

Consultation on the CGIAR System Review

At the 1996 Annual Meeting (ICW), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) commissioned a review of the CGIAR-System. This decision was most welcome and timely.

At that stage, BMZ, on behalf of the European Members, emphasized in a letter to the Chair of the CGIAR that it attributed great importance to ensuring an independent external review and one which is seen to "have teeth". The independence of the panel was considered a precondition to achieving this aim. In addition, the importance of the process and the adequacy of the time horizon to produce a meaningful review was stressed. This includes consultations with members and stakeholders.

To further elaborate on this important agenda item, BMZ convened a working group¹ of scientists, management experts, NGO and private sector representatives as well as resource persons from the International Agricultural Research Units of BMZ, GTZ, and ATSAF. The following comments represent the outcome of their discussion and are intended to contribute to the initial interaction and consultation between the review panel and the constituencies of the CGIAR which is scheduled for the 1997 Mid-term Meeting.

I. General Comments on the System Review

1. A review of the effectiveness of the CG-System is of great importance and urgency, because the System has matured celebrating its 25th anniversary last year. Whereas the first and second reviews date back to 1976 and to 1981, recent studies on vision and governance drew only partially on external expertise and were limited in scope.

2. The review is timely to assess the implementation of the decisions made in February 1995 at Lucerne, where members of the CGIAR at the ministerial level renewed their commitment to contribute to sustainable agriculture in developing countries through International Agricultural Research.

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3. Major changes that were initiated at Lucerne need to be followed up by the Group:

- reorientation of the System towards a more effective contribution to its goals, in particular poverty alleviation (Annex 1: Matrix of CGIAR goals)
- sharply focused research priorities, providing an appropriate response to global challenges of the next century
- people-centered and problem-oriented strategic research approach
- stronger participation of the South and a full North-South partnership in the global agricultural research system
- tighten the governance and enhance the finance management (the proposed CGIAR Logframe is considered a first step: Annex 2)

4. The programmatic and organisational set-up of the CGIAR was the basis of the past successes. This set-up is considered a unique advantage, to contribute to solving key development problems by pooling the resources of its members and bringing to bear the worldwide capacities in research for agricultural development to contribute to poverty alleviation and environment protection and sustainable food security.

5. It is recognised that the CGIAR-System is facing various weaknesses and inefficiencies that need to be addressed. Subsequent to Lucerne, there is scope for further changes and adjustments in science and research strategy as well as in governance and finance.

6. In line with the reaffirmed support at Lucerne, the CG System deserves the full commitment of its members to its strategic business orientation and basic organisational principles:

- informal structure of membership
- coherent research orientation based on independent technical advice
- autonomous decisions of members to target funding
- decentralized implementation of programmes through research centers controlled by boards with immediate responsibility.

II. Question and Issues for the System Review

Based on the above considerations, the following questions have been formulated with regard to the System Review. The questions are intended to contribute to a forward-looking discussion of the

members and other stakeholders at the MTM on the Terms of Reference for the System review.

Research Mandate

1. Does the CGIAR address the appropriate research topics according to

- effectivity of contribution to goals (poverty alleviation, especially of disadvantaged groups, environmental protection, sustainable food security)

- international public-good orientation

- comparative advantage of Centers

- people-centered focus and contribution to the solution of development problems?

Against this background, how can we shape the most effective contribution of the CG System as a whole to the research-development process?

2. How can the necessary search process and priority setting be supported and further developed in a (quantitative and qualitative) analytically sensible way by TAC and the Centers, accepting the increased limitation of funds? In what way can priorities, at both national and regional levels (bottom-up), be reconciled with the orientation decided at Lucerne and with the priorities set in the global policy environment - in the sense of an iterative participatory process at the various levels (Subsidiary Principle)?

3. To what extent is the CGIAR, as a whole, capable of picking up new problems and global developments, at the same time giving up tasks of subsiding priority? What is the readiness for change in the System and what indicates its rate of response (e.g. replacing one-dimensional technology development/traditional commodity research by complex research approaches that are interdisciplinary and based on partnership)? What adaptations of the program must be resolved in view of the new orientation adopted in Lucerne, especially a stronger poverty- and client-focus of research (adoption, impact)?

4. Does the CGIAR have adequate mechanisms in place to involve partners and users of research in defining and evaluating programs and research contents? Do their roles correspond with the demands of a broadened partnership and participation? Does the CGIAR work with those partners who - in accordance with the Lucerne

declaration - effectively and efficiently contribute to the application of research (impact) towards achieving its goals? Should the CG place more emphases on diversifying its partners (e.g. universities, NGOs, "change agents")?

Structure

5. Are the present CGIAR steering mechanisms (CG Chair, CG Secretariat, Cosponsors, Member Group, Center Boards) still adequate with regard to goal achievement, the broadened agenda, and the resulting increase in complexity of the System? How appropriate is the present structure to implement the new research directions laid down in Lucerne (problem-orientation, stronger emphasis on interdisciplinary system approaches) and openness to partners?

6. Is the emphasis and the consideration given to decentral and to central steering functions appropriate (CG Chair, CG Secretariat, Cosponsors, Members)? Do they correspond to the demands of systemwide approaches and transcending global cooperation with regard to an effective contribution to the development process? Where and how should central and decentral steering functions (e.g. CG-Secretariat, Cosponsors, TAC, Boards) be changed in order to promote efficiency and transparency, and to prevent overlap in competence or unbalanced control?

7. How can the decentral steering capability of the System be improved, e.g. by strengthening the Board by smaller, more competent composition and by combining tasks?

8. How can frictions during the interaction of the diverse committees in the CGIAR be removed (Cosponsors, Oversight and Finance Committees, CG Secretariat, TAC, IAEG, Generic Resources Policy) and the effectiveness and the transparency increased, e.g. through reducing (by merging) committees and changing the task structure?

9. Which means of intervention by the different System elements (e.g. Members, Oversight and Finance Committees, TAC) can be dispensed with and which are especially relevant for the System management?

10. In how far are potentially negative developments discovered and corrected at an early stage? Are appropriate feedback

mechanisms of the steering elements in place (bottom-up and top-down)?

11. Can a complex system such as the CGIAR be managed by decisions solely based on consensus by its Members, especially given the growing shortage of funds and increasing number of members? How could alternatives be utilized, such as procedure based on majority decision, and frank discussions be strengthened by a structured approach, but restricted to strategic issues?

Operationalisation

12. How should the funds available to the CGIAR be deployed towards the System's contribution to its complex goals in order to maximize the application and impact of research? What strategic role is given then to TAC?

13. Which mechanism does the CGIAR have to measure progress towards achieving goals and objectives, thus providing the necessary transparency in the overall research and development process (setting-up of milestones, benchmarking)? How is research steadily being reviewed with regard to quality, effectiveness and efficiency of programs and their management?

14. Are research approaches and the partners involved interlinked in such a way that available know-how and existing research capacities are effectively used without overlap? How can systemwide synergies and ecoregional approaches as well as the importance of partnership with NARS be enhanced by research cooperation, capacity building and training, given the competition of individual centers for funds?

Finance Management

15. Are the tasks of the System's finance management sensibly and appropriately assigned and differentiated? What weaknesses can be identified?

16. How does the modified financing system of the World Bank (matching funds) influence System management and the implementation of the research agenda (e.g. long-term natural resources research, competition for funds between Centers)? What

implications result for the System management, the tasks of TAC, of the Finance Committee and of the CG Secretariat?

17. How could the contribution of the Finance Committee to the System's finance management be made more effective (e.g. appointment of members according to the committee tasks, clarification of role of the World Bank in Finance Committee, increased transparency to the Group and clear delineation to other committees)? In what way can the role of CG members in the committee be strengthened, thereby adding to the committee's credibility?

18. How could the capacity of the Boards in finance management be enhanced to meet the legal responsibility? What possibilities actually do exist to simplify and to make more efficient the finance management of Centers by introducing standards and systemwide coordination of by compatible project and finance management?

Annex 1 Matrix of CGIAR Goals

In: CGIAR Priority Setting and Poverty Reduction as an Objective-Background Paper - Presented by the German Delegation at the 1996 Mid-Term Meeting, May 20-24 1996, Jakarta

Annex 2 Proposed CGIAR Logframe

In: Report on the TAC/DSE Workshop "Efficient Research Planning for the CGIAR Development of a Logical Framework and Classification of Activities" Feldafing/Germany, February 25-27, 1997

6.2 Terminology of the Proposed CGIAR Log-frame

Mission: The overall raison d'être of the CGIAR system, as stated in the Lucerne Action Programme:

"to contribute, through its research, to promoting sustainable agriculture for food security in developing countries".

Goals: The overall benefits for target populations and the environment, resulting from the collaborative effort of global research and development, including the contribution of the CGIAR system. They are to be seen as composite goals. The complex inter-

relationships, however, cannot be shown in a single matrix. Goals guide the system in a strategic way.

Intermediate Goals: Intermediate goals define the direct benefits to be accrued at the level of beneficiaries through the attainment of the purposes set...

They form the necessary linkage between the purposes and the more strategically oriented goals at the higher level. Similar to the goals defined, they are to be seen as composites.

Purposes: Purposes define the utilisation of CGIAR outputs by the direct clients of the CGIAR system, i.e., NARS, regional or other international research organisations, policy makers, the development community, etc. Although the responsibility for the utilization of the research output lies outside the realm of the CGIAR system, it nevertheless has to ensure that the purposes set determine the definition of outputs. In other words: Outputs must be client-oriented.

Outputs: Outputs are defined as the products to be delivered by the System. Outputs may be both tangible or intangible: germplasm, infrastructure, technologies, policies, knowledge, etc.

Outputs must be measurable using quantitative and/or, in many cases, qualitative indicators. One output can contribute to the attainment of more than one purpose, whereas the sum total of all outputs must make a substantial contribution to attaining the purposes set.

Activities: Activities are the actions undertaken by the system to ensure that outputs are attained. Implementing the defined activities is the management responsibility of the CGIAR system. This holds true for collaborative efforts with other organisations as well.

The sum total of the activities must be sufficient to reach all outputs. Any single activity must be attributable to one or more outputs.

Projects: At the Centre level, activities emerge from projects. Projects may contribute to one or more activities, thus contributing to one or more outputs. The total output of all projects is identical with the total output of all activities. Any single project must identify its linkage to outputs.

6.3 Synopsis of the Proposed CGIAR Strategy Log-frame

Mission of the CGIAR System: "to contribute, through its research, to promoting sustainable agriculture for food security in developing countries"

Goals:

Poverty is alleviated, especially of disadvantaged groups

The environment is protected

Sustainable food security is achieved

Purposes:

- (1) Biodiversity, land and water resources are conserved
- (2) Production systems are improved
- (3) NARS and Regional Research Organisations are stronger partners
- (4) Improved policies are operational

[Note: Purpose attainment is supported through direct contributions from the following outputs:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Purpose (1): | outputs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| Purpose (2): | outputs 1, 4, 5, 6 |
| Purpose (3): | outputs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 |
| Purpose (4): | outputs 7] |

Outputs:

1. Germplasm and germplasm improvement techniques for priority crops, livestock, trees, and fish are enhanced and available to NARS and other partners.
2. Germplasm of selected species and their wild relatives are saved, techniques for germplasm conservation are developed and made available to NARS and other partners.
3. The understanding of biodiversity in complex natural ecosystems is improved.
4. Management practices and research methodologies for environmentally sustainable production systems and for natural resource conservation in high potential ecosystems/high productivity environments/high natural resources environments are available to NARS and other partners.
5. Management practices and research methodologies for environmentally sustainable production systems and for natural

resource conservation in low potential ecosystems/ low productivity environments/low natural resources environments are available to NARS and other partners.

6. Management practices and research methodologies for environmentally sustainable production systems and for natural resource conservation in aquatic ecosystem/aquatic environments are available NARS and other partners.

7. Improved policy analyses and techniques are available to NARS, policy makers, and the development community.

8. Knowledge about and methods for enhancing the organisation and management of NARS and Regional Research Organisations are improved.

9. The capacity of NARS and Regional Research Organisations to conduct and manage research is enhanced.