

**Report Of The  
Fifth External Programme And Management Review  
of the  
Centro Internacional De La Papa  
(CIP)**

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**REPORT OF THE  
FIFTH EXTERNAL PROGRAMME AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW  
OF THE  
CENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE LA PAPA  
(CIP)**

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

CIP undertakes its activities in a world in which the context of its activities is changing rapidly. Economic conditions now reflect more open national economies, among other things. A revolution in the life sciences is changing the nature of the biological research process and opening new opportunities. And the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is reorganizing and establishing a new *modus operandi* for implementing its endeavours.

The Panel gave most of its attention to reviewing and making suggestions and recommendations on projects falling under three core areas of the Center: (1) crop improvement and protection, (2) natural resource management, and (3) the social sciences. It also reviewed CIP's numerous partnership programs and considered a number of cross-cutting issues.

The projects on crop improvement and protection are multidisciplinary by nature and staffed with quality scientists. They have suffered from repeated cuts in budget, and with those cuts there was a need to reorganize the research program. Maintenance research necessary in improving vegetatively propagated crops absorbs a significant part of the Center's resources and is an issue donors and the CG need to consider in allocating their unrestricted financial resources. Some significant outputs have been produced by the research on crop improvement and protection, both in terms of improved varieties and innovations for successful plant protection.

CIP needs to build on its genetic resources and competencies in plant breeding to create technology platforms for the delivery of public goods. In this way CIP can position itself to be the center of excellence for the application of science and technology to potato and sweetpotato breeding for the developing world. The research on and the adoption of new innovations to protect from various viruses in China is also impressive.

The Panel believes the crop improvement work would benefit from more centralized leadership. It also believes CIP's scientific stature would benefit from moving more of its publications into quality, refereed journals.

The research on natural resource management is of recent vintage, having been established only in 1996. The focus of NRM activities is on (a) application of the latest advances in geoinformation science and remote sensing, as well as information- and communication technologies; (b) systems analysis and the development of analytical tools and methodologies for environmental and natural resource management, and (c)

management and policy recommendations related to sustainable agricultural productivity, environmental quality and human health and welfare. The Panel is impressed with the qualifications of the NRM staff. A flow of products has already begun from this group, and there is promise of much more in the future.

Social scientists in CIP are integrated into the various biological and natural research projects; there is not an independent or free-standing research group to address economic issues per se. The effective integration of the social scientists with the biological and natural scientists is unique at CIP among IARCs, and has served the Centre well. The research group has made contributions in the area of helping to set the scientific priorities for the Centre, in better understanding the adoption of new technology, in science and technology policy, and in evaluating the impact of CIP's program in society. The Panel feels a larger share of the efforts of the social scientists can be focused on science and technology policy and a limited number of macroeconomic issues without abandoning the very effective work they now do with the other scientists in the Center.

CIP maintains a wide range of partnerships with a large number of collaborative partners. These partners range from collaborators in the industrialized countries, to collaborating NARS, to the private sector, and to the other Centers in the Consultative Group. The Center's educational and training program is ambitious and substantial. It contributes in important ways to the development of research capacity in developing countries and thereby to their future.

The Panel addressed a number of cross-cutting issues. These include the quality of science and the need for greater efforts to increase the publication of research in refereed journals, the relatively new and challenging problem of fund raising, public awareness and the need to provide public education on controversial issues, intellectual property rights, and collaboration with the private sector. Some of these cross-cutting issues will likely be increasingly important in the future.

Issues of finance and management were also considered by the Panel. Finance issues are especially important, given the significant reductions in total budget in recent years. A consultant helped advise the Panel on finance issues, and especially on financial controls and procedures. Recommendations were made on how financial management might be improved.

Members of the Panel participated in a week-long one meeting of CIP's Board, conducted in-depth interviews with members of the Board and CIP leaders. CIP has a very dedicated and well organized Board of Trustees, with a fairly good geographic and gender balance and solid leadership. Improvements in its operations could be made in budgetary and financial oversight, long-term programmatic vision, and assessment of management and self assessment.

Finally, the Panel feels strongly there is a need for CIP to develop a vision statement that provides a framework for integrating the various activities of the CIP into a

cohesive whole and the need to use such a vision as the means to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. That plan should then be used to develop a robust set of priorities for the future that can be used to guide management in its decision making and to use with potential funders of CIP's activities. The Panel suggests that the priorities cut across the multiple activities of the Center.

### **LIST OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **CHAPTER 3 - CROP IMPROVEMENT AND PROTECTION**

1. Because of the need to improve the identity, visibility and effectiveness of the CIP potato breeding effort, the Panel recommends that the potato improvement activities be coalesced into a single project and that the leader be empowered (full financial, budgeting, and managerial accountability) to champion the development and delivery of a coherent breeding programme that captures the full potential of all the resources available to CIP.
2. Because of the unique role of CIP as holder of vast genetic resources of its mandate crops, the Panel recommends that CIP urgently identify resources to establish a state-of-the-art high-throughput genotyping facility that will enable it to fully exploit its genetic resources in the post-genomics era. Skills and competencies in the area of bioinformatics/computational biology must be strengthened.

#### **CHAPTER 4 - NATURAL RESOURCES**

3. Because of the need for multidisciplinary approaches for sustainable improvement of the cropping systems under CIP's mandate commodities and limited resources for research, and the need to demonstrate impact, the Panel recommends that, within the overall strategic planning of the Centre, a priority setting exercise be conducted for NRM, using an appropriate methodology, to help focus the research agenda and develop a proper balance between process oriented and application oriented research, and between production systems based on CIP mandate crops on the one hand and livestock-pasture-based production systems on the other hand.
4. Because of the unique opportunity offered by CONDESAN and its very diverse partners in providing an excellent mechanism with a large number of watershed sites for testing research hypotheses and products, the Panel recommends that all CIP scientists work together in the CONDESAN benchmark watersheds and to use the CONDESAN mechanism for the development, evaluation and dissemination of integrated technologies, and policy and management recommendations.

5. Because of the extremely diverse activity profile of CONDESAN on one hand and its potentially important role in combining regional interests on the other hand, the Panel recommends that CIP continue to have a strong scientific vision and methodological input in the consortium, in addition to CIP's current coordinating, administrative and facilitating role; and that the Technical Committee be revived and the coordinators of the cross-cutting themes be members of it.

## **CHAPTER 5 – SOCIAL SCIENCES**

6. Because of the need to consider CIP's priorities on a continual basis, given constant changes in the external environment, the Panel recommends that the Centre continue the interactions of its social scientists with its biological and physical scientists, but with a broader involvement of partners and constituency groups.
7. Because science and technology policy is increasingly important in a resource constrained world, and because the economic conditions of adopting new technology varies so much from one part of the world to another, the Panel recommends that CIP reallocate its social science resources to do more research on science and technology policy issues.
8. Because of the potentially significant insights to be obtained from comparative studies of adoption and constraints, and because of the value attached to the results of such studies by the international donor community, the Panel recommends that CIP develop consistent frameworks for the collection and analysis of basic data on adoption and constraints (including household data), and strengthen the skills of the Centre in sophisticated statistical approaches required for the collection of such data.

## **CHAPTER 6 – PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

9. Because of the opportunities for partnership are overwhelming and tend to lead the Centre in multiple directions, the Panel recommends that CIP formulates a strategy for how to engage in different types of partnerships, including the private sector.

## **CHAPTER 7 – CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

10. Because of the need to enhance CIPs' scientific reputation and ability to compete more effectively for external funding, the Panel recommends that the Institute encourage more frequent publications in refereed scientific journals and set more demanding annual publication performance targets.

11. Because traditional sources of funding for CIP's activities are drying up, and because additional outside funding is needed if the Center is to attract quality professionals to contribute to its activities, the Panel recommends that CIP reallocate resources from its management staff to hire a competent international development officer, and use the leadership of that officer, together with a marketing survey, to develop a strategic plan for increasing its external funding.

## **CHAPTER 8 – FINANCE**

12. Because of the need to retain a healthy distance between the Centre and its External Auditor, the Panel recommends that the Board of Trustees change CIP's External Auditor at the conclusion of the current end-of-year audit/reporting cycle, and every 3-5 years thereafter.
13. Because of the need to give managers the ability to cost-efficiently conduct their business, the Panel recommends that the required changes to transform CIPFIS into a fully-fledged Management Information System be completed as soon as possible; and that managers at all levels then be given access to complete and transparent budgetary information on the activities they are accountable for, and that CIP management devise incentives to encourage and increase cost-consciousness and efficiency;

## **CHAPTER 9 – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

14. Because of the importance of the Board's financial oversight role, and especially in view of the Centre's funding situation, the Panel recommends that the Board ensure that it receives adequate financial and budgetary information from management and that it spend sufficient time exercising its budgetary and financial oversight function;
15. Because of the Board's important role in programmatic/scientific oversight, the Panel recommends that the Board be more challenging and forward looking in its discussions of the Centre's long-term scientific strategy;
16. Because of the need to keep professional distance and independence of the Board vis a vis management, the Panel recommends that the DG not be a member of the Nominations Committee and that the DDG-F/A not be the Secretary to the Board and its Executive Committee.

## **CHAPTER 10 – THE FUTURE**

17. Because of the value of a well-articulated, encompassing vision tied together with a strategic plan, the Panel recommends that CIP develop a vision and a strategic plan that will integrate crop improvement and protection, natural resource management, and the social sciences in an approach that will guide the understanding of problems developing countries face as they experience economic development;
18. Because of the need to give more attention to priority setting in CIP and to maximize the effectiveness of the resources made available to it, the Panel recommends that the vision statement and the strategic plan be connected and used to establish a robust set of priorities to guide resource allocation in CIP in the coming years.



March 22, 2002

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tuber crops

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Natural resources

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Mountain ecologies

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Dear Drs. Javier and Reifschneider,

We are pleased to provide this response to the recommendations of the Fifth External Program and Management Review (EPMR) of the International Potato Center (CIP). This response from the Center is a consensus view reflecting the perspective of both management and the Board of Trustees.

First and foremost we want to express our great appreciation for the rich, detailed, and valuable report provided to our Center. We are pleased that the Panel concluded **“that CIP has had significant achievements in [its three core areas]\* and that it will continue to be an important and needed Centre in the future”**. We have studied the report in considerable detail and concluded that it is a very positive evaluation, with many commendations and worthwhile recommendations and suggestions for incremental improvements.

We have elected to organize our response around the 18 recommendations found in the report. However, we hasten to point out that both the Board and management have gleaned from the EPMR process a wealth of additional suggestions that are being organized into short- and long-term implementations. These items and the planned responses will be summarized for presentation to iSC in April 2002 in Lima, Peru.

\* “(1) crop improvement and protection, (2) natural resource management, and (3) the social sciences”

Before getting to our specific response to the 18 recommendations found in the EPMR, let us note the value to our Center of the review process itself. Our extensive preparations for the review and our self-examinations have strengthened our understanding and commitment to some independently formulated decisions, and as a consequence, even prior to the initiation of the EPMR, we have initiated changes in several areas. Often these preparatory benefits are missed or discounted, but they should not be overlooked.

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS (by Chapter) AND THE CENTER'S RESPONSES**

### **CHAPTER 3 - CROP IMPROVEMENT AND PROTECTION**

*1. Because of the need to improve the identity, visibility and effectiveness of the CIP potato breeding effort, the Panel recommends that the potato improvement activities be coalesced into a single project and that the leader be empowered (full financial, budgeting, and managerial accountability) to champion the development and delivery of a coherent breeding programme that captures the full potential of all the resources available to CIP.*

The Center respectfully acknowledges the intent of this recommendation. The Center feels that the current configuration of our breeding efforts is working well, and that making changes at this time might not improve the effectiveness of the breeding program. The Board and management pledge to monitor the situation and to seek improved efficiencies, and will make corrections as necessary.

Recognizing the value of external reviews, the Board proposes to undertake a Center Commissioned External Review (CCER) in 2006 to re-evaluate the structure of our project portfolio vis-à-vis plant breeding. This will provide the Center with sufficient time to test the present configuration (i.e., gather data for the CCER), and in turn will provide the next EPMR with an external look at the merits and drawbacks of various plant breeding configurations.

**Background:** The Center has recently completed a top-to-bottom realignment of our research project portfolio. We were pleased to see the EPMR panel's positive treatment of the resulting research project structure. The careful placement of our breeding activities within certain projects was done with much thought and discussion. We are seeking to provide interaction with the efforts of many national breeding program partners, which in turn respond to diverse conditions and priorities. Thus, the Center has decided that our recently completed renovations to the research portfolio need to be tested before any more changes are instituted.

*2. Because of the unique role of CIP as holder of vast genetic resources of its mandate crops, the Panel recommends that CIP urgently identify resources to establish a state-of-the-art high-throughput genotyping facility that will enable it to fully exploit its genetic resources in the post-genomics era. Skills and competencies in the area of bioinformatics/computational biology must be strengthened.*

**The Center accepts** the recommendation to establish a state-of-the-art, high-throughput genotyping facility and will explore the human and financial resources implications of moving forward with this recommendation, including the implementation of collaborative arrangements with other institutions.

We stress however, that the intention of creating such an initiative would be strictly in the interest of better serving the recipients of our research efforts, and with the purpose of contributing to solving poverty, nutritional and environmental problems in our client communities.

#### **CHAPTER 4 - NATURAL RESOURCES**

*3. Because of the need for multidisciplinary approaches for sustainable improvement of the cropping systems under CIP's mandate commodities and limited resources for research, and the need to demonstrate impact, the Panel recommends that, within the overall strategic planning of the Centre, a priority setting exercise be conducted for NRM, using an appropriate methodology, to help focus the research agenda and develop a proper balance between process oriented and application oriented research, and between production systems based on CIP mandate crops on the one hand and livestock-pasture-based production systems on the other hand.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and notes the following. We are fully aware of the challenging task of making the needed trade offs among natural resource management components and agricultural productivity-oriented alternatives. We will be including this topic in the visioning and priority-setting processes outlined in our response to the recommendations regarding Chapter 10 (see below). Because of the successful methodologies and tools that have been developed through the Center's NRM research to date, CIP is quite prepared to tackle this challenge and to implement applications-oriented research in conjunction with the most appropriate partners in the Andes and, on the global scale, through the Global Mountain Program.

*4. Because of the unique opportunity offered by CONDESAN and its very diverse partners in providing an excellent mechanism with a large number of watershed sites for testing research hypotheses and products, the Panel recommends that all CIP scientists work together in the CONDESAN benchmark watersheds and to use the CONDESAN mechanism for the development, evaluation and dissemination of integrated technologies, and policy and management recommendations.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation to foster the integration of CIP scientists' with work at the benchmark sites, as appropriate to their assessed needs. However, because we participate in CONDESAN as a member, and in the spirit of collaboration, the Center will *recommend* to our partners that CONDESAN be used as a “mechanism for the development, evaluation, and dissemination of integrated technologies, and policy and management recommendations”.

*5. Because of the extremely diverse activity profile of CONDESAN on one hand and its potentially important role in combining regional interests on the other hand, the Panel recommends that CIP continue to have a strong scientific vision and methodological input in the consortium, in addition to CIP's current coordinating, administrative and facilitating role; and that the Technical Committee be revived and the coordinators of the cross-cutting themes be members of it.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation with enthusiasm and remains fully committed to continuing to provide strong scientific input to CONDESAN. Regarding the proposal to “revive” the Technical Committee and populate it with crosscutting theme coordinators, the suggestion will be communicated to CONDESAN leadership. (See our response to Recommendation 4 above for the rationale.)

## **CHAPTER 5 – SOCIAL SCIENCES**

*6. Because of the need to consider CIP's priorities on a continual basis, given constant changes in the external environment, the Panel recommends that the Centre continue the interactions of its social scientists with its biological and physical scientists, but with a broader involvement of partners and constituency groups.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and pledges to continue to promote interaction between our social, biological and physical scientists, as we have historically done. The Center appreciates the EPMR panel's commendation of this program for its successful multi-disciplinary integration.

*7. Because science and technology policy is increasingly important in a resource constrained world, and because the economic conditions of adopting new technology varies so much from one part of the world from another, the Panel recommends that CIP reallocate its social science resources to do more research on science and technology policy issues.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation. The Center would like to defer, however, the reallocation of our social science resources until the completion of the EPMR's recommended visioning, strategic planning, and priority setting

exercise. Also, given the fact that the primary CGIAR mandate for doing policy research rests with IFPRI, the Center will seek a closer working partnership with IFPRI on science and technology policy issues.

*8. Because of the potentially significant insights to be obtained from comparative studies of adoption and constraints, and because of the value attached to the results of such studies by the international donor community, the Panel recommends that CIP develop consistent frameworks for the collection and analysis of basic data on adoption and constraints (including household data), and strengthen the skills of the Centre in sophisticated statistical approaches required for the collection of such data.*

**The Center accepts** the recommendation to strengthen the collection of data on adoption and constraints and will incorporate evaluation and definition of consistent frameworks as part of the EPMR recommended visioning, strategic planning, and priority setting exercise.

*9. (Numbering error in EPMR report.)*

## **CHAPTER 6 – PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

*10. Because of the opportunities for partnership are overwhelming and tend to lead the Centre in multiple directions, the Panel recommends that CIP formulates a strategy for how to engage in different types of partnerships, including the private sector.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and will form a Center Task Force to assess and gather data on our expertise and experience, and to address the specific issue of strategies for partnering.

## **CHAPTER 7 – CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

*11. Because of the need to enhance CIP's scientific reputation and ability to compete more effectively for external funding, the Panel recommends that the institute encourage more frequent publications in refereed scientific journals and set more demanding annual publication performance targets.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation fully, as it is vital to our future. To address these needs several creative approaches are under consideration. These ideas go beyond the points made in the EPMR's report, and include: the reorganization of the Center's information services; the definition of strategies that enhance and expand outlets for peer-reviewed research results of the types produced by IARCs and our partners; and better recognition for high quality

research performance, including project-based support and scientist-based rewards.

*12. Because traditional sources of funding for CIP's activities are drying up, and because additional outside funding is needed if the Center is to attract quality professionals to contribute to its activities, the Panel recommends that CIP reallocate resources from its management staff to hire a competent international development officer, and use the leadership of that officer, together with a marketing survey, to develop a strategic plan for increasing its external funding.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation, but may implement it as a “development program” rather than a “development officer”. The distinction here is merely one of greater flexibility as we may want to look at contracting for services (rather than hiring an officer), and we may want to partner with other Centers and the Future Harvest Foundation on common resource-mobilization interests.

## **CHAPTER 8 – FINANCE**

*13. Because of the need to retain a healthy distance between the Centre and its External Auditor, the Panel recommends that the Board of Trustees change CIP's External Auditor at the conclusion of the current end-of-year audit/reporting cycle, and every 3-5 years thereafter.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and it has been implemented.

Note: The temporary extension of the current external auditor was a result of the merger of the prior audit company (Coopers and Lybrand) with the newly contracted one (PriceWaterhouse) into a joint company (PriceWaterhouseCoopers). With the subsequent change-over of the Center's CFO position, the normal cycle of retaining an external auditor for limited periods has resumed.

*14. Because of the need to give managers the ability to cost-efficiently conduct their business, the Panel recommends that the required changes to transform CIPFIS into a fully-fledged Management Information System be completed as soon as possible; and that managers at all levels then be given access to complete and transparent budgetary information on the activities they are accountable for, and that CIP management devise incentives to encourage and increase cost-consciousness and efficiency.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and notes that the implementation of these enhancements were already planned before the EPMP and were undergoing implementation prior to the EPMP main phase. We anticipate completion of this project within a few months.

## CHAPTER 9 – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

*15. Because of the importance of the Board's financial oversight role, and especially in view of the Centre's funding situation, the Panel recommends that the Board ensure that it receives adequate financial and budgetary information from management and that it spend sufficient time exercising its budgetary and financial oversight function.*

**The Board accepts** this recommendation and has, in the past year, moved to elevate its attention to financial oversight. This will be accomplished through enhancements to the Center's management information system, and changes to the Center's annual auditing arrangements.

*16. Because of the Board's important role in programmatic/scientific oversight, the Panel recommends that the Board be more challenging and forward looking in its discussions of the Centre's long-term scientific strategy.*

**The Board accepts** this recommendation and notes that it has been awaiting finalization of the change management activities of the CGIAR and the outcomes of the regional planning efforts as necessary input to this process.

*17. Because of the need to keep professional distance and independence of the Board vis a vis management, the Panel recommends that the DG not be a member of the Nominations Committee and that the DDG-F/A not be the secretary to the Board and its Executive Committee.*

**The Board accepts** the first point and has already completed implementation. As to the second point, the statutes founding the Center prescribe the position of the Secretary of the Board.

## CHAPTER 10 – THE FUTURE

*18. Because of the value of a well-articulated, encompassing vision tied together with a strategic plan, the Panel recommends that CIP develop a vision and a strategic plan that will integrate crop improvement and protection, natural resource management, and the social sciences in an approach that will guide the understanding of problems developing countries face as they experience economic development.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation and plans to implement it through a yearlong process of visioning, stakeholder dialogue, strategic planning, human resource capacity assessment, financial needs evaluations, and resource mobilization strategies.

*19. Because of the need to give more attention to priority setting in CIP and to maximize the effectiveness of the resources made available to it, the Panel recommends that the vision statement and the strategic plan be connected and used to establish a robust set of priorities to guide resource allocation in CIP in the coming years.*

**The Center accepts** this recommendation, but notes our intentional postponement of priority setting activities in anticipation of the outcome of the change management exercises of the CGIAR (especially the emergence of the critically important Challenge Programs) and this pending EPMR.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The Center wishes to comment on some significant factual errors that are found in the EPMR report that are likely to have occurred in the panel's rush to complete the document.

1. **Fact:** CIP's Board of Trustees commissioned three CCERs in the interval since the Fourth EPMR. The Board policy is to commission all of the Center's External Reviews (ICER/CCER), with a few notable exceptions, when it is appropriate for management to undertake such a study. Confusion over terminology appears to have initially misled an EPMR member, but subsequent assurances and factual evidence should have corrected that initial misrepresentation. To avoid future misunderstandings the Board has developed a new policy statement that clearly spells out the process to be used, and the allowable variations on that process.
2. **Fact:** The CIP Board of Trustees has practiced due diligence in the monitoring of the Center's finances, and the casual reader of this report may be misled by the Summary Recommendation numbered 15. The Center's Board uses a method of decision-making (which was actually complimented by the EPMR Panel) that superficially gives the impression of a too speedy disposition of some items. In fact, the process requires that all committee reports be shared with Board members the day prior to consideration to permit everyone to read the contents and to visit with the committee members off-line with any questions or issues. Thus, when a committee report (such as our Audit Committee's report) reaches the Board for a decision it has received considerable attention, a fact that seems to have been missed by the EPMR panel. Additionally, the rules for decision-making used by the Board allow ample time for discussion by all Board members prior to any action.

It is the view of CIP's Board and our external auditors that the Center's present auditing systems, procedures, and practices provide adequate control of CIP's finances.

**Final Note:**

The International Potato Center expresses its deep appreciation to the members of the Fifth EPMR for a valuable exercise that will no doubt contribute to CIP's continued contribution, as the Panel concluded, as "an important and needed Centre in the future".

Regards,

Hubert Zandstra  
Director General

David R. MacKenzie  
Chair of the Board



## **iSC Commentary on the Fifth External Programme and Management Review of CIP**

The Report of the Fifth External Programme and Management Review (EPMR) of CIP was discussed at iSC/TAC 82 at CIP headquarters in Lima, Peru, in the presence of the Panel Chair Dr. G. Edward Schuh, Dr. Orlando Olcese who represented the CIP Board, and the CIP DG, Dr. Hubert Zandstra and other CIP staff members. The interim Science Council (iSC) expresses its appreciation to Dr. Edward Schuh and his Panel for an analytical and constructive Report which offers an insightful contextualisation of CIP's work within the CGIAR's overall framework. The iSC commends the Panel for the Report which undertakes a detailed assessment of all activities of the Centre.

The iSC notes with appreciation CIP's very positive response to this EPMR Report and the actions the Centre intends to take to implement the recommendations. A number of the recommendations build upon and further reinforce the previous 4<sup>th</sup> EPMR conclusions. CIP in general has made significant progress in most of the 1995 recommendations although some of the concerns still remain.

The Report contains eighteen key recommendations and other important suggestions in various chapters. The iSC broadly endorses the Panel's recommendations and provides the following commentary, which was prepared with inputs from the CGIAR Secretariat to complement the Report.

### **Introduction**

Although not necessarily the core of its Report, the Panel called attention to the recent restatement of the CGIAR goals of not only increasing the supply of food, but also raising the income of poor farmers, and to improving the management of natural resources. In the Panel's view the addition of these goals creates a situation in which the CGIAR Centres like CIP may be evaluated unfairly. Producing new technology for small farmers is an appropriate basis for evaluating performance of the international Centres. But expecting the new production technology to be a significant factor in raising the per capita or family income of the small farmers when so many other factors affect those incomes would not be appropriate. In raising this flag of caution the Panel invoked a cardinal rule in policy making which called for one policy instrument for one policy goal.

The iSC understands the apprehension of the Panel over the multiple goals of the CGIAR. This had been the subject of debate in the Group. However, the iSC maintains that increasing food production through improvement in productivity responds directly to the goal of food security but does not sufficiently account for the equally important objectives of alleviating poverty and maintaining the sustainability of the natural resources upon which food production depends. All three goals are intimately linked with each other and are best pursued together.

Agricultural research as a policy instrument is multidimensional and it is the challenge to CGIAR Centres and their NARS partners to find win-win solutions that will advance these goals in harmony. This review of CIP reveals good examples of how these goals can be reconciled through quality research, dedicated training and capability building and innovative partnerships/alliances with a host of research and development partners at the national and regional levels.

### **Research Achievements and Impact**

The Panel's first key recommendation is the need to coalesce all potato improvement activities into a single project to improve the identity, visibility and effectiveness of the CIP potato breeding effort and that the project leader be fully empowered with financial, budgeting and managerial authority to champion the development and delivery of a coherent breeding programme.

The Centre while appreciating the intent of the recommendation feels that the current configuration of the breeding efforts is working well so far and proposes instead to revisit the issue with a Centre-commissioned external review (CCER) in 2006 to provide the Centre sufficient time to test the present configuration.

The iSC believes that it is too soon to ask the Centre to change its structure anew without giving the Centre the opportunity to test the efficacy of its new project structure which was installed only in 2001 following the 4<sup>th</sup> EPMP recommendation. However, 2006 is too long to wait and the iSC urges the Centre instead to re-evaluate the situation within the next two years.

CIP has recently established a biodiversity and biosafety facility, which together with the fully integrated corporate database, workflow system for accession monitoring, integration of GIS, and establishment of a bioinformatics unit are likely to enhance the use of these resources for breeding and strategic research. The iSC supports the Panel's recommendation that CIP invest in a high-throughput genotyping facility for the benefit of the gene discovery and pre-breeding activities at CIP and elsewhere.

The Centre has made notable achievements in research on host-plant resistance and in integrated pest management both in pathogen identification, characterization and detection, and in developing resistant potato and sweetpotato materials. High levels of resistance to late blight have been attained in advanced breeding populations. The projects on late blight and integrated pest management are of high quality and they provide practical benefits to CIP's clientele. The Panel believes that the transfer of virus-free sweetpotato technology to China is likely to have a significant economic impact. Other important traits that are being introgressed into advanced materials include quality, particularly in sweetpotato for nutrition. The project for high vitamin A sweetpotato in Africa promises to have significant impact for women and children, in particular. CIP is also making good progress in developing markers and transgenic lines for potato and sweetpotato breeding.

The iSC notes that the Panel has doubts on whether the projects on true potato seed (TPS) and post-harvest quality will be sustainable and able to deliver, and encourages CIP to carefully assess the future of these projects.

The Panel assesses the recently initiated NRM research to be both relevant for the Andean region and the CIP-lead initiative on mountain ecosystems, and productive in developing tools and methods. It has already produced policy decision support tools, which are likely to have significance to the national partners for many different applications. A priority setting exercise for NRM within the overall strategic planning of the Centre as suggested by the Panel should help focus further the research agenda and develop a proper balance between process oriented and application oriented research, and between production systems based on CIP mandate crops on one hand and livestock-pasture-based production systems on the other hand. Greater synergies between CIP's commodity research and the NRM work are likely to strengthen the overall coherence of CIP's research agenda.

The iSC joins the Panel in commending CIP for the effective organizational location of its social scientists, who have dual belongingness and accountability to their own specialized units within CIP (benefiting from having critical mass and professional interaction) as well as to the interdisciplinary research programme teams, in which they are integrated as members. CIP's social research on poor farmers and households has yielded strategically useful knowledge to CIP's biophysical researchers. This needs to be sustained.

The iSC is alarmed by the discrepancy between the release of CIP-derived varieties and the much lower and variable adoption of those materials. Although adoption rates are influenced by issues such as vegetative propagation, consumer preference and prevalence of plant health problems, the iSC encourages CIP, in addition to looking at physical attributes associated with adoption, to do household studies and beyond that to examine cultural features at village and region levels for adoption and impact. The iSC strongly endorses the Panel's recommendation for CIP to conduct more studies on constraints to early acceptance and adoption looking at economic profitability and policy and to develop a consistent framework for data collection and analysis.

The Panel flagged the need for CIP to reallocate its social science resources to do more research on science and technology policy. While recognizing the impressive achievements of CIP in documenting rates of return to agricultural research as important basis for making decisions on research priorities, the Panel felt that in particular the topics of resource savings effects of new technology and the economics of *in situ* vs. *ex situ* genetic conservation are very important to CIP's work and must be addressed. The Centre's response to this recommendation was positive and the iSC looks forward to seeing these items in CIP's future social research agenda.

CIP's relationship with CONDESAN in particular is quite unique, and the iSC would have liked to see more analysis of the potential benefits that both CIP and CONDESAN are likely to achieve from this partnership. The iSC commends the Centre for its long

term commitment to this ecoregional consortium, which has features in line with the CGIAR's regional approach to research, stated in Plank 4 of the new Vision and Strategy. The iSC endorses the Panel's recommendations to increase the use of the CONDESAN benchmark watersheds in CIP research and the CONDESAN mechanism in the evaluation and dissemination of the research outputs. The iSC is confident that CIP as a member of CONDESAN will be able to enhance this kind of integration through the partnership. The iSC finds the Panel's recommendation on strategic framework in building partnerships important, but would have liked to see a more analytical assessment in the Report of the Centre's collaborative research partnerships as a basis for this recommendation.

The iSC appreciates the Panel's efforts to assess the quality of research based on the criteria of quality and impact of publications as well as quantity and quality of other outputs. The iSC joins the Panel in encouraging CIP to adopt a more determined and systematic strategy to publishing. In the Panel's view more of the quality work done at CIP could easily be advanced into refereed publications. Publishing in the relevant refereed scientific journals is vital for maintaining science quality and for the Centre's visibility, competitiveness and attractiveness as a science partner.

### **Governance, Finance and Management**

The iSC is pleased that the Centre agrees with the recommendations of the Panel and has put or is planning to put in place fiscal and management policies, systems or procedures to implement them. The completion of changes in CIPFIS should be followed by the full and transparent sharing of information with managers at all levels with budgetary and planning responsibilities, as recommended by the Panel. The iSC is concerned, however, that the Board's performance in the oversight of financial and budgetary matters has not been strong. This is particularly troublesome because the last EPMR made a similar recommendation: "that the Board continually monitor CIP's liquidity and operating fund levels and establish a timetable for achieving what CIP management proposes as prudent and reasonable targets".

The review highlights the leadership role expected of the Board in promoting prudence in financial management. As this review shows, the Board should focus not only on ways of increasing revenues, but also on ways of cutting expenditures. Otherwise there is danger that Centre programmes will be stretched to levels when they begin to lose their effectiveness, critical mass, and viability. Clearly, financial discipline can be achieved only if a Board is vigilant in setting and enforcing clear priorities.

The iSC calls CIP's due attention to the Panel's recommendation to employ an international development officer, given the variable performance in resource mobilization in the past by CIP. Whether through a programme and/or officer, fund raising is a vitally important strategic activity and CIP needs to secure high level of skill in this area by itself and/or in partnership with the other Centres and the CGIAR Secretariat.

The iSC joins the Panel in its wish that the Board be more challenging and forward looking in the exercise of its programmatic/scientific oversight.

### **CIP's Future**

The iSC commends the Panel for its insightful discussion of the future of CIP. The iSC agrees fully with the Panel that the Centre should urgently engage in the development of a vision and a strategic plan that will integrate crop improvement and protection, NRM and social sciences, particularly in the context of CIP's expected funding environment and changing external conditions. The need for strategic planning and priorities was also a concern of the 4<sup>th</sup> EPMR Panel. The iSC believes that priority setting should contribute both to seeking innovative solutions to developing country problems and to setting the basic priorities to guide resource allocation in CIP. The iSC agrees with the Panel's view that priority setting needs to involve partners and constituency groups and be methodologically suitable for the different areas of activities.

The iSC notes that, as observed by the Panel, recent budgetary cuts have been made across all areas. In the Panel's perception the Centre may currently be trying to do too much and has under funding pressure developed a short-term bias in its current programmes. The iSC strongly supports the concept of basing the cuts and resource allocation on a priority setting exercise of the Centre to ensure strength, capacity and critical mass in the high priority areas.

The iSC believes that continuous assessment is needed at CIP on the position of the Centre in the research-to-development continuum in order to develop a strong self-identity and guarantee long term impact. While accepting CIP's intention to engage in development activities as needed, the Panel cautions to do so only if this serves the weaker NARS. The iSC agrees with the Panel's view that CIP should sharpen its profile as a centre of excellence in its mandate research for the developing countries. CIP's focus on near-end-products is understandable for demonstrating impact where it is likely to be achieved effectively and in the short term. However, this should be balanced against the need for strategic research paving the way for long term relevance and impact, a point that was also strongly emphasized by the 4<sup>th</sup> EPMR. The iSC underlines the primary need for CIP is to produce international public goods.

The iSC trusts that the key recommendations and several important suggestions in this Report are helpful for the Centre. Like the Panel, the iSC strongly believes that CIP, despite the current financial difficulties, will remain an important and needed Centre.

Roots and tuber crops continue to be very valuable crops for the poor and in the marginal areas of the developing world. Because of their vegetatively propagated nature these crops require considerable research maintenance effort. Although these same crops are produced in the North, their research requirements for the developing world are quite different. CIP as the key supplier of international public good research for roots and tubers clearly deserves greater support.