

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Seventieth Meeting, CIAT Hqs., Cali (Colombia), 30 July - 4 August 1996

**STUDY OF CGIAR REGIONAL COMMITMENTS  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**- A Draft Proposal -**

(Agenda Item 5)

**For Comments and Discussion**

At TAC 69, the Committee requested that the Standing Committee prepare a draft proposal for the Study of CGIAR Regional Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean for consideration at TAC 70.

The attached draft proposal was prepared by the TAC Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee and by TAC. TAC members are invited to provide comments on the proposal so that the scope of the Study can be determined.

TAC SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

July 1996

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# **STUDY OF CGIAR REGIONAL COMMITMENTS**

## **IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**- A Draft Proposal -**

### **Introduction**

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In their comments on the Panel's Report, the Committee concluded that the experiment with a regional review of CGIAR investments was a success, encouraging TAC to commission reviews of other regions. Following this, Latin America and the Caribbean was chosen as the region for the next study, taking into account the level of CGIAR investment and the number of centres doing research on that region; as well as the opportunity to gain experience by focusing on a region with contrasting characteristics to the one previously studied.

### **Background**

Two aspects seem relevant for a regional overview in the framework of CGIAR goals and in relation to the proposed Study. First, a few considerations on poverty, agricultural production and the natural environment. Then, a picture of institutional aspects related to agricultural research.

#### Poverty, Agricultural Production and the Environment

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are becoming increasingly urbanized, moving from 58% in 1970 to 74% in 1993 (WB, 1994). In 1990 there were 115.5 m poor in urban areas and 80.4 m in rural areas (CEPAL, 1994). The percentage of urban dwellers that are poor has increased from 29% in 1970 to 39% in 1990, while that of rural dwellers declined from 67 to 61%. The percentage of poor who are indigent in urban areas has decreased from 45 to 39%, but it has gone up slightly in rural areas from 58 to 60%.

Regional production growth rates for all cereals are expected to be slightly higher than demands in the coming decades (2.4 vs 2.3%), a difference much lower than the 0.8% of 1970-90 (3.2 vs 2.4%), but higher than the 1.0% deficit of 1980-90 (FAO, 1995). Although four countries account for 75% of the output of LAC agriculture, the sector is an important contributor to the GDP of almost every country. The nature of agriculture differs markedly among countries. Mechanized medium- to large-size crop-livestock systems predominate in the Southern Cone; while cotton, sugar coffee, fruits, flowers and vegetables characterize the tropics. The number of "minifundios" grew from 7.9 to 11.7 million farms in the last ten years, 70% of the farms controlling just 3.3% of the agricultural land (Garrett, 1995). This

notwithstanding, there are also some 4 m "smallholders" controlling only 9% of the land, but producing up to a third of the agricultural outputs.

LAC has an abundance of natural resources: 23% of the world's potential arable land, 46% of the tropical forest, and 31% of the fresh water, for only 8% of the world's population. But the very poor living in marginally productive, and often ecologically fragile areas are forced to exploit such natural resources to survive. Deforestation is the principal focus of concern, often undertaken by poor hillside farmers who clear the land to eke out a living (Pachico, Ashby and Sanint, 1994). Although the actual amount of land deforested is much larger in South America, the proportion is far greater in Central America (Kaimowitz, 1994). Nevertheless, in this region agriculture is the principal cause of soil degradation.

In this context, two aspects appear especially relevant for a regional study on CGIAR agricultural research to alleviate poverty and protect the environment. First, the geographical locus of rural poverty, heavily concentrated in the Central and South Mexico, the hillsides of Central America, the Andean region, the Northeast of Brazil, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Second, the extent of land degradation, estimated to be 24% of the vegetated lands in Central America and Mexico and 8% in South America. The principal cause of degradation in Central America has been linked to agricultural activities, while deforestation has been viewed as the prime cause in South America.

### Institutional Considerations

Agricultural research in LAC is serviced by a variety of suppliers from the public, parastatal, private, and non-governmental sectors, which seem to be evolving into large, multi-level and non-functional systems (IICA, 1991). The study would then have to take into account the geographical foci and thematic specialization of the institutional actors, including NARIs (e.g., EMBRAPA, CENTA), regional institutions (e.g., CATIE, CARDI), sub-regional mechanisms (e.g., PROCIs, CLADES), international institutions (e.g., CGIAR, CIRAD, University of Florida), and private companies (e.g., parastatals like Chile Foundation or FEDECAFE, or private like Cargill, Pioneer).

The CGIAR contributes to that system, having three Centres operating from LAC (CIAT, CIMMYT and CIP), and at least five others developing activities in the region (ICRAF, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ISNAR and IPGRI). Cooperation among the regionally-based Centres on thematic issues is increasing from the commodities (e.g., on methodological aspects of root-tubers research, maize-sorghum adaptation to the acid savannas) to the "ecoregional" context (e.g., between CIAT-CIMMYT on agricultural systems in the Central American hillsides; and between CIAT-CIP on the Andean highlands). Moreover, cooperation includes presently Centres based outside LAC (e.g., with ICRAF on the ASB S-WP in the Amazon, and with IFPRI in the Central American hillsides). Resource allocation to LAC in 1991 was 15% of the total CGIAR investments, and is projected to reach 19% by 1998. At a recent Consultation Meeting of the LAC NARS the CGIAR commitment was estimated to be in the order of US\$ 45 million, including complementary projects. Such a level of investment was thought to constitute 7% of the social benefits derived from germplasm development research (Janssen *et al*, 1992)

In the mentioned NARS Consultation Meeting, convened to analyze NARS-CGIAR relationships in the LAC region, participants raised three issues of special relevance to the Study (Vaccaro, personal communication):

- The highly variable agroecological and socioeconomic conditions of the region, resulting in an uneven distribution of benefits from CGIAR activities;
- The on-going changes in NARS composition as new non-governmental and private entities concerned with agricultural research appear on the scene, affecting the dialogue with the CGIAR;
- The good regional capacity in applied research, which would indicate the appropriateness for the International System to strengthen its upstream work.

The meeting decided to create a formal regional-level consultation, establishing an executive committee to facilitate interaction between the region and the CGIAR, as well as to promote regional discussions among NARS on priorities and joint programmes.

### Scope of the Study

The acuteness of overlapping mandates and responsibilities among CGIAR Centres working in and on West Africa was the initial motivation behind the first regional review. (TAC 61, 1993). That led the Standing Committee to endorse the proposal "to define more cost effective ways of organizing the CGIAR presence in the region" (TAC 62, 1994). The objectives were then to identify overlaps, to find gaps in current delivery mechanisms, and to suggest strategies/options to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery mechanisms.

*Organizational efficiency* of CGIAR activities appear then as the operative words for the West African study. As it turned out, the Panel found that the organization of CGIAR's work in West Africa was "reasonable efficient and cost effective", and that there was no need for a major restructuring in the way the CGIAR was operating in the region. The Panel then explored more *strategic* areas, leading to recommendations on the coordination of policy and management research, the balance between production systems and germplasm enhancement research, the production impact of two of the Centres operating in the region, an alternative governance structure for the other two, and the relations with national partners.

Learning from the experience of the first regional study on West Africa, it would then be of utmost importance for the Committee to define the problems, or opportunities, that in their judgement should be the focus of the Panel's work in the LAC Study. In other words, *what is it that TAC expects out of this Study*, so that such expectations could then be appropriately conveyed in the terms of reference (ToR). A few possible options follow.

Option 1. If the concerns were still about perceived problems with the *institutional organizational efficiency* of CGIAR activities in the region, then the ToR could be similar to those of the West African Study, i.e.,

- Characterizing current CGIAR activities in the region, making an inventory of and appraising CGIAR facilities and personnel for the development of

programmes and activities. (A task common to any approach the Committee wishes the Panel to pursue, but adapted to the specific purpose of the Study)

- Identifying and proposing cost-efficient options for organizing and operating future CGIAR activities in the region.

Ongoing collaborative arrangements among Centres doing research on regional issues would indicate that, in principle, there would be no organizational problems of the type mentioned above. The Committee may then wish for the Study to focus on opportunities for future CGIAR activities in the region. In this case, opportunities could appear in at least two strategic fronts: research and operation. The former responds to the "how" question, i.e., the approach to strategic research to be emphasized by CGIAR Centres in the region, e. g., the "upstream" approach suggested at the NARS Meeting, or the "applied" approach that may suit best small NARS in the sub-region with the greatest level of poverty and environmental degradation. In selecting this focus a clear distinction will have to be made between the outcome expected from the Study and responsibilities assigned to Centre Reviews.

Option 2. If the selected opportunity for the Panel to explore was that of *research approach*, the Study would then be expected to focus on (in addition to the common characterization task):

- Analyzing the impact of past CGIAR activities in the region, in terms of their consequences on knowledge building, institutional development, production increases, poverty alleviation and environmental protection.
- Proposing alternative research strategies for future CGIAR activities in the region, especially for research aimed at the alleviation of rural poverty and the protection of threatened environments.

The first of these proposed tasks for the research strategy focus could overlap with the planned activities of the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group, but it could also follow up on their findings.

The Study could also focus on operational strategies for the CGIAR in LAC. These refer to the "who" question, in terms of who else of the "other 96%" may have comparative advantages vis-a-vis the CGIAR to carry out certain activities, and would address the issue of changing nature of NARS raised at the NARS Meeting. For example, given the presence of new NARS and other international actors, would it be more appropriate for the CG to focus its research on sub-regions with the highest proportions of poor (e.g., Caribbean/Central American/Andean); or on particular issues (e.g., NRM research, vis-a-vis the growing importance of private sector research on germplasm). In this case the Study will have to consider on-going discussions on a Regional Research Fund to support joint ventures around prioritized activities.

Option 3. Should the Committee select to focus the Study on *operational strategies*, the ToR would include (in addition to the characterization task):

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The Study will cover all four main sub-regions: Central American and Mexican, Caribbean, Andean and Amazonian.

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The Study will be carried out by an External Panel supported from the TAC Secretariat and regionally-based Centres, as required. It will be developed in four phases, as follows:

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# ROUTING SLIP

From	1B	Div.	Room	Ext.	Date
To		Div.	Room	Initials	Date
1) AK				AK	4/7
2) <del>SK</del>				<del>SK</del>	<del>4/7</del>
LAC Draft Proposal					
for TAC 70					

For

☐ Action

☒ Approval or ☒ Comment

☐ Information

For yr OK for distribution  
to TAC 70 participants  
See corrections



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**STUDY OF CGIAR REGIONAL COMMITMENTS  
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

*Draft- Proposal*  
**- A Discussion Paper -**

*or Progress Report?*

(Agenda Item 5)

*Draft!*

**For Information and Comments** *and Discussion*

The attached discussion paper provides an update on the preparation of the study of CGIAR Regional Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

TAC Members are invited to provide comments on the ... ????

TAC SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

July 1996

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# STUDY OF CGIAR REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

## IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*Draft Proposal*  
- A Discussion Paper -

*or Progress Report ?*

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### **Study of CGIAR Regional Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The focus of the study would be on joint work by CGIAR centres and programmatic and organizational coherence.

The study will:

- (a) characterise current CGIAR activities in the region, including CGIAR facilities and personnel through a desk study;
- (b) assess alternative research strategies for future CGIAR activities in the region, including opportunities for increasing complementarities on regional agricultural research between CGIAR centres and governmental and non-governmental sectors and the private sector;
- (c) identify and propose cost-efficient options for organizing and operating future CGIAR activities in the region;

The study will be carried out in three phases by a 4 to 5 member external panel supported by the TAC Secretariat, and in consultation with the CGIAR centres active in the region.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Phase 1 (March -July 1997):      | Preparatory phase including desk study and consolidated proposal by panel chair to TAC 73.     |
| Phase 2 (August-November 1997):  | Analysis and regional visits and preliminary report to TAC 74.                                 |
| Phase 3 (Dec 1997 - March 1998): | Report writing, consultation with main stakeholders, and submission of final report to TAC 75. |

**PANEL CHAIRS (NOT IN ORDER OF PRIORITY)**

**IFPRI:**

Taff Davies (UK)  
Lloyds Evans (Australia)  
Bob Thompson (US)  
Franz Heidhues (Germany)  
Bernard Tinker (UK)  
Hans Gregersen (US)

**IRRI:**

Graham Jenkins (UK)  
Neil Rutger (US)  
Martin Piniero (Argentina)  
Taff Davies (UK)  
Almiro Blumenschein (Brazil)  
Declan Walton (Ireland)

**CIMMYT:**

Dick Flavell (US)  
Graham Jenkins (UK)  
Taff Davies (UK)  
Martin Piniero (Argentina)

**CIFOR:**

Bernard Tinker (UK)  
Jean-Paul Lanly (France)  
Sir Martin Holdgate (UK)  
Hans Gregersen (US)

**Latin America Study:**

Carlos Sere (Uruguay)  
Mike Nelson (New Zealand)  
Lucia Re ca  
Eduardo Venezian (Chile)