



Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

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Charting the CGIAR's Future – Change Design and Management

Regional Priority Setting

**Proposed Process for a Greater Integration of CGIAR Activities in Central
Asia and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) Region**

This Item is for Information Discussion Decision

Proposed Action: None

Proposed Process for a Greater Integration of CGIAR Activities in Central Asia and West Asia and North Africa (CWANA) Region

Background

During the MTM-2000 in Dresden, the CGIAR approved the proposal made by TAC in its *Vision and Strategy* document to follow a regional approach in research through greater integration of the CG-Centers activities in NARSs regional research priorities. This approach will be complementary to the on-going CGIAR global and eco-regional approaches.

The TAC envisages progress towards the regional approach to research planning and implementation in two phases: the first phase will cover the overall regional planning and priority setting which will be NARSs led, while the second phase will deal with a subset of the regional agenda in which the CGIAR will play a direct role. Through the CDC/CBC Chairs, ICARDA has been assigned the responsibility to lead the second phase of the process for CWANA region.

Considering the various features of the two sub-regions in CWANA, the process will be initiated separately at two major sub-regional levels covering West Asia and North Africa (WANA) on one side and Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) on the other side. In the last two decades, overall regional priorities in WANA have been tackled in several regional meetings involving the Association of Agricultural Research Institutes in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA):

- Technical Consultation on Agricultural Research in the Near East and North Africa organized by FAO, ICARDA and ISNAR and held in Cyprus, 1983.
- Research Priorities in WANA and Modalities of NARS-ICARDA interaction (ICARDA Special Task Force/Questionnaire to all Concerned Stakeholders in WANA), 1992.
- West Asia and North Africa Regional Forum: Towards a Shared Vision on Agricultural Research in WANA, organized by AARINENA, IFAD, FAO and CGIAR, in 1995 at ICARDA.
- AARINENA Towards 2000 and Beyond: A Strategy for the Future, approved in AARINENA General Assembly held in Iran, May 1998.

In CAC, regional research priorities have been tackled since 1995 in two major events:

- Central Asia and Caucasus: Seed Production and Agricultural Research Priority Setting: organized by GTZ and ICARDA (involving CIMMYT, ICARDA, IPGRI and ISNAR), in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, December 1995.
- Meeting of the CGIAR Task Force on the involvement of the CGIAR in the Central Asia and the Caucasus Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1996.

CWANA being the eco-regional mandate region for ICARDA, feedback on NARSs research priorities relevant to ICARDA's mandate has been regularly solicited, at the national level, through NARS/ICARDA annual national coordination meetings since 1977; and at sub-regional level through annual regional coordination meetings in WANA since 1979 and in CAC since 1996. In these meetings the sister CGIAR Centers have also participated through their staff posted at ICARDA or in the region. In addition, the regional priorities for livestock

research in WANA have been established by NARS in two consultation meetings held jointly by ILRI and ICARDA in 1995 and 1997.

Considering that priorities change with time and recognizing that substantial developments have occurred in CWANA NARS in the last decade; the two major sub-regional fora, AARINENA and CAC NARS Forum, have articulated recently their long-term vision and the strategies; and several CG-Centers are working with the NARS in CWANA, the regional approach in planning and implementing research is certainly an urgent need.

To enhance the process of regionalization of agricultural research, there is a need to build on the information already assembled in the past through the above mentioned efforts, with greater involvement and broader participation of stakeholders in a bottom up approach. The proposed process has the following major elements:

- Broader participation in the process of priority setting by various stakeholders including farmer's organizations, universities, NGOs, private sector, investors, etc. in addition to the national agricultural research institutes.
- Greater coordination and integration of research activities of CG-Centers.
- Seeking complementarity in tackling the regional research agenda based on comparative advantages of NARS and CG-Centers.
- Capitalization on NARSs strengths to serve regional needs.

Objectives and Expected Outcome of the Process

The overall goal is to enhance the effectiveness of the CGIAR System in working with the national agricultural research systems to tackle the priority sub-regional and regional agricultural problems in CWANA region.

Specific objectives of the process, which will be done in cooperation with AARINENA, the CAC NARS Forum, and all other concerned stakeholders in a bottom up approach, would include:

- Re-visiting with NARS their sub-regional and regional research priorities considering developments at national, regional and global levels.
- Identifying the CGIAR niche within the NARSs regional priority setting.
- Defining a coherent CGIAR strategy in CWANA.
- Developing an action plan to implement the strategy.
- Harmonizing and integrating CGIAR activities within CWANA research priorities.
- Identifying operational modalities for the integration of CGIAR activities and cooperation with AARINENA and the CAC NARS Forum.

Expected output of the process will be:

- A coherent strategic action plan for CGIAR in CWANA.
- Operational modalities for integration of CGIAR activities and cooperation with AARINENA and CAC NARS Forum.
- Steps needed to move from strategic action plan to implementation.
- Endorsement of the "integration process" by concerned CGIAR bodies and general assemblies of AARINENA and CAC NARS Forum.

The Integration Process and a Tentative Schedule

The integration process will involve consultation with all stakeholders in cooperation with AARINANA and the CAC NARS Forum. To ensure broader participation of all stakeholders, the process will include in addition to consultation meetings, an inventory of the CGIAR activities in CWANA, a questionnaire on priority setting to all NARS stakeholders. The questionnaire will be finalized in consultation with sub-regional organizations (SROs) and the CG Centers. The outcome of the questionnaire will be analyzed at sub-regional level before the consultation meetings. The focus of the regional priority setting exercise and the integration process will be ensured by initiating the process in consultation meetings at sub-regional levels in WANA and CAC. According to AARINENA strategy, WANA is divided into five sub-regions and CG-Centers: The Maghreb (N.Africa), Nile Valley and Red Sea, the Mashreq, Arabian Peninsula and the highland region of Western Asia (Turkey to Pakistan). These coincide with ICARDA sub-regions based on similar agro-ecologies. Central Asia and Caucasus region has two distinct sub-regions.

The process and the tentative schedule below were discussed and agreed upon with AARINENA President, Dr. Moustafa Yaghi, in April 2001 and it will be further discussed with the CAC NARS Forum President Dr A. Satyabaldin during the upcoming Steering Committee Meeting of the CGIAR Program for CAC in early June:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Period</i>
- Discussion with regional fora on overall approach	April 2001
- Development of sub- regional and regional inventory of CGIAR activities in CWANA by correspondence with all CG Centers	April/May '01
- Identification of methodology for priority setting based on review of process followed in other regions, and conferencing with concerned stakeholders	June '01
- Based on agreed methodology, a questionnaire developed and served to NARS leaders and other stakeholders for identification of research priorities	June '01
- Analysis of questionnaire	July/Aug '01
- Brain storming at sub-regional level* (to coincide with annual sub-regional coordination meetings convened by ICARDA)	Sept/Oct '01
- Discussion and synthesis of research priorities relevant to CGIAR for CWANA and integrating CGIAR activities in CWANA region in a meeting* Convened at ICARDA	Jan/Feb 2002

*All CG-Centers will be invited. AARINENA and CAC NARS Forum and other stakeholders (ARIs, farmers organizations, universities, NGOs, private sectors, etc.) will be involved in sub-regional and regional meetings.

Progress to Date

- The process and the tentative schedule have been discussed with AARINENA President Dr Mustafa Yaghi and will be soon discussed with the President of the CAC NARS Forum, Dr. Satyabaldin.
- Sub-regional and regional inventory of CGIAR activities in CWANA have been requested from all CG-Centers using a standard format. Responses have started arriving from various Centers.
- First draft of questionnaire is being prepared for inviting comments from the concerned.
- Methodologies followed in agricultural research prioritization in Latin America and Caribbean, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa are being reviewed to arrive at an appropriate methodology.