

ICW2000 Parallel Session I
External Program and Management Review of CIAT
26 October 2000
Chair: Francisco Reifschneider
Rapporteur: Christine Bergmark
Secretary: Manuel Lantin

Purpose

The 5th External Program and Management Review (EPMR) report of CIAT was considered in Parallel Session I involving a number of interested CGIAR Members, representative of the Host Country, and other participants of ICW2000. The session's report is submitted to the CGIAR for information and discussion.

Process

Participants had received the EPMR report, as well as the response of the Center to the review report, and the TAC commentary in advance of the meeting.

The session was attended by over 45 participants. The discussion followed a presentation of the review report by Ronnie Coffman, panel chair; the response of the Center by Lauritz Holm-Nielsen, Chair, CIAT's Board of Trustees and Joachim Voss, CIAT's Director General; and the TAC commentary by Lucia de Vaccaro, TAC member. The Review Panel Chair and Center representatives responded to questions. At the end of the session, the Chair summarized the discussion and the recommendations of the meeting.

Comments and Issues

1. The participating CGIAR members agreed to the overall conclusion of the Review Panel and of TAC that CIAT has performed very well as a CGIAR research institution during the last five years. The report reflects a very positive assessment of the Center's research program and the way the institution has been managed.
2. The Center underwent major changes during the period and yet was able to maintain the quality of its science and the relevance of its outputs. In the Panel's view, CIAT has become a "new model among the CGIAR centers." The Center has implemented a flatter and more participatory management structure and seeks to blend two research directorates – genetic resources and natural resources. The participants were pleased to see exemplary models of partnership such as a Research Park, FLAR, and the Global Whitefly program. It was felt that these models represent a new and more open center that is a hub for research in the region while maintaining an international presence and impact.
3. The following concerns and challenges were raised:
 - Improving donor coordination is essential to enable CIAT to keep a coherent research focus in the face of a program which is funded largely through 140 restricted research grants, accounting for approximately 70% of CIAT's budget. The challenge will be to ensure that each research activity contributes to the overarching goals of CIAT's mandate.

- Striking the right balance between commodity and NRM research is critical for CIAT. This is a dilemma which involves a rising role and interest in NRM work, but with insufficiently well-defined methodologies and uneven results, and a decline in commodity research, with a consequent slow-down in outputs. The participants recommended that CIAT renew its commitment to commodity research and better integrate the germplasm program with the natural resource management program.
- Increasing support to the Bean Program was highlighted by the participants. The program is the only one of its kind in the world and the group endorsed CIAT's commitment to increase collaboration with ICARDA, ICRISAT and IITA on legume research. Additional support is needed in order to maintain and eventually expand the Bean Program.
- Developing a more rigorous overall research approach in integrated natural resources management is a must. The participants endorsed the recommendation that CIAT continues to adjust its work towards improving the hillside programs.
- The participants were pleased to note CIAT's contribution to several international conventions and issues of global interest, particularly highlighting the work of interest to the CBD and carbon sequestration. These important linkages ensure relevance not just for CIAT at the global level, but also for the CGIAR system as a whole.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The CGIAR members participating in the session:

- **Endorsed** the Panel's recommendations and very positive assessment of CIAT, and thanked the panel for an excellent report.
- **Encouraged** members to continue to support CIAT's work.
- **Assures** the Group that CIAT is well placed to meet the challenges to international agricultural research.