

CGIAR

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<h3>The Third System Review: From Proposals to Practice</h3>
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TAC Chair's Report

Attached is the TAC Chair's Report which is issued as background to agenda item 8 – Committee Recommendations and Reports, Report of the TAC Chair.

MID-TERM MEETING 1999

Beijing, China

TAC CHAIR'S REPORT

1. This TAC Chair's report brings the Group up-to-date on the Committee's activities since ICW'98, highlighting progress or accomplishments in the three principal areas of TAC's responsibility -- (a) assuring the quality and relevance of Centre science; (b) developing priorities and strategies, recommending resource allocations, and monitoring programme implementation; and (c) reviewing strategic considerations within the external environment.

2. The report comes to the Group at a time when TAC has been heavily involved in the follow-up to the recommendations of the System Review Panel and Consultative Council. In recent months, the Committee has been actively engaged in preparing proposals on TAC's terms of reference, streamlining evaluation, and the integration of IAEG into TAC; preparing commentaries on the CDC's proposals on integrated natural resources management, policy, and gender; formulating advice to the CBC on review of Systemwide programmes; and developing terms of reference for a Systemwide review of plant breeding and an analytic review of partnerships in the CGIAR. These matters are addressed elsewhere on the MTM agenda. There is little further comment on them here. TAC has benefited from this engagement, and is grateful to those who contributed to its effort.

I. Assuring the quality and relevance of Centre science.

External Reviews

3. First, it should be noted that the Group has had the opportunity to consider at this meeting the review reports of two EPMRs, those of ICLARM and ILRI, as well as TAC's commentaries on these reports prepared at TAC 76. There is, therefore, no need to discuss these items further here.

4. The EPMR of ICARDA is well underway and the report will be considered at ICW'99. Panel chairs have been selected and prospective panel members identified for the reviews of IIMI and WARDA, to be implemented in late 1999/early 2000. The results will be reported at MTM 2000. As well, planning has advanced for the future EPMRs of CIAT, IITA, and CIP, also to be conducted during 2000.

5. TAC continues to bring new specialists into the review process. Moreover, its Standing Committee on External Reviews (SCOER) recently evaluated the process by which EPMRs are planned and implemented and has taken steps to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

6. The review of Systemwide programmes employing an ecoregional approach led by Ted Henzell, a former TAC Member and widely known in the NRM community, will be completed next month. Building on the results of a survey and analysis provided by the TAC Secretariat, the review team has visited selected sites of Systemwide programmes in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for a first-hand look at how well the ecoregional approach is serving the Group's interest in promoting sustainable improvement of productivity by linking strategic and applied research on NRM with that on production systems. Centres, partners, and stakeholders alike have participated in this review. The Group will know that this stocktaking had been planned by TAC in its 1997 *Report on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies*. The results are being delivered a year ahead of schedule at ICW'99 to assist the Group as it address the issue of future commitments to Systemwide activities.

7. Three considerations emerge from TAC's external review activities over the past year:

- **EPMR results increasingly reflect the need for Centres to engage in longer term strategic planning. TAC is quite sensitive to this need and has been quite forthright in encouraging more attention to it by Centres.**
- **The Ecoregional Review should provide valuable lessons for future reviews of Systemwide programmes having a thematic focus -- i.e., integrated pest management, gender analysis, property rights and collective action, water management, livestock, and soil, water and nutrient management. In proceeding with these reviews, TAC will incorporate what it has learned, in particular about which incentives work best in orienting Centres towards the pursuit of complementarities in Systemwide work.**
- **Finally, Member-commissioned reviews are assuming increasing importance in generating information about Centre performance in specific areas. As TAC notes in its proposal on streamlining evaluation, ways must be found to ensure the complementarity of reviews of all kinds in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the review and evaluation processes. The TAC Secretariat will work with SCOER to lay out a strategy for assessing the utility of such reviews for EPMRs.**

II. Developing priorities and strategies, recommending resource allocations, and monitoring implementation.

8. TAC considered the future suitability of the current structure of priorities as a guide for allocating CGIAR resources. Several considerations suggested the need for a revision of the 1997 *Report on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies*. These included the pace at which science is changing the possible in germplasm improvement and in expanding the horizons in integrated natural resources management, the declining cost of applied biotechnology, the increasing private sector investments in plant breeding projected for selected tropical and sub-tropical crops, the shifting circumstances of NARIs, and the declining real budget of the CGIAR. As it now stands, TAC proposes to present an initial version of a revised priorities paper at MTM 2001.

Resource allocation

9. TAC 76 considered proposals from the sixteen Centres for the 2000-2002 CGIAR Research Agenda. The Committee's report to the Group, considered elsewhere on MTM's agenda, analyses the implications of the proposals for CGIAR priorities and strategies. The specifics will not be treated here. However, emphasis should be given to two of the broad messages that emerged from TAC's analysis:

- **there is a continuing shortfall in the share of CGIAR resources allocated to germplasm improvement compared to the level endorsed by the Group;**
- **for some commodities the trends in support are not towards the levels endorsed by the Group;**

10. **These trends seem to suggest that the current strategy for funding Centres has a limited capacity to deliver what the Group has endorsed.**

Monitoring implementation

11. **As agreed at ICW'98, Centre proposals for 2000 incorporated for the first time the logframe vocabulary. As well, Centre activities and proposed allocations for 2000-2002 were presented in two formats -- by the five Undertakings and by the five Logical Framework Outputs. While a changeover to the logframe approach for planning and reporting purposes is anticipated in 2001, both formats will be employed during the 2000-2002 planning period to permit comparisons of System allocations during the transition and beyond.**

12. **Parallel to this shift, TAC has been working closely with the Centres and now with IAEG to enhance the former's capacity to implement the logframe approach and to ensure that the System and Centre level logframes are compatible. This theme was discussed in an earlier session. Even so, it is important to note that the milestones being developed will greatly enhance Centre and Member capacity to monitor progress at the activity level.**

Set Aside Funds

13. **At ICW'98, the Finance Committee requested TAC's counsel in allocating \$4.5 million in World Bank funds that had been set aside for strategic research featuring complementary inputs from several Centres. The process by which TAC responded to this request is treated elsewhere in TAC documentation and will not be repeated here.**

14. **TAC invited for potential funding proposals on: urban and peri-urban agriculture (CIP); investments for in-trust germplasm collections (IPGRI); functional genomics (IRRI, CIMMYT); bioinformatics and the poor (CIMMYT); tools for valuation of farm animal genetic resources (ILRI); optimising use of water for food security (ICLARM); and water management and policy (IWMI, IFPRI). In addition, the Committee identified two themes for which it invited multi-Centre proposals: production ecology research within the CGIAR (CIAT, CIMMYT, ICRAF, IITA, IRRI); and intellectual property rights and CGIAR research (ISNAR, selected Centres).**

15. **In brief, three sets of considerations shaped TAC's selections. One point of departure was the 1997 *Report on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies*. A second aim**

was to encourage and facilitate Centres to rebalance their research portfolios towards apparently promising new opportunities. Third, TAC was influenced by the recent Systemwide review of genetic resources, by the reports of the CGIAR panels on biotechnology and proprietary science and technology, and by recommendations of the System Review Panel.

III. Reviewing strategic considerations within the external environment.

16. TAC 76 discussed the System's likely research portfolio in 2010, starting with an assessment of the elements in the external environment that promise to most influence the portfolio's content. The 1997 *Report on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies* had identified five such elements: advances in science, alternative sources of supply, goals of the CGIAR, support for the System, and developing country income and markets. By now it is evident that legal and regulatory frameworks, especially for IPR applicable to biotechnology, must be added. Knowledgeable people queried for their impressions brought other elements to TAC's attention. Based on the information at hand and guided by a prepared note, TAC will soon broaden participation in its quest for impressions.

17. As pointed out earlier, several considerations, however, shaped the conclusion that the 2010 portfolio must be considered in the broader context of a revised priorities and strategies paper.

Monitoring external environments

18 TAC will this year begin to strengthen its capacity to monitor the major environments with which the CGIAR operates by forming expert advisory panels. These will, initially, focus on the implications for the System's priorities and strategies of likely developments in molecular biology and biotechnology relevant to germplasm, the science related to production ecology, selected national and international regulations with consequences for intellectual property rights, and developments in information and communications. As well, but less external to the System, TAC will look to a panel on factors influencing poverty. Over the course of two or three years each of these major environments can be treated, assisting the CGIAR to stay abreast of developments critical to its planning. Over time the issues of consequence and the roster of experts will evolve.

Strategic studies

19. This report closes with a brief overview of TAC-commissioned strategic studies that have a bearing on CGIAR priorities, including those on the drawing boards and others that have been recently completed. The report will also touch lightly on the issue of climate change, an item considered elsewhere on MTM's agenda.

20. A strategic study of CGIAR partnerships will be undertaken collaboratively by TAC and the CGIAR Secretariat. At the request of the Consultative Council, terms of reference for the study have been presented to the Group at this meeting. Its overall objectives are to evaluate Centre experience with research and research-related partnerships, characterise the relative significance of various types of Centre partnerships, assess the factors that contribute to the success of partnerships, and suggest which types of partnerships might be most effective in the future in achieving CGIAR goals. The study would be conducted over an 18-month period following MTM'99, with results presented at three successive CGIAR meetings: literature review (ICW'99); Centre case studies and survey (MTM'00); and stripe review (ICW'00).

21. A recently completed background study commissioned by TAC on *CGIAR Collaborative Relationships with National Agricultural Research Systems*, prepared by former TAC Member Dr. Hans Gregersen, treated issues related to CGIAR activities in the areas of institution strengthening, extension and diffusion. It emphasized the importance of understanding the changing institutional environment within which the CGIAR operates, in particular the emergence of regional and subregional groupings of NARS. TAC has decided to pursue the institutional context theme further in its review of partnerships in the CGIAR, with particular emphasis on future relationships with elements of NARS in the private sector, universities, NARIs, and other institutions.

22. TAC 76 finalized the report of the *Study of CGIAR Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which had been revised by the Panel Chair, Dr. Lucio Reza, in light of comments made at TAC 75. The Committee also considered a synthesis, prepared by Dr. de Janvry, of the *CGIAR Study on Marginal Lands*. TAC will present both studies together with the Committee's commentaries at ICW'99.

Climate Change

23. TAC has had on its agenda during the past year the issue of climate change and its implications for the CGIAR. The Committee's examination has addressed various aspects of climate change on agriculture and food production including the current status of research and the activities of the major research entities in the field. TAC has given particular attention to adaptation and mitigation measures. A report on the Committee's views was made to the Group by TAC Member Elias Fereres at this meeting.