

Taking Biotechnology forward in the CGIAR

The CGIAR intends to address major issues in biotechnology to assist the system to develop both a strategy for the medium and long term and an overarching policy framework. The strategy and the framework should provide a flexible environment for the centers of the CGIAR to manage biotechnology within their programs. A number of key issues have already been identified and include:

- interaction and collaboration with the private sector
- intellectual property
- harmonization with global agreements
- protection and promotion of international public goods
- flow of products to beneficiaries in developing countries
- biosafety
- ethics
- benefit sharing
- public awareness and perception.

The following process is suggested for the Group's consideration:

Establishment of two ad hoc expert panels to define and address the issues according to the attached Terms of Reference. One expert panel will address general issues of biotechnology; the second panel will address issues specifically related to proprietary science and technology.

The expert panels will work under the auspices of TAC and will consult widely with CGIAR stakeholders and existing committees.

The expert panels shall include in their membership external, highly qualified, individuals and representatives of existing CGIAR committees.

The expert panels will present reports to TAC for commentary. The reports and commentary will be tabled at ICW97 for consideration by the Group as to further action.

Conditions of Operation

- Panels should take as a starting point the existing situation in the CGIAR.

- Panels will draw on the expertise of existing CGIAR committees in areas where efforts are ongoing (e.g. GRPC for ethics issues, benefit-sharing, etc.)
- Panels should include members who are familiar with the CGIAR and are conversant with the external environment in which it operates (e.g. the convention on Biological Diversity for proprietary issues, the position and problems of NARs, etc.)
- Panel members should be appointed (approved) by the Group.

Expert Panel: General Issues in Biotechnology

The Panel will:

1. Identify issues of major concern to the CGIAR that will facilitate positioning the CG in the global agricultural research system.
2. Provide advice and guidelines on immediate or long-term needs with respect to;
 - comparative advantage analysis
 - risk management
 - strategic alliances
 - strategy and resources.
3. Prepare a draft strategy on biotechnology for the CGIAR, taking into consideration needs of the centers and the stakeholders, identifying options for the strategic involvement of the CGIAR in the use of biotechnological approaches to solving problems relevant to its mission.
4. Prepare a report and recommendations to be presented to TAC for commentary and for consideration of the Group at ICW97.

Expert Panel: Proprietary Science and Technology

The Panel will:

1. Identify and examine issues of major concerns to the CGIAR in the area of proprietary science and technology and in the context of ongoing deliberations in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and World Trade Organization (TRIPS).
2. Provide advice and recommendations on immediate and/or long-term needs with respect to such issues as:
 - further refinement/resolution of CGIAR Guidelines for IPR

- a central legal capability within the CG for advising centers on proprietary matters
 - documenting and studying existing center or inter-center experiences in propriety matters
 - tracking proprietary negotiations within the CGIAR for assessing future implications.
3. Prepare a draft strategy for addressing proprietary issues in the CGIAR in the short, medium and long-term and suggest a framework within which future proprietary negotiations should occur consistent with accepted CGIAR policy and mandate.
 4. Prepare a report and recommendations to be presented to TAC for commentary and for subsequent consideration by the Group at ICW97.