

**Report of the
First External Review of the System-Wide Programme
on Collective Action and Property Rights
(CAPRI)**

1. Summary and Recommendations
2. Response from IFPRI and SP-CAPRI Steering Committee
3. iSC Commentary

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The CGIAR System-Wide Programme on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI) was conceived in 1994 with the preparation of a concept note by IFPRI. CAPRI became accepted as a system-wide programme in 1996, with IFPRI as the convening centre, and by 1997 all 16 CGIAR centres had joined the Programme. Initial funding was provided by Sweden, and subsequently by Norway in 1996. Italy contributed financial support in 1998, and the Ford Foundation committed additional funds used to establish a competitive grants programme, which has generated substantial original research. There have now been three rounds of competition, with eight grants allocated, but the Ford Foundation funding is ending this year.

CAPRI's underlying premise is that Collective Action (CA) and Property Rights (PR) are important tools for empowering the rural poor, and its stated goal is "to contribute to policies and practices that alleviate rural poverty by analysing and disseminating knowledge on the ways that collective action and property rights institutions influence the efficiency, equity and sustainability of natural resource use." Within this framework, the Programme seeks to a) increase knowledge on the performance of voluntary, self-governing user associations/property institutions in managing natural resources; b) identify policy instruments that promote the formation, improved functioning and evolution of such institutions; and c) strengthen the research capacity of, and collaboration between, national and CGIAR centres in CA and PR.

CAPRI's structure comprises a Steering Committee (SC) consisting of representatives from the 16 CGIAR centres, NARS and independent experts. Its role is to oversee and approve strategies and activities, and to identify priority themes for research based on a set of guiding principles. A smaller Executive Committee (EC) annually reviews progress under the programme, and awards funding under the competitive grants scheme, based on the recommendations of an external Review Panel.

In March 2002, after seven years of funding, the CGIAR's interim Science Council commissioned a 3-member external Panel to evaluate the CAPRI programme. The Panel devoted two days to discussions with CAPRI and IFPRI staff in Washington D.C., and the Panel Chairman attended a 5-day Technical Workshop in Kenya on "Methodologies for Studying Collective Action," and the subsequent SC meeting.

Mechanisms, priorities and strategies for attaining overall goals

The Review Panel concludes that CAPRI's thematic foci are highly relevant to the CGIAR's goals of sustainably increasing production through technology adoption. Furthermore, the strategies, criteria and instruments used to implement its activities have worked efficiently with low transaction costs. Two ingredients for CAPRI's success have been transparency and participation, but national researchers merit a greater voice in the setting of priorities.

Effectiveness and efficiency in implementing activities

CAPRI has been very effective in knowledge generation through commissioned papers and workshops, and in information dissemination especially via its web site. Survey respondents on the Web site have stressed the value of CAPRI's working papers in strengthening their research.

The Panel believes the inclusion of policy-makers in CAPRI's Steering Committee (SC) and EC has been crucial in ensuring the policy relevance of research priorities. Collaboration with local organisations and researchers in policy workshops has contributed to the successful delivery of policies to governments, and such collaboration should be promoted.

Research capacity building is considered to be one of CAPRI's comparative advantages, and the workshops on research methods and policies are very effective to this end. The Panel recognises the impressive array of on-going research that CAPRI has helped promote, with more than 400 institutions having collaborated in 110 research projects on CA and PR issues. The competitive grant scheme has played an important role in fostering centres' interest, in attracting researchers from centres and NARS to work on CA and PR, and in leveraging additional research funds from centres. Nevertheless, there is a need to incorporate more NARS into CAPRI.

The Panel is of the opinion that the web site documents and workshops, especially those on methods, have contributed to greater coherence in the concepts and methods utilised in research programmes across the CGIAR system. However, the Panel encountered disparities in institutional research capacity and in centres' involvement in CA and PR research. The Panel suggests secondment of post-docs from NARS to selected CGIAR centres to strengthen their research capacity.

To achieve a more equitable participation by centres in CAPRI's activities, the Panel suggests strategically selecting workshop themes of greater relevance to centres that have not previously participated significantly, and to give weighting in the evaluation of research proposals to priority themes yet to be addressed. The Panel is of the opinion that when funding is scarce CAPRI's SC should decide whether to allocate grants for strengthening research capacity, or for promoting new research.

Relevance and quality of outputs and impacts

The Review Panel is very positive about CAPRI's outputs and their impacts, and particularly CAPRI's role in creating increased awareness by centres and NARS of the role of CA and PR research in natural resource management and technology adoption. The Panel believes that had it not been for CAPRI, the centres would have, at best, paid lip service to the inclusion of CA and PR in their research agenda. Furthermore, as in any system-wide programme, inter-centre collaboration has enabled the capture of synergies and latent capacities within NARS and other partners.

Although poverty eradication underlies most of CAPRI's work, the Panel believes a systematic study should be carried out on the relationships between CA, PR and poverty alleviation, to strengthen the underlying concept on which CAPRI is based. The Panel notes that CAPRI has developed specific policy findings for certain technologies that facilitate their adoption, and has acquired new insights into the need for CA to improve animal health. This

should be expanded to human health issues. The Panel regards the existing best practice on planning research for policy impact to be excellent, as exemplified by the Mashreq/Maghreb project and the subsequent policy workshop. Such best practices should be replicated more widely.

Some of the studies on Gender have been excellent, but the Panel considers that the mainstreaming of these studies and the treatment of Gender as a cross-cutting theme have been only partially successful, and that a more purposeful approach is required. The Panel suggests publishing research findings as policy briefs or research methods briefs to enhance the impact of CAPRI's outputs.

Effectiveness and efficiency of CAPRI's governance and mode of operations

The Panel considers that the decision to modify the SC in 1998 and create an EC to strengthen the decision-making process was vital. This resulted in increased funding from the Ford Foundation, which allowed an expansion of activities and the awarding of competitive grants. The Panel believes that the formation of the SC with representatives from all CGIAR centres, and its participation in CAPRI's decision-making, has benefited the Programme's governance and operations. The Panel was particularly impressed by the efficiency of the Programme Secretariat with its complement of less than two full-time persons, but notes that this has led to excessive workloads. The Panel views CAPRI as an example of an effective and innovative structure for promoting cross-cutting research. However, more attention needs to be focused on forward planning, although this is difficult in a situation of uncertain funding and for a programme that seeks to respond to the changing needs of CGIAR centres.

The links established with other centres, and especially with IASCP, have given CAPRI access to the latest developments in CA and PR research. This has strengthened CAPRI's activities at modest cost, led to mutual sharing of concepts, methods and analysis, and created a critical mass of social and interdisciplinary scientists working on CA and PR in natural resource management. The Panel is convinced that without CAPRI, it would have taken many more years, or a much greater investment, to have produced the same amount and quality of research, and the same degree of exchange of information and concepts between CGIAR and non-CGIAR institutions.

Each CGIAR centre, with its NARS and Regional Institutions, sets its own priority programmes tailored to its specific needs and situation. In the Panel's assessment, CAPRI has been successful in sharing decision-making with its partners to reflect national and regional priorities, whilst adhering to CAPRI's objectives.

The Review Panel considers that CAPRI has allocated funds efficiently across the centres to facilitate joint research programmes, despite operating under budgetary constraints. It is noted that CAPRI relies heavily on funds from outside CGIAR's regular budget, and considers it remarkable that this system-wide programme was created with such modest core funding. The Ford Foundation funding is about to end, although CAPRI's research outputs are expected to continue for several years. This emphasises the urgency of seeking alternative sources of core funding, and raises serious questions about how to utilise the modest funds that will remain in the absence of significant additional funds. The Panel suggests a minimum budget of \$ 2 million/annum is required from sources outside IFPRI's regular budget to allow CAPRI to continue the competitive grants programme, workshops, outreach, and capacity building of selected NARS.

Effectiveness and efficiency of IFPRI as a convening centre

The Panel commends the relationship between IFPRI, the convening organisation, and CAPRI as exemplary. IFPRI actively interacts with and supports CAPRI, enabling it to operate as a system-wide programme, so that what would otherwise be disparate research projects in different CGIAR centres are linked and co-ordinated. This successful relationship derives from the restraint shown by IFPRI in its management, its willingness to devolve decision-making to CAPRI, and to provide administrative support and information sharing facilities at no cost. IFPRI has also abstained from entering the competitive grants scheme to promote transparency in the process of grant allocations.

Future of CAPRI

The Panel concludes that CAPRI has achieved a critical mass and momentum in CA and PR research, which is very relevant to NRM research. Much of CAPRI's payoff will accrue over the next four to five years, and so the continuation of CAPRI as a system-wide programme would be a strategic decision in promoting the CGIAR's poverty alleviation focus within the centres and the new Challenge Programme.

In the Panel's view, CAPRI should take advantage of its system-wide status by placing increased future emphasis on a) policies to promote genetic resources and NRM technologies requiring collective action that target poor communities, b) developing effective tools for capacity building of weaker centres and NARS, and c) expanding the circle of collaborating centres and NARS. The Panel also suggests CAPRI considers enhancing the impact of its activities through case studies and research into identifying the key decision-makers.

In the Panel's opinion the decision made by CAPRI's Steering Committee at its March 2002 meeting not to become a Challenge Programme was discerning and far-sighted. Consequently there is a need for the CGIAR to support the work of CAPRI, and the Review Panel urges the CGIAR to accept the principle of direct funding for system-wide programmes. The Panel also encourages the iSC to assist CAPRI in seeking additional funds to replace the Ford Foundation grant.

Recommendations:

Chapter 2, Section 2.6

The Review Panel recommends that:

- The criteria used for ranking research proposals should focus on the quality of the proposed research and its contributions to policy.
- CAPRI should continue to promote the collaboration with NARS as an important criterion in the rating of funding proposals.
- Policy workshops should be continued because of their success in delivering policy findings to governments.
- The communication of information by radio should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness at reaching individuals, and its impacts.
- The Steering Committee should address the issue of how funds should be allocated to research and capacity strengthening.

Chapter 3, Section 3.8

The Review Panel recommends that:

- CAPRI should commission work to expound more systematically the relationships between collective action, property rights and poverty alleviation, with the prospect of producing a policy brief as well a working paper. A workshop organised by ICLARM, ILRI and CIMMYT on collective action and poverty would be a promising initial step;
- CAPRI should develop a strong portfolio of projects on collective action issues in the CGIAR centres involving concerted action by households and communities, with a view to expanding such research on human and animal health issues,
- CAPRI should develop a more purposeful programme on gender and related areas to promote these issues in other studies to enhance their impacts;
- The policy briefs series be supplemented by a methods series, with initial numbers on village studies and research planning to target policy-makers;
- The excellent best practices developed by CAPRI on planning research for policy impacts should become more widespread within the programme.

Chapter 4, Section 4.8

The Review Panel recommends that:

- CAPRI seeks to identify funding from other sources to replace the Ford Foundation grant in order to pursue an original programme of research;
- A sufficient core budget is provided to the programme, and a small group of iSC members be given authority to actively assist in mobilising funds, with the aim of raising US\$ 2 million as an annual budget;
- Every two or three years, CAPRI should convene a working group of scientists from the Steering Committee to consider the future directions of the programme;
- CAPRI should consult directly with the DGs and Research Directors of the collaborating centres to gain their support in fund-raising strategies and actions. Such consultations could be organised as part of a Fund Raising Strategies and Actions Workshop convened by CAPRI to address among other issues, the future role of the private sector;
- In the unfortunate event that CAPRI should find itself with reduced funding, it should refocus on the production of public goods and promoting collective action and property rights initiatives within the CGIAR and NARS centres as opposed to funding new research or significantly expanding into new activities.

Chapter 5, Section 5.8

The Review Panel recommends that:

- Given its comparative advantage in capacity building of NARS, CAPRI should develop proposals to enhance this aspect of its work;
- Given the positive track record established by CAPRI, IFPRI and CAPRI should work together to achieve a higher profile for CAPRI within the CGIAR system. Some ways in which this might be accomplished could be:

1. By the chairpersons of CAPRI's SC and EC developing closer and more direct links with the head of EPTD and, to make the case for expanded fund-raising for CAPRI, with IFPRI's DG and the leaders of the CGIAR centres.
2. By IFPRI and the Science Council ensuring a heightened presence of CAPRI at the CGIARs donors' meetings, and in particular at the Annual General Meetings.

August 15, 2002

Emil Javier
Chair, Interim Science Council
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
Food and Agriculture Organization
00100 Rome, Italy

Dear Emil,

Enclosed is the response to the recent external review of the CGIAR System-wide Program on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI), which we are submitting on behalf of IFPRI management and the CAPRI Steering Committee. Because the report has just been completed, the IFPRI Board of Trustees has not yet had an opportunity to respond to the review, but may submit its own response after it has had the opportunity to review the report. . We wish to express our strong appreciation for the efforts of the Review Panel led by John Bruce, with Corrine Valdivia and Uraivan Tan-Kim-Yong, and supported by Shellemiah Keya. Working with a team of this caliber, and being able to tap into their expertise in the area of collective action and property rights, has been a valuable experience and we believe it will further strengthen the CAPRI program as we move ahead.

Sincerely yours,

Per Pinstrup-Andersen
IFPRI Director General

Ruth Meinzen-Dick
CAPRI Coordinator

encl: a/s

cc: Geoff Miller
Joachim von Braun
Peter Hazell

Response to Report of the First External Review of the System-wide Program on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRi)

on behalf of the IFPRI Management and CAPRi Steering Committee

General Comments

When the CAPRi program was first set up, the IFPRI Board of Trustees gave a clear mandate that this program should operate in an exemplary manner, providing real participation by all members. The IFPRI and CAPRi program management has taken this charge seriously, striving to be inclusive and transparent in priority-setting, decision-making, and ongoing management of the program. Furthermore, the CAPRi secretariat and Steering Committee have applied their knowledge of what makes collective action work to the operation of the program itself, particularly to setting up the governance structure of the program.

In substantive terms, many initially questioned how two institutional issues—collective action and property rights—fit in with the mandate of the CGIAR. However, the program has worked to demonstrate how these institutions are crucial for many aspects of agricultural technology adoption and natural resource management, contributing to the goals of poverty reduction, environmental conservation, as well as productivity increases.

While we are thus proud of the governance and accomplishments of the CAPRi program, it has been very helpful and encouraging to get feedback from this expert panel on what the program has achieved, and recommendations of what can be done further to be even more effective in meeting the program's goals.

Specific Comments

1.5 Assessment Summary

The Review Panel concludes that:

- the mechanisms for setting CAPRi's priorities have been appropriate, enabling broad participation of sectors and institutions, and appear to be working with admirable efficiency and low transaction costs;*
- the priority themes are highly relevant to the CGIAR goals of sustainably increasing production and alleviating poverty, but the Panel suggests the emphasis on poverty-alleviation needs to be made more explicit by CAPRi, and highlighted in its publications;*
- the strategies and instruments developed by CAPRi to address the CGIAR goals are effective.*

We appreciate the endorsement of the program's priorities, themes, and strategies. The suggestion that the program give more explicit attention to the links to poverty alleviation is an excellent one. The commitment of CAPRi members to this objective is too often taken for granted. Highlighting the links between collective action, property rights, and poverty reduction (including the links that the panel itself has identified) can help others to understand the relevance of these issues, and increase the attention to these issues in CGIAR centers and partners. We will commission a paper and policy brief on this topic, and it is already planned as a topic for a future policy workshop.

2.5.1 Recommendations

- *The criteria used for ranking proposals should focus on the quality of research and its contributions to policy.*
- *CAPRi should continue to promote the collaboration with NARS as an important criterion in the rating of funding proposals.*
- *Policy workshops should be continued because of their success in delivering policy findings to governments.*
- *The communication of information by radio should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness at reaching individuals, and its impacts.*
- *The Steering Committee should address the issue of allocating funds for research or capacity strengthening.*

Chapter 2 of the report finds that CAPRi has been effective in generating and disseminating knowledge, as well as in policy outreach.. The tension they note is between use of CAPRi-supported grants for strong and innovative research, and using them for capacity building at centers that do not have as much work on CAPRi issues. We appreciate that the panel asks the Steering Committee to take this up. While producing high-quality research will remain a priority for any research grants, we can consider ways to increase the involvement of other centers, such as excluding any centers currently holding a grant. However, it may be more effective to help strengthen the capacity of centers that have been less active, through training programs or working with centers to strengthen their proposals, for instance. This would require some additional resources in the secretariat to work with centers.

Collaboration with NARs has always been a requirement for receiving research grants, and we will continue this, as well as in planning Policy Workshops. We also plan to tap into networks of NARs for training programs, starting with one in Eastern Africa, as mentioned in the chapter.

Receiving grants for CAPRi-sponsored research is only one of the ways in which centers participate in the program, however, and we hope to broaden participation in workshops, publications, and other CAPRi activities.

We appreciate the endorsement of the Policy Workshops, and will endeavor to continue these as a means of disseminating findings of CAPRi research.

Radio communications came about when a development-oriented radio program picked up CAPRi research on first water rights and then land rights for radio shows in Africa. We will follow up to find out how effective these experimental programs have been, and consider how we might use this approach ourselves, or by communicating our work more effectively to radio journalists.

3.8 Recommendations

The Review Panel recommends that:

- *CAPRi should commission work to expound more systematically the relationships between collective action, property rights and poverty alleviation, with the prospect of producing a policy brief as well as a working paper. A workshop organised by ICLARM, ILRI and CIMMYT on collective action and poverty would be a promising initial step;*
- *CAPRi should develop a strong portfolio of projects on collective action issues in the CGIAR centres involving concerted action by households and communities, with a view to expanding such research to focus on human and animal health issues, and to explore new sources of funding;*
- *CAPRi should develop a more purposeful programme on gender and related areas to promote these issues in other studies and to enhance their impacts;*
- *The policy briefs series are supplemented by a methods series, with initial numbers focusing on village studies and the planning of research for targeting policy-makers;*
- *The excellent best practices developed by CAPRi on planning research for policy impacts should become more widespread within the programme.*

We agree with all of these recommendations, and we will pursue them, provided we can secure necessary resources.

We are already planning a policy workshop on poverty alleviation for 2004, when we anticipate that more research on these linkages will be available. However, commissioning a working paper and policy brief reviewing the linkages would offer useful input into the workshop, and provide material to raise awareness of these issues much sooner.

This is closely related to a more purposeful program on gender. While CAPRi was one of the first programs in the CGIAR to address gender issues in research, with a very successful email conference and publications on gender and property rights, more attention is needed, especially on gender and collective action. We are planning a workshop on this topic, and will consider ways to stimulate further research on this, especially under the priority theme of Demographic Change (including feminization of agriculture).

Issues of human and animal health are relatively new for our program as, indeed, for most work on collective action and property rights (which has mostly focused on natural resource management). However, the innovative project led by ILRI on trypanosomiasis control provides a starting point for this, and we will consider how to expand on this, especially to include human health. One of the lessons we have learned is that there are many exciting opportunities to link the success of technologies and programs to collective action in innovative ways, and that CAPRi needs to continue to focus on capturing these opportunities.

We appreciate the endorsement of our policy briefs series. The CAPRi program has been invited to produce a series of briefs under the 2020 Focus series. This will allow us to pull together a portfolio that shows how collective action and property rights affect a wide range of household and community action, including technology adoption, natural resource management, agroenterprises, and other poverty reduction strategies. This partnership will allow us to reach a much broader audience through the 2020 Program's outreach to the media, general public, and policymakers.

We welcome the suggestion of expanding to include a methods briefs series, building on the strong approaches of some of the innovative CAPRI-sponsored projects and the work presented at this year's technical workshop on methods for studying collective action. There is likely to be good demand for these products, but they will need to be backed up with longer papers explaining the methods in more detail. A methods brief on planning for policy impact can also help making this more widespread.

4.8 Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- *CAPRI seeks to identify funding from other sources to replace the Ford Foundation grant in order to pursue an original programme of research;*
- *A sufficient core budget is provided to the programme, and a small group of iSC members be given authority to actively assist in fund mobilisation, with the aim of raising US\$ 2 million as an annual budget;*
- *Every two or three years, CAPRI should convene a working group of scientists from the Steering Committee to consider the future directions of CAPRI's programme;*
- *CAPRI should consult directly with the DGs and Research Directors of the collaborating centres to gain their support on fund raising strategies and actions. Such consultation could be organised as part of a Fund Raising Strategies and Actions Workshop convened by CAPRI, addressing among other issues, the future role of the private sector;*
- *In the unfortunate event that CAPRI is faced with reduced funding, it should re-focus on the production of public goods and the promotion of collective action and property rights initiatives within the CGIAR and NARS centres, as opposed to funding new research or expanding significantly into new activities.*

These recommendations go to the heart of one of the greatest challenges CAPRI faces—raising sufficient funds to meet the growing demand for our services, both by CGIAR centers and NARs. With the end of the Ford Foundation's 3-year support, we have been faced with a serious shortfall of funds, and been unable to award new research grants in 2002. At the same time, the report correctly notes that the very small secretariat of the program has reached its limits, and needs more support—in terms of human and financial resources—if it is to take on many of the activities recommended in this report, particularly to strengthen capacity at CGIAR centers and have more active engagement with NARs.

We therefore welcome the recommendation that CAPRI receive assistance in achieving an expanded budget of \$2 million per year. While the CAPRI program, with IFPRI support, will continue to actively pursue additional funding, additional support is welcome to raise the profile of the CAPRI program and to have it taken seriously along with Challenge Programs and other major CGIAR initiatives. We hope that the findings of this external review regarding our accomplishments and the recommendations of what we can further contribute to the CGIAR's mandate of reducing poverty will help in this regard.

We will continue to convene meetings of the full Steering Committee every 2 to 3 years to ensure that the program stays consistent with the priorities of the CGIAR, and will look into ways of combining this with a fundraising workshop along the lines recommended.

We agree with the final point that, in the unfortunate event that we cannot obtain sufficient resources to expand our activities along the lines recommended in this report, the program should concentrate on production of public goods, rather than on new research grants and activities. This was our strategy in the early days of the program, when funds were very limited, and we focused on workshops, publications, literature review, and other training or capacity building materials that would be available to as many of our members as possible. This played a catalytic role in getting centers and NARS themselves to take up this research, and there is a continued need for capacity strengthening in this regard. However, we hope that limiting ourselves to this mode will not be necessary, and that we can continue to facilitate funding of innovative research by centers and their NARS partners on CAPRI issues (which itself generates international public goods, as seen in our workshop on methods for studying collective action).

5.8 Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- *Given its comparative advantage in capacity building in NARS, CAPRI should develop proposals to enhance this aspect of its work;*
- *Given the positive track record established by CAPRI, that IFPRI and CAPRI work together to achieve a higher profile for CAPRI within the CGIAR system. Some ways in which this might be accomplished are:*
 - *For the Chairpersons of CAPRI's SC and EC to develop closer and more direct links with the head of EPTD and, to make the case for expanded fund-raising for CAPRI, with IFPRI's DG and the leaders of the CGIAR centres,*
 - *For IFPRI and the Science Council to ensure a heightened presence of CAPRI at CGIAR's donors' meetings, in particular at the Annual General Meeting.*

We have already begun plans for a training program for NARS, to be hosted by ICRAF in conjunction with the African Highlands Program, ASARECA, and the IFPRI 2020 Network for East Africa. This is also consistent with an suggestion that we work through established NARS networks such as ASARECA. We are also making reading lists, glossaries, and presentations about CAPRI issues available on our web site, and working through IFPRI's Training and Capacity Building group to disseminate these to interested NARS, e.g. in India.

The second recommendation of raising the profile and funding of CAPRI relates to those covered in the previous section. As noted there, we welcome these recommendations. As time at CGIAR meetings has become tighter and centers are increasingly "rationed" in the number of their own activities they can put forward to donors, it has become harder for CAPRI to gain visibility. As the report notes, IFPRI has been extremely supportive of the CAPRI program, and although there might be a potential incentive problem for IFPRI alone to promote funding for CAPRI, when the research grants are passed on to other centers. We have done, and will continue to do everything we can to raise funds for CAPRI because its work is a key part of IFPRI. Mechanisms to allow CAPRI to report regularly to the CGIAR members will help to prevent this program, with its established track record and governance structure, being eclipsed by the many new Challenge Programs that are coming up.

As noted in the report, the CAPRI Steering Committee has elected to remain a System-wide Program, rather than becoming a Challenge Program. We hope this will allow us to support work on collective action and property rights wherever it is of relevance in the CGIAR—whether in centers' own work, challenge programs, and even other system-wide programs. We appreciate the endorsement of this decision, and the vision of our continued role in helping the CGIAR towards its mandate.

iSC Commentary on CAPRI

The Report of the First External Review of the Systemwide Programme on Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI), was discussed at iSC/TAC 83 meeting in the presence of Per Pinstруп Andersen, the DG of IFPRI, the convening centre, and Ruth Meinzen-Dick, CAPRI Coordinator. The iSC thanks John Bruce, the Panel Chair, and its members for conducting a constructive forward looking review. The iSC discussed the report together with the written response from IFPRI's management and the Steering Committee of CAPRI, noting that the timing did not permit the IFPRI Board to discuss the report at this stage.

The iSC concurred that the Panel's report addressed the TOR for the review. In its response, the CAPRI Steering Committee has endorsed the Panel's recommendations, proposing ways to address them in the future. The iSC accepted the report and prepared a commentary.

The Panel concludes that CAPRI has been an effective and productive programme and praises the Coordinator and members of CAPRI and IFPRI, the Convener of CAPRI, for their significant professional contributions. The iSC agrees with the Panel's conclusions and commends IFPRI and the funders of CAPRI (Ford Foundation, Italy, Norway and Sweden) for creating and sustaining a dynamic and relevant Systemwide Program that is poised to generate important outputs on a relatively small budget.

One of the keys to CAPRI's success is its openness of structure and governance as a community of practice held together by mutual scientific interest and support. Its Secretariat, Executive Committee and Members come from the CGIAR, developing country practitioners, outside experts and the concerned public. It provides significant services to its many Members and clients in a very cost-effective manner.

Since its establishment in 1996, CAPRI has produced some notable achievements, as detailed by the iSC External Review Panel. These result directly from CAPRI's own research and research supported by its competitive grant funding; and through CAPRI's capacity strengthening activities, which in turn have had a positive influence on NARS and centre research.

The iSC notes that CAPRI's underlying premise is that Collective Action (CA) and Property Rights (PR), by way of voluntary, self-governing user associations/property institutions, are important tools in agricultural development. With longer time horizons between adoption of some CGIAR/NARS-developed technology and receipt of benefits, farmers need secure tenure (property rights) and associated freedom to access, use and manage their resources, often collectively, as an incentive to adopt.

Researching the patterns of farmers' collective actions, with particular regard to vulnerable and poor farmers, is relevant to many central concerns of the CGIAR, such as NRM, seed selection and reproduction, IPM, adoption of innovations. Collective action at various levels, encompassing community watersheds, irrigation districts, sub-community groups, helps define the socio-cultural context for technology adoption or rejection. Understanding this context is critical to improving technology adoption. Thus, the iSC suggests that CAPRI more widely and systematically communicate its research findings and recommendations to other Centers' programmes and to CPs.

The Panel concluded that CAPRI has an effective approach to identifying priority research questions and targeting policy relevant research questions, partly because of its inclusionary approach, which, among other things, involves representation of key decision and policy makers on its advisory and decision making committees. The iSC endorses this conclusion.

It is evident from the Panel report and by the positive response to the CAPRI agenda by most CGIAR centres that many key researchable poverty alleviation problems related to agricultural, forestry and fisheries development are underpinned by questions related to collective action (CA) and property rights (PR).

It is equally evident from the Panel report that CAPRI's research and collaboration in research is generating answers to such questions and will continue to do so. The Panel provides a number of recommendations on how such work should be effectively expanded, and recommends greater funding up to US\$2 million annually, which would permit an effective level of operation for CAPRI. The iSC endorses these recommendations and further notes that the Panel did not find any areas of research that it felt were unproductive or that should be curtailed or terminated.

While the iSC cannot pass judgment on the US\$ 2 million figure suggested by the Panel, it, at the same time, fully supports the Panel's conclusion that CAPRI could efficiently utilize a much larger budget than it currently has available. Further, while the iSC itself is prohibited from fund raising, it strongly endorses the recommendation that CAPRI be joined by other units in the CGIAR to raise the necessary funding to bring CAPRI's budget to a level more in line with its partners' potential contributions to the CGIAR mission and goals.

According to the Panel, CAPRI is effectively contributing to CA and PR research capacity strengthening, both in CGIAR centres as well as NARS. Its contributions are made partly through competitive grant funding, made possible so far by a generous Ford Foundation Grant that is terminating in 2002. Capacity strengthening also is supported by CAPRI's training activities, workshops, publications and other outreach activities. These have been given high marks by the Panel. The Panel recommends that CAPRI expand its successful policy brief series and that it initiate a "Research Findings" and "Methods briefs" (and "research brief") series. The iSC believes that these recommendations point to promising ways of expanding the impacts of CAPRI, if continued funding is secured. This also will enable the outputs for CAPRI to be more effectively used in technology uptake and impact pathways and in designing new pro-poor research.

The Panel concludes that a significant expansion in CAPRI's social research and capacity strengthening activities would be beneficial to the CGIAR and its partners and clients in the context of the CGIAR mission and goals. The Panel further recommends that CAPRI should be joined by centres and the iSC in a more aggressive search for such funding.

In addition to urging greater help in external fund raising for CAPRI, the Panel concludes that CGIAR centres should give high priority to their active participation in CAPRI-sponsored research and other activities aimed at strengthening participants' knowledge and capacities in CA and PR research, policy analysis and policy advice. Some centres, in fact, have been active and have benefited from collaboration. The iSC strongly supports this conclusion, given the evidence of benefits that can flow from such participation.

CAPRI provides an excellent model for systemwide programmes; and the iSC commends CAPRI's Executive Committee for electing to remain as such. It notes that CAPRI could play an important role in supporting Challenge programmes and would urge the CGIAR to support such efforts by CAPRI.

The iSC believes that the CAPRI Review Panel has done an outstanding job of carrying out this review in a very effective and efficient manner, given the breadth of the programme and the limitations in time and resources devoted to the review. The iSC thanks the Panel for a comprehensive, in-depth and interesting review of CAPRI.

Since IFPRI Board did not have the time to discuss the report before the iSC meeting, the iSC recommends that this be done during the next IFPRI Board Meeting, as part of the regular review process. Appropriate Board guidance should be given to CAPRI for its continuing work and iSC shall await information about the Board's conclusions.