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Shaping the CGIAR's Future

Report of the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG)

Attached is the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) report on its activities. This report is issued as background for Agenda Item 5 (v) : "Recommendations from Cosponsors CGIAR Committees and Partnership Committees - IAEG"

Report on Activities

Terms of reference and strategy

- 1. Facilitate the strengthening of the CGIAR's ex post impact assessment capabilities.
- 2. Provide guidance and oversight to impact assessment activities and recommend appropriate actions by the CGIAR and/or Centers.
- 3. Ensure the design and conduct of evaluations that document the impact of the CGIAR as a System.

This charter comes down basically to two things: (1) helping the members of the Group, the Centers and their associated NARS to become more skilled in the areas of evaluation and impact assessment; and (2) commissioning impact assessment studies which document the effect of the work that the CGIAR has carried out. The CGIAR members have also requested the IAEG to produce an annual report on the impacts of the CGIAR.

We have developed the following strategies: to focus on key elements of CGIAR activities and build, together with studies conducted by Centers and Members, an incremental evaluation of the fabric of CGIAR work;

- to develop common protocols for use across Centers so that System-wide impacts can be determined;
- to encourage the use of a range of evaluation methods throughout the System
- to work collaboratively with Centers and NARS in conducting impact assessments, while ensuring objectivity and quality
- to enhance credibility through the use of independent evaluators and peer review
- to encourage studies by Centers with their NARS partners to provide training for evaluators throughout the CGIAR, linking skill enhancement activities with actual impact studies wherever possible to encourage Centers to develop evaluation strategies for themselves

Our operational credo comprises:

1. working as closely as possible with Centers (we provide some financial support);
2. using outside independent consultants to provide technical oversight to the projects, increase the credibility of the studies and introduce new methodologies;
3. involving NARS partners in all studies; and
4. a member of the IAEG taking an oversight interest for each project.

IAEG membership:

It is three years since the inaugural IAEG members were appointed during ICW95. Three new members have now taken their place on the IAEG: Dr Cristina David (Philippines), Dr Frans Leeuw (The Netherlands) and Dr Hans Gregersen (USA). With the departure of the present chairman after ICW this year, a fourth new member is to be identified by the co-sponsors to complete the team.

Establishment of IAEG Secretariat

The Secretariat is still in the process of being established. The appointment of Dr Guido Gryseels as Executive Secretary as a

UNDP staff member on secondment from FAO has been approved by the UNDP. He will initially be based in Rome at FAO, at least until the outcomes of the System Review are known, before transferring to UNDP Headquarters in New York in 1999. He is expected to take up duties during October this year. Dr Carlos Zulberti who has been on secondment from UNEP to the CGIAR completed his one year term at the end of August. The idea of professional staff from Centers or Members spending time working on system-wide evaluation projects sponsored by the IAEG is worth developing. The IAEG thanks UNEP for its initiative.

Operational matters

We are pleased with the developing interaction between Centers and the IAEG. We have learned a great deal in this regard from the recently completed adoption studies. We have been impressed by the excellent collaboration we have received from staff in Centers. However, we are concerned about the amount of time that Center evaluation staff can devote to IAEG-sponsored projects as an add-on to their scheduled duties. Ideally, IAEG-sponsored evaluation activities should be part of the scheduled workplan of each Center. Participation in the regular Annual Impacts Report and in the major Impact and Evaluation projects of the IAEG is beginning to put this objective in place. We are also concerned that the mechanisms for funding IAEG activities are yet to be established in a formal sense.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the report of its first meeting in December 1995, the IAEG stated that its success over its first two years (members were initially appointed for two years) would be reflected in:

- Centers knowing how to undertake evaluation and impact assessment, and that such analyses are regarded as a regular feature of a Center's work and are of high quality
- A number of impact studies being made available to Donors to show contributions that the CGIAR System has made.
- Evidence that because of impact studies, Centers have developed a greater range of working alliances.
- Impact assessment analysis of past work will be accepted as a key component of priority setting for future projects

The IAEG has had mixed success. We believe, although we have not verified the observation, that there is a wider acceptance of the value of ex post impact assessment throughout the CGIAR and that the IAEG has made some contribution to this increased awareness. Initiating studies has not been easy and we recognise that we underestimated the difficulties involved. None-the-less, the review of past ex post studies and the studies on factors affecting adoption have been completed and the plans for the major studies on the impact of CGIAR germplasm improvement and on poverty are closer to fruition. We also believe that as the evidence presented in the Annual Impacts report accumulates it will provide useful material for demonstrating System-wide impact. We have been most appreciative of the willingness of Centers to collaborate but we think the professional analysts providing plausible, data-backed ex post impact information should be given greater support and recognition.

IAEG WORK PROGRAM

The status of major elements within the IAEG portfolio is detailed below:

Annual report on CGIAR impacts

The decision that the IAEG should assemble an annual report on CGIAR impact was taken at MTM97. The IAEG produced a pilot report for 1997. It was assembled from the most recent Center annual reports available to the IAEG (usually 1995) and from material forwarded from a number of Centers. Feedback was positive.

The 1998 report has been prepared and will be distributed during ICW98. We received contributions from Centers and had active interaction with these Centers once their initial drafts were received. Center staff have been extremely helpful and co-operative in assisting the IAEG produce the 1998 report. Feedback from Members and Centers on the usefulness of the various formats used will be helpful. The IAEG believes that the quality of contributions will improve as we collectively gain experience in the preparation and use of the report.

Impact of CGIAR crop germplasm improvement on food production

This topic was chosen because it addresses the impact of a large proportion of the System's total research effort (the CGIAR has 25 mandate crops and a major proportion of the effort has been on crop germplasm improvement). The study will depend largely on the evaluation expertise and resources in the Centers.

The scoping and design phase of the project was completed by Prof Greg Traxler from Auburn University. Prof Bob Evenson of Yale University has been contracted as the lead investigator. Prof. Evenson held a planning meeting with Center economists participating in the study at Salt Lake City during August this year. Seven Centers are carrying out studies on nine commodities. In addition, three country level studies will be conducted in collaboration with the national programs in Brazil, China and India. A major progress report will be presented at ICW99, and a final synthesis report presented to the Group at MTM2000.

The Co-sponsors have approved funding in the IAEG's current operating budget to support components of the study, and the CGIAR Secretariat made a special one-time allocation of \$200,000 to cover a portion of Centers' costs incurred during field work. These funds have already been allocated in support of work now on-going in the Centers. Dr Cristina David is providing project oversight on behalf of the IAEG.

Assessment of the adoption of CGIAR agricultural innovations

This project had its genesis at the CGIAR impact assessment and evaluation workshop held at ISNAR in April 1996 when Centers and NARS identified case study methodology as potentially one of the more useful evaluation methods for assessing impact which could be used by CGIAR evaluators. The evaluators requested further training in the methodology. The IAEG commissioned Prof Lee Sechrest from the University of Arizona to conduct a workshop in the use of case study for impact assessment and to provide on-going advice to participating Centers to ensure appropriate design and rigour is applied to their studies. Nine studies in the project have been completed and the results were discussed at a synthesis workshop held in Hawaii at the end of June this year. The workshop was attended by the senior Center investigator from each participating Center and a collaborator from a NARS partner. The workshop initiated a cross-system analysis of the findings of the individual case studies. The workshop also discussed a draft paper on technology adoption commissioned as part of the project. The project report is presented to the CGIAR at ICW this year. We propose that full accounts of each study will be available on the CGIAR Website. We have also been negotiating for all these impact studies to be published in a special edition of a leading Evaluation Journal.

The completed studies in the project are:

Study 1: Hybrid maize in Ghana

Lead Center : CIMMYT NARS partner: Ghana

Study 2: Cassava processing in Brazil

CGIAR Center: CIAT NARS partner: EMBRAPA, Brazil

Study 3: CGIAR and NARS post-production innovations in the Philippines and Vietnam

CGIAR Center: IRRI NARS partner: PhilRice, Philippines; Vietnam

Study 4: Comparative study on factors critical to the adoption of ICRISAT/NARS groundnut innovations in Vietnam and India

CGIAR Center: ICRISAT NARS partner: Oil Plant Institute, Vietnam

Study 5: Comparative study on factors critical to the adoption of ICRISAT/NARS sorghum germplasm innovations in India and Nigeria

CGIAR Center: ICRISAT NARS partner: Nigeria

Study 6: Small holder dairy technology in Kenya

CGIAR Center – ILRI NARS partner: KARI, Kenya

Study 7: - Crop descriptors lists (DL)

CGIAR Center: IPGRI

Study 8: International *musa* testing programme (IMTP) of INIBAP

CGIAR Center: IPGRI

Study 9: Strengthening planning, monitoring and evaluation in LAC

CGIAR Center: ISNAR NARS partner: Brazil

Impact of CGIAR innovations on poverty

This major project aims to determine whether there is evidence of a decrease in poverty levels among groups of people in those situations where there has been a demonstrated improvement in production level as a result of an introduced CGIAR innovation (germplasm or technology). Reduction of poverty is a major objective of the CGIAR and it is important to develop a better understanding of the links between CGIAR innovations and their effects on poverty levels. We considered an approach to a poverty study elicited from Professor David Cordray at Vanderbilt University and commissioned him to develop a proposed design of the project. Subsequently, we agreed that IFPRI would lead the further design and conduct of the study – Dr Peter Hazell and Dr Lawrence Haddad are the project leaders.

A draft proposal for a two-year project was discussed with a number of CGIAR members during MTM. We are delighted with the interest shown by Centers; nine have indicated their desire to be associated with the project. The general design concept was accepted by the IAEG at its June meeting and the proposal was modified to take account of comments made at MTM and by the IAEG. Further refinements to the study methodology, with special attention to synthesis across the case studies, will be made during a methodology workshop planned to be held later this year. The project will be fully launched as soon as assurances of funding are received. Although the Co-sponsors have approved significant funding support from the IAEG operational budget, additional resources are required. We are pleased that UNDP and DANIDA have indicated their willingness to serve as co-convenors of an informal project-donors support group. In addition, DANIDA has made a commitment of support for project activities in 1999 and 2000. DFID has also expressed interest in supporting the methodology workshop. Our plan calls for an interim report in October 1999 and the final report in October 2000.

Workshop on good evaluation practice

The IAEG reported at MTM that it would discuss the review of past studies with the intent of developing best practice guidelines for reporting impact assessment and evaluation studies. The IAEG is planning to hold a workshop titled "Using evaluation to enhance impacts of research – what works and how to do it" on 18/19 March 1999 in Rome before the TAC meeting. It will include consideration of the data essential for the evaluation needs of the CGIAR. The workshop will be for Center staff doing impact assessment work and senior research managers from Centers – ideally we would like to attract a senior evaluator and the Director of Research or equivalent from each Center. Dr Frans Leeuw will take oversight of the project for the IAEG; his main contribution to the IAEG will be in the area of institutional strengthening and capacity building.

Natural resources management

We have started the process of scoping a study in this area. The IAEG co-sponsored an international workshop at ICRAF on Assessing the Impact of Research in Natural Resource Management in Nairobi from 27-29 April 1998. The IAEG is presently

considering assessment possibilities. Dr Hans Gregersen will take oversight of the project for the IAEG.

Incubator projects

In addition to projects already or soon to be underway, we have identified several priority projects for inclusion on an 'incubator' list. These are projects that we think would be useful and that should be commissioned as resources permit. The projects are concerned with:

- Biotechnology and science impact
 - Institutional strengthening
 - NARS and scientific capacity
- Post harvest technologies
- Integrated pest management
- Biodiversity

The IAEG would appreciate feedback on the priority of these areas.

IAEG members

Dr Jim Peacock

Dr Cristina David

Dr Hans Gregersen

Dr Frans Leeuw

IAEG support

Dr Guido Gryseels (Executive Secretary designate)

Dr Peter Matlon (Acting Executive Secretary)

Mr Tim Healy (Manager, Operations)

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