

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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Attached for the consideration of the Group is a paper entitled "Sharing of International Responsibilities Between CGIAR Centres and National Institutions" (AGR/TAC:IAR/88/8 Rev.4).

Attachment

Distribution

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CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SHARING OF INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN
CGIAR CENTRES AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

TAC SECRETARIAT
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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SHARING OF INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES
BETWEEN CGIAR CENTRES AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

1. The CGIAR Centres ("Centres" for short) were created to fill perceived gaps in the research capacity of most developing countries in the face of a great need for additional food by rapidly increasing populations. From the beginning cooperation and collaboration with institutions of the national agricultural research systems ("national systems" for short) were seen to be essential if the research results achieved by the Centres were to be applied in farmers' fields. To achieve this objective, most national systems in developing countries have taken steps to strengthen their research capacity. They were aided in such areas as human resource development, national agricultural research policy, and organization of agricultural research by the Centres and by the CGIAR donors.
2. The evolution of the national systems towards partnership has not reached the same level of capacity in all developing countries. However, several have attained an advanced status. In virtually all national systems, research groups and individuals who are outstanding in an area of valuable expertise can be found.
3. As noted in the "CGIAR Priorities and Future Strategies" ^{1/}, one long-term trend that is expected to shape the future roles and functions of the System is the build-up of research capacities in the national institutions of developing countries. This would permit them increasingly to take the lead in generating technology. With growth in capacity, the demands of the national systems on the Centres will change and will call for more strategic and even basic research.
4. The nature of the collaboration between the Centres and their partner institutions in developing countries will also change. Increasingly arrangements like contract research and voluntary assumption of major tasks by national programmes in networks established on commodity and/or problem lines have become possible and effective. Such arrangements have helped to increase the amount and scope of the work of the emerging global research system for agriculture in the developing countries. In a few instances, the initiative for the arrangements have passed from the Centres to national groups (network) or single institutions of the stronger national systems.
5. The task of strengthening weaker national systems is still very large. The Mid-Term 1986 Meeting of the CGIAR made explicit the suggestion - already implied and stated in the TAC priorities document - that the strengthened national systems might take on a share of the international responsibilities so far undertaken largely by the Centres. This would facilitate and accelerate the strengthening of the weaker

^{1/} AGR/TAC:IAR/85/18

national systems, and the generation of new or improved technology through applied and adaptive research. In making this suggestion, CGIAR members considered that the already strengthened national systems would gain further in both capacity and prestige. However, they recognized also that there would have to be a genuine desire to exploit the comparative advantages of the stronger national systems for the benefit of other countries, and that the other countries would accept the new arrangements for meeting some of their needs.

6. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in cooperation with several other CGIAR member organizations, organized a meeting in January 1987 of leaders of strengthened rice and wheat national research programmes with representatives of IRRI, CIMMYT, and the donor community. The meeting sought to explore whether relatively more developed national programmes might offer to share international responsibilities and, if so, how this might be done. Leaders of national systems participating in the meeting did offer to share in broader regional or global tasks of the kind currently carried out by the Centres, including training, collection and exchange of information, and collection, preservation and characterization of genetic resources and their improvement through breeding programmes.

7. "The Role of CGIAR Centres in the Global Context" has been on the TAC agenda since October 1986. A part of this role is the "Sharing of International Responsibilities Between CGIAR Centres and the National Agricultural Research Systems". This paper examines the purposes and consequences of the acceptance by national systems of international responsibilities, suggests conditions to enable effective assumption of such responsibilities and proposes principles for guidance of the Centres when they proceed to share some of their responsibilities. In this context, research in national systems includes research done at universities and in the private sector.

Purposes and Consequences of the Sharing of International Responsibilities

8. The concept of "sharing" involves three distinct groups of actors. There are the Centres which have international responsibilities for the tasks in the System. The national systems which offer to assume part of these responsibilities ("sharing national systems") form a second group. The national systems which have benefitted or expect to benefit in a given instance from the discharge of the responsibilities by the Centres ("beneficiary national systems") is the third group of actors. Participating national systems in the last group will often also be collaborating in some areas and may become part of a particular sharing arrangement in the future. Under arrangements of sharing, beneficiary national systems would look to the sharing national systems to meet part of their needs for strengthening and for new or improved technology. The cooperation and goodwill of all three of these groups will be essential for the effectiveness of sharing arrangements. In addition, for the two groups of national systems, the political will of the nations to which they belong is recognized as an indispensable enabling factor.

9. The main purpose of sharing of responsibilities is to increase the capacity of the global agricultural research system to cope with the growing and ever more diverse demand for the goods and services needed to meet the CGIAR goal. It is anticipated that these sharing arrangements would increase and stabilize agricultural productivity and income for a greater number of farmers, especially the resource-poor farmers.

10. The beneficiary national systems are expected to gain in several ways. Their scientists would have more opportunities to collaborate in research activities of interest to them, and to receive training on the techniques they need to use. Similar farming systems, or societal characteristics, can often enhance the impact of collaborative research or training in a region. The institutions of the beneficiary national systems would face a much-reduced threat of loss of their able staff. They would have better prospects of early attention particularly to those urgent problems which are shared by other national systems in their region, and they could thus become stronger and increasingly take the lead in developing new technology to address problems at the national level.

11. The sharing national systems would also benefit from assuming international responsibilities. The benefits should constitute an incentive to undertake sharing. Thus scientists conducting the relevant activities of research and training would gain in ability and international prestige. Their knowledge of the problems in the region and of approaches to solve them would deepen. Further, research on problems in their own country would be facilitated since, in addition to their role of sharing, they would be part of the group of beneficiary national systems as well.

12. The institutions of the sharing national systems would also be expected to gain strength, resources (human and material) and prestige. Through service to their counterparts in other national systems they would enhance their partnership and effectiveness in the global agricultural research system. They could anticipate also that their growing needs for strategic research, and for training and assistance in more highly specialized and sophisticated techniques, would be better catered for by the Centres in the future.

13. The Centres would welcome the sharing of some of their responsibilities - for example in areas of applied and adaptive research and the related training - by national systems which have the capacity and possibility to do so. In the interest of improved effectiveness of the CGIAR System in meeting the changing and growing needs of national systems in developing countries, the Centres should actively seek out and develop possibilities and opportunities of sharing. The identification of activities that lend themselves to efficient and cost effective sharing arrangements should be a joint task of the Centres and the national systems concerned.

14. The Centres, and the donors, would expect sharing to lead to increased impact at the level of the farmers, including those in more remote, harsher environments. Increased impact would also be anticipated on the strengthening of weaker national programmes and on the progress of all national systems to become full partners in the effort to reach the common goal of the global system.

15. In making arrangements for sharing of responsibilities, the potential for adverse consequences, especially for the beneficiary national systems, must be kept in view. Thus ways must be found to prevent e.g. a drop in the quality and timeliness of the output (research results and trained staff) when sharing arrangements are put into effect. The beneficiary national systems must also be assured of a voice in the priorities under the shared responsibilities and in the modes of discharging these responsibilities. As already mentioned, goodwill and understanding among the two groups of national systems and the Centres and donors will be essential for the success of sharing arrangements.

Conditions for Sharing of International Responsibilities

16. TAC considers some conditions to be necessary for a successful arrangement of sharing by national systems in the international responsibilities of Centres. Among these are the following:

- a genuine freely offered wish of the sharing national systems to assume the responsibilities;
- the capacity to do so, i.e. ability in terms of staff, facilities and other resources, comparative advantage, and commitment of scientists and institutions backed by national policy and support for the assumption of the international responsibilities;
- the assurance of unrestricted access of developing countries and their institutions to participate in the benefits, networks, germplasm testing and distribution, etc. as beneficiary national systems and, when appropriate and feasible, in sharing arrangements;
- the assurance of a voice for all participating national systems in deciding priorities and strategies in the discharge of the responsibilities by the sharing national systems and commitment of the sharing national systems to ensure equity among scientists involved in activities under the shared responsibility;
- the assurance of free movement of persons, materials and information concerned with activities under the shared responsibilities (duty-free entry of equipment and supplies needed for the activities will be highly desirable);
- the assurance of availability to scientists everywhere of genetic materials used in or developed under the sharing arrangements;
- willing acceptance by both the sharing national systems and the beneficiary national systems of monitoring of activities under the shared responsibility by or at the request of the concerned Centres and/or TAC.

17. Clearly the commitment of the Centres and donors, is also a fundamental condition without which a sharing arrangement cannot work. The goodwill of the authorities under which the sharing national systems operate is equally indispensable. National systems opting to share responsibility with the Centres should have the strength and stability of funding and organization to meet the normal requirements of national activities. But they may have to turn to CGIAR donors to defray costs associated with international activities currently being undertaken by the Centres. In most instances the assistance of the Centres will be needed to establish the new activities in the sharing national systems. The donors and the Centres should recognize these additional costs as an essential investment in a partnership for reaching the goal of the CGIAR. Attempts should, however, be made to minimize additional administrative burdens and costs, so long as the effectiveness and efficiency of operations is assured.

Principles of Sharing Responsibilities

18. In those instances in which additional CGIAR funding would be required, TAC considers that the following general principles should apply to proposals of arrangements for sharing of international responsibilities of CGIAR Centres with national systems:

- (i) the proposed sharing arrangements must concern responsibilities which are part of the operational mandate of the Centre and which are in support of the CGIAR goal;
- (ii) the proposal must be submitted to TAC by the Centre, e.g. as part of its regular programme proposals, and should have the Centre's support;
- (iii) the Centre should have assured itself that the conditions stated in paragraph 16 above will be met;
- (iv) the Centre accepts that the sharing arrangement does not end the Centre's responsibility in the CGIAR for the shared activities;
- (v) the Centre, in consultation with sharing national systems and beneficiary national systems, has set acceptable standards for the performance of activities under the shared responsibilities;
- (vi) the Centre accepts the responsibility to ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate the discharge of shared responsibilities;
- (vii) the Centre agrees to provide support to the sharing institution(s) for establishment and initial operation of activities under the shared responsibilities;
- (viii) the implementation and effectiveness of the shared responsibilities will be subject to monitoring by TAC through appropriate mechanisms.

Funding of Activities Under Shared Responsibilities

19. TAC considers that in many situations costs can be lower for given activities under sharing arrangements than when conducted at or by a Centre. However, as sharing national system should not initially have to assume the burden imposed by the international character of the shared responsibilities, donors in consultation with the Centre concerned should ensure that the additional funds are made available to the sharing national systems as and when needed. Donors have expressed readiness to support sharing arrangements, and Centres would likewise be expected to add some financing to their technical backstopping for activities proposed and supported by them.

20. The flow of additional funds may vary depending on circumstances. Donors may choose to channel their contributions through the concerned Centres. TAC considers that this would often be the most efficient procedure where research and related activities are intimately tied to the work of the Centre. It may also be particularly cost efficient in the initial stages of a sharing arrangement. Care should be taken to ensure that national systems do not come to view the Centre as a donor, nor the shared activities as a mandate from the CGIAR.

21. After some time of sharing or in some situations, especially where bilateral support is available, funds might flow to sharing national systems directly. Alternatively, a third party, for example, a regional institution promoting cooperation in agriculture (SACCAR, SAARC, IICA and others), could be an intermediary. In all such cases, consultation with the Centre concerned would be appropriate.

Ways of Sharing Responsibilities

22. TAC envisages that the network mode currently in use by CGIAR Centres for many topics for which they retain the roles of leadership or coordination would serve well also in situations in which the sharing national systems assume these roles. However, other modes may also be useful, e.g. Centre-led contracts, since Centres remain ultimately accountable to the CGIAR for performance under their mandates if they wish to continue to receive the support of the Group.

