar from participants within and outside the PRCI project. The presentation on gender biases and challenges with conducting phone surveys was very timely, given the ongoing global pandemic and the need to shift

plans for in person surveys to the phone. As this is a somewhat new method of data collection in developing countries, early lessons about the gender-specific challenges and risks can help research teams avoid common pitfalls and ensure women's safety.

Challenges, lessons learned, and brief plans for year 2: We identify three principal challenges in this area during Year 1. First, the online platform for PICA may have made it difficult to effectively highlight the importance of gender in research and organizational capacity. As a result, despite our efforts to integrate gender into the PICA workshop with CPEEL, the final resource allocation included gender sensitive research methods in the first funded event (the overview of research methods) of the capacity development plan included, but did not include more than this on gender.

Second, there is a need for core centers and research teams to have access to tools and training in qualitative research methods. The focus of the training activities was largely on quantitative methods thus far. However, research teams also lack capacity in qualitative methods and several are planning to use them in their research. Bringing in experts in qualitative research methods would strengthen the ability of research teams to implement mixed methods research projects and more deeply explore nuanced social dynamics including gender issues.

Third, as a result of covid-19 and the needed shift in the overall PRCI workplan, many project activities were ongoing simultaneously leading to an overburden of work by the participating centers, making it difficult to manage multiple deliverables. Clearer guidance on the timing of research activities, expected deliverables, and expectations for engagement with the PRCI team will be provided at the start of the next phase of research projects.

Research-to-Policy (R2P)

The three CPLs and SUA (the four centers currently carrying out PRCI's "Core Center Research Program, and hereafter referred to as "the Centers") are pursuing high quality research with the assistance of mentors from the PRCI consortium. However, quality research may not have policy impact without a concerted outreach strategy to relevant decision makers. As such, the R2P component of PRCI will focus on increasing researchers' consideration of the policy issues and policy levers that they intended to influence with their work and, in turn, who from government, civil society, the private sector, and/or donor community should be targeted for outreach and engagement with the research findings.

This effort will consist specifically of: (1) an asynchronous powerpoint video on issues to consider while trying to enhance the impact of research on policy; (2) a two-hour interactive policy landscape assessment webinar to assess the policy actors and issues with respect to each Center's specific research topic; and (3) the development of a 1-2 page policy outreach strategy produced by each Centers with the input of their mentors. The outreach strategy will also complement some of the institutional capacity activities pursued under the PICA process as it will identify whether certain communications skills and infrastructure need to be strengthened in order for Center staff to effectively engage with the policy community.

These activities will commence in November 2020. By early 2021, the Centers will share their outreach strategies with each other in a webinar event to facilitate cross-Center learning.
In mid-2021, the effort will expand to include STAAARS+, with the interactive policy landscape assessments being implemented with each STAAARS+ fellow team.

VIII. Innovation Transfer and Scaling Partnerships

PRCI is entirely focused on transferring knowledge and capabilities and doing it in a way that ensures scaling. As detailed above, we transfer knowledge and build capacity in four ways:

- Mentored research that emphasizes joint, collaborative work in which highly experienced and highly trained analysts from PRCI member institutions can nurture the capacities of local analysts;
- Technical training closely tied to the research to ensure greater uptake of knowledge by putting it to use during or shortly after the training;
- Design of learning forums in which findings and best practices are regularly presented; and
- Institutional capacity strengthening through the PICA process

PRCI pursues a "training of trainers" (ToT) approach whenever possible to ensure future scaling of these efforts. For example:

- ReNAPRI staff and its research director participate in the PICA process with the objective of eventually (during the life of PRCI) rolling out this process with selected centers from the network;
- During Year 2, selected African analysts trained from the Core Center and STAAARS+ Year 1 research and training programs will present some of this training to the Year 2 cohort and to extend the training within their own and potentially other organizations;
- In Asia, PRCI relates directly to two strong subregional lead centers (KU and RIS) whose explicit mandate and goals under PRCI are to strengthen their capacity to reach out to "junior" centers in the subregions to enhance these junior centers' capacity for applied policy research with policy impact;
- PRCI promotes policy change – which if successful results in massive scaling of research findings – in two ways. First it does so through PICA, which is built around a diagnosis of an organization's current position in the policy system, their desired position after four years, and their strategic plan for moving to that desired position. Second, PRCI created its R2P position to enable and encourage every research team to build an explicit, empirically informed policy impact plan for its particular study.

IX. Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan (EMMP)

Per Annex E of its final award documents, PRCI has a categorical exemption and thus is not required to prepare an EMMP. PRCI is required to have a functioning IRB and to consider gender as a cross-cutting activity, not separate a activity, both of which it does.

X. Open Data Management Plan

PRCI collected no primary data during Year 1. Year 2 will feature data collection by at least two centers, and each will receive training on data submission procedures.

XI. Project Management Activity

In responding to our evolving understanding of needs under the Lab, PRCI during Year 1 modified the set of programmatic leads as follows:

- Lab Director: David Tschirley (MSU). No change.
- Asia Lead: Suresh Babu with Xinshen Diao (IFPRI). New position.
- R2P Lead: Danielle Resnick (IFPRI). New position.
- Institutional Capacity Development Lead: John Medendorp with Cait Goddard (MSU). No change.
- Core Center Technical Training Leads: Saweda Liverpool-Tasie (MSU) and Nicole Mason-Wardell (MSU). New position.
- Gender Lead: Ruth Meinzen-Dick with Elizabeth Bryan (IFPRI). No change
- Special Topics research & training leads: Varying depending on topics and centers. New positions
- ReNAPRI Liaison: Thom Jayne (MSU). New position.

PRCI Director Tschirley is assisted in his logistical and financial management of the program by one program assistant and a business office consisting of one manager and three additional staff dealing with contracting, accounting, and travel.

PRCI also sought and won two buy-ins to its core award to expand its resources: $200,000 in COVID-19 funding for the cross-country survey, and $175,000 from the Mozambique mission to help it identify its programmatic priorities going forward.

XII. Communications

Year one of PRCI's communication strategy has focused on raising awareness of the Lab, building excitement for its programming, and creating a robust digital presence through the PRCI website and on social media. The Lab's communication efforts have been focused on reaching a global community of stakeholders who are interested in agricultural policy research, including researchers, practitioners, government and NGO leadership, and policymakers. PRCI communication materials adhere to the expectations outlined in the Feed the Future Branding Guide and attempt to capture audience interest through the use of engaging visual design.

Website

The development of the PRCI website over the past year has been the most critical component of the Lab's communication efforts. The PRCI website is both the primary source for distributing news about the lab and its events, and central to the distribution of PRCI's webinars and technical training offerings.

In year one, the website had 3,353 page views. The most popular pages on the site were the STAAARS+ Fellowship application page (1,721) and our announcement page for the *PRCI Webinar:*

Using Mobile Phones During COVID-19 Lockdowns (695). The high number of views for the STAAARS+ Fellowship application is an encouraging sign that our efforts to reach a broad audience of interested stakeholders have been successful.

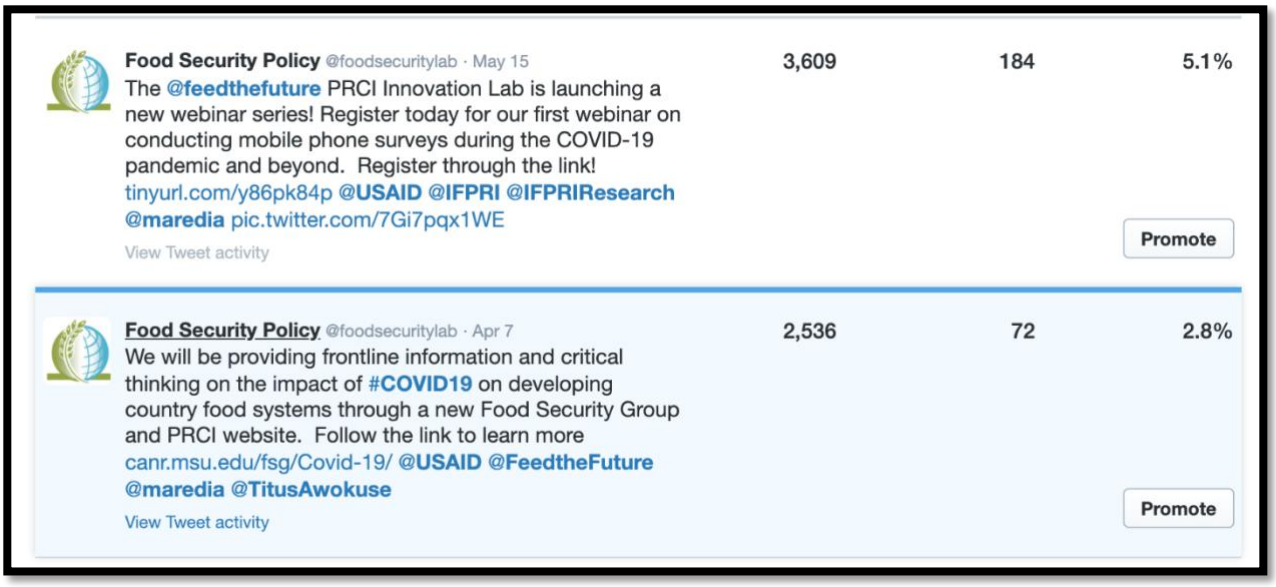
As with any new site, we experienced an initial lag in website user activity, but by promoting our site on social media and through our email newsletter we have been able to improve our search engine optimization. The most popular news article written for the site was *PRCI Finalizes its Selection of Three African Centers for Policy Leadership* (261 views). Over the course of the next year the website will begin hosting PRCI research papers, policy briefs and reports. We expect website traffic to increase in year two as we continue to populate the cite with research content and impact stories that are relevant to our audience. Our goal is to eventually reach an audience as large as that of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Website which in its fifth year reached 25,000 people.

Social Media

PRCI builds off of the social media channels that were previously managed by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy (FSP) and Michigan State University's Food Security Group (FSG). These channels include a Twitter account, Facebook account, and YouTube account. By using these existing channels PRCI did not have to cultivate a new user base but was able to immediately begin connecting with an audience already interested in food security policy. PRCI continues to share the use of these platforms with FSP and FSG. Sharing the accounts in this way does make branding PRCI content more difficult but the synergies created by sharing content that is relevant to our audience from across the three programs outweighs the branding challenges.

Twitter

Over the course of the year our twitter account @foodsecuritylab received a total of 104,000 impressions. This means that our tweets reached a combined audience of 104,000 people, which is substantially larger than our audience of 3,353 on the PRCI website. Our Twitter count has 1,761 followers. Two of our most popular tweets can be seen below. The first column is the total number of impressions, the second number is the total number of engagements, and the third is the percent of impressions that turn into engagements. A general rule of thumb is that you should try to reach 20% of your followers and these tweets can be considered successful because they significantly exceeded our number of followers.



Facebook

We have created a new Facebook account for the MSU Food Security Group and PRCI. The account has 97 followers. In addition to posting articles and event announcements to the page we are using it to live stream our webinars. Facebook records the livestream and then the content is readily available. By sharing our webinars through Facebook we can expand our audience. Our top performing live stream was the PRCI Webinar: Thailand's Response to COVID-19 which reached 536 people and was viewed 23 times.

YouTube

We have created a new YouTube account for the MSU Food Security Group and PRCI. The channel is our newest social media addition. The YouTube channel is primarily being used to host our Webinar recordings. We anticipate adding more videos and growing the channels subscriber list over the course of the next year.

Newsletter and Email Marketing

PRCI News, updates and events are shared on a quarterly basis through MSU Food Security Group newsletter. The newsletter is sent to more than 2,400 email addresses and our quarterly update had a 45% open rate, the average open rate for an email newsletter is 10-15%. In addition to providing timely information on PRCI, the newsletter drives hundreds of users to our websites. The newsletter email address is also used to promote PRCI webinars and events. An example of the quarterly newsletter can be viewed at this link.

Print

PRCI has produced a trifold paper brochure to promote the innovation lab and its mission. 500 copies of the brochure have been printed. Before the pandemic the brochure was distributed at the USAID Innovation Lab Annual meeting in Washington D.C. (2019), the World Food Prize Meeting (2019), and at the PRCI Launch meeting in Uganda.

XIII. Issues and How They are Being Addressed

Beyond the substantive issues already discussed under sections on challenges and lessons learned in each activity area, the primary challenge that PRCI faces is building strong relationships with the large number of far-flung centers with which it engages. These include three CPLs, 10 members of ReNAPRI, the ReNAPRI Secretariat and technical direction, two additional centers with STAAARS+ fellows, two lead centers in Asia, and at least four additional centers in Asia that will be engaged with PRCI going forward. Due to COVID-19, direct contact with leadership of these centers has been impossible since November, 2020 at the ILLC. The ILLC was well represented with CPL and ReNAPRI leadership, but few other ReNAPRI members, neither of the additional STAAARS+ institutions, and none of the Asian centers were present. PRCI's response so far has included naming Asia Leads who know the region and some of the centers and can remain closely engaged with them; working in Asia through the two lead centers, who then relate most closely to the junior centers in the region; and instituting regular zoom calls with leaders of each CPL. We are considering instituting quarterly calls among all CPL directors and research directors, but wanting to balance the need for communication and coordination with the limited capacity of many to deal with the heavy load of zoom communications going on since the onset of the pandemic. PRCI leadership intends to as many of the Lab's collaborating centers as possible within one year of travel becoming possible again

In Nigeria, the combination of COVID-19 and new national regulations on the flow of funds for public institutions (which includes CPEEL and DAERD, both of University of Ibadan) has made it impossible so far to make funds available to the center. PRCI leadership understands from the leadership of CPEEL that the heavy demands of research, technical training, and institutional capacity strengthening under PRCI, combined with the lack of funds, has had a negative effect on morale. MSU has now worked out a resolution that involves using the MacArthur foundation office at U. of Ibadan as a conduit for the funds transfers, has the legal agreement in place with MacArthur Foudation to do this, and expects to transfer a substantial advance to CPEEL not later than mid-November.

XIV. Future Directions

As will be detailed in the Year 2 workplan to be delivered November 13, PRCI intends to build on its Year 1 success and make adjustments as follows. First, at the broadest level, the Lab will work to ensure more learning, borrowing, and coordination where relevant between its various platforms. This will include encouraging Africa-Asia joint research where interest is detected, for example in the trade flow analysis that was launched in Asia under the Special Topics program and could be very relevant for example for India and countries in East and Southern Africa; adopting aspects of the STAAARS+ approach to benchmarking and mentoring in the Core Center research program; creating platforms for STAAARS+ fellows to engage with other researchers in the consortium; familiarizing all participants with the rich set of online training materials that PRCI has developed under its Core Center, STAAARS+, and Special Topics platforms and promoting their use.

Second, as outlined in section IX, the Lab will seek scaling of its efforts. It will do this through (a) ReNAPRI engagement with PICA for rollout in year 2 or 3 among ReNAPRI centers; (b) an explicit

training of trainers approach in year 2 and beyond in all three of its training platforms; (c) partnership with Asian lead centers with an explicit objective of building their capacity to build capacity in their subregion; and (d) fully launching R2P to achieve policy impact, which is the ultimate scaling mechanism with potential to affect all citizens in a country and, through that, many in the region.

Third, PRCI will ramp up its research output and bring this to bear on policy deliberations. It will do this by (a) finishing the first cohorts of Core Center and STAAARS+ research outputs and organizing research- and policy outreach around them; (b) building policy outreach around COVID using results from its cross-country survey; (c) extending the mentored research model into Asia starting with the trade flow analysis for which analysts have already been trained and emphasizing mentoring from the two Asian lead centers, and (d) seeking additional buy-in and associate award funds.

Appendix: Success Stories

Success Story #1

Building Capacity in the Virtual Environment

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Research, Capacity and Influence (PRCI) is committed to training a new generation of agricultural policy researchers throughout Africa and Southeast Asia. Over the past year, PRCI has undertaken three distinct training initiatives to enhance the research capacity of agricultural policy researchers who are working within established policy research centers and institutions. These three initiatives include the Core Center Technical Training Program, STAAARS+, and the Special Topics Training Program. These trainings have included modules on research design, analysis, and policy development. During PRCI's inception many of these trainings were envisioned as a series of in-person workshops, where trainers and mentors could work directly in small groups to develop research proposals and impart concrete research skills. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic began sweeping across the globe in the winter of 2020, PRCI Director David Tschirley says, "PRCI's executive committee and institutional partners quickly realized that we would need to reimagine these trainings for the virtual environment to promote the health and safety of everyone involved."

Over the last 8 months PRCI and its consortium partners including Michigan State University (MSU), The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Cornell University, and Kasetsart University (KU) have successfully launched 13 online training modules, in addition to providing virtual mentorship meetings between expert researchers and program participants. These virtual training sessions were made possible through the use of video conferencing software and by sharing training exercises, supplemental reading materials, and datasets with participants through the PRCI website. For MSU, Associate Professor and PRCI co-principal investigator Saweda Liverpool-Tasie, "Maintaining engagement from trainees in the online environment can be challenging. To foster active participation, the Core Center Technical Trainings utilized virtual 'breakout rooms' within the larger trainings to better connect small groups with experts in the field. In these smaller breakout rooms participants were able to ask questions and receive feedback from a familiar group of their peers." One participant in a post-training evaluation survey wrote, "The breakout sessions were very useful because I interacted with other researchers and I was able to learn from them."

Despite the challenges of teaching in the virtual space, MSU Associate Professor and PRCI co-principal investigator Nicole Mason-Wardell notes, "Conducting the training sessions virtually provides us with some advantages over more traditional in-person workshops. For participants who are typically hesitant to ask questions, they can more easily participate by submitting written questions and responses. Additionally, participants in the training have benefitted from being able to re-watch recordings of all of the trainings online, and while we encourage all participants to participate in the trainings in real time, the flexibility of having an asynchronous opportunity to receive the instructions broadens the number of participants."

For PRCI Director Tschirley, "While the delivery of PRCI's technical trainings had to be adapted to a virtual setting, PRCI's commitment to capacity building through co-creation with our research

partners remained steadfast. Our research capacity building efforts are always developed by listening to the needs of our global research partners in their home countries." PRCI's Core Center Technical Trainings were developed in part based on a needs assessment completed by researchers at four African policy research centers and for PRCI's "special topics trainings" the course design and implementation of the trainings was led by one of our newest institutional partners, Kasetsart University (KU). KU Professor Pasakorn Thammachote oversaw the development of the trainings, while members of IFPRI and MSU provided guidance, content knowledge, and technical support.

According to IFPRI Senior Research Fellow and PRCI co-principal investigator Babu Suresh, "PRCI was able to help KU develop its own training capacity in the virtual environment, while at the same time tap into KU's network of policy researchers throughout South East Asia. By leveraging KU's network and regional reputation for policy research, PRCI was able to engage agricultural policy researchers in Thailand, Papua New Guinea, India, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam in the online trainings." Reflecting on his own experience working with PRCI, Thammachote says, "I benefited from the exchange of experiences and networking possibilities through the partnership and the entire gathering was extremely useful for teambuilding with PRCI's network in Asia."

To better assess the value of PRCI's capacity training efforts participants have been surveyed on their experiences in the trainings. So far, the response from trainees has been overwhelming positive with one participant from the Special Topics Training stating, "[The course was] well organized with contents and exercises which are practical for our research in our countries and for the region as well." Furthermore, the development of concrete skills to enhance research capacity can clearly be seen in the Core Center Training evaluations; one participant writes, "Although I had studied econometrics, I have not used it in my work for long and have almost forgotten everything. This training helped me to brush up on my knowledge again" and another participant writes, "Discussions on impact heterogeneity and natural experiments were very useful to me because I face these issues very often. I did not know how to handle these kinds of problems and [the instructor] made it clear."

"If you had told me a year ago that we would have to move our entire technical training and mentorship programming into the online environment, I'm not sure I would have believed it was possible," says Director Tschirley, adding, "we owe the success of this programming to the creativity of our co-PIs, the commitment of our institutional partners, and the willingness of all our program participants to remain engaged during a challenging but also exciting era of learning and communication. When the pandemic passes, virtual learning and mentoring will not completely replace in-person trainings and interaction, but the advantages of online learning cannot be ignored. Virtual mentoring and learning are here to stay and will be a critical component of PRCI moving forward."

Success story #2

Strategic Planning Through a Global Pandemic

When Dr. Nalishebo Meebelo was hired by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy, Research, Capacity and Influence (PRCI) to serve as the senior program coordinator for the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI) she supported the organization's position that a comprehensive strategic plan was needed to guide the day to day

activities of the network. ReNAPRI is a consortium of ten African agricultural policy research centers that collaborate on policy research, outreach and capacity building throughout East Africa and in Ghana. Meebelo says three things were clear from the beginning: "Firstly, there was an increasing demand for ReNAPRI's services on the continent. Secondly, we wanted to expand ReNAPRI's visibility as an agent for policy influence in the African continent, and thirdly, we needed to be able to evaluate the impact and work of ReNAPRI. The best way to achieve these goals was through a strategic plan."

In early March of 2020, Meebelo traveled to Malawi to begin working with Dr. John Medendorp, the Director of Michigan State University's Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) program, along with a specialist in that program, Cait Goddard, to begin developing the strategic plan. Medendorp and Goddard lead PRCI's institutional capacity strengthening efforts and as noted by Medendorp, "We, like ReNAPRI itself, recognized the immense potential in the ReNAPRI network and what it could mean for Africa if ReNAPRI could become a leading voice for food security and agricultural policy."

Working closely with Meebelo and several other members of the ReNAPRI network, Medendorp and Goddard planned to work with the organization on an actionable framework to achieve its goals. Unfortunately, just as the planning sessions were set to begin, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Recognizing the dangers posed by COVID-19, ReNAPRI and PRCI cancelled the in-person meetings and everyone involved returned to their home countries.

ReNAPRI now had a new challenge to face: how would they develop the strategic plan they need without being able to engage in-person with their members? Working with PRCI's Medendorp and Goddard, Meebelo and ReNAPRI adopted a blended strategic planning process that included both online and offline activities. ReNAPRI used Zoom teleconferencing software to conduct the virtual meetings and used the program Smartsheet to assist with project management. Meebelo credits Medendorp and Goddard with helping ReNAPRI develop a framework and implementation plan for the strategic plan and for training her on how to use the necessary technologies to make the planning process possible. Medendorp added, "Thanks to Cait this experience was less painful than it might have been. Cait has a lot of experience with online teaching so we relied on her heavily, especially her knowledge of the different virtual learning tools that are available."

Once Meebelo became comfortable with the technology, they began hosting weekly meetings with the policy centers. Meebelo says "The team began by undertaking a historical journey of ReNAPRI, looking at the organization's achievements and challenges, and thinking about where we saw ReNAPRI heading in the next five years." To prepare for these weekly meetings Meebelo says, "The ReNAPRI secretariat, including myself, would meet three times a week with John and Cait, to develop and distribute to participants a detailed meeting schedule and any materials needed for the meeting's discussion." Meebelo says, "this approach worked well, and week-after-week participation in the meetings from the centers remained high."

Reflecting on the entirety of the process, Meebelo says the strategic planning sessions fostered open and honest discussion among the participants and ultimately were a success. Through the strategic planning process, ReNAPRI was able to agree on the content for the strategic plan and it will be launched at this year's 7th Annual ReNAPRI Stakeholders' Conference in November. Among the plan's highlights are five pillars or intervention areas including project management, knowledge management, public relations and outreach, process management, and strategic partnerships and

resources management. Goddard notes that, "Not only has ReNAPRI developed the capacity to create a strategic planning process, they've also learned how to work in an entirely virtual environment. In some respects they are leading the continent in this kind of work."

For Medendorp, "the most gratifying part of this was the growing sense of ownership of the process on the part of ReNAPRI. A strength of ReNAPRI has been and will always be the initiative of its member centers but now we are also seeing effective coordination and leadership from the center. This will generate a really high payoff for the network and its members over time. This strategic plan is now a ReNAPRI process and not only have they taken ownership, they've done this really successfully and well." Echoing these sentiments, Goddard added, "ReNAPRI's ownership of the process grew as we went along, and by the end, they were giving us instruction on how they thought we could best present the planning materials."

A copy of ReNAPRI's strategic plan will be made available on the PRCI website when it becomes available.

Success story #3

Successful process putting local centers in the lead on their own capacity building and research priorities

PRCI was a qualitative departure from previous ILs run by MSU in its heavy emphasis on institutional capacity building and local leadership of that capacity building process, albeit in a partnership model. Previous ILs had all built institutional capacity but had not had this as a central goal and had not developed and mainstreamed processes and procedures to systematically ensure that local centers were in command of their own capacity building. A major success of PRCI is to have conceived and then implemented a program with the same two lead partners – MSU and IFPRI – that was not "business as usual" in this regard.

Departures from past practice included (1) competitive selection of research centers, (2) working from and with these centers' own definition of objectives and priorities to develop institutional capacity strengthening strategies that meet their needs and vision, (3) consistently applying a mentorship model in all research, including having local researchers start the research process with their own proposals, which PRCI then worked with to improve, after which they worked closely with the teams to carry out the research, (4) far more ambitious formal training undertakings than ever in previous ILs, and (5) much more systematically pursuing scaling of its activities through an emphasis on training-of-trainers and working through local organizations to leverage broader impact – ReNAPRI in Africa and KU and RIS in Asia.

Making a program like this work requires a very high level of coordination. PRCI leadership has learned a lot over the past year about how to do this, and has revamped its operational structure (see section XI) to better achieve it. Year 2 will see much more learning, borrowing and collaborating across platforms, building on and expanding elements of convergence and borrowing that emerged in Year 1.

Annexes

Annex A: Indicator targets and actual

Table 8. Year 1 Indicator Report

#	Indicator ID in FTFMS	Indicator title	Baseline	Y1			
				Target	Actual	% diff	Explanation
1	Custom	Number of individuals from partner countries participating in mentored research (e.g., through STAARS+ fellowship and other joint research activities)	0	10	20	100%	Eight teams (four Core Center and four STAAARS+) with multiple researchers (at least 2) per team
2	Custom	Number of policy research and best practice papers authored or co-authored by partner organization researchers	0	3	0	-100%	Research not yet finished, will be in Year 2
3	Custom	Number of stakeholder learning forums (national, regional, or global) where findings/best practices are presented	0	2	5	150%	PRCI Webinars plus one based on CRP
4	Custom	Number of Requests received by PRCI Researchers/Partners from National/Regional/Global Organizations/Entities for Information, Consultation, Data, and Presentations	0	3	13	333%	Original target was unreasonably low in light of the number of members and individual researchers in PRCI consortium and their global reputation. Could consider increasing for years 2-5
5	CBLD-9	Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance	0	0% (0/6)	0%	0%	
6	EG3.1-d	Milestones in improved institutional architecture for food security policy achieved with USG support	No targets, just reporting		Indicator being defined by end November 2020		

7	EG3.2-7	Number of technologies, practices, and approaches under various phases of research, development, and uptake as a result of USG assistance	na	na	8	na	Indicator added at end of Year 1. Currently setting equal to number of studies launched. Could be modified depending on further guidance from AOR

Annex B: Learning Forums (C3)

Learning Forum Type	Learning Forum				Main type of stakeholder Audience
	Title	Presenter(s)	Date	Location (Country)	
Global	The Covid-19 Policy Response Portal (CPR) Tool	Danielle Resnick (IFPRI)	6/12/2020	Online (hosted in USA)	Researchers and policy makers
Regional	COVID-19 Impact on Thailand's Economy and Agriculture (Researchers from the Thailand Development Research Institute discussed the impact of Thailand's efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19 and to provide economic relief.)	Nipon Poapongsakorn (TDRI), Urairat Jantarasiri (TDRI)	9/30/2020	Online (hosted in USA)	It was an open invitation but was mostly attended by agricultural economic researchers in Asia
Regional	COVID-19 Policy Analysis and Responses in Thailand: Researchers from the Thailand Development Research Institute discussed the measures used by the Thai government to successful prevent the spread of COVID-19	Nipon Poapongsakorn (TDRI), Urairat Jantarasiri (TDRI)	9/17/2020	Online (hosted in USA)	It was an open invitation but was mostly attended by agricultural economic researchers in Asia

Global	Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research in the Time of Covid-19 Lockdowns and Beyond	Mywish Maredia (MSU), Ruth Meinzen-Dick (IFPRI)	5/28/2020	Online (hosted in USA)	Both were open invitations; but researchers and development practitioners from the following types of organizations would have joined: government, universities, research institutes, donor and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
Global	Integrating Gender in Policy Research and Outreach: This webinar discussed key gender issues and entry points for policy research and outreach.	Ruth Meinzen-Dick (IFPRI), Elizabeth Bryan (IFPRI)	6-Feb-20	Global in scope	

Annex C: Requests from Stakeholders (C4)

#	PRCI researchers/partners approached for information				Entity & Person Making the Request				Date of request	Please briefly describe the request	How did the person/ organization respond to the request? (briefly explain)
	Partner Org Name	Researcher approached			Requestor's name & position	Organization Name	Type of Org	Level of Org			
		first name	last name	M /F							
1	ReNAPRI	ReNAPRI Secretariat			Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security and Hunger Hotspots at AGRA	AGRA	NGO	R	Apr-20	Request for a study of the impact of policy responses to COVID 19 implemented by national governments	ReNAPRI moblised a team of African regional experts and 1 international experts to work on thestudy for the Task Force
2	ReNAPRI	ReNAPRI Secretariat			Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture	African Union Commission	P	R	May-20	Request by DREA to establish potential areas of support to the African Union Commission, lead the technical work on the Abuja II Fertiliser Summit, and facilitate the participation of the AUC DREA Commissioner in continental and global	ReNAPRI delivered all documents requested by DREA, agreed to lead the technical work on the Abuja II Fertiliser Summit, and has facilitated the participation of the AUC DREA Commissioner in

#	PRCI researchers/partners approached for information				Entity & Person Making the Request				Date of request	Please briefly describe the request	How did the person/ organization respond to the request? (briefly explain)
	Partner Org Name	Researcher approached			Requestor's name & position	Organization Name	Type of Org	Level of Org			
		first name	last name	M /F							
										events	continental and global events.
3	ReNAPRI	ReNAPRI Secretariat			Commissioner, Department of Trade and Industry	African Union Commission	P	R	Feb-20	Request to contribute to African continental commodities strategy and AfCFTA	ReNAPRI met with the Commissioner and agreed to participate in the discussions and work around the African continental Commodities Strategy and the AfCFTA
4	ReNAPRI	ReNAPRI Secretariat			Mariam Kadzamira	Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA)	NGO	G	Oct-20	Request to collaborate on policy research concerning smallholders in agribusiness along key commodity value chains	ReNAPRI has organized meetings with CASA and has invite them to the 7th Annual Stakeholders' Conference scheduled for 18-20 November 2020

#	PRCI researchers/partners approached for information				Entity & Person Making the Request				Date of request	Please briefly describe the request	How did the person/ organization respond to the request? (briefly explain)
	Partner Org Name	Researcher approached			Requestor's name & position	Organization Name	Type of Org	Level of Org			
		first name	last name	M /F							
5	BAME	Djiby	Dia	M	Ndeye Dibor Ngom, Analyst	DAPSA (Ministry of Agriculture)	PUB	N	27 may 2019	The Ministry of Agriculture was looking for datas to assist AU Member States in the preparation of their reports on agricultural transformation, which they will present to the AU Summit on the progress made on the commitments of the Heads of State of the AU in the Malabo Declaration, on Accelerating agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved resource efficiency of subsistence.	The person responded favourably and provided the information requested
6	IFPRI	Danielle	Resnick,	F	?	Oxfam and IFPR	NGO	G	6/1/20	Requested a" virtual presentation to the Food and Nutrition Security Collaboration Space, co-hosted by Oxfam and IFPRI.	Gave a virtual presentation entitled: The Covid-19 Policy Response Portal (CPR) Tool
7	IAPRI	Thom	Jayne	M	AGRA	AGRA	NGO	G	Aug-20	First requested a presentation for the AGRA African Green Revolution Forum	Gave a presentation at the AGRA African Green Revolution Forum – "Toward Abuja II Fertilizer Policy framework for Africa "

#	PRCI researchers/partners approached for information				Entity & Person Making the Request				Date of request	Please briefly describe the request	How did the person/ organization respond to the request? (briefly explain)
	Partner Org Name	Researcher approached			Requestor's name & position	Organization Name	Type of Org	Level of Org			
		first name	last name	M /F							
8	IAPRI	Thom	Jayne	M	AGRA	AGRA	NGO	G	Aug-20	Second requested a presentation for the AGRA African Green Revolution Forum	Gave a presentation at the AGRA African Green Revolution Forum –Bridging demand and supply of private investment in African agribusiness
9	MSU	Tschirley, Reardon, Liverpool-Tasie		M		African Development Bank	PUB	R	Apr-20	African Development Bank requested a webinar presentation	Presented a webinar titled "COVID-19's Disruption of Africa's Transformed Food Supply Chains"
10	MSU	Dave	Tschirley	m		Alliance for African Partnerships:	UNI	G	May-20	Alliance for African Partnerships requested a webinar presentation	Presentation titled: The economic, food security, and livelihood impacts of COVID-19 in Africa: Lessons learned and policy responses"
11	IFPRI	Danielle	Resnick	F	AfDB	AfDB	PUB	G	May 18, 2020.	Building Resilient Food Systems: Strategic Policy Responses - Short, Medium, & Long Term.	AfDB virtual seminar on Building Resilience in Food Systems and Agricultural Value Chains: Agricultural Policy Responses to COVID-19 in Africa.
12	IFPRI	Danielle	Resnick	F	PlacemakingX	PlacemakingX	NGO	G	May 28, 2020.	COVID-19 and informal food traders in Africa	Placemaking X virtual seminar on The New Frontlines: Highlighting Actions to Promote Healthier Informal Communities through Placemaking

#	PRCI researchers/partners approached for information				Entity & Person Making the Request				Date of request	Please briefly describe the request	How did the person/ organization respond to the request? (briefly explain)
	Partner Org Name	Researcher approached			Requestor's name & position	Organization Name	Type of Org	Level of Org			
		first name	last name	M /F							
13	IFPRI	Danielle	Resnick	F	International Growth Center	International Growth Center	NGO	G	August 6, 2020.	Policies to address COVID-19's impact on Africa's informal sector	virtual seminar hosted by the International Growth Centre.

Annex D: Factors determining CBLD-9 rating

The PICA process is using the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) as the basis for its improved performance metrics in CBLD-9.[7] The OPI divides organizational performance into four areas and eight domains:

1. **Effectiveness**: Ability of an organization to carry out high quality programs and continuously improve its program operations in accordance with its mission and goals
    A. **Results:** Effective organizations measure and analyze outcome level results to best serve beneficiaries
    B. **Standards**: Effective organizations adopt and consistently implement accepted industry standards as well as lead the improvement of those standards over time
2. **Efficiency:** The ability of an organization to plan and budget for their interventions in a consistently successful and cost-efficient manner.
    A. **Delivery**: Efficient organizations develop, utilize and update work plans, budgets, tracking systems related to program services delivery and analyze the cost-efficiency of services.
    B. **Reach**: Efficient organizations use resources to reach target audiences according to clearly articulated plans and, over time, expand the number of beneficiaries and geographic areas.
3. **Relevance:** The ability of an organization to respond to the actual needs of its beneficiaries, to stay alert to any changes that influence this ability, and to alter its course of action and adjust its programming based on learning.
    A. **Target Population**: Relevant organizations engage their stakeholders at every step of a project to ensure activities address actual needs including active involvement in the design and implementation of solutions.
    B. **Learning**: Relevant organizations embrace and consistently implement learning as a key driver for change from within
4. **Sustainability:** The ability of an organization to ensure its services are supported by a diverse base of local and international resources that may include funding, people, trust, & other types of support.
    A. **Resources**: Sustainable organizations generate resources from multiple and diverse sources in a strategic manner.
    B. **Social Capital**: Sustainable organizations understand and use the power of social capital, which is those relationship and connection in their communities that allow for the running of programs that are successful and produce long-term results.

Each domain is divided into four levels. For the sake of the CBLD-9 indicator, the PICA process will define improvement of at least one level in each of the eight domains as evidence of organizational improvement. A baseline study was completed prior to the beginning of the PICA process which, combined with the evaluation of the PICA implementation team will serve as the point of measurement for each of the three CPLs with which we are working.

[7] Pact International (2015). *Organizational Performance Index (OPI) Handbook: A practical guide to the OPI tool for practitioners and development professionals*. Washington DC: Pact International.

Annex E: Details on PRCI Webinars

Thai Government's Policy Response to Covid-19 and success of health policy. (9/30/2020)

Purpose: The focus is on policy classification and combination of factors that explain why Thailand is one of the top countries that has successfully contain the pandemic. The webinar will provide a brief description of timelines of Covid-19 and the government's response. The webinar also discusses how Thailand contained COVID-19 and provides a qualitative assessment of the efficacy of the health measures taking by the government.

Economic/ Social impact of Covid-19 Pandemic and Health Policy on Thai Economy and Agriculture. (9/17/2020)

Purpose: The focus is twofold: 1) analyzing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and health policy (especially the partial lockdown & movement restriction) on the economy, with an emphasis on agriculture, 2) assessing the economic & social policy to minimize the short term impacts on affected agricultural households and their members who work in non-agricultural sector and become unemployed or affected by Covid-19.

PRCI Global Lab Launch Webinar. (6/18/2020)

Purpose: introduced the research agendas of those in selected African institutes in Nigeria (CPEEL), Senegal (ISRA-BAME), Tanzania (SUA), and Uganda (EPRC), and discussed how their work aligns with the three global research topics pursued by PRCI: inclusive agricultural and rural transformation, healthy food systems, and resilience to withstand economic and environmental shocks. The webinar provided an opportunity for exchange between the selected institutes, the PRCI team, and USAID colleagues to ensure the research agendas of the selected institutes are empirically rigorous and policy relevant.

Main Takeaways. One key takeaway message from the webinars was the research teams appeared very focused on research questions and methods but less focused on how their research projects would influence the policy process. Consequently, the leadership of PRCI decided to actively address this feedback by creating a R2P position on the ExComm to ensure that more strategic thinking could be devoted to enhance the ability of the research to have policy impact. In year 2 of PRCI, an event will be organized for the teams to share their final research outputs.

Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research in the Time of Covid-19 Lockdowns and Beyond. (5/28/2020)

Purpose: To provide an overview of the best practices for conducting mobile phone survey research.

Main takeaways: There are many modes (text, phone/voice, web) in which mobile phones can be used for rapid, higher frequency data collection. Each method has its own pros and cons, opportunities and constraints. Researchers should be aware of and take into account some practical, ethical, and legal considerations in the use of mobile phones as a research tool. For example, gender, age and income gaps in mobile ownership can lead to systematic bias in phone-based surveys. There are also other sources of biases related to differential response rates. Following approaches to address these biases were discussed: Collecting data for variables to construct post-survey weights to make the data representative, designing protocols for contacting respondents to increase response rates (e.g., number of rings, number of attempts, timing of the call, etc.), language and length of the questionnaire.

Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research in the Time of Covid-19 Lockdowns and Beyond
On May 27, Ruth Meinzen-Dick gave a presentation on the "Gender Considerations in Phone Surveys" as part of the webinar on "Using Mobile Phones for Survey Research in the Time of Covid-19 Lockdowns and Beyond." The presentation highlighted the importance of reaching women with phone surveys but also discussed the potential biases that can be introduced, such as the exclusion of older, poorer women who may not have access to mobile phones, difficulty reaching women because they don't own the phones or have more time burden to answer phone survey questions, and limited privacy to answer surveys over the phone which may bias responses. Ways to overcome these challenges, such as reaching women through trusted contacts, using female enumerators, and dropping overly sensitive questions, were also discussed.

Integrating Gender in Policy Research and Outreach. (2/6/2020)

On February 6, 2020, Ruth Meinzen-Dick and Elizabeth Bryan hosted a webinar on "Integrating Gender in Policy Research and Outreach" with core center research teams and other partners. The webinar provided background information on the motivation for integrating gender into research, tools for gender analysis and how women's empowerment is defined and measured. The content shared during the webinar was an input to later capacity training with core center research teams on gender.