

## Working Group 2: Partnerships - Issues and Options

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The Working Group discussed **issues** relating to:

- the *concept* of partnerships
- the relevant *recommendations* of the System Review report.

### Issues relating to the concept of partnerships

Because the concept is inherently complex and multi-faceted, it is understood in many different ways by the CGIAR's different stakeholders. Clear functional/operational definition of partnership at each level would be useful. The following dimensions or aspects of partnerships were discussed:

- Purposes and motivating forces for partnership
- Role of partnerships in enhancing research effectiveness and efficiency, research impact, and capacity building
- Equity considerations
- Asymmetrical relationships among partners
- Mutual respect for each partner's agenda
- Critical factors for successful partnerships.

### Issues relating to the recommendations of the System Review report

The Working Group (WG) focused particularly on recommendations 20 (partnership with components of the Global Forum), 8 (Capacity Building), and 11 (broadening of partnerships). It examined issues relating to these recommendations at three levels, recognizing their interactions as well:

- Global
- CGIAR
- Center

#### Global Forum (Recommendation)

The WG strongly endorsed the participation and support of the CGIAR to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR). It fully recognized that partnership between the CGIAR and other actors in the global agricultural research system is mutually beneficial and should be strengthened.

The issues concerning the future development of this partnership relate mainly to:

- the modalities and frequency of the interaction
- setting of the CGIAR research agenda

The WG encouraged closer interactions between the CGIAR and other components of the GFAR including the regional/subregional fora, to exploit synergies that such interactions could generate.

#### CGIAR Agenda Setting

The WG recognized the mutual benefits of interactions between the CGIAR and the other components of the GFAR. An important area where the CGIAR would be particularly benefited is in the setting of its research agenda. Consultations with partners assure the relevance of the CGIAR's work, and enables the CGIAR to help shape the global research agenda.

#### NARS Capacity Building (Recommendation)

The WG endorsed the System Review's call for greater emphasis on capacity building of NARS (including NARIs, universities, NGOs, and the private sector engaged in agricultural research at the national level). Strengthening of NARS is fundamental to the development of strong partnerships, not only with IARCs but also among and within NARS.

#### Partnership with Private Sector (Recommendation)

The WG welcomed the recommendation of the System Review to strengthen partnerships with the private sector. It recognized that private sector differs from one another, in terms of interests, capabilities, mode of operation, and capacity to engage in meaningful partnership etc.

The private sector's perspectives in seeking partnership with IARCs and NARs were conveyed and elaborated by the private sector participants in the WG. There was recognition of the enormous diversity of the private sector and the types of partnership that can be developed. Private sector refers not only to multinational companies undertaking biotechnology and genetic engineering research but also to small and specialized companies engaged in downstream activities such as seed production and distribution.

The WG endorsed the SR Panel's recommendation that in relevant areas, the CGIAR Centers enter into MOU with partners that contain a Voluntary Code of Conduct.

#### Management of Partnerships

This was raised as a major issue both at the IARC and NARS levels. Elements of planning, monitoring, resource allocation and evaluation are important considerations in partnership management. Transaction costs should be weighed against benefits.

Good outputs from a collaborative effort can be expected only if it is well managed by concerned parties.

#### Other Recommendations

Partnerships with NGOs and other actors will be discussed in the next session of the WG, as well as other recommendations relevant to partnerships.