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***The CGIAR Research Programs:
Gearing Up for New Challenges***

Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG)
Report to the CGIAR

Attached is the report of the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG). This report is issued as background to agenda item 4, Evaluation and Impact Assessment in the CGIAR.

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION GROUP
(IAEG)

REPORT TO THE CGIAR

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INTRODUCTION

This is the third report from the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Groups (IAEG) to the CGIAR. With the experience of nearly 18 months of operation it is time for the CGIAR to review the role, achievements, work program and working arrangements of the IAEG. This report outlines what we were asked to do, what we are doing, the progress we have made, how we operate and makes a number of comments and suggestions for improvement. We hope that the discussion by participants at MTM'97 will result in a stronger commitment to all impact assessment and evaluation in the CGIAR, a clarification of the roles of different players, and in suggestions for the IAEG.

FORMATION AND CHARTER

The Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) was formally established at Centers Week 1995. By strengthening impact assessment and evaluation across the CGIAR System it is intended to improve research decision making and resource allocation, improve accountability to Members, increase the interaction between the CGIAR and NARS, and create greater awareness outside the CGIAR of the importance of agricultural research in establishing food security in the developing world.

After its first meeting in December 1995, the IAEG suggested changes to the terms of reference developed by the Group in 1995 consistent with CGIAR expectations and fitting a feasible operational mode for the small group. The IAEG philosophy is to add value to the work of those involved in the CGIAR system. We aim to encourage information exchange and networking between evaluation practitioners and will seek to complement current evaluation activities in the CGIAR by undertaking a synthesis role where related studies already exist and by providing guidelines for additional studies to be initiated.

The CGIAR endorsed the modified terms of reference at MTM'96.

Our accepted charter is to:

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 which 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.

IAEG STRATEGY

Given the limitations of size and budget and the twin aspects of the charter, the IAEG has 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
- 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.

One of the major responsibilities given to the IAEG is to help build the evaluation capability of the CGIAR. We believe each Center should develop its own evaluation strategy and incorporate evaluation components into Strategic and Medium-term Plans, particularly planned measures for documenting indicators of performance and the achievement of objectives and outcomes. The Center strategy should incorporate evaluation activities at all stages of the research process, focusing on assessments of processes, outputs and outcomes as well as impacts within a systems framework.

The IAEG encourages a strategy of improving scientists' capability to conduct evaluation analyses, including collaborative studies between Centers and with national programs, and to integrate Center studies and System-wide studies so that they are complementary. In building the evaluation capacity of the System, training components should be built into the design phase of evaluation projects, involving both Center and national program scientists. Since strengthening the capability of national programs is a key CGIAR strategy, it is important that evaluation and training activities include participants from national programs.

IAEG PORTFOLIO

The first year was an establishment and planning period and in the second year we now have a suite of projects underway.

We will establish operational links with the Centers involved in each project and will keep other Centers, members and TAC informed about the progress of projects as they develop

Work completed

- IA&E workshop for the CGIAR held at ISNAR in April 1996, including an annotated bibliography and an initial assessment of the status of impact assessment and evaluation in the CGIAR. The outcomes of the workshop were reported to the CGIAR at MTM'96 in Jakarta. Three reports covering the record of the workshop sessions, the status of impact assessment and evaluation in the CGIAR, and the speakers notes were distributed following the workshop.
- IAEG role and evaluation strategy commissioned at MTM'96 and completed in December 1996. The strategy was distributed throughout the CGIAR early in 1997. The IAEG has received little feedback to this document.
- First methodological workshop in Case Studies for Impact Assessment held at FAO in February 1997. The IAEG believes that the workshop was successful for a number of reasons:
 - the quality of participants and their high level of participation
 - the interaction between Center and NARS representatives
 - the sense of a project team developed by participants
 - the value of the contribution by the Arizona team and their interaction with participants

- the development of rapport and arrangements for an on-going input by the Arizona team
 - the extent to which initial study plans were developed
- Compilation of list of evaluation specialists completed in December 1996. There have been several suggestions for additions to the list which will help to make it a more useful document for CGIAR evaluators. We are hoping to receive further suggestions.

Work in progress

Methodological review and synthesis of existing CGIAR ex post impact assessments

The project arose from a strong recommendation of the IA&E workshop at the Hague that the IAEG should 'first examine what we have already done'. The project will provide feedback to the System on the quality of its recent assessment efforts and will provide some perspective on the impact of the System since 1980.

The project aims to :

- identify and collect studies conducted by the CGIAR on the impact of their work since 1980
- determine which of the studies can be classified as impact evaluations
- identify the substantive focus of the studies
- assess their methodological quality
- determine whether there are enough studies to support a synthesis
- carry out a synthesis across studies if possible.

We asked Centers and donors in July 1996 to forward studies to us. We have collected around 250 documents to date and have commissioned Prof Leslie Riggin from Florida State University to conduct the methodological review. By the end of March, 159 documents had been examined and 79 were accepted for methodological review. This triage focused on accepting documents that presented real data and described the efforts of the Centers. The main reasons for not accepting documents for review have been that they were descriptions rather than evaluations of programs or were focused on planning rather than results. When the methodological review is complete we will be able to decide whether a cross-study synthesis is feasible. The review is scheduled to be completed by June 1997. We intend providing feedback to Center analysts.

Impact of CGIAR germplasm improvement on food production

This topic was chosen because it will elucidate the impact of a large proportion of the research effort in the past 15 years (the CGIAR has 25 mandate crops and a major proportion of the effort has been on germplasm improvement) and because it will utilise evaluation expertise already in the System. Significant gaps remain in our knowledge of the role and impact of CGIAR germplasm improvement research since the Green Revolution, and for crops other than wheat and rice. The objective of this project is to take the first step toward providing a comprehensive picture of the institutional and economic impact of CGIAR germplasm improvement research.

The scoping and design phase of the project is under the supervision of Prof Greg Traxler from Auburn University. Partners for the studies, designs of the individual studies, data collection, coding and analysis, and dissemination of results will be firmed up once the study design is agreed. Crops chosen for the study, and hence the collaborating Centers and countries to be involved, will be decided in close consultation with Centers and their NARS partners. Our aim is to report progress at ICW'98.

The study will be useful to the donor community and Center administrators and scientists in helping them define the role of internationally funded genetic research in an evolving global agricultural research system.

The project will provide an assessment of CGIAR germplasm research impact at two levels - in farmers' fields, and in NARS scientists' breeding programs - and will compile and summarise data on both types of impacts across Centers.

In order to illustrate the probable magnitude of the economic impact of CGIAR germplasm research, we would like each participating Center to attempt to measure the economic impact in one or more countries or regions.

As with any IAEg project, the success of the project will be determined by the enthusiasm with which it is embraced by Center social scientists. The IAEg will provide modest financial resources to cover survey costs, and will take responsibility for co-ordinating the effort among Centers. The IAEg will attempt to organise two discussion meetings of participating Centers. The extent to which the project will generate information useful for the System review will depend on the level of resources which can be allocated to data collection.

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 - they requested further training. Case study methodology, if carried out in rigorous design mode, should be effective in developing a better understanding of the adoption process to enhance the extent to which CGIAR-generated innovations are taken up.

The IAEG has 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. Prof Sechrest and his team will work with CGIAR evaluators to conduct a synthesis, enabling system-wide generalisations to be made which will be useful to Center managers and scientists and members. The IAEG expects the results of the studies to provide data and guidance to donors and NARS and to Center researchers in the design and targeting of their work. The findings of the project will be reported to the CGIAR at ICW'98.

The IAEG held discussions with a number of Centers with a view to obtaining a range of innovations to be studied. We sought to include some studies on the adoption of improved germplasm, some on the adoption of farming technology and agricultural systems and some on the adoption of information and training. The IAEG offered to provide partial financial support to studies from five Centers. In offering partial financial support, the IAEG is aware of the cost implications to Centers but believes that this reflects the collaborative nature of IAEG activities. Additional resources will be required to finance a number of the studies. The IAEG also invited all Centers to participate in the project by conducting parallel studies using compatible protocols, with the IAEG providing access to methodological advice.

The studies in the project are:

Study 1: Hybrid maize in Ghana
Lead Center : CIMMYT

Study 2: Cassava processing in Brazil
CGIAR Center: CIAT

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

CGIAR Center: IRRI

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

CGIAR Center: ICRISAT

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

CGIAR Center: ICRISAT

Study 6: Small holder dairy technology in Kenya

CGIAR Center - ILRI

Study 7: - Crop descriptors lists (DL)

CGIAR Center: IPGRI

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

CGIAR Center: IPGRI

Study 9: Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

CGIAR Center: CIFOR

The portfolio of innovations to be studied will provide useful information for CGIAR and NARS managers with respect to the development of appropriate dissemination and collaboration practices and for donors in their bilateral work. Apart from the outputs of the individual studies, a synthesis across the studies is expected to provide a system-wide perspective of factors affecting the adoption of CGIAR-generated innovations, and the individual studies themselves. It is intended that all studies will be published in international peer reviewed journals. Credibility beyond the CGIAR System is essential.

A number of Centers not represented at the workshop may wish to utilise case study methodology. If there are sufficient potential participants, ideally from Centers and their NARS collaborators, the IAEG will convene a further familiarisation workshop.

Impact of CGIAR innovations on poverty

This 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 have considered an approach to a poverty study elicited from Professor David Cordray at Vanderbilt University and have commissioned him to develop a proposed design of the project.

Provision of advice on methodology for impact assessment studies submitted by Centers

The IAEG is conscious of its role in helping to build evaluation capacity in the CGIAR. The aim of this activity is to assist the development of the quality of Center impact assessment studies by providing advice on proposed methodologies for Center-sponsored studies. We will do this with the help of independent evaluation specialists.

Three Centers have currently requested advice.

Essential data for evaluation

The objective of this project is to identify data essential for the evaluation needs of the CGIAR. We will identify common data needs for different types of projects. Data collection can be expensive but is essential for establishing baselines, tracking diffusion of technology and for monitoring purposes. Especially in the natural resource management area, considerable attention needs to be given to the development of long-term data sets.

We participated in the DSE/TAC workshop held in Germany at Feldafing in February 1997, on logical frameworks and the classification of CGIAR activities. We believe that the development of the Logframe for the CGIAR provides a useful framework for linking evaluation activities throughout the CGIAR. We believe that the work of developing indicators and means of verification would be best undertaken as a joint project between TAC, Centers and the IAEG because of their mutual interests in data along the evaluation spectrum.

Incubator projects

We also have a number of projects on an 'incubator' list. These are projects which have been suggested to us and which we think would be useful to do. They will be commissioned as resources permit. The projects are concerned with:

- Biotechnology and science impact
- Natural resources management
- Institutional strengthening
- Post harvest technologies
- Integrated pest management
- Biodiversity

EVALUATING IAEG PERFORMANCE

The recommendations of the Co-sponsors when the IAEG was formed was that the System's experience with the IAEG should be reviewed after a few years. It was thought desirable to conduct this review as part of a System review, otherwise an independent review of the System's evaluation activities should be conducted in 3 to 4 years time. At 18 months, it is too early to conduct a full review.

The IAEG expects that its operations will be judged on the basis of:

- *Centers being capable of undertaking evaluation and impact assessment analyses of high quality, and that such are a regular feature of Center work.*
- *Impact studies being made available to donors showing what difference the CGIAR System has made to the primary goals of poverty reduction, food security and environmental protection.*
- *Impact assessment analysis of past work being accepted as a key component of priority setting for future projects*

IAEG ROLE IN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The IAEG has a dual purpose role and our modes of operation will reflect these roles:

- For enhancing evaluation skills in Centers the IAEG will:
 - conduct methodological workshops e.g. case studies, natural resource management;

- provide advice on impact assessment proposals developed by Centers; and
- integrate Centers and NARS in IAEG projects whenever possible.
- When commissioning studies:
 - For IAEG originated projects,
 - the IAEG will partially fund Center involvement where the Center is a partner in the study; and
 - For Center originated projects associated with IAEG projects,
 - the IAEG will contribute, usually by supporting external specialist involvement.

LINKAGES

We are conscious of the need for close working relationships with a wide range of people and organisations involved in the CGIAR and to keep people adequately informed about our activities without burdening with excess paper. It is critical that we build effective linkages with Centers, donors; NARS, NGOs, the CGIAR secretariat, and the TAC.

Centers: We are attempting to establish linkages with Centers at a number of levels. The Center Directors Committee has nominated Dr. Grant Scobie, Chair of their Priorities and Evaluation Committee, as their main contact with the IAEG. The Directors have also charged their Deputy Directors with the task of making the ICWG effective. Each Center has nominated an IAEG contact person for interactions with the IAEG secretariat. We are hopeful that these mechanisms will be effective for disseminating information about the IAEG through each Center, for establishing working arrangements for the different projects, and for integrating the workplan of the IAEG with those of the Centers.

We are conscious that the social science capacity of some Centers has been depleted and that the scientists involved are expected to undertake a wide range of planning, economic analyses and evaluation and impact assessment tasks. We take to heart the concerns of the Centre Directors Committee about the extent to which IAEG should rely on Center staff for conduct of system-level impact studies, as compared with contracting such studies to outside experts. Wherever possible we will harmonise the study portfolios of the IAEG and Centers, while maintaining the independence required for credibility.

As each project takes shape we are establishing networks between the study scientists involved in the Centres and the project consultant, thus enhancing collaboration with and between Centers.

Despite our best intentions, we realise we have some way to go before we will achieve an ideal level of interaction with all Centers.

Members: We have tried to keep members informed of our activities. For example, We have asked a subset of members about the potential use of the proposed adoption case studies as we prepared for the case study workshop.

We intend to involve NARS participants in all our projects and will facilitate collaboration between NARS and CGIAR Centers.

TAC/CGIAR secretariats: We are conscious of the need for close interaction with both secretariats and believe that these interactions are developing satisfactorily. We see opportunities for joint activities with TAC, especially in the area of data requirements for both ex ante and ex post evaluation purposes. We expect the_ IA&E projects undertaken or supported by the IAEG will provide a useful input for the external review process and for priority-setting exercises. We intend to promote joint activities when it is sensible to do so.

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| USING IAEG RESULTS TO ENSURE IMPACT |
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Evaluation and impact assessment analyses conducted by the IAEG provide measures of achievement and accountability for the CGIAR. Our analyses should also provide feedback for priority setting and strategy formulation and generally assist institutional management development and improvement of decision making throughout the CGIAR. Thus, when we define target audiences for each IAEG study we try to understand the roles played by different people in the various components of the business system under examination. We build into every IA&E project a delivery road map and indicators of the use and impact of the study results. The IAEG aims to establish awareness of studies being planned or in progress and to obtain feedback about potential users and uses of results.

What do we want to do with our results?

Consistent with our charter, we need to:

- inform CGIAR stakeholders and Centers of the impact of a range of CGIAR research activities
- provide information which will help improve the performance of the CGIAR

Who are the main target audiences and what do they want?

The main target groups for IAEG impact assessment studies are:

- **donor agencies** who pay for the research who need information about the "payoff" of their investment in CGIAR research which they can use to influence political decision makers and budget responsible to help maintain 'their' share of their country's aid budget. Similarly, those who decide the aid budget of each donor country need evidence to develop aid policies that demonstrate to voters that their money is achieving its objectives. Donors also wish to use the results of impact assessment to improve the way they allocate resources and design future research for other programs they sponsor.
- **NARS organisations** who collaborate in the research and/or in the delivery of CGIAR research development need information on the effectiveness of their partnership with CGIAR Centers and how they can work better with the CGIAR system, and to optimise the transfer and adaptation processes.
- **CGIAR managers** who need credible measures of CGIAR research in relation to the goals of the System. This should assist priority setting, funding negotiations and resource allocation. Evaluation results should help research managers to improve research performance.

- **CGIAR researchers** who wish to demonstrate the contribution of their work to system goals and who wish to improve the delivery of their research outputs by taking account of lessons learnt from past experiences.
- **Beneficiaries** of research, both direct and indirect, who lack information about the source of their improved well-being

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| SUMMARY |
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There are a number of issues for discussion at the MTM'97:

- the charter and role of the IAEG
- accountability arrangements for the IAEG
- the composition and size of the IAEG
- the means of financing the IAEG and impact assessment activities
- the IAEG support structure and the role of UNDP
- the nature of interaction between the IAEG, CGIAR Centers and members
- the appropriateness of the IAEG strategy and work program.