

Improving ILRI's visibility and positioning

March 2014

In February-March 2014, surveys were sent to ILRI staff as well as external people asking them to comment on ways to improve ILRI's visibility and profile in different parts of the world. The aim was to better understand how staff and partners perceive ILRI's name and 'brand'. Responses were received from 159 people outside ILRI and 99 staff members. This note summarizes the responses and reports selected comments.

Key Points

External respondents and staff were asked to comment on how they see **ILRI's visibility in their disciplines**: 67% of external respondents found this to be high or very high (3.4% perceived it to be very low). 53.2% of staff responding completely agreed or agreed with the statement 'The visibility and positioning of ILRI's work in my disciplinary area is VERY HIGH.' The proportions agreeing were lower for Addis and Nairobi respondents (45.4%) and higher for regional staff who responded (70.4%).

External respondents and staff were asked to comment on how they see **ILRI's visibility in their countries or regions**: 48.6% of external respondents found this to be high or very high (8.1% perceived it to be very low). 48% of staff responding completely agreed or agreed with the statement 'The visibility and positioning of ILRI's work in the country or region where I work is VERY HIGH.' The proportions agreeing were slightly higher for Addis and Nairobi respondents (48.5%) and lower for regional staff who responded (44.4%). 5.2% of all staff respondents completely disagreed with the statement (3.7% of regional staff responding; 5.9% of Addis and Nairobi respondents)

Conclusion: ILRI's visibility in regions is perceived to be lower than it is in specific disciplinary areas.

Regarding how well **the name 'international livestock research institute' captures the institute's mandate**, 81.4% of external respondents said the name 'completely' or 'very well' captured the mandate (12.1% of external respondents found the name to 'not well' or 'not at all' capture the institute's mandate). From staff respondents, 64.7% said the name 'completely' or 'very well' captured the mandate (the number was slightly lower for Addis and Nairobi respondents and slightly higher for regional respondents). 25.6% of staff respondents found the name to 'not well' or 'not at all' captures the institute's mandate (the number was higher for Addis and Nairobi respondents - 28.6% - and lower for regional respondents - 20%).

Conclusion: External respondents were more positive than staff on the name adequately capturing the institute's mandate. Many staff perceive the institute's name to not fully capture its mandate.

Regarding the **ILRI name and acronym**, 28.7% of external respondents do have especially positive or negative associations with the name 'international livestock research institute' or the acronym 'ILRI'. Additional comments refer to the acronym: "Some people confuse ILRI and IRRI. Particularly in Asia;" "ILRI is pronounced the same as ILL RI which can be associated with sickness;" "I like ILRI;" "The old name ILCA rings better."

Some respondents say the name does not match the mandate: "I think the word 'International' gives it a global mandate but in practice this is not the case ... 'Tropical and Subtropical ...' could be a more apt name;" "ILRI does not have an international dimension and is totally absent in many areas of the world. What is ILRI contribution to livestock research in Europe, North Africa, West Asia and many other regions of the world;" "Any way if the 'R' could be replaced by a 'D' because the development (D) sounds more close both to researchers, farmers, nonspecialized policy-makers, but the Research (R) sounds more close especially to researchers and professionals than to the other categories;" "The effort made in the last 10 years on the field of 'innovation systems' is not valued in the present name and acronym, maybe in adding a second 'I' may be justified: ILIRI: International Livestock Innovation and Research Institute or ILRII: International Livestock Research and Innovation Institute."

Similarly, 48.8% of staff respondents have encountered people commenting positively or negatively on the name 'international livestock research institute' or the acronym 'ILRI' (the number is lower among regional respondents – 40%). Regarding the acronym, comments included: "In Asia, when we pronounce ILRI, people understand IRRI;" "Many people have difficulty to pronounce the acronym. They often said IRLI instead of ILRI;" "Only problem is confusion for peoples with 'L' - 'R' pronunciation problems;" "ILRI sounds very close to IRRI and, as many acronyms, remains a mouthful to say for some;" "No complaints - but some people do sometimes pronounce ILRI as IRLI , ILerI, or some such."

Some comments zoom in the problem of low visibility or lack of understanding of the institute: "they comment negatively because they say they have no idea what we do for their livestock;" "people do not easily recognize the name ILRI easily;" "Most people don't even know what ILRI means or what it stands for;" "People think we only work on livestock (animal) issues which is a very limited view/understanding of the wide mandate we have."

Other comments mention positive associations: "ILRI is the institution to collaborate with when you know you need good quality work--and uncompromised results;" "Positive, well known among researchers within in my field in my home country;" "Usually i get only positive feedback, we are recognized as an important player in the national research systems;" "the name ILRI to those who know is synonymous with high class research and many in the science fields would like to be associated with it."

Finally, some staff respondents comment on the name itself: "We are not doing pure livestock work, hence we should adopt a better name;" "outdated logo does not speak to ILRI's future;" "ILRI does not represent the whole of the work we do here;" "I think we should not try to change the name or acronyms of ILRI but should try to do more to justify ILRI's name in true sense."

Conclusion: The name and acronym have positive and negative associations. The acronym is not always easy to pronounce and it can be confused with IRRI (in Asia). Some find it to be outdated. Some say that the word 'international' mis-represents where ILRI actually works; others say that the word 'livestock' is too narrow; others that I (for innovation) or D (for development) should be added. Several people comment that the name is not the problem, it is the lack of understanding of what ILRI actually does. Moreover, talking of ILRI also creates positive associations with quality research and people.

Finally, staff members were asked: “If ILRI’s name and acronym were unchanged, what are one or two things that could strengthen the profile and visibility of ILRI’s work?” Comments included:

Name, logo, acronym:

“I think ILRI’s profile is high among people who matter. We have an excellent and respected brand. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

“I think the name is OK and it says what we do. The main limitation i see is that Livestock as a term is quite British-centric (I think) and perhaps not a widely used term. But it’s a briefer / more concise than saying ‘farm animals’. We used to have the tag line ‘pathways out of poverty’ - do we have a new one? If yes then i don’t know it and if no then addition of this may help;” “ILRI’s logo and branding (including boring burgundy) needs to be completely revamped;” “The weakness in the name could be in terms of conveying an impression of doing research only for research sake; this could mean uninformed research or even good research but that stops at the research output level.”

“Re-brand the logo to reflect what we do;” “ILRI’s acronym must be changed;” “Maybe consider changing the logo and colour;” “Have a logo;”

Credibility:

“Our reputation ultimately depends on the trust others have in our staff;” “Credibility will be about ILRI’s researchers delivering innovations that make a difference to people’s livelihoods;” “Great achievements and impacts will strengthen the profile and visibility of any institute, including ILRI;” “Excellent science and great impact;”

Regions:

“ILRI should have offices not only in some part of Africa and Asia but also in Latin America;” “It should also have a few representative offices in developed regions around the globe to justify ILRI’s name and mandate;” “extend equal/distinct presence to all regions;” “Concentrate on expanding our work in regions outside East Africa;” “Invest more resources in the regions outside East Africa”

Communications:

“high profile publications, outreach;” “ILRI may try to produce annual global livestock report in each year which would receive equal importance to that of FAO’s report/statistics;” “ILRI’s website should be the first destination for information checkers on global livestock scenario;” “To increase visibility of ILRI in print & electronic media, ILRI should be prompt in responding to global audience in emergence of any threat to livestock or livestock associated human diseases;” “Is important to raise more publicity at different levels, doing more visits, seminars, publications, partnership, and even distributing materials like T-shirts, caps, calendars;” “more media engagement, more policy work, more conferences organized by ILRI in Southern Asia;” “Devote more resources to communications - ensure that every project devotes at least 10% of its budget to Comms;” “Publicity and public relations in the country;” “more high-profile events to showcase ILRI’s scientific outputs and outcomes from ILRI research, and encourage more scientists to seek opportunities to talk about their work in appropriate settings;” “develop and disseminate more research briefs, policy briefs, and similar communication materials that highlight key research outputs and outcomes;” “Interact more with local media in hosting countries. Shout louder about our work;” “Involve local and international media to communicate our research outputs. Social media tools should also be used effectively to communicate our research work. We need to take our work where the conversations are happening;” “Invest more in the communication strategy--recruit energetic, curious and good writers--flexible enough to work with teams and enhance communication of various outputs;” “more outreach projects;” “Revamp the web site, to allow much more pictorial, user friendly and interactive interface, and importantly to portray different profiles for different regions and

countries;” “More (small and focused) face to face interactions/convenings across different locations talking about livestock and to some extent what we bring - go where the people are.”

Engage with partners:

“In the short term, more engagement with key stakeholders should increase ILRI's visibility and influence;” “Increased care of our strategic partners and better use of existing channels and key players in the region;” “Associate ILRI to non-livestock-specific visible initiatives (e.g. GFAR and major events);” “Work much more closely with partners, e.g. NARS and national governments as well as influential NGOs where it makes sense;”

Conclusion: Beyond changes to the name and acronym, there is a full agenda of potential actions to reinforce the current ILRI product and services.

Respondent Profiles - Location

	External Respondents	Staff
Addis/Nairobi		72%
Africa	48%	14%
Europe	22%	
Asia	10%	13%
North America	6%	1%
Middle East and North Africa	5%	
Latin America	4%	
Australasia	3%	
Elsewhere	3%	

Respondent Profiles - Externals

A scientist	31%
A science manager or leader	20%
A policy maker	3%
A development practitioner	17%
An academic	14%
A government official	5%
An entrepreneur	1%
An investor in agriculture	2%
Something else	8%

Respondent Profiles – Staff

	All	HQ	Region
A scientist	31.3%	22.5%	51.9%
A science manager or leader	21.2%	15.5%	37.0%
Having a specialist non-scientific role	14.1%	19.7%	0.0%
Delivering a research support role within ILRI	33.3%	42.3%	11.1%

Ranking by externals of the Visibility of ILRI work – in disciplines

Very high	17.6%
High	49.3%
Neutral	14.9%
Low	14.9%
Very low	3.4%

Staff: The visibility and positioning of ILRI's work in my disciplinary area is VERY HIGH:

	all	HQ	Region
Strongly agree	9.4%	8.8%	11.1%
Agree	43.8%	36.8%	59.3%
Neutral	31.3%	36.8%	18.5%
Disagree	15.6%	17.6%	11.1%
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Ranking by externals of the Visibility of ILRI work – in countries/regions

Very high	10.8%
High	37.8%
Neutral	16.9%
Low	26.4%
Very low	8.1%

Staff: The visibility and positioning of ILRI's work in the country or region where I work is VERY HIGH

	all	HQ	Region
Strongly agree	11.5%	13.2%	7.4%
Agree	36.5%	35.3%	37.0%
Neutral	35.4%	36.8%	33.3%
Disagree	11.5%	8.8%	18.5%
Strongly disagree	5.2%	5.9%	3.7%

Externals and Staff: Does the name 'international livestock research institute' capture what you understand the institute's work and mandate to be?

	External people	All staff	HQ staff	Region staff
Completely	18.6%	11.0%	16.1%	0.0%
Very well	62.8%	53.7%	46.4%	68.0%
No idea really	6.2%	9.8%	8.9%	12.0%
Not well	10.9%	23.2%	26.8%	16.0%
Not at all	1.6%	2.4%	1.8%	4.0%

Externals: Do you have any especially positive or negative associations with the name ‘international livestock research institute’ or the acronym ‘ILRI’?

Yes	28.7%
No	71.3%

Selected comments

- It sounds primarily like a scientific research-based organization doing basic research on livestock worldwide.
- Some people confuse ILRI and IRRI. Particularly in Asia.
- I like ILRI.
- "ILRI" is pronounced the same as ILL RI which can be associated with sickness.
- I think the word 'International' gives it a global mandate but in practice this is not the case ... I will rather the name be more specific to the region of the world where it is carrying out its activities. 'Tropical and Subtropical ...' could be a more apt name to me
- The old name ILCA rings better.
- Well CGIARs are all acronym that way, so it makes sense
- Any way if the "R" could be replaced by a "D", it could may be better, because at my understanding, the development (D) sounds more close both to researchers, farmers, nonspecialized policy-makers, but the Research (R) sounds more close especially to researchers and professionnals than to the others categories
- The effort made in the last 10 years on the field of " innovation system" is not valued in the present name and acronym, maybe in adding a second "I" may be justified: ILIRI: International Livestock Innovation and Research Institute or ILRII: International Livestock Research and Innovation Institute
- ILRI does not have an international dimension and is totally absent in many areas of the world. What is ILRI contribution to livestock research in Europe, North Africa, West Asia and many other regions of the world.
- No, I like the name...
- The name clearly indicate the mandate of the organisation

Staff: Have you encountered people commenting positively or negatively on the name 'international livestock research institute' or the acronym 'ILRI'?

	all	HQ	Region
Yes	48.8%	53.6%	40.0%
No	51.2%	46.4%	60.0%

Selected comments

- In Asia, when we pronounce ILRI, people understand IRRI
- Scientists from ARC South Africa think highly ILRI and would like to work for ILRI for two reasons: ILRI is prestigious - good name; Remuneration
- Many people have difficulty to pronounce the acronym. They often said IRLI instead of ILRI .
- The name says that they are big organisation for livestock research, but very few people are known about ILRI work.
- When people see the name of the institute they identify it with the sector. Is different than in the case of other CGIAR Centers whose name do not indicate the commodities they are working on.
- People not knowing what type of research we do and whether we go out to assist farmers
- Not the name but 'what does ILRI do'.....KARI's impact more felt that ILRI etc
- ILRI is the institution to collaborate with when you know you need good quality work--and uncompromised results
- Only problem is confusion for peoples with 'L' - 'R' pronunciation problems!
- People think we only work on livestock (animal) issues which is a very limited view/understanding of the wide mandate we have. Private Sector/UN agencies do not know about the wider agenda we have/can support/work on.
- Positive, well known among researchers within in my field in my home country.
- We are not doing pure livestock work, hence we should adopt better name.
- they comment negatively because they say they have no idea what we do for their livestock
- Given a disproportionately high number of economists at ILRI, the joke was that ILRI has now become another IFPRI.
- They talk of 'ILRAD' and always ask where did ILRAD go? What is ILRI? individuals do not understand why ILRAD disappeared and a new entity ILRI came into place
- Positively - speaks to ILRI's history.
- Negatively - outdated logo and does not speak to ILRI's future.
- They are generally surprised that agriculture work is also done here, and considering there is so much of it (through BECA), ILRI does not represent the whole of the work we do here.
- ILRI sounds very close to IRRI and, as many acronyms, remains a mouthful to say for some.
- Most people don't even know what ILRI means or what it stands for.
- ILRI is known to employ the best scientists
- Usually i get only positive feedback, we are recognized as an important player in the national research systems
- it is not a totally negative comment but people do not easily recognize the name ILRI easily
- No complaints - but some people do sometimes pronounce ILRI as IRLI , ILerI, or some such
- In international meetings associated with livestock development and animal/ zoonotic diseases, ILRI's name is well-known.
- Yes, I encountered several situations where ILRI's name or acronyms have influenced positively. I think, we should not try to change the name or acronyms of ILRI but should try to do more to justify ILRI's name in true sense.
- reference to ILRI's name has often been made to distinguish its 'fair broker' role as international and evidence-based, rather than sounding like an NGO with an agenda

- As a former UN staff, if I mention(ed) the name ILRI doors do not automatically open.....maybe among traditional (research) partners it does but not with "new" partners that we will increasingly (seek to) work with.
- yes the name ILRI to those who know is synonymous with high class research and many in the science fields would like to be associated with it.
- Most reports or reviews from ILRI is taken more seriously also because we seem to be not biased in our reporting
- Usually positively- high quality and objective research
- But not because of the name but related to a partners experiences with the organisation previously - can be good, bad, traditional (focused on what we used to do) etc.
- possible partnership with One Acre Fund. Name rung a bell although they did not seem to know much about what we do but the name gave them enough clues to know that we might be an appropriate research partner for them