

Additional Comments on the Report of the WGSC

1. FAO Comments (Communication from J. Ekebil to ExCo on September 27, 2002)
2. NGOC Comments (Communication from A. Waters-Bayer to ExCo on September 26, 2002)
3. Cross-Cutting Issues And Synergies Between GFAR and CGIAR's Science Council (Draft paper distributed at ExCo 3 on September 24, 2002)

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Subject: FW: FAO Comments on WGSC Report and Pilot Challenge Programmes

Francisco,

As agreed at ExCo 3, I am pleased to provide herewith FAO's written comments on the WGSC Report and the Pilot Challenge Programmes.

Best regards,

Jacques

WGSC Report

1. FAO wishes to stress that the SC's functions of monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment be seen as inter-related functions with the results of monitoring and evaluation feeding back into strategic planning.
2. The nominating procedure for SC Chair and members - be it by the Cosponsors, a new Nominating Committee, or some combination thereof - should take into account that SC's mandate involves assuring both the quality and relevance of science. Thus, candidates recommended for membership should not only pass scientific muster but also know how to link science to development in the context of the CGIAR's mandate. FAO continues to think the Cosponsors can play a role in ensuring that short-listed candidates satisfy this important criterion.
3. The work programme of the SC is very ambitious and it is not matched by an appropriately sized Council. The optimal size is 10-12 members, including the Chair.
4. The SC should have the authority to make non-binding recommendations on resource allocation. This is implicit in addressing issues of "imbalance" in the research agenda. Such judgements will ultimately have to be quantified if they are to provide the Group with a meaningful basis for decision-making.
5. The section dealing with SC's function of identifying priorities and strategies emphasises the Council's lead role, but does not specify who prepares the System-level strategic plan to which it refers. Lead responsibility should be assigned to the SC in partnership with Centres and Challenge Programmes.
6. The recommendation that "the SC should have full and unconditional authority in selecting the staff of the SC Secretariat" is inconsistent with the Decision 9 of

AGM01. The authority to recruit SC staff should satisfy FAO's legal obligations as host organization. Similarly, the recommended transition arrangements should also satisfy these legal obligations.

Pilot Challenge Programmes

A. Bio-Fortified Crops for Improved Human Nutrition

1. Only passing reference has been made to the role of biotechnology and plant breeding to reduce anti-nutrients and enhance bioavailability of micronutrients increased by biofortification. There is considerable work on the selection of germplasm and plant breeding to produce low phytate crops. Populations that consume a largely staple diet are also consuming diets rich in phytic acid which in turn binds tightly to micronutrients - in particular to two of the three micronutrients targeted by this proposal i.e. zinc and iron. FAO is collaborating on this issue with IAEA in Vienna. Mutants have been produced using isotopic techniques which are an alternative to classical biotech approaches to producing variations in genes and then breeding them. FAO particularly recommends the inclusion of Victor Raboy (USDA, Aberdeen, Idaho) and also the participation of FAO more directly with its staff in IAEA - e.g. Miroslaw Maluszynski (FAO, IAEA).
2. Regarding the priorities of crops with which the CP is dealing, no consideration has been given to crops that are known to be adapted to drought and thus more adapted to climate change. From the list of crops provided by the Programme, other than cassava, wheat can be moderately adapted to drought. The rest of the crops, including beans, maize, rice and sweet potatoes, cannot survive long periods of drought. FAO recommends including drought-tolerant crops in the first phase of the programme such as groundnut, sorghum and millet. These crops are widely cultivated in Africa, Brazil and India and the financial support for research on these crops is being reduced at the national level.
3. Table 10 (generic deliverables for six phase 1 crops) indicates that in three years the G x E interactions will be understood. The content of the proposal should clearly specify how this can be done and what are the new findings that allow this to be accomplished using conventional breeding. This topic has been under research for quite a long time producing very limited concrete results.
4. FAO considers the deliverable products presented for phase 1 to be overly optimistic, considering the timetable proposed.
5. Since EMBRAPA is involved in the maize and cassava research components, FAO suggests adding EMBRAPA's rice centre as Latin America would provide the Programme with national representation and since the crop is a staple food for many countries in the region.

B. Water and Food

1. The proposal underestimates the benefits of irrigated agriculture to food security, and the quality of livelihoods, even if it is widely recognised that there is great scope to improve performance of irrigation and water use efficiency. There is also much evidence of the benefits of irrigation (see, e.g. "Poverty reduction and irrigated agriculture", available at: <http://www.fao.org/iptrid/iptrid1.pdf>)
2. FAO does not share the observation that "Large-scale development of river and groundwater resources is less acceptable and less cost effective now than it was in the 1960-1990 period, when most of the world's 45,000 large dams were built". This is only

partially true as there are many areas and countries in the world in which irrigation development is well below its potential. There still exist many situations in which water development is highly cost effective.

3. On page 9 it is stated as an objective "To increase crop water productivity such that food security can be ensured and farmers' livelihoods enhanced without increasing water diverted to agriculture above the amount diverted in the year 2000". This may already be a non-achievable objective. FAO has estimated that there will be a 14 percent increase in water withdrawals for irrigation by 2030. ("World agriculture: towards 2015/2030" available at: <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/Y3557E/Y3557E00.HTM>)
4. FAO could play an important role in this initiative as it relates directly to food security and has a large capacity building component. However, the research questions are considered vague - e.g. factors influencing farmers' adoption of improved technologies, how people organize themselves with respect to water - and should focus more sharply on very specific questions. Also, the scope of the programme should not be restricted to sub-Saharan Africa.

C. Unlocking Genetic Diversity in Crops for the Resource-Poor

1. As one priority, the CP should concentrate on areas in which the private sector may not see a commercial interest, particularly on local and socially important crops, and as a further priority on delivering technologies and gene complexes to developing countries that are capable of increasing food security, and which otherwise might be unavailable for proprietary reasons.
2. FAO trusts the CP will more clearly take into account the requirements of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as they pertain the improved materials resulting from the proposed programme.
3. In the course of developing this CP, a number of complex decisions regarding IPRs will need to be taken. It is recommended that the prime focus be on maintaining the capacity of NARS, and the developing countries' public and private sectors, to access and use the technologies they require for local development.
4. FAO emphasises its interest in participating in this programme. It will, however, be very important to ensure that the focus is on (a) the needs, crops and environments of developing countries, and (b) the most effective ways of delivering the benefits and not promoting molecular technologies *per se*.

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Subject: Comments to add to SCWG report

Dear Francisco,

On Tuesday, we agreed that the report on the SCWG would be forwarded to the CGIAR members with comments from the ExCo. Here are the comments that Ian asked me to note down:

1. We wish to stress that the Science Council must consist of scientists who recognise that science in the context of the CGIAR should meet the goals of the international agricultural research **and development** community. This would require a slight amendment in the proposed expansion of SC responsibilities (Recommendation 1).
2. The SC should include a balanced representation of biological, physical and social sciences. This is stated (in parentheses) in the full report, but does not come out clearly in the summary and conclusions.
3. The SC should encompass a variety of perspectives on science, above all, giving recognition to the importance of people's science - indigenous knowledge, experimentation and innovation. This means that the links and partnerships of the SC - also with a view to persons in the Standing and Ad Hoc Panels - will have to go beyond academies of science, universities and formal research institutions/networks to include other organisations involved in participatory research and development in agriculture and natural resource management.
4. The report makes no mention of alignment with the GFAR, even though the SCWG suggests that the SC's responsibilities go beyond the ambit of the CGIAR system to provide a service to the "larger international agricultural and natural resources research communities". It is important that the SC seek to maximise complementarity and synergy with the activities of the GFAR in mobilising scientific expertise and promoting linkages for the benefit of international agricultural research and development, and avoid duplication of activities.

Best wishes,
Ann



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA

DRAFT
for Discussion

**CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN
GFAR and CGIAR's SCIENCE COUNCIL**

1. The Working Group (WG) envisages the CGIAR Science Council (SC) as a major new institutional innovation for international agricultural science and sustainable development. It proposes that the SC engage with and be relevant to the wider international agricultural and science community and seek the involvement of the wider scientific community. With this expanded and global SC mandate, the need for a stronger collaboration between GFAR and the CGIAR, through the SC, may be more apparent. As a stakeholder-led initiative, GFAR promotes research partnerships and strategic alliances among the key players involved in agricultural research for development (ARD), and serves as a neutral forum for the discussion of strategic issues among the stakeholders in ARD. As such, GFAR's efforts are clearly supportive to the aims of the SC for it provides a good vehicle in mobilizing various stakeholders in the agricultural research for development.
2. The WG on the Establishment of Science Council also recommended that the Science Council will advise the CGIAR on strategic scientific issues of importance to its goals, and to mobilize and harness the best of international science for addressing the goals of the international agricultural research community (Recommendation 2). Toward this end, the SC is proposed to include in its mandate the provision of independent, credible and authoritative advice and opinion on scientific issues relevant to the international agricultural research system. With GFAR mandated to serve as a neutral platform for the discussion of global (and perhaps controversial) issues related to agricultural research, it can also provide a promising venue in discussing various scientific issues relevant to the work of the CGIAR and those that have implications to various ARD stakeholders-acknowledging that possible differences of opinions do not preclude the enormous potential for cooperation.
3. The recommendation to establish a Standing Panel on Strategies and Priorities to facilitate its work in ensuring the relevance of science in the CGIAR System complements well GFAR's efforts in facilitating regional priority setting exercise. As neither SC nor GFAR can encompass the full range of areas that may need to be addressed, the two entities can work in synergy, relying on each one's comparative advantage. The proposed SC and GFAR can also work jointly in conducting dialogues with relevant stakeholders and representatives of target groups to be able to gain insights in developing and/or examining CGIAR's strategic plans and activities, as well as that of GFAR's. This collaboration also provides a good opportunity to ensure better linkages between GFAR and CGIAR at the regional/subregional level.
4. GFAR can also assist its the proposed Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (as articulated in Recommendation 6 of the WG) in developing linkages and partnerships with various regional/sub-regional and national fora, as well as other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, farmers organizations) on agricultural research with which GFAR collaborates.

COMPARISON BETWEEN GFAR¹ and the PROPOSED CGIAR SCIENCE COUNCIL

ITEM	GFAR ²	SCIENCE COUNCIL ³
1. Mandate and Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mobilize the scientific community and all stakeholders in agricultural research for development in their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote the sustainable use of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance and promote the quality, relevance and impact of science in the CGIAR, to advise the Group on strategic scientific issues of importance to its goals, and to mobilize and harness the best of international science for addressing the goals for the international agricultural research community • Ensuring scientific relevance and enhancing science quality is in the core of the Science Council's mandate
2. Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge in all agricultural research sectors: crop and animal production, fisheries, forestry and natural resources management • Promote the integration of NARS from the South and enhance their capacity to produce and transfer technology that responds to users' needs • Foster cost-effective, collaborative partnerships among the stakeholders in agricultural research and sustainable development • Facilitate the participation of all stakeholders in the formulation of a truly global framework for development-oriented agricultural research • Increase awareness among policymakers and donors of the need for long-term commitment to, and investment in, agricultural research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that science in the CGIAR is of high quality and is relevant to the development goals of the System • Provide science policy guidelines to the CGIAR on issues of strategic importance • Provide independent, credible and authoritative advice and opinion on scientific issues relevant to the international agricultural research system • Develop partnerships with the wider scientific community for the benefit of an international agricultural research agenda
3. Lines of Action/ Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information and communicate in more effective ways. • Discuss global, and often controversial, issues, acknowledging that possible differences of opinions do not preclude the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strong links/partnerships with leading scientific organizations worldwide, including Academies of Sciences, universities, research institutions and networks

¹ Comparison between GFAR as a whole and not the GFAR Secretariat.

² Based on GFAR Charter, October 2000.

³ Based from the document "Report of the Executive Council's Working Group on the Establishment of CGIAR Science Council," Trieste, Italy, August 2002.

	<p>enormous potential for cooperation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and build research partnerships that could materialize by the design and implementation of global programmes. • Provide institutional support to the different stakeholders, in particular the developing country NARS and their regional and sub-regional fora in order to strengthen their capacity to participate in the globalized environment of agricultural research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, in collaborations with the Centers, the System Office and external partners, a Roster/Inventory of the most active and committed researchers in agricultural and related sciences. Council should establish a peer-review based Evaluation System to facilitate decisions on inclusion of scientists in the Roster/Inventory • Organize, in collaboration with its partners, a periodic global conference in agricultural sciences to exchange views and experiences, promote linkages and advance the global agricultural research agenda. • Facilitate, in collaboration with the Centers, the sharing of experiences and the development of joint initiatives between scientists of the Centers and those of agricultural research institutions in the South
4. Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFAR Steering Committee • NARS Sub-committee • Donor Support Group (DSG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of 4 Standing Panels (SP) • SP on Strategies and Priorities • SP on Monitoring and Evaluation • SP on Impact Assessment (external) • SP on Mobilizing Science <p>• Ad-hoc Panels can be created based on a pool of Experts</p>
5. Head	<p>GFAR Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From NARS, elected by NARS constituency for a 3-year term 	<p>Science Council Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eminent scientist hired by the CGIAR for a 3-year term (renewable up to maximum of another 2 years)
6. Steering Committee/ Council Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 members representing the seven categories of Stakeholders: Regional Fora of the NARS from the South (5 seats), ARIs (3 seats), IARCs- (1 seat), NGO (1 seat), Farmers' organisations, Private Sector (1 seat), and Donor community (1 seat) • Nominated by their respective stakeholder group • While stakeholders are independent and autonomous, GFAR-SC acts as the governing body of the Global Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to eight individuals plus the Chair; • Composed of eminent scientists in disciplines relevant to the work of the CGIAR; • To be recruited either on a full-time or part-time basis • Work carried out through the SPs covering the 4 functional areas above (except Impact Assessment) • SC is an advisory-- not a decision-making-- body. The main decision-making bodies in the System are the CGIAR and the

7. Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice annually preceded by GFAR Management Team Meeting 	<p>board of individual centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually, 2-3 days supplemented with additional virtual meetings • To be reviewed and modified after 3 years
8. Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Secretary (Chief level) • Housed in FAO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director (Director level) • Housed in FAO
9. Annual Workplan and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GFAR Donor Support Group mobilizes GFAR annual budget, including that of the Secretariat • GFAR activities are carried out by the stakeholders themselves and the Secretariat plays the role of broker and catalyst. • "Cost sharing" • Annual Workplan and budget is approved by the Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed by Exco/Co-sponsors • System Office to help harmonize the activities of the SC with the activities of other CGIAR units