

Changing Agricultural Research in a Changing World

WHY THE CGIAR HAS REFORMED AND HOW THE WORLD WILL BENEFIT

Agriculture in the developing world faces unprecedented challenges. Rising and volatile food prices, coupled with increasing pressure on natural resources, have emerged as severe threats to the world's poor and hungry. Climate change and variability will exacerbate these threats in the coming decades.

At the same time, advances in science and technology, together with a changing institutional context, offer unprecedented opportunities. Progress in bioscience and information and communication technologies is particularly promising. And national organizations in some developing countries have become stronger players while the private sector's role is expanding.

To overcome the challenges and exploit the opportunities, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has undergone reform. A new **Strategy and Results Framework** (SRF) will, for the first time, allow the CGIAR centers to function as a unified system, working together to pursue shared goals.

The SRF defines four **system-level outcomes** that will shape the CGIAR's research in the coming years. All research priorities and activities will be guided by their potential contributions to these outcomes:

- *Reduced rural poverty.* Improved productivity and better developed markets will deliver agricultural growth in which the rural poor participate.
- *Improved food security.* Increasing supplies of key staples will buffer communities against price rises and volatility, making food affordable for millions of poor people.
- *Improved nutrition and health.* Improved crop varieties and diversified production systems will provide the nutrients often lacking from the diets of poor people, particularly women and children.
- *Sustainably managed natural resources.* Only through this outcome can poor farmers benefit from healthy ecosystems and sustain high-level agricultural productivity, particularly in the light of climate change.



Photo: Neil Palmer, CIAT

A LEANER, MORE EFFICIENT CGIAR

The reform process enables the CGIAR centers and their partners to integrate their work into large and ambitious programs driven by their potential impact on development, avoiding the fragmentation and duplication of the past. Research within the new Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) gives funders better value for money and will benefit more people than ever before.

The new CGIAR Consortium binds together the work of the 15 CGIAR centers and provides a single contact point for donors. The Consortium Board works with CGIAR Fund donors, research partners, farmers and other stakeholders to refine the SRF as it evolves to meet changing needs.

The CGIAR Fund, a new multi-donor funding mechanism, will finance research within the SRF. The Fund Council, a representative body of fund donors and other stakeholders, will manage relationships with donors and allocate resources to new CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs). It will also appoint the Independent Science and Partnership Council, a panel of leading scientific experts who provide independent advice and expertise to CGIAR donors. The Funders Forum, a biennial gathering of all donors, will set the CGIAR's strategic direction.

Before they begin, CRPs will set out their expected achievements and provide verifiable targets against which progress can be monitored. Their performance and impact will be assessed through comprehensive, independent, publicly disclosed evaluations.

The new CGIAR is organizing its research in multi-center, multi-partner initiatives known as **CGIAR Research Programs** (CRPs). These are built on three core principles: impact on the four system-level outcomes; making the most of centers' respective strengths; and effective partnerships at all stages of research and development.

The 15 CRPs proposed by the centers and their partners will require a budget of US\$790 million for the first year (2011), with an annual increase of around US\$100 million for the next three years. If similar annual increases are secured in the long term, the new CGIAR will deliver returns on investment well beyond even the impressive results of the past. Millions of poor urban and rural people will benefit.

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POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE NEW CGIAR'S RESEARCH: SOME EXAMPLES

Research to **increase rice yields** will raise farm incomes, lower the price of rice, reduce hunger, and cut by 3 million hectares the land area required to grow this key food staple. The objective is to produce enough additional rice to free more than 100 million Asian people from hunger.

Research to **reduce disease risks and improve nutrition** (e.g. through more nutritious crop varieties) will improve the health of poor and vulnerable people, especially women and children. Savings to the global economy could amount to US\$30 billion.

Research on **climate change, agriculture and food security** will reduce the vulnerability of crops to drought, flooding, salinity, pests and diseases. In so doing, it will help cut poverty by 10 percent and the number of undernourished rural poor by 25 percent. It will also cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Research on **water scarcity and land and ecosystem degradation** will protect productive land and rehabilitate degraded land. Water and land management that sustains and improves ecosystem services will make poor farm households and communities more resilient and substantially increase crop yields.

