In December 2008, the CGIAR launched its Change Initiative to identify how best to fulfill its role as a provider of science-based solutions for agriculture, natural resource management and rural development. A new system was agreed on and over the past 12 months a series of consultations, reports and meetings have been conducted to flesh out how the components of the new system will operate. The recent Executive Council meeting affirmed that all elements of the new system are coming together and that the new CGIAR is quickly becoming a reality.

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The Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs specify the outcomes, intermediate objectives and research activities to be pursued jointly by centres. The Alliance updated the Executive Council on development of the draft Framework and initial set of potential Mega Programs, and it was agreed that further development of these is needed. The Alliance will spearhead a process to address this over the coming months, in close coordination with the process for the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development, the Independent Science and Partnership Council, and other partners. The Alliance also indicated that the concept of a Mega Program requires further clarification and will develop a think piece for the forthcoming business meeting of the CGIAR.

The roles and responsibilities for the Independent Science and Partnership Council were approved by the Executive Committee. This Council will consist of a standing panel of world-class scientific experts. It will provide independent advice to the funders of the CGIAR and serve as an intellectual bridge between the funders and the Consortium. An interim Council will be launched in December 2009, with the current Science Council filling in until the new members of the Independent Science and Partnership Council are recruited.

The mutual accountabilities and responsibilities of the Consortium, the Centers and the Fund will be made clear in a “CGIAR Declaration”. Also under development is a system-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which sets out a results-based system for performance management and establishes the arrangements for independent evaluation.

CGIAR Members will come together for a final business meeting in Washington, DC, on 08 December 2009. Participants are expected to adopt the new model for the CGIAR. While CGIAR transition processes will continue into 2010, this meeting will formally mark the end of the current CGIAR system.

By Kate Longley, with Carlos Seré and Dennis Garrity. Contact the author, k.longley@cgiar.org.