United Nations University
Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA)

Strategic Plan
2011 - 2014

Africa Centre for Green Growth:
Enhancing Capacities for Managing Africa’s Natural Resources

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Strategic plan 2011-2014

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This United Nations University – Institute for Natural Resources Africa (UNU-INRA) Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2014 draws lessons from and builds upon previous strategic documents that have guided the Institute’s work over the past decade. UNU-INRA consulted extensively with key stakeholders and made an elaborate analysis of an exercise it undertook in Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).

Africa’s human and natural resources constitute the continent’s most important endowments. In spite of the rich natural resource base and significant economic growth it has witnessed in the last five years, Africa remains poor. Harnessing these human and natural resources, therefore, offers the only genuine path for sustainable development on the continent.

Nearly 25 years after UNI-INRA was established, it now aims – with this Strategic Plan – to reposition itself in view of recent worldwide developments and trends. The new discourse on the green economy and the fact that most countries in Africa will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the one of environmental sustainability, justify this re-positioning and indeed make it an imperative. The huge knowledge gaps and the lack of capacity for managing Africa’s natural resources make a powerful case for additional efforts to enhance and to build these capacities on the continent.

This Strategic Plan identifies three priority program areas that will be the basis of UNU-INRA’s work. These are: harnessing land and water resources for efficient and sustainable use; promoting conservation and developing the green economy, and; governing and managing the extractive industries. These three program areas will be undertaken within the framework of a continuum of research – training – policy development.

Two strategic directions will guide UNU-INRA’s research and capacity development over the next four years. First, the Institute will develop and improve capacity for research and training in and policy development for natural resource management (NRM) in Africa. The objectives are: to strengthen research and training capacity; to facilitate and support knowledge development; to enhance the collaboration and coordination of research funding for NRM; to develop and manage knowledge delivery systems, and; to strengthen collaborations with governments, other UN organisations, the private sector and civil society organisations.

Secondly, the Institute will strengthen its operating structures and networks. It will accomplish this by: enhancing the UNU-INRA image and operational structures; strengthening the links between UNU-INRA and the Operating Units (OUs) and also within the OUs; reviving and reinforcing the College of Research Associates (CRA) Network, and: strengthening the twinning arrangement with the United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP).

The Institute’s unique and important niche role is the strengthening of the capacity of African universities and research institutions to address – by developing sustainable solutions - problems related to natural resource management. This Strategic Plan is not cast in stone; rather it provides a strong but dynamic framework that positions and develops the Institute to achieve this important goal and fulfill its niche on the continent and beyond. To ensure that it is serving the evolving needs of its major stakeholders, UNU-INRA will maintain flexibility in the implementation of the plan. This it will accomplish by close monitoring and reporting on progress and results.
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List of Acronyms

AAU  Association of African Universities
AAS  African Academy of Sciences
AfDB  African Development Bank
AFF  African Forest Forum
AGRA  Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ANAFE  African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education
AU  African Union
CDM  Clean Development Mechanism
CGIAR  Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research
COE  Committee of Experts
CODESRIA  Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa
COMESA  Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CRA  College of Research Associates
DANIDA  Danish International Development Agency
DFID  UK- Department for International Development
ECOWAS  Economic Community of West African States
EITI  Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU  European Union
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GIZ  German International Cooperation
IEP  Intensive Endowment Promotion
JICA  Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG  Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD  New Partnership for Africa's Development
NORAD  Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NR  Natural Resources
NRM  Natural Resource Management
OU  Operating Unit(s)
PHEA  Partnership for Higher Education in Africa
PWYP  Publish What You Pay
RUFORUM  Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SADC  Southern African Development Community
SIDA  Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TWAS  Third World Academy of Sciences
UNEC  United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNU  United Nations University
UNU-INRA  United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa
UNU-ISP  United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace
USAID  United States Agency for International Development
Introduction

Several attempts have been made since 2006 to develop a Strategic Plan for the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA). The first draft developed in 2006 was examined by the UNU-INRA Board and recommendations were made for its revision. The revised version, which was subsequently approved by the Board, coincided with the appointment of a new Rector of the United Nations University system. On his appointment as the new Rector, he articulated some new strategic directions. The UNU-INRA Strategic Plan was then revised to incorporate some of these new ideas. A third draft of the Plan was further revised but not submitted to the Board for approval. The current Strategic Plan takes into account the ideas developed in previous drafts. It also builds upon previous strategy documents of the Institute and has been developed with input from a select and diverse group of key stakeholders and partners.

Vision

UNU-INRA’s vision is to be the leading institution in Africa in capacity building for research in natural resource management (NRM). The main targets are African universities and other national and regional organisations. UNU-INRA’s goal is to be a catalyst in knowledge creation for efficient use of the continent’s natural resources, thus leading to the improvement of livelihoods on the continent.

Mission

The mission of UNU-INRA is to empower African universities and research institutions through capacity strengthening. This will enable them to conduct high-quality research and produce a cadre of well-trained, well-equipped and highly motivated individuals. The knowledge created and the increased capacity should be useful in developing, adapting and disseminating technologies that promote efficient and sustainable use of the continent’s natural resources.
**Purposes**

At the 38th Session of the UNU Council, held in December 1991, the Council established the multi-faceted rationale for and the role of the UNU-INRA to ensure it fulfils its mission. Its main purposes are to:

- Undertake work in the area of natural resources within the overall university research and training program;
- Assist African countries and other non-African developing countries to better appreciate and mobilize their natural resource endowment for the benefit of their peoples;
- Promote the sustainable development and use of natural resources through the generation of knowledge and application of scientific knowledge and innovative technological approaches, and by formulating appropriate planning and policy options, thereby improving livelihoods and enhancing social and environmental capital in Africa and beyond;
- Increase the understanding of the socio-economic and other aspects of natural resources in the context of self-reliant sustainable development;
- Contribute to the strengthening of national and other institutions, building of capabilities for endogenous research, development and consultancy in African and other developing countries, to enhance sustainable use and protection of their natural resource endowments;
- Encourage inter-disciplinary research and development efforts, advanced training and dissemination of knowledge in the area of natural resources, and;
- Disseminate widely the knowledge and experience gained from this work to the academic and scientific communities everywhere, particularly in developing countries.

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**Converting Africa’s resources into sustainable wealth and human well-being**
Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

The development challenges confronting the African continent are well documented. Although, in terms of macroeconomic performance, the continent has done relatively well in recent years, the number of people living on less than a USD 1.00 a day has actually increased. Africa’s position in the global economy remains unenviable; it is still mainly a supplier of inexpensive labour force and raw materials. From the perspective of the United Nations Human Development Index, in 1980, Africa contained 21 of the world’s 45 least developed countries. In 2010, of the 169 countries for which data was available, 28 of the world’s least developed 30 countries in the world are African.

Food insecurity is high; more than 40% of the people in sub-Saharan Africa are food insecure. In addition, the continent remains the only part of the world where the absolute number of people and the percentage of the population that is chronically malnourished have continued to increase. Political conflicts and civil wars in many African countries are not only diverting human and material resources needed for development but are also exacerbating the depletion of Africa’s natural resource base.

 Estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) indicate that between the years 2000 – 2010 Africa had the second highest net annual loss of forest, of 3.4 million hectares. Poor and unsustainable management, including over-exploitation and the lack of transparency in the use of Africa’s natural resources by key actors, has resulted in rapid degradation or loss of genetic resources of indigenous food crops, useful plants and animals, and of soil, water and land resources. Overall, with just four years left for countries to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets, it is now evident that most African countries will fail to meet the MDGs
Of the 45,000 universities in the world and the world’s 4,005 research centres rated by Webometric in 2011, only two universities in Africa were within the best 500 top rated universities and only one research centre on the continent was rated in the top 300 in the world, and then only at 269th place. Africa lags behind in the critical mass of scientists needed for a coherent new approach to sustainable, resilient and equitable agricultural production in the face of climate change, the growing demand for food, environmental constraints, eroding agro-diversity and biodiversity and rising costs for fossil fuels. There are only 70 researchers per million people in Africa, compared with 130 in the Middle East and India, 550 in Latin America, 1,990 in Europe, 2,640 in North America and 4,380 in Japan.

Opportunities

Africa is richly endowed with human and diverse natural resources. This combination provides ample opportunities for addressing the multifaceted development challenges facing the continent.

Africa’s one billion people are its greatest asset. Its researchers are also working in some of the world’s best research centres and universities. Africa’s forests host a very significant proportion of the world’s reservoir of diverse genetic resources. Africa’s mineral wealth is legendary: the continent has 97 per cent of world reserves of chrome, 85 per cent of world reserves of platinum, and 64 per cent of world reserves of manganese. Africa is also one of the world’s major sources of crude oil, gold, diamonds, copper, tin, titanium dioxide, coltan (columbite–tantalite), bauxite, and uranium.

UNU-INRA is the only institution in Africa with UN recognition and support to develop and strengthen the capacity for research-based information to support natural resource management policy and decision-making. Within that context, the forthcoming international conference in Ghana, slated for 5 – 8 December 2011 to commemorate UNU-INRA’s 25th anniversary, also offers unique opportunities for the Institute to focus its operations and greatly broaden its visibility and influence.
Program areas

The foundation of the current Strategic Plan consists of the thematic clusters and programs that have been identified in the UNU Strategic Plan 2011–2014. UNU-INRA’s work will pool from the following two clusters: human and socio-economic development and good governance, and; global change and sustainable development. The corresponding program areas include climate change – adaptation and mitigation, sustainable land, agriculture and natural resources management and green economy.

UNU-INRA has identified three program areas (PA) in which it will concentrate its research, training and capacity development, and its policy work during the implementation period of this Strategic Plan.

These three program areas will be undertaken within the framework of the continuum of research – training – policy development. The first PA will emphasize the development of new information that emerges from research.

The second will focus on filling the gap and eliminating the dearth of capacity in the region. The third will deal primarily with policy development.

Although UNU-INRA will undertake its work in alignment with these program areas, it will undertake the activities with an eye to maintaining the continuum of research – training – policy development, while remaining proactive and responsive to changing conditions. The identified program areas are consistent with guidelines provided by the UN University System on the work of its institutes.
Harnessing land and water resources for efficient and sustainable use

Africa’s population is projected to rise to 1.8 billion by 2050. As the continent’s population continues to increase, there will be an even greater demand for food. The continent’s agriculture depends to a large extent on its natural resource base, most especially land and water. Soil degradation through wind and water erosion, exacerbated by farming practices that deplete soil nutrients and soil organic carbon pools, are major issues constraining food production in sub-Saharan Africa. Improving productivity by increasing fertility of inherently infertile or degraded soils as well as better management of the water resources will be critical in reducing poverty, improving food security and ensuring environmental sustainability. The themes in this program area include:

⇒ Evaluating and monitoring the state of land and water resources in Africa;
⇒ Introducing technologies for improved on- and off-farm water use and management, including recycling and water harvesting;
⇒ Understanding access and equity in distribution of and access to secure land and water resources;
⇒ Improving and encouraging innovation through appropriate technologies for effective management of small reservoirs;
⇒ Analysing the connections between climate change and the human activities that affect land use as agents contributing to pollution, carbon emissions and global warming;
⇒ Increasing soil nutrients and efficient use of water;
⇒ Assessing the sustainability of the creation of long-term carbon sinks on agricultural lands;
⇒ Understanding the potential and challenges of payment on ecosystem services (PES), and;
⇒ Exploring climate change adaptation through forecasting, early warning and adaptive capacity development for sustainable livelihoods.

Promoting conservation and developing a green economy

The Green Economy Initiative of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), with its payment for ecosystem services, as well as various national biodiversity initiatives in Africa, aim mainly to ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem services will be well reflected in natural resource management strategies and policies. The concept of a green economy is relatively new in most of Africa. As a consequence, the nexus between biodiversity conservation, PES and a green economy has not yet been well established or well understood by the various stakeholders, such as governments and other policy-makers, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society groups.

As noted earlier, Africa’s forests host a very significant proportion of the world’s reservoir of genetic resources. There is thus the need to promote this thematic area among the various stakeholders in Africa. But Africa cannot “conserve” what it does not know it has and it often
doesn’t appreciate what it has either. There is a serious lack of scientists capable of identifying, clas-
sifying and understanding the value of Africa’s genetic resources. UNU-INRA would catalyse the
development of capacity for Taxonomy and Systematics in Africa’s universities. The Institute’s aim
in pursuing this program area is to encourage and assist African governments and decision-makers
to review and refocus their policies, investment and public spending towards utilizing their natural
resources to promote clean technologies, including biotechnologies, renewable energy, agriculture
and waste management. The main themes for this program area are:

⇒ Training stakeholders on payment for ecosystem service, or PES, as a potential means of lift-
ing poor rural households out of poverty and ensuring future environmental security and sus-
tainability;
⇒ Catalysing capacity development in Africa’s universities to supply much-needed talents in
Plant and Animal Taxonomy and Systematics;
⇒ Designing strategies to develop and sustainably exploit the potential of biodiversity-based
industries;
⇒ Determining the environmental and economic impacts and relevance of invasive species on
biodiversity and food security;
⇒ Promoting the conservation, development and commercialization of underutilized and under
-valued crops and species with emphasis on medicinal and other useful plants, and;
⇒ Understanding the approaches that can be effectively employed to close the complex and
“leaky” nitrogen and phosphorous nutrient cycles.

Governing and managing the extractive industries

The Lagos Plan of Action upon which the Institute’s mandate was based emphasized
that Africa’s extractive industries are integral
to managing and benefiting from the natural
resource base. The exploitation of natural
resources presents opportunities, but also
enormous challenges for the continent. The
reality today is that countries that have high
concentrations of these extractive minerals
are often those that have been or currently
are embroiled in conflicts. This program area
aims to enhance the governance of the sector
in order to promote equitable wealth distrib-
ution, minimal environmental degradation
and loss of other natural resources (arable
land, water, etc) and sustainable management
of all natural resources. The priority themes
include:
⇒ Understanding and managing mineral ex-
traction and conflicts;
⇒ Conducting needs assessment and capacity
development for negotiations and imple-
mentation of natural resources-related Mul-
tilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
⇒ Encouraging large and sustained private
sector investment in the extraction and val-
ue addition to Africa’s agro-minerals such
as local phosphate rocks and rare elements,
and;
⇒ Examining policy options to create incen-
tives for investments in alternatives energy
production (bio/hydro energy, solar, wind)
Strategic Focus

Nearly 25 years since its inception, UNU-INRA has still to fulfil its potential as an institution that not only plays an important leadership role but also exerts considerable influence in setting the direction, pace and content of research, training and capacity building for natural resources management in Africa. Africa urgently needs just such an institution to fill this crucial niche, and UNU-INRA is well placed to rise to this challenge. This challenge is in fact an exciting opportunity for the Institute to draw on its strengths and its relatively short history to renew its commitment to the critical role of facilitating the development, accumulation and delivery of the knowledge base for sustainable natural resource development and management in Africa. To do this, the new strategic focus will consider and contextualize its original mission and objectives, laid out when UNU-INRA was first established, by shaping by the clear findings of its SWOT analysis, to pursue the niche the Institute was intended to fill. The new focus draws guidance from the overall Strategic Plan of the UNU for the period 2011–2014.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: Developing and improving capacity for research, training, and policy development for natural resource management in Africa.

This is the original mandate envisaged for UNU-INRA as embodied in its mission. It is a mandate that UNU-INRA has the sole comparative advantage to fulfil, given its operating structure consisting of the Operating Units (OUs), the network of scientists through the College of Research Associates (CRA), partnerships with other national research institutions and the twinning arrangements with UNU-ISP. There is no other university in Africa that has the network, mandate, operating infrastructure, and the professional stature and influence necessary to mobilize the requisite human and capital resources, and to train and develop the capacity of scientific and policy researchers. In addition, as was the dream of the founding fathers, UNU-INRA is uniquely positioned to mainstream research results for policy- and decision-making in the context of natural resource management. Giving priority to this strategic focus will ensure UNU-INRA does not duplicate the work of or compete with organizations within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and others on the continent. Rather, the Institute will play a complementary role of helping inform and enrich policy formulation and implementation, while deriving maximum benefits from projects that were based on cutting edge research.

Goal 1.1: Strengthen research and training capacity

Africa has an urgent need for new knowledge, tools and models that will enable the continent to strike the delicate balance between natural resource management and use, and economic growth, for its own sustainable development. This means it must find a way to sustainably utilize its natural resources and also safeguard its resource base to improve human livelihoods without compromising human and environmental health and other crucial resources – soil, water, genetic – for future generations. However, a key issue is the lack of indigenous capacity for research required to develop the critical knowledge base. UNU-INRA’s core business has traditionally been about strengthening research capacity in universities and research institutions, which it has done by funding research work and supporting cutting edge curriculum development.

The UNU-INRA will further strengthen its role by exploring, adopting, adapting and developing – in partnerships with relevant global organizations and institutions – new research tools and methodologies capable of producing robust results to inform policy- and decision-making for NRM. Building on the strong network forged with and between African universities, research institutions and the CRA, the Institute will mobilize, train and improve capacity in the application of these new research tools and methods.
Implementation Measures:

⇒ Conduct and support cutting edge research at African universities and research institutions;
⇒ Survey and access the training needs of researchers at the OUs and within the CRA membership;
⇒ Develop training materials, taking into consideration the information from the needs assessment, and;
⇒ Train the OUs to undertake high-quality research on NRM.

Goal 1.2: Facilitate and support knowledge development

UNU-INRA will strategically focus on developing the research skills and expertise of young and emerging African scientists, particularly female ones. By pursuing this goal, it will support the training of the next generation of policy- and decision-makers in natural resource management.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Establish and administer competitive grant programs for pre-doctoral dissertation, doctoral dissertation, post-doctoral and visiting scholar research, and;
⇒ Support and coordinate internship programs by encouraging partner institutions abroad to outsource literature reviews, data gathering, preliminary analysis and other research assistantship duties for their research work focusing on Africa to recent graduates so as to develop their skills, offer employment opportunities and encourage their interest for future career in NR and NRM research.

Goal 1.3: Enhance the collaboration and coordination of research funding for NR management in Africa

Several foundations are supporting research on natural resource management in African universities and research institutions. However, there is little communication and information sharing between and among foundations on, for example, what research programs are being funded, the skills and expertise of the researchers, and the results from the research. Published research results are often not disseminated to the right audience; that is the real end-users of the information. Sometimes these studies and reports remain on library shelves “gathering dust” when they could easily be disseminated using the Internet and modern communications facilities that are springing up rapidly in Africa. UNU-INRA has the appropriate network and infrastructure within its OUs and CRA to profile and mobilize researchers and coordinate research work to avoid duplication, maximize the utility of the research results for policy- and decision-making and ensure that future research builds on and reinforces past and existing research.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Establish and administer competitive grant programs for pre-doctoral dissertation, doctoral dissertation, post-doctoral and visiting scholar research, and;
⇒ Support and coordinate internship programs by encouraging partner institutions abroad to outsource literature reviews, data gathering, preliminary analysis and other research assistantship duties for their research work focusing on Africa to recent graduates so as to develop their skills, offer employment opportunities and encourage their interest for future career in NR and NRM research.

Forge links and strengthen collaboration with foundations and organizations within the framework of their work, for example, that of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA), which comprises foundations such as Rockefeller, MacArthur, and others. Joint activities can also be initiated with programs such as the Commonwealth Fellowship and Scholarship Plan and the International Foundation for Science to help exchange information and ideas. Collaboration with the Third World Academy of Science, which already exists, will be strengthened.

Work with partners to coordinate the allocation of resources for NRM, increasing benefits from the synergy generated by joint programs, and forge consensus on the right direction for funding research and capacity training, all of which will help establish best practices for research, including the most efficient and effective use of research funds.
Goal 1.4: Develop and manage knowledge delivery systems for natural resource policy and decision-making

Like its parent body, UNU-INRA could be described as a think tank with the goal of improving linkages between research and policy- and decision-making on natural resources management, for a seamless continuum between knowledge generation and knowledge application. To that extent, the Institute is an important asset for governments and policy- and decision-makers both in the public and private sectors. Consequently, it will concentrate on making timely and relevant information available to African governments, policy- and decision-makers within the public and private sectors on issues related to natural resources.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Collate current and relevant research information, package existing knowledge into accessible form for widespread dissemination and application.
⇒ Update and contextualize existing knowledge and facilitate the generation of new knowledge.
⇒ Develop a knowledge management system that links collated information on the current and updated relevant research at UNU-INRA OUs, CRA and affiliated institutions with the knowledge needs of policy- and decision-makers.
⇒ Coordinate a knowledge delivery system for disseminating and applying the relevant information in policy- and decision-making, tapping into existing and emerging communications opportunities in Africa, particularly the burgeoning use of mobile telephones, social media and Internet opportunities.
⇒ Reinstate the UNU-INRA annual lectures and organize national and regional public lectures and fora to create a dynamic and powerful platform for dialogue and exchange of ideas among scientists, civil society, and policy- and decision-makers.

Goal 1.5: Strengthen collaboration with governments, other UN organizations, private sector and civil society organizations for policy advocacy

There are a number of viable mechanisms for achieving the sustainability principle enshrined in the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 that are currently gaining traction. An example is UNEP’s Green Economy Initiative. Africa is confronted with the troubling paradox of increasing poverty and environmental degradation amid a rich endowment of natural resources. This unfortunate situation is bound to worsen in light of the arrival on the continent of new and highly competitive players such as China and India, which have joined the other, primarily Western, investors that have been exploiting natural resources in Africa for many years. The aim of promoting a green economy in Africa will be achieved only when there is effective and coherent collaboration between the private sector and the public sector, including government, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Support governments through research, capacity building and policy analysis to implement multilateral agreements and national regulatory frameworks that stimulate and advance the benefits of the green economy in Africa;
⇒ Take the leadership role in mobilizing the perspectives and positions of African scientists, policy- and decision-makers for the Rio+20 Conference scheduled for 2012 in Brazil;
⇒ Engage companies (including multinationals) whose productive activities rely on natural resources in Africa as partners to help sponsor UNU-INRA events, help fund policy research and collaborate in moving forward with the implementation of some of the research results for corporate policy- and decision-making, thereby making their operations sustainable, more
Success in accomplishing the strategic objectives outlined in this document hinges greatly on the strengthening of the operational structures of UNU-INRA to make the Institute more effective in linking structures and processes that contribute to the achievement of its mission. UNU-INRA will therefore focus on improving its operational structures at its headquarters in Accra, Ghana, at the OUs by improving the coordination between them and Institute headquarters, and at the level of its twinning partnership with UNU-ISP, while reviving and strengthening the CRA network.

Goal 2.1: Enhance UNU-INRA image and operational structures

UNU-INRA will strategically focus on improving its operational structures at its headquarters and will strive to enhance its image and increase its visibility and influence in Africa and internationally. It will focus also on broadening and strengthening its stakeholder and partnership mechanisms, diversifying its resource mobilization base and increasing the synergy with partners and sponsors.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Set up a systematic internal management process.
⇒ Use the provisions enshrined in the UNU personnel policies to pursue longer-term appointments for senior research and teaching staff, as recommended in the UNU Strategic Plan 2011–2014, to ensure stability and continuity in UNU-INRA programs.
⇒ Utilize UNU training and human resources management programs to improve the quality of work of both the administrative and academic staff.
⇒ Conduct periodic brown-bag seminars and lectures to encourage the sharing of knowledge and information.

Goal 2.2: Strengthen the links between UNU-INRA and the OUs and within OUs

Major structural components of UNU-INRA are the OUs. However, the Statute setting up UNU-INRA does not provide sufficient guidance to enable these nodes to operate effectively. Furthermore, the current five OUs have different funding mechanisms, have minimum interaction with each other, and coordination from UNU-INRA headquarters is often loose. In some cases, this has resulted in research activities that were not focused on the Institute’s core program areas. The activities at the OUs and UNU-INRA headquarters can be mutually reinforcing when they are harmonized, coordinated and implemented to realize common strategic objectives.

Implementation measures:

⇒ Develop and implement Rules of Procedures and Standards of Operation for UNU-INRA and OUs consistent with Article VII Section 2 of the UNU-INRA Statutes.
⇒ Enhance the coordination between UNU-INRA and OUs to harmonize research and training activities, resource mobilization, evaluation, performance monitoring and reporting, and research publications.
⇒ Encourage and support collaboration between OUs for effective allocation of research resources and to maximize synergy between and among OUs.

⇒ Create the platform for dialogue and stimulate discussion on collaborative governance of the extractive industries to help improve sustainable management and improve the living conditions, particularly those of the communities where those natural resources are located.
Goal 2.3: Revive and Enhance the CRA Network

Another institutional structure prioritized in this strategic focus is the CRA network and partnership framework. It is an essential pillar for the major strategy of “strengthening partnerships with African scientists and research institutions”. The CRA could also serve as the framework for mobilizing and engaging relevant African scientists and professionals in the Diaspora in the work of the Institute. UNU-INRA will build on this network to forge collaborative research links with African researchers in the Diaspora who may have relatively greater access to current and sophisticated research tools (for quality research) but may not be current on African research issues and indigenous knowledge (for relevant research). Similarly, this is also highly relevant for researchers in African Universities who may have relatively greater access to and better understanding of current research issues in Africa and indigenous knowledge (for relevant research) but may lack access to current and sophisticated research tools (for quality research). The Institute intends to develop and help realize the immense research potential of this complementarity.

Implementation Measures:

⇒ Structure researchers into a two-tier network consisting of a Registry of Researchers (ROR) and a College of Research Associates (CRA). Members of the CRA will be selected from the ROR using criteria for recognition and value process similar to that of the UNESCO Professorship. Current CRA members would be grandfathered in the process of selecting and evaluating CRA recognition.

⇒ Make provisions for online membership registration and database management of ROR and CRA members.

⇒ Use the ROR and CRA framework and collaboration with the OUs to organize training and research capacity development for African scientific and policy researchers.

Goal 2.4: Strengthen the Twinning partnership with UNU-ISP

The Twin Institute partnership and operational mechanism outlined in the overall UNU Strategic Plan 2011–2014 is also considered in this strategic focus. UNU-INRA currently has a twinning partnership established with the UNU Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP). This partnership can be solidified by developing joint research and training proposals for funding and by carrying out joint research, training and capacity building programs. Moreover, UNU-INRA may have to play an instrumental role in UNU-ISP’s current initiatives in Africa to ensure their sustainability.

Implementation measures:

⇒ Expand and improve UNU-INRA’s role in the implementation of UNU-ISP projects.

⇒ Formalize arrangements for allocating assignments, funding and general governance of the twinning partnership with UNU-ISP.

⇒ Pursue the development of joint research and training proposals for funding and implementation.
The operational modalities look at the structuring framework necessary to mobilize UNU-INRA constituents, stakeholders, partners and sponsors for effective implementation of the measures outlined in this strategic plan.

**Operating Units (OUs)**

UNU-INRA will strengthen the OUs. Interaction within the OUs and the coordination from the UNU-INRA headquarters will be strengthened to enable them to implement, monitor and report on UNU-INRA research and training activities. The Institute’s coordination role will harmonize this interaction and improve the synergy between OUs, mutually reinforcing the respective activities that lead to the realization of the objectives and outcomes of the Strategic Plan. During the Plan period, the Institute will study the feasibility of establishing three to five additional OUs in the following candidate countries: Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Although OUs are theme-based, each OU would be encouraged to formulate its research activities to cover the strategic program areas of UNU-INRA, as outlined in this Strategic Plan. The OUs will be institution-centred rather than researcher-centred.
The ROR and CRA Network
As noted in 3.18, the ROR and CRA network will be the major pillar for mobilizing, training and developing researchers’ capacity, generally, and to carry out UNU-INRA scientific and policy research specifically. UNU-INRA will utilize broader networks, such as the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Third World Academy of Science (TWAS) to build the ROR and CRA membership. ROR and CRA members will be contacted and requested to provide information on their research activities for the knowledge management system. The Institute will outsource its research and consultancy activities only to members with CRA recognition. CRA members would be required to comply and honor agreed deliverables of the research contracts and would be encouraged to mentor ROR members for CRA recognition. UNU-INRA will organize training and capacity development courses for both ROR and CRA members.

It will also engage the ROR and CRA network for its outreach to the Diaspora and mobilization of that pool of expertise, to harness global science and technology resources for NRM policy- and decision-making. UNU-INRA will build on the ROR and CRA network by profiling and selecting members with distinguished career achievement and organize them into Committees of Experts (COE). The COEs will serve as technical and consultative groups to support African delegates in negotiating and implementing multilateral environmental agreements relevant to NRM development in Africa.

Visiting Scholars and Fellowship Programs
UNU-INRA has initiated a visiting scholars program to offer seasoned researchers the opportunity to spend between three and six months at UNU-INRA headquarters. The visiting scholars can profit from this time to finalize and publish results of research relevant to the UNU-INRA program focus, while contributing to the Institute by participating in seminars and other information-sharing activities. Visiting scholars will be selected on the basis of a competitive call for proposals. UNU-INRA is considering the possibility of extending the program to the OUs, which may require upgrading of their capacity and also facilities that enable them to host visiting scholars. The Institute is also working on a competitive grants program to provide young scientists in Africa with the opportunity to develop and pursue research interests that intersect with those of UNU-INRA, and also provide them with the opportunity to get their research results published.

Partners, sponsors and other stakeholders
UNU-INRA will pursue partnerships, intensifying and dramatically broadening its network of collaborators, which will increase its profile and its influence at all levels and allow it to fulfill its role and its important niche on the continent. It will strengthen its twinning relationship with UNU-ISP and forge collaboration with other UNU institutes and programs and UN organizations whose focus areas, research and capacity development interests intersect with its own. It will pursue partnerships with foundations within the PHEA to help coordinate research funding and harmonize research and capacity development activities related to natural resources in Africa. As stated above, the Institute will strategically partner with academic networks such as the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), TWAS and the AAU for the CRA network. UNU-INRA will seek collaboration and
thus build synergies with the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), African Forest Forum (AFF), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE). Partnerships will be sought with universities in the North as well as in the South. UNU-INRA will strengthen its collaboration with regional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union (AU) and the AU-Secretariat for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU-NEPAD), and many others. UNU-INRA will also forge inter-institutional and stakeholder cooperation with African governments and civil society organizations and engage the private sector and multinational firms whose operations draw on natural resources. The Institute will seek collaboration with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and with Publish What You Pay (PWYP)

Partnering for effective research, capacity development and policy for sustainable natural resource management and development in Africa
During the period covered by the current Strategic Plan, UNU-INRA will constantly assess and evaluate its effectiveness against its mission and objectives. To accomplish this, it will need to focus on and thus achieve the strategic goals that have been laid out in the Plan. It will also be important to monitor and report on how the Institute evolves as an organization.

An understanding of the impact and benefits of UNU-INRA’s work and the changes that it has helped to bring about will be a key prerequisite for measuring its success in achieving its planned goals. The Institute will strive to enhance both its organizational and program effectiveness. To achieve this, a range of techniques, strategies, sources of information and evidence will be used. Priority will be given to the following:

- Providing guidelines for the formulation and management of projects to the OUs to ensure that they have the minimum human resources required to develop and implement a coherent research program in at least two program areas of the Institute.
- Regularly assessing the activities of the OUs through external evaluations to identify areas for improvement.
- Regularly updating the list of members of the College of Research Associates, and making special efforts to ensure that all the main disciplines are represented. Budgetary allocations will be made to facilitate the work of the Associates.
- Undertaking, using external evaluators, regular assessment (every two years) of the research and training agenda to determine whether or not the Institute’s activities are still relevant, taking into account recent developments in the field, and congruent with the overall strategic plan of the UNU system. The assessment of the training courses will also examine how UNU-INRA is delivering the courses.
- Assessing, with continuous evaluation, whether staff numbers and the skill mix are appropriate and whether UNU-INRA has the human resource capacity to meet future needs to implement its Strategic Plan.
- Organizing regular meetings of the UNU-INRA Board, for documenting and implementing strategic directions provided by the Board.
- Establishing a knowledge management system at the Institute that will facilitate wide access to UNU-INRA’s information resources and the documentation of research and training outputs.
- Developing a resource mobilization strategy and reporting annually on the implementation of the strategy, thus ensuring that both internal and external resources are used judiciously and effectively.
- Ensuring that a robust and dynamic internal communication system is in place and that the information and technology (IT) facilities are upgraded regularly. A communication strategy has been developed.
- Preparing – and obtaining Board input on and then approval of – the Institute’s annual program of work and budget, as well as its annual activity and financial reports.

The Director of UNU-INRA, with the assistance of the Finance and Administrative Officer, will ensure that the necessary mechanisms and strategies are put in place to enhance both the organizational and program effectiveness of the Institute.
UNU-INRA currently needs about USD 1.7 million per year to cover core costs. With the current goal of having at least three additional OUs, four Senior Fellows at the Accra office and at least one Research Fellow at each of the OUs, it is anticipated that UNU-INRA will need a minimum operational budget of USD 2.5 million per year.

**Resource Mobilization Strategy**

To be competitive and successful in its resource mobilization drive, UNU-INRA will design and consistently implement clear-cut strategies and highly relevant projects that are readily implemented. These strategies will be fine-tuned with feedback obtained regularly during the resource mobilization activities.

**NICHE:** UNU-INRA will pursue its activities to establish its key and unique niche in

- Training, mobilizing & outsourcing research (OUs, CRA)
- Mainstreaming research results into policy- and decision-making, and into NRM contracts
- Mobilizing CRA for technical assistance (network of scientific experts) for negotiating and implementing MEAs and for consultancy services.

**POSITIONING:** UNU-INRA will seek to position itself as the “GO-TO Institute” in Africa for research, training, capacity development, delivery and management of knowledge needs of end-users for policy- and decision-making on natural resources (1. Land, Animal, Climate, Agriculture and Forestry Resources; 2. Water Resources; 3. Marine Resources; 4. Mineral Resources, and; 5. Energy Resources including oil & gas, solar, hydroelectric, geothermal, etc).

**VALUE PROPOSITION:** UNU-INRA will carry out its scoping, positioning and prospecting for funds and resources by consistently focusing on: the interests and priorities of partners, donors, constituencies and stakeholders; opportunities for creating or enhancing synergies, and; evaluating UNU-INRA’s competency in and capacity for value-added services.

**Resource Mobilization Segments**

UNU-INRA will segment its resource mobilization efforts into: (1) Endowments; (2) Special Project/Program Contributions (SPCs); (3) Consultancy, and; (4) Equipment and Event funding. UNU-INRA will pursue a clear strategy for each of these segments. It is expected that all senior staff, unit coordinators and the Board members will play an active role in resource mobilization.
Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

Reporting

UNU-INRA will institute effective reporting mechanisms to clearly and systematically document its activities. It will also maintain all current methods of reporting, which include: the annual report to the Rector; the financial reporting using the ATLAS – a customized financial and project management software being used by UNU and some UN agencies - and the internal reporting (which has been effective for the past few years). During the implementation of this Strategic Plan, reporting will be expanded and intensified to reflect all the operations of the Institute, including its technical (research, training and capacity building) and financial aspects.

Reports on all training and capacity development workshops will be completed a maximum of three weeks after the training, using standard reporting formats. The final reports, which will include the abstract and appendices, will be posted at the UNU-INRA website and also be sent to all the OUs, CRA members and relevant stakeholders. OUs will provide monthly reports on current issues or initiatives in which the Units are involved and on the status of current research and any other relevant information. In turn, the relevant information from these monthly reports would be used in the UNU-INRA quarterly newsletter. Reports of projects for partners and donors will, where applicable, follow the format that they specify.
Monitoring & Evaluation

One unfortunate oversight in UNU-INRA’s operation has been a lack of evaluation, risks and performance monitoring of programs and also insufficient consideration of “feedback” issues in subsequent research and capacity development activities. With the implementation of this Strategic Plan, henceforth UNU-INRA will closely monitor all its administrative and academic operations. Monitoring and evaluation of administrative and academic personnel has been noted in paragraph 5.2. Progress on all UNU-INRA projects, programs and activities will be evaluated to ascertain and establish that the intended outputs are generated and that they are producing the expected outcomes, as laid out in either the Logical Framework or the Results Management Framework. The evaluation will also determine if the program and research activities that are being implemented are consistent with the strategic objectives and that the outcomes are meeting the expectations of the participants and stakeholders.

On capacity development, pre- and post-training evaluations will be conducted on the materials and course content, communication, delivery and applicability. In addition, the Institute will periodically follow up with training participants to ensure that all future accrued and additional benefits are taken advantage of. For research projects, evaluation will be done on the progress of the project every two months, taking into consideration what was outlined in the work plan. From time to time, the Director will also assign monitoring and evaluation roles to staff members, in addition to their regular duties.

Apart from evaluating the research, training and capacity development activities, UNU-INRA will also evaluate the partnerships and collaborations with CRA members, agencies, institutions and foundations with which it has links or with which it collaborates. Contracts with researchers, consultants and institutions will emphasize the fulfilment of responsibilities and duties, and mandate these partners to submit bi-monthly progress reports. For these reasons, UNU-INRA will carry out readiness assessment to ensure the CRA or institution has the capacity, the willingness and the resources to implement the outsourced project or to fulfil allotted assignments of joint projects to achieve the intended objectives. Based on the mutual benefits, impacts and synergies with agencies and institutions, UNU-INRA will determine whether to pursue the partnership, or to suspend or even sever it.
The following is an assessment of risk factors that could impede the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan. A detailed log framework analysis for the strategic objectives of the Institute has also been prepared but is not presented in this document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Mitigating Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNU-INRA is able to secure sufficient financial resources to kick-start the process of rejuvenating the Institute and by so, doing attract additional support and resources</td>
<td>Insufficient financial resources to fund the intended activities.</td>
<td>UNU-INRA has started the process for intensive resource mobilization, particularly to increase the endowment fund, and secure external funding (SPCs) for activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNU-INRA is able to find and recruit capable and motivated staff to sustain the transformation of the Institute</td>
<td>Lack of funding and employment security to attract experienced personnel and to retain personnel recruited and trained by UNU-INRA.</td>
<td>UNU-INRA will work with UNU to implement the personnel policies outlined in the UNU Strategic Plan 2011–2014 to pursue longer-term appointments for both academic and professional staff.</td>
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<td>UNU Strategic Plan for 2011–2014 is implemented without major changes, which may adversely affect the implementation of UNU-INRA activities.</td>
<td>Major adverse changes in UNU-Strategic Plan 2011–2014</td>
<td>UNU-INRA will work with the Board and the Rector to ensure that any adverse changes are anticipated and alternative arrangements made to mitigate any significant negative impact(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNU-INRA will not compete with major constituencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNEP, FAO, and others, as well as other universities and research Institutions in Africa.</td>
<td>Competition that may &quot;crowd out&quot;, duplicate and render UNU-INRA activities redundant.</td>
<td>UNU-INRA will consistently explore and establish its niche in activities that can help complement and enhance synergies with constituents, partners and sponsors.</td>
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As UNU-INRA celebrates 25 years of existence, it is time for the Institute to take stock of its accomplishments and to develop a road map that will guide its activities through the next four successful years. This Strategic Plan aims to position UNU-INRA as it embarks on its mission to strengthen the capacity of African universities and other research institutions to undertake research and training in natural resource management. This mission encapsulates UNU-INRA’s niche role on the continent and also globally.

This Plan is not set in stone; indeed it reflects UNU-INRA’s decision to develop itself into a dynamic institution that is responsive to rapid changes in Africa and around the world. It does, however, provide crucial guidance in setting the new and well-focussed direction for UNU-INRA programs and activities. It is intentionally designed to be flexible to enable UNU-INRA to adjust and pro-actively respond to changes that are likely to occur in the research and training required for sound and sustainable natural resource management on the continent.

The implementation of this Plan will enable UNU-INRA to move closer to and eventually realize its vision of serving as the primary catalyst for stimulating and enhancing the capacity of African universities and research institutions to create new knowledge in science and technology, both in and for Africa. Looking ahead, UNU-INRA will consist of a workable and optimal number of OUs, a strong network of College of Research Associates, a vibrant visiting scholars’ program and it will become a leading campus for research and training in natural resource management. To accomplish this, UNU-INRA will forge linkages and build synergies with like-minded institutions, which will in turn reinforce and strengthen its niche role in Africa – and beyond.

This Strategic Plan has set out the strategic objectives, priority program areas and operational modalities, amongst others, that will ensure that UNU-INRA’s work truly delivers and matches or even exceeds expectations over the next four years. The Plan builds upon the UNU’s strategic thematic areas and has been deepened and broadened by consultations undertaken with a select and diverse group of key stakeholders.

The Plan provides a holistic framework that will strengthen the work of the Institute. However, its implementation will depend on the successful mobilization of human and financial resources.

UNU-INRA Board read, discussed and approved this plan on July 1, 2011.
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