

CONTRIBUTION OF THE EIARD WORKING GROUP ON RESTRUCTURING OF THE CGIAR

INTRODUCTION

The CGIAR's contribution to fighting hunger in many of the poorest countries of the world is widely acknowledged. However, over the last 30 years a number of changes in the environment in which the CGIAR operates have occurred namely:

- Some NARS have become stronger and have taken over some of the tasks previously assigned to CGIAR Centres.
- New regional and global structures (GFAR) in agricultural research for development have emerged. The CGIAR has not been founded to compete with such structures.
- Environmental issues, including threats to biodiversity, are considered more important
- Research undertaken within the private sector now covers a large part of the initial CGIAR agenda
- The revolution in information and communication technologies enables close world-wide collaboration of research partners making efficient use of their comparative advantages.

The CGIAR also has several criticisms levelled against it, some of these being

- problems in extending benefits of the 'Green Revolution' to marginal areas
- problems in forging new partnerships (NGOs, private sector)
- unhealthy competition between CGIAR centres and NARS for donor funding
- duplication of effort when several centres base staff in the same region
- inflexibility in responding to new research challenges

While growth in membership (more donors, particularly from the 'South'), number of committees (for better representation of the stakeholders), number of centres and breadth of research agenda has been welcome, these may also cause a number of problems in efficiently governing the system. The current situation of

- 16 centres trying to eradicate poverty, from 120 offices, world-wide
- 16 Boards of Trustees with approximately 200 members (some double or triple memberships) steering the centres
- around 60 CGIAR members (donors, investors) trying to reach consensus at ICW and MTM
- stakeholder committees such as private sector, NGO and science trying to influence the agenda

may not be the most efficient way to proceed in the future.

EIARD'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CGIAR

The following represents EIARD's vision of the longer-term future structure and governance of the CGIAR. EIARD does not underestimate the problems of attaining this vision but it strongly believes that adoption by the System of the seven planks which define the future heartland of the CGIAR mean that substantive movement towards the elements outlined below are inevitable. In order to implement such a vision a strong TAC and an efficient secretariat are needed. The necessary sequence of events to achieve this vision during the coming years has not yet been formulated. It is likely that changes to funding mechanisms will provide the initial stimulus to reforms.

Element 1: Strong NARS and regional organisations

Strong national agricultural research systems (NARS) which can take up and adapt the CGIAR research outputs to meet the specific needs of poor farmers are required if the CGIAR is to have an impact on the food security and livelihoods of poor people. In regions where there are relatively large numbers of small NARS, the development of strong and effective regional and sub-regional organisations which can effectively represent such NARS in negotiations with, for example the CGIAR, is also a potentially effective way to proceed. The first element of the EIARD long-term vision for the CGIAR is therefore the existence of strong NARS and, where appropriate, strong regional and sub-regional organisations. Such NARS and regional organisations will then have a key task in assessing research needs of their stakeholders and undertaking, in their own right, much of the consequential research activities. Where appropriate NARS and/or their regional organisations could then also request regional CGIAR centres to undertake research which can be more effectively or efficiently undertaken by the CGIAR rather than other research players.

Element 2: Four regional CGIAR Programmes

EIARD envisages that four regional CGIAR Programmes will need to be established servicing the needs of:

- South and South-East Asia (including China and the Pacific),
- West Asia and North Africa (including Central Asia and Caucasus),
- Sub-Saharan Africa, and
- Latin America and Caribbean

Within these regional Programmes there could be several sub-programmes, for example, within Africa there could be sub-programmes for East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. Regional programmes would undertake strategic research of regional importance. They should be responsive to changing regional situations. Wherever possible, regional organisations should give guidance. Complementarity between emerging stronger NARS and CGIAR regional programme will be sought. The 4 regional programmes would receive funding as part of the

CGIAR but this would be related to established regional research priorities. Each regional programme would have a single governing body where major responsibility should be given to representatives of NARS and/or their regional/sub regional organisations.

Element 3: A single centrally managed CGIAR research facility.

Such a single central research facility would have a single Board of Trustees but may well have a number of sub-programmes in different parts of the world. The single central research facility would have two strands of responsibility. Firstly, it would be responsible for all the CGIAR germplasm conservation and maintenance activities including issues of biosafety, intellectual property rights, negotiations with the private sector, etc. The second component of the single central research facility is strategic research of **global relevance** including germplasm improvement and other research of crops, livestock, fish, trees etc. Certain types of policy research could also be included. The activities of this single central research facility would be clearly defined and carefully managed within time bound "programmes" including the application of external audit and review procedures with real power. As a consequence of these in house programme management procedures, donors would be invited to return to core funding the work in its entirety thereby saving considerably on transaction costs.

Element 4: The use of Task Forces

The fourth element to the EIARD vision is the increased use of groups of organisations including IARCs, Advanced Research Institutes, the Private Sector, NARS, NGOs etc to form flexible and time limited Task Forces to address specific research issues. This will require the CGIAR to put in place appropriate technical/management committees and other mechanisms by which the themes for task forces could be identified and the Task Forces formed. Such Task Forces could be formed by simple discussion and agreement between the organisations with services to offer or there could be competitive calls for bids from research consortia to offer services to address specific research outputs. EIARD is of the view that many of the activities currently directed at food and water policy, and research management outputs of the CGIAR logframe could be effectively serviced by Task Forces. EIARD is aware of the often-claimed poor reputation of system-wide initiatives /programmes within the CGIAR and the potential for high transaction costs. Thus, it would be expected that initially the number of Task Forces may be relatively low but if they proved successful in practice they could in time proceeded to expand at the expense of the more permanent central and regional centres of the CGIAR.

FOOT NOTE

EIARD does not underestimate the problems in moving to adopt the approach outlined above. A few examples that come to mind are:

- Most current centres include in their current mandate components of elements 2 and 3 above, and possibly 4 as well. How would these be reformulated under different management structures?
- How would funding be channelled to the various elements?
- Is there a danger that the four elements would fail to communicate/ integrate effectively and, indeed, start again to compete with each other for funds?
- Many of the centres have substantial real estate responsibilities. It is likely that there will be a reduced requirement for this in the future. How will this be handled?
- There is a strong political element in the size, location and continued existence of CGIAR centres in specific countries, North as well as South. Is the will of CGIAR Members to reform robust enough to weather the undoubted storms this will entail?

The re-structuring of the CGIAR, like that of any business worth 350 million dollars, is likely to be messy and require compromises. As pointed out earlier, EIARD believes that there is a strong future need for the CGIAR but that maintaining the current status quo is not an option. As part of its ongoing deliberations over the next few months, EIARD will consider further these and other issues relating to CGIAR reform and looks forward to continuing positive interaction with all CGIAR Members.