

The design differences for early impact are not very different from conventional design. The process of knowing the farmer and doing on-farm trials are virtually the same. The difference comes from expecting production from research AND extension, not just from extension alone, and putting a reasonable pressure on research for early impact.

Expecting early impact will also mean that project sites will not be in the most difficult areas. However, that should not be a difference. Until an institution is fairly well developed with a considerable capacity, it is a doubtful strategy to expect it to perform in difficult ecological areas or in areas ill-served by infrastructure and markets.

### E. Basic National Capacity

Five elements can be considered as constituting Basic National Capacity in agricultural research and extension.

1. One is the ability to know and to understand the farmer clients and their systems of farming. This does not mean all farmers in all areas and all commodities. Choices have to be made, and the choice does not have to be the smallest farmers in the most difficult areas. Choices are difficult because so much has to be left unattended. It does mean that for the areas, problems, and commodities chosen there is a capacity to know and understand producers--and that the choices are limited to a scope that can be adequately attended by resources available.

2. The second element is the ability to generate technology OR the ability to import it. For the concept of basic national capacity it makes no difference which of these abilities exist or if they exist in combination. What is significant is that farmers are offered technological opportunities, and that the national R/E system has the capacity to do this on a continuing basis. Many countries have little chance to develop a sustainable capacity to generate technology, even in a few commodities. Most countries can develop the capacity and the management system to monitor the world technology system for likely technology.

3. The third element is the ability to test the technological alternatives IN the relevant farming systems and BY criteria of those systems. This also requires hard choices to keep the program scope within institutional resources.

4. The fourth element is the ability to inform farmers of improved technology and to instruct them on its use. Some technology is very easy for farmers to learn and integrate into their operations, and little more is needed than to demonstrate it. Other technologies are increasingly difficult to work into the system and more instructional effort is needed. Basic capacity can begin with ability to handle the simpler technology.