

Summary of previous round of the debate:

Human resources development

Discussions have so far attributed the misalignment between the technical and managerial requirements of the agro-industrial sector to weak linkages between food science academic programmes and the food industry. Broadening of food science and technology curricula to integrate skills development in business, finance and management training, the development of internship programmes designed to foster entrepreneurship and collaborative research programmes between universities and industry, were identified as key interventions required to address this misalignment.

Professional training in the areas of agro-economics, rural development, organizational management and agricultural sociology were also identified as key support elements for the development of competitive agro-industries.

Apart from hardware and technical training, the need for community initiatives and efforts to foster entrepreneurship in small farming communities was noted. On-the-job informal training through the use of training manuals/modules was also highlighted as one way of enhancing the capacity of food experts.

The focus will now move on to a more in depth discussion on prioritization of the level of training to meet the needs of competitive agro-industries.

Current focus of the debate

Should countries prioritize the training of a few highly qualified professionals (e.g. MSc, Ph.D) or opt to develop the skills and capacities of a large number of individuals (e.g. BSc, vocational training, on the job training) at a lower level?

What are the risks and benefits of pursuing either avenue?