

Oversight Committee Discussion Paper for the First CGIAR Consultative Council Meeting

A. Introduction

1. This paper covers the issues raised in System Review recommendations 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21 and 29. It does not, however, deal with each recommendation in turn, nor does it revisit and rehearse the issues discussed at length at ICW98; it tries to build on them. There were several areas where we nearly reached agreement but where the drafting of the recommendation included ideas or proposals that were not accepted. We have tried to identify the areas of agreement and to examine those areas that remain controversial.
2. The paper endeavours to identify the main governance issues, set out a range of reasonable options and criteria for their assessment, list some pros and cons for the options and, in one case (agendas and spacing of CGIAR meetings), offer some views to further the debate. In most cases it has not been possible to reach a firm 'yes-able' conclusions since many of the issues merit discussion before reaching a conclusion or recommendation.
3. As we see them, the key issues include the following:
 1. World Bank leadership
 2. The role of the Cosponsors
 3. The composition of TAC
 4. Streamlining committee structure
 5. Facilitating decision making in the CGIAR
 6. Agendas and spacing of CGIAR meetings
4. We suggest that the following questions guide the Consultative Council's review of the options:
 - Will they increase **ownership of and support for** the IARCs and the System?
 - Will they increase **efficiency in the workings** of the System and reduce transaction costs?
 - Will they increase the **impact** of the CGIAR on development and how?
 - Will they increase the **influence** of the CGIAR on development policies and other organisations?
 - Are **decisions being taken at the right level/location**?

G. World Bank Leadership (Recommendations 17 and 29)

1. The consensus view of the CGIAR at ICW98 was that World Bank leadership has served the CGIAR very well and that the CGIAR should ask the President of the WB to

continue with the arrangement of having a Vice- President (or higher) serve as CGIAR Chair. This should ensure WB commitment and apply maximum leverage on the Bank's Development Grant Facility for continuing its support to the CGIAR.

2. The outstanding issues are **what kind of a chairman is needed for the CGIAR** and **whether or not the chairmanship should be a full-time appointment?**

3. Regarding the *character and quality* of the chairmanship required, the answer comes from the changing nature of the position and the expectations that have been created with the present incumbent. The Chair is expected to carry major responsibilities, including the following:

- providing the system with strategic vision and inspiration;
- building consensus within the system;
- protecting coherence within the system;
- managing the system's high-level linkages with the global scientific and agricultural research communities;
- serving as the system's ambassador in major external relations activities;
- guiding the system's public awareness campaigns;
- directing resource mobilization efforts within the World Bank, among new members, with partners (e.g., the private sector), and through philanthropic funding;
- chairing CGIAR meetings;
- guiding the work of the Secretariat.

4. These responsibilities require significant engagement of the Chair with the CGIAR. In addition, they demand strong support from an executive officer who can stand in for the Chair when needed and from a corporate secretariat.

Option 1: An Existing World Bank VP as Part-Time Chair

5. This reflects the existing system: a part time Chairman and WB Vice-President nominated by the President of the WB, supported by a full-time Executive Secretary and corporate secretariat. A part-time chair would have other WB responsibilities within his portfolio and, therefore, would not be a "single issue" executive. He would be more connected with the WB power structure (and to WB operations), and, most likely, would be more influential in linking Bank operations more closely with CGIAR activities.

6. Several of the responsibilities of the Chair (noted above) would need to be carried out by the full-time Executive Secretary, under the guidance of the Chair. However, the Chair would likely have less time available for the demanding task of raising funds for the CGIAR. System management matters would depend more on the Executive Secretary and CGIAR committees, and interested members.

7. **Advantages:** Likelihood of greater influence within the WB; greater "responsibility sharing" with committees and members in intellectual leadership and system management (which might lead to greater "ownership"); less top-down appearance in decision making.

Disadvantages: Top executive less available for fund raising; less opportunity to raise the profile of the CGIAR and address system issues requiring attention from the Chair (e.g., conflict resolution); lower effectiveness as Chair because of less intimate knowledge of system developments.

Option 2: A visionary Leader as Full-Time Chair

8. To be effective, the Chair needs to draw on all resources of the system and receive support from all components of the system. To receive such support and collaboration, he needs to be someone with outstanding *competence*, *credibility* and *commitment*. His personal qualities need to include *acknowledged stature* within and outside the CGIAR system, *acceptance* by the Bank's leadership, *respect* within the global agricultural research system, and *effective linkages with the political leadership* of CGIAR members and potential members. In addition, the individual has to be *interested* in the CGIAR and prepared to devote *time* to it.

9. If an individual with the character and quality noted above cannot be identified from within the World Bank, an outside candidate could be considered for appointment as CGIAR Chair and World Bank VP. If an existing VP fits the profile, has interest in the CGIAR, and can devote the time necessary for carrying out the required responsibilities, outside recruitment would not be necessary.

Advantages: Top executive available for fund raising and promoting the CGIAR; opportunity to make significant contributions to setting visions and strategic planning; available to help resolve system management difficulties.

Disadvantages: Tendency to centralize more power and bureaucracy and a managed executive style; less prominent role for TAC and the other committees; in wishing to speak more on behalf of the CGIAR, potential policy conflicts with member countries and organizations, particularly in international negotiating fora.

G. The Role of the Cosponsors (Recommendation 19)

1. FAO, UNDP, and WB "acquired" their cosponsor status because of the role they played in the establishment of the CGIAR. (UNEP joined as Cosponsor on the invitation of the CGIAR in 1994.) In this sense, status of FAO, UNDP and WB as sponsors of the CGIAR is a fact and cannot be "abolished" as recommended by the SR. However, the functions performed by the Cosponsors can be assigned to others.

2. The key functions of the Cosponsors are as follows:

- a. Their sponsorship of the CGIAR provides the CGIAR recognition as an international body, despite the CGIAR's status as an informal organization. Also, using their own status as international organizations, the Cosponsors help establish or reconstitute centers as international organizations.
- b. The WB provides the Group's Chairman, Chair of the Finance Committee, and houses and covers the full cost of the CGIAR Secretariat.

- c. The Cosponsors collectively cover the cost of operating TAC and IAEG.
- d. They serve as an informal advisory group to the Chairman on matters of CGIAR policy—not as a separate layer of management, but as an informal group the Chair can use when needed.
- e. They serve as a search and selection committee for TAC and IAEG Chair and also a nominating committee for TAC and IAEG members. Appointments of TAC and IAEG chairs and members require CGIAR approval.
- f. The Cosponsor serving as host to TAC Secretariat or IAEG Secretariat coordinates the process for the appointments of TAC and IAEG Executive Secretaries, with inputs from the other cosponsors.
- g. The Cosponsors serve on the Search Committee for the CGIAR Executive Secretary.

3. Since “abolishing” Cosponsors status is not an option (for reasons noted above), the question is whether any of the above functions could be performed better by another CGIAR group. Since the benefits from a, b, and c, above, are quite clear and any alternative would cost the CGIAR much more, there is not a clear rationale for changing the status quo with respect to these Cosponsor contributions.

4. Regarding point d, above, the Cosponsors to meet occasionally as a constituency group is quite normal, as is practiced by European or North American donors, particularly if they have responsibility for joint financing of some overhead units of the CGIAR. The transparency of these meetings has increased by having minutes distributed to the CGIAR and by having the Cosponsors report to the CGIAR regularly.

5. Regarding points e, f, and g, there has been criticism of the Cosponsors because of delays and lack of transparency in some appointments. However, as these appointments require adherence to the norms of the host agency, there is little the CGIAR can do other than providing feedback to the Cosponsor about its concerns and requesting reconsideration of the host agency’s practices. If the dissatisfaction with these practices reaches an unacceptable level, the support units could be moved from the Cosponsors to another location (with associated costs being covered through the CGIAR.)

6. The only Cosponsor functions that could, in theory, be shifted elsewhere is the nomination of Chairs and members of TAC and IAEG.

Option 1. Maintain the *status quo*

7. **Advantages:** Well-tested system; well understood; provides check-and-balance among CGIAR actors; Cosponsor input into the nomination process is critical as they cover the costs of TAC and IAEG and provide technical expertise to the CGIAR through their organizations.

Disadvantages: Low degree of transparency.

Option 2. Transfer Cosponsor functions to other committees (e.g., OC, FC)

8. **Advantages:** Greater transparency and accountability.

Disadvantages: Danger of greater politicization in appointments; loss of interest in the system by the Cosponsors.

G. Composition of TAC (Recommendation 18)

1. The issues around TAC are not really new. For some time, TAC has been facing the dilemma of how to deal with a rapidly diversifying scientific mandate, coupled with its traditional burdens in terms of priorities and strategies, program evaluations and, more recently, center management reviews. The problem comes in trying to look at smaller groups that still accommodate the reality of representation and perhaps the realization that not all the members will be stars, at least in all undertakings. "Strategic thinkers" may be hard to come by when dealing with competing criteria of selection, and may not be all that keen to engage in some of TAC's more mundane burdens.

2. According to its TOR, the functions of the current Committee include the following:

- a. monitor changes in the global context;
- b. recommend medium- and long-term strategies and priorities for the CGIAR;
- c. recommend annual systemwide resource allocation to CGIAR-supported programs and centers;
- d. evaluate the quality and relevance of Center research programs and monitor compliance with approved plans and priorities;
- e. address across-center and System issues such as commodity/activity balance, regional distribution, inter-center conflicts, and monitoring the System's evolution.

3. Thus, the current expectation from TAC is that it is to serve as:

- a strategic think-tank (item a, above);
- strategic planner (item b);
- operational planner (item c);
- evaluator/controller (item d);
- troubleshooter on technical matters (item e).

4. The System Review's suggestion to have a main TAC supported by more expanded teams is appealing, and in some ways, is similar to the way TAC already works. However, these study groups are *ad hoc* in nature, with a limited life. The idea of sub-TACs could point towards a more balkanized TAC, with competition between genetic approaches, natural resource activities and other parts of the CGIAR's business. Competing ideas are good, but there is a legitimate concern about competing sub-TACs (there has already been some suggestion that the genetic resource community should have its own "board" that would also act like a TAC). While done with the best intentions, the result could be overstressing a certain activity area at the expense of others. (Incidentally, having sub-TACs for

sectors of CGIAR activity—like forestry, fisheries, livestock—was discussed as part of the expansion exercise a decade ago, and discarded for fear of balkanization.)

5. Regardless of whether it has sub-TACs, TAC needs to remain, first and foremost, integrative, supported by an effective Secretariat. If a careful problem analysis were done, it would probably point to the functioning of the Secretariat and the support TAC receives from it. Probably it would also call for an examination of the implications of essentially de-linking TAC from direct engagement in resource allocation, as resulted in Jakarta. While many are comfortable conceptually with that separation, the larger effect has been to lessen TAC's ability to gain and hold the attention of the Centers (and to a lesser degree, the members).

6. A TAC, at its current or slightly smaller size, could work effectively if supported by occasionally in-depth analyses drawing on expertise beyond TAC; ideally, such panels or reviews could closely engage an appropriate member of the TAC who would help provide longer-term continuity on a given issue. And TAC would be free to invite specific strategic thinkers to join it for given discussions or processes.

7. Thus, the issue is more on how TAC operates than on its size. Budgetary constraints may argue for a slightly smaller size, particularly if funds are needed for the supportive studies, etc., but a significant reduction would not necessarily go hand and hand with an increase in quality or the time available from the members to do the necessary work. In other words, the need for balance is here to stay, and it is not clear if individuals of star caliber would be able to provide more time for TAC's work. Additionally, as noted above, the Secretariat's operation needs to be factored in. A stronger TAC Secretariat could go a long way towards improving TAC's overall performance.

Option 1. TAC working with *ad hoc* specialist panels

8. Under this option there would be a single TAC, smaller than its present size (perhaps 8-10, instead of the present 15 members), supported with *ad hoc* specialist panels put together depending on the issues at hand (similar to recent biotechnology panels.) GRPC would remain a separate committee reporting to the CGIAR.

Advantages: Ease to integrate technical concerns within a single committee; small size; less possibility of balkanization; flexibility to form specialist groups when needed.

Disadvantages: Inability to provide *significant* continuous technical focus on the CGIAR's core businesses; having two groups (TAC and GRPC) voice concern on genetic resource matters.

Option 2. Small TAC working with standing specialist panels.

9. For TAC to remain the "integrator" and "synthesizer" of all technical advisory functions, it requires a minimum critical mass in the core committee to handle (or

integrate) the various dimensions of its portfolio of activities (noted earlier). These minima include:

- 2-3 strategic thinkers, visionaries
- 2-3 “masters” of operationalizing scientific programs
- 1 evaluator
- TAC Chair.

10. The above scenario leads to a core TAC of at least 6-8 members. This core group would also need to include substantial knowledge of and experience with *developing country* agricultural research concerns. The core TAC would be supplemented with standing panels. Candidates for standing panels include:

- genetic resources (possibly in place of GRPC);
- natural resource management (the second pillar of the CGIAR work)
- evaluation and impact assessment (carried out by IAEG working as a standing panel of TAC).

11. To provide the necessary linkage, the chairs of these standing panels would serve as members of TAC. The chairs and members of TAC and the standing panels would be appointed by the CGIAR. When needed, TAC would appoint additional, *ad hoc* panels.

12. **Advantages:** Small, flexible, nimble TAC; advice from external groups of expertise in the CGIAR’s core businesses; integration of strategic, operational and evaluation concerns and the ability to provide policy advice with a “holistic” perspective; cost effectiveness.

Disadvantages: Difficulty of coordinating divergent views; possibility of balkanization; small size of core TAC limiting coverage of the full range of skills and knowledge.

G. Streamlining Committee Structure (Recommendations 14 and 18)

Linking IAEG with TAC

1. There was broad consensus at ICW98 that IAEG should be closely linked (possibly merged) with TAC. IAEG developed some reasonable proposals on how such a merger could take place. It was generally understood that such a merger would lead to:

- a unified support mechanism for TAC and IAEG; and
- preserving the independence of the evaluation function.

2. A critical issue, which was not discussed explicitly at ICW, concerns the mandate of IAEG. At the time it was created, IAEG’s mandate was restricted to *ex-post* impact assessment only, leaving *ex-ante* impact assessment and periodic reviews of centers in the hands of TAC (because the TAC mandate calls for evaluating the quality and relevance of center programs.) However, the possibility of a merger opens the question of whether all evaluation responsibilities should be shifted to IAEG, including the responsibility for external program reviews.

Option 1. Transfer IAEG's responsibilities to TAC

Under this option, TAC would re-organize its internal committee structure to ensure dedicated attention to evaluation and impact assessment, perhaps through its present Standing Committee on Reviews.

Advantages: Full integration of *ex-post* and *ex-ante* impact assessment; fewer committees

Disadvantages: TAC's small size would limit providing sufficient professional attention to evaluation through a core group of evaluation experts; less time would be available to TAC to discuss strategic concerns.

Option 2. IAEG as Evaluation Sub-panel of TAC

Under this option, IAEG would maintain a distinct identity. TAC's responsibilities on external reviews would be transferred to IAEG. IAEG chair would be an *ex-officio* member of TAC. IAEG chair and members would continue to be appointed by the CGIAR. Center reviews and other evaluation studies would first be discussed by TAC before their submission to the CGIAR with commentaries from TAC.

Advantages: Provides greater independence to the evaluation function; brings greater professionalism to evaluation; unifies all system-level evaluation activities under one umbrella.

Disadvantages: Possibility of inter-committee conflict; coordination difficulties at the committee and secretariat level; possible disconnect between priority setting and evaluation.

The Case of GRPC

3. GRPC is a stakeholder committee, with membership from various groups inside and outside the CGIAR. It was separated from direct oversight based on the view that in the area of genetic resources the system needed some sort of central point to focus the on-going policy discussions. There was a need to insulate the centers from some of the storminess in the policy sea. The committee was thus able to interact with the various groups (CDC, ICWG-GR, IPGRI), acting in both advisory and interlocutory ways. While some may have considered the Committee's reports to be less than riveting, much of the discussion was very useful and it was clear that much "damage control" had occurred via the backstage work of the Committee.

4. Given that genetic resource issues will be with us for the foreseeable future, there will be a continuing need for some sort of policy advice, as well as for a CGIAR forum for dealing with the issues. There are two options for providing the policy advice:

- through a CGIAR committee, as at present, that integrates views of several groups of stakeholders;

- through a sub-panel of TAC (if TAC is organized along sub-panel lines).

5. Regardless of which option is chosen, there is the additional question of whether the GRPC (or a committee with another name under the TAC umbrella) should serve as the governance mechanism for SGRP—as recommended by the external review of SGRP. In the view of the OC this would not be wise, as it would place a policy advisory committee into an operational role, with either CGIAR members (under the GRPC model) or TAC members (under the TAC model) playing a supervisory role on a program they finance (in the case of the members) or assess (in the case of TAC).

Option 1. Maintain GRPC as a Policy Advisory Committee to the CG

Advantages: Brings diverse constituencies under one roof; isolates TAC from political concerns

Disadvantages: Does not help streamline committee structure; duplication of some responsibilities and possible confusion with the role of TAC

Option 2. Transfer GRPC responsibilities to a TAC sub-panel on IGM

Advantages: Streamlines committees, reduces confusion; integrates policy concerns with scientific IGM concerns

Disadvantages: Throws TAC more deeply into the political arena; CG would receive advice indirectly (through TAC) rather than directly (from GRPC); difficulty to assign CGIAR members to a TAC committee.

Partnership Committees

6. **NGOC** and **PSC** were established as part of the Lucerne Action Program “as a means of improving dialogue among the CGIAR, the private sector and members of the civil society who are interested in the same issues as the CGIAR.” As reflected in their TORs, NGOC and PSC exist to help the CGIAR take into account NGO and PS experience and perspectives in the formulation of CGIAR policies, priorities and strategies. At their founding it was clearly conceived that they would have divergent views—the whole point was to receive a range of important views from a range of partners. A single committee would provide watered down comment and advice—perhaps of little value. Inviting people to articulate their views with respect to an international research effort was preferred over asking them to reconcile their differences in a group comprising diametrically opposing viewpoints on most issues.

7. The input received thus far, especially from the PSC, has been articulate and to the point on a number of issues. The NGOC input has been useful—but usually the key points are buried under an lot of exhortation. There are also outstanding concerns around costs, such as expenses associated with running programs and workshops. It is being questioned whether it is more useful for the committees to focus on the CGIAR issues at hand, instead of expending energy and time on developing a stand-alone agenda.

8. The SR recommended abolishing NGOC and PSC as committees and, in their stead, appointing three individuals to the SR-recommended central board from each of these two constituencies. Although such an arrangement would help bring NGO and PS perspectives into the CGIAR's central committee on matters that are up for decision, it would eliminate the airing of these perspectives within the CGIAR forum itself and in the cross-constituency groups that precede or succeed CGIAR meetings. Recognizing this, the ICW98 Working Group on partnerships recommended preserving NGOC and PSC as separate committees at the CGIAR level.

Option 1. *Maintain the status quo*

This is the principal outcome of the ICW98 Working Group discussion. The committees could be asked to modify their size, structure and working procedures for greater efficiency.

Advantages: Preserves existing momentum, avoids start-up delays of a new partnership fostering arrangement.

Disadvantages: Slow progress to date in establishing new partnerships. Some CG members resent non-contributing bodies (such as NGOC and PSC members) having a strong voice in the CGIAR forum when decisions are being made.

Option 2. Keep NGOC and PSC; establish a Science Partnership Committee

Advantages: Provides voice to a heretofore unheard stakeholder (i.e., science academies) in the CGIAR forum; keeps the CGIAR abreast of scientific developments; brings greater recognition to the CGIAR in the global scientific scene.

Disadvantages: Introduces some confusion with the science linkage function to be performed by TAC; increases the number of committees.

Option 3. Abolish NGOC and PSC in favor of NGO and PS representation through Global/Regional For a presence in the CGIAR.

Advantages: Reduces the number of CGIAR committees by two; provides a distilled view integrating NGO, PS, NARS and other stakeholder views at a regional level; focusses the CGIAR's attention on real problems instead of generic issues.

Disadvantages: Distinct identities of NGO and PS views would be lost; as the leadership of the global/regional for a rests with public sector NARI representatives, the CG would not have direct exposure to views of NGO and PS representatives; assumes that NGO/PS representatives (globally and regionally) would be more interested in participating in global/regional for a than the CGIAR forum.

G. Facilitating Decision Making in the CGIAR (SR Recommendations 12, 13, 15)

1. The key recommendation of the SR on CGIAR's governance is the establishment of a *central board*, with access to funds, power to act on behalf of the CGIAR, and a chief executive. The board would take on the functions of several existing committees such as the OC, FC, and the Cosponsors. In addition, the SR recommended *formalization* of the legal status of the CGIAR by having it established as a legal entity.

3. This recommendation ran counter to some of the key *organizational principles* the CGIAR's governance has been based on since its inception. Recognizing this, the panel suggested reconsideration of three principles (*consensus decision-making, non-political nature, and informal status*) as decisions would now be made by the central board, the CG would be a formal organization, and it would be able to take positions on political issues. At the same time, the Panel suggested continued adherence to three other principles: *member sovereignty, center autonomy, and independent technical advice*.

3. The SR recommendations on governance received, at best, a lukewarm reception from the CGIAR during ICW98. It became clear from the discussion that:

- members were not willing to *delegate* authority to a smaller group, but were happy to have a smaller group take responsibility for facilitating their own decision making;
- centers were not willing to *delegate up* any of their authority;
- neither the members nor the centers were interested in turning the CGIAR into a formal legal body.

4. The Group recognized that conversion of the CGIAR into a **legal entity** has far reaching implications. One interpretation is that this would convert the CGIAR into a treaty organization with all that this implies for negotiating and then ratifying an agreement, and possibility burden sharing and assessed contributions amongst the members. This was not seen to be to the advantage of the System.

5. The Group's reaction confirmed the strength of the two sovereignty principles: *donor sovereignty* and *center autonomy*. As *consensus decision making* is most compatible with maintaining strong donor sovereignty, other decision modes would have less chance of being acceptable to the CGIAR so long as it places high priority on donor sovereignty. Similarly, an *informal* CGIAR would leave more power in the hands of the members and the centers than a formal CGIAR which is seen as prescribing norms that might be binding to members and centers. **Thus, the CGIAR was more comfortable with maintaining its traditional organizational principles than entertaining decision making modes which would threaten them.**

What decisions does the CGIAR make?

6. The records show that the CGIAR does not make decisions, it endorses, or reaches a consensus on, the recommendations of various committees or propositions from the Chairman. The decisions are binding on the Centers, that are the legal entities in the System and on TAC and the CG Secretariat, but not on the members, who only

take account of the conclusions in their funding for the Centers. The CGIAR, however, *deliberates* on many issues and these deliberations help members, centers and others clarify their own positions on these issues.

Options

7. There are two organizational options that satisfy the spirit of the Group's preferences on governance. One represents the status quo and the other builds on it. Neither creates a formal structure whose decision would be binding on the membership.

Option 1. Maintain the status quo

8. This is an option that preserves OC and FC as the only two standing committees of the membership. The Chair would assemble a *stakeholder committee* whenever he wishes to seek advice from a cross section of the CGIAR. The stakeholders would be represented by the chairs of the system committees. Minor adjustments could be made (such as having two, instead of one, center director and/or board chair represent the centers.)

Advantages: The membership has been relatively comfortable with it.

Disadvantages: OC and FC represent only the membership and not the broader system (no center or partner inputs at present, although adjustments could be made to committee structure.)

Option 2. Establish a representative Consultative Council

9. The Consultative Council that was established at ICW98 is a temporary committee, assembled for the purpose of following-up on the SR. This option would replace the present OC and FC with a Council structured along lines similar to (but perhaps smaller than) the temporary CC. The CC would not *make* decisions *for* or *on behalf* of the CGIAR; instead, it would *prepare* or *facilitate* decision making by the CGIAR. To work efficiently, it could form sub-committees covering:

- governance
- finance
- information and public affairs.

Advantages: Familiarity (as the CGIAR will have experience with it during the SR follow-up); similarity to the accepted present system; inclusion of centers and other stakeholders in the Council; strengthening ownership of the system by major donor members.

Disadvantages: Large size (if kept at the present CC size); creation of a "second class citizen" feeling by members who are not part of the Council.

G. Agendas and Spacing of CGIAR Meetings (Recommendation 21)

Agenda for ICWs and MTMs

1. Apart from the opening and closing ceremonies and time spent on the reports of the various committees, the working sessions of the CGIAR are devoted to the consideration of Medium-term Plans, EPMRs and presentations by the Centres or from specific working groups. The Associated Centres and other organisations use the occasions to present their programmes and to 'work' their constituencies.
2. The committees, donor support and special interest groups and bilateral meetings tend to take place before the main meeting or in the margins of the main sessions. Apart from the meeting room fees, the costs of these activities fall on the Centres and members, particularly the Centres and donors, and are reflected in the size and levels of delegations attending ICW and MTM and the duration of stay. It has been observed that most delegations have grown over recent years. It has been suggested that the opportunity and transaction costs of these meetings are too high, and that the functions could be carried out through meetings held less frequently at each of the Centres. But given the annual, voluntary nature of funding, it has been argued that contact every six months is necessary. If, however, the System were to continue to move towards system-wide or even Centre-based multi-year programmes, the need for such frequent meetings might fall away.
3. One of the consequences of unrestricted core funding is that the membership has traditionally taken an interest in both the work of the Centres and how they are managed. The Centres presented their programmes, TAC appraises the quality of the proposals against the MTPs and the agreed priorities of the System and then the donors provide funding. The EPMRs assess progress, impact and management. The Trustees or Boards provide more regular guidance and accountability. The CG Secretariat organises meetings and the reviews.
4. The move towards programmes at the Centres and for a greater emphasis on System-wide activities, coupled with increasing interest in the development impact of the Centres, could allow the members to focus more on agenda and priority setting, and on assessing the impact of the programmes. The long-term nature of research and the assessment of impact might afford the opportunity for a wider spacing of some of the processes and for a greater division of responsibility between the Boards, TAC, The Secretariat and the CGIAR.
5. It is increasingly in the interests of the Boards to assure efficiency and the accountability of the Centres; it is also their legal responsibility to do so. The members and donors are more interested in the quality and timeliness of the outputs, their accessibility and the impact these have on development processes.
6. It might be possible to reduce the time spent by the CGIAR at MTM and ICW on specific management issues at the Centres, as these are the responsibility of the Boards. Management issues could then be discussed with interested parties in special meetings held at the Centres. This could also reduce some of the 'oversight' functions of the OC, as it would be in the interests of the management of the Centres to carry out

many of these activities. A Centre with a poor management or delivery record would over time receive less resources.

7. The development of the regional fora might facilitate some of the agenda setting, regional feed back, work on impact, local ownership, and the development of partnerships between the Centres and NARS. They might also provide the best places to identify and develop the programmes to be carried out in the regions where the work is most relevant, e.g., the ecoregional and some of the NRM work.

8. **Conclusion:** It might be productive to discuss whether it is possible to reduce or give wider spacing to some of the issues discussed at MTMs and ICWs. It might also be possible to devolve some the issues to the Boards and to Regional Fora.

Spacing the meetings

9. The Review suggested reducing the frequency of MTM to once in three years. ICW would continue, but that a Central Board would meet three times a year. The costs of this option would need to be calculated but on first pass they could result in a greater centralisation of decision making and take considerably more time of the members of the Central Board.

10. The devolution of several responsibilities to the Regional Fora and to the Boards, coupled with greater emphasis on multi-annual programmes, might take some of the pressures off ICW and MTM. A greater emphasis on policy, strategy, impact and multi-annual funding with the support of TAC could also reduce the time spent at the meetings on annual financial issues.

11. It would seem that for the moment ICW is needed, however it might be possible for the MTM to converge with the Regional Fora or be based at the Centres. These regional meetings could focus on programmes, partnerships and impacts of specific Centres, and aim to get around the regions once every three years.

Pros:- Reduced transaction costs and better-focused meetings.

Cons:- Loss of cohesion and the overall picture. Reduced interest in the workings of the Centres.

12. **Conclusions:** There would seem to be a reasonable prospect for reducing or changing the nature of the MTMs. The option would be worth discussing further.