

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SCIENCE COUNCIL

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Since my last report to you at AGM '04 in Mexico City, the Council has made significant progress in each of our four main areas of work: Priorities and Strategies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Impact Assessment and Mobilizing Science. Some notable achievements are highlighted below, along with a brief description of key activities planned for 2006-2007.

Priorities and Strategies

A set of 20 *CGIAR System Research Priorities* focusing on problems for which the CGIAR is likely to have the greatest impact has been identified by the Council and been endorsed by the ExCo at its last meeting in October. We believe that this major CGIAR effort should be finalized after all the work done in consultation with researchers, CDC, CBC, NARS, CG Members and many others. As soon as the new priorities are approved by the CGIAR, the Centers will begin a 3-year process of adjusting their research portfolio to reflect the system priorities and reflect these adjustments in their MTPs beginning with those to be prepared by June 2006. I am pleased to report that some Centers have already started to do so in this year's MTP submission.

Other strategic studies being conducted by the SC include: development of a strategy for Genomics Research in the CGIAR, defining opportunities for handling Intellectual Property in the context of International Public Good research, Biosafety, Animal and Fish Genetic Resources, and Ethics and CGIAR Research.

The main focus of the Standing Panel on Priorities and Strategies (SPPS) during 2006-07 will be the follow up and implementation of the new CGIAR System Priorities, including refining the scope of research of the twenty System Priorities and progressive alignment of the current portfolio of the Centers.¹

Monitoring and Evaluation

Following the new approach to M&E of CGIAR Centers focusing on a more streamlined, cost-effective approach to Center-level monitoring and evaluation, several *external reviews* are currently underway:

¹ For more details of the strategy of each Standing Panel, its ongoing activities and recent publications see www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org

- Report from the external review of the SWP on Alternatives to Slash and Burn recently completed was considered by the Council at SC4 and discussed at ExCo-9 (Oct 2005). The review concludes that ASB has been highly relevant to the CGIAR's core mission and is pursuing work well aligned with the proposed CGIAR System Research Priorities for 2005-2015.
- A brief follow up review of IRRI upland rice research activities as requested by AGM04 is being organized and will be finished in early 2006.
- A follow up review of the recent CIMMYT EPMR as approved at ExCo-8 is being organized to be conducted by mid 2006.
- A follow up review of the SSA CP as approved at AGM04 will be organized in the first quarter of 2006.
- ICRAF, CIFOR and WorldFish Center EPMRs are underway and will be considered by the SC in April 2006, at ExCo-10 (May 2006) and at AGM06.
- Planning for three more Center EPMRs (ILRI, IWMI and ICARDA) to be implemented in 2006 is now beginning.

Based on the lessons learned during the 2005 cycle of *Medium Term Plan review*, the SC will coordinate in collaboration with Centers and the CG Secretariat the improvement of guidelines for preparation of MTPs, specifically focusing on a better definition of research output targets.

During the pilot phase of the *performance measurement* (PM) system, the Council, through a task force involving members of SPME and SPIA and SC Secretariat staff, contributed to drawing lessons on PM system elements (output, outcome, impact, quality of research staff, quality and relevance of programs). The SC has submitted recommendations for implementing PM in 2006.

The main focus of the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME) work during 2006-07 will be to implement the new CGIAR M&E system approved in 2005 through improving the CGIAR performance measurement system, monitoring the use of the Center Commissioned External Reviews (CCERs), as well as streamlining of seven new EPMRs to be commissioned during the biennium.

Impact Assessment (refer to *SPIA Report to AGM '05* for full report)

Seven completed Center case studies that document the *impact of NRM research* in the CGIAR were presented at a joint SPIA-iNRM workshop in June 2005 at IRRI. The case study reports have been peer-reviewed, are now undergoing revision and will be published in early 2006 in a book entitled *Impact from CGIAR Research on NRM*. Highlights of specific case study results, e.g., reduced tillage and integrated aquaculture-agriculture, will be presented at AGM05.

The *Training Evaluation and Impact Assessment* has finished all field visits and a final report is being prepared and is expected by January 2006. The study will provide an analysis of the training components of research including where investments have been best placed and an assessment of the added value.

A study to better understand the *Demands and Uses for Impact-Related Information among Donors* has been completed. This study examined issues related to how *ex-post* impact assessments actually inform perceptions of past research impacts, what influence these have on donor investment decisions and how study results can be used more effectively.

The first phase of the *Impact of Agricultural Research in Sub-Saharan Africa* study is underway involving a comprehensive collection, synthesis and assessment of the evidence on the impacts of new technologies and improved policies from CGIAR + partner research in SSA.

Among several planned initiatives, the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) will focus its activities during 2006-07 on assessing the impacts of CGIAR policy-oriented research activities and activities of the CGIAR and partner research in Africa and South Asia from an integrated, regional perspective.

Mobilizing Science

A *Survey of CGIAR Center's on-going scientific collaboration* was conducted in 2004-05 to determine where the SC might offer some assistance to Centers in identifying good collaboration practices. The SPMS Survey has created a pool of useful information on CGIAR collaborations, with good descriptions of CGIAR collaboration in terms of the number, location and type of partners. We also know more about the reasons for collaboration (access to expertise and resources, field presence and contacts, dissemination of information and technologies) and how collaborations contribute to the Centers' successful performance (enhanced funding, capacity and networking). To develop a better understanding of the role partnerships play in achieving CGIAR goals further work will now focus on addressing the following issues: What is the definition of a CGIAR partner? Can typologies help to define the nature of partnerships according to the different activities they undertake? To what extent have the thousands of collaborations identified by the survey contributed to 'mobilizing science' in the CGIAR and how can such partnerships be further encouraged in future?

A new Council-led publication *Science for Agricultural Development 2005*, has been prepared and is being launched at AGM05. The aim of the publication is to enhance knowledge about recent trends, current status and emerging issues related to global agricultural research. It is also intended that it will help shape global perspectives and priorities about agricultural science and technology as well as mobilize the scientific community to contribute to the CGIAR mandate. The publication includes chapters on the potential contribution of agriculture to the MDGs, the impact of research on agricultural development with lessons to date, scientific opportunities and the potential for success including the potential of genomics, trends in investment in research and a discussion on the implications of the analysis including what the trends mean for agricultural development. This will be the first of the proposed biennial series to be produced by the Science Council with the next report scheduled in the workplan for 2007.

A one-day *Science Forum 2005* within the CGIAR AGM05 is being organized to discuss the role scientific research can play in supporting development and poverty reduction. The SC and the CGIAR Secretariats have jointly organized five parallel sessions on the theme *CGIAR Priorities:*

Science for the Poor. The five expert presentations will be on conservation of indigenous livestock; genetic enhancement of selected species to increase income generation; increasing income from fruit and vegetable production; integrated land, water and forest management at landscape level; and improving research and development options to reduce rural poverty and vulnerability. Two other parallel sessions have been organized on the theme of *Strengthening research-for-development capacities*. A session is also being organized under this theme on *Farmers as research and technology transfer partners*.

The main focus of the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS) during 2006-2007 will be to develop strategic elements to help mobilize science around CGIAR goals, including identifying innovative ways by which advanced research institutes, strong national agricultural research institutes, national councils for science & technology, international and national private sector companies and other organizations mobilize agricultural science.

Science Council Secretariat

The new management and the implementation of a new Staffing Plan are gradually strengthening the Secretariat to underpin the SC's comprehensive work plan. Since the approval by the SC of a new Staffing Plan for its Secretariat three vacancies have been filled (Administrative Assistant in March 2005, Senior Officer in July 2005 and another Senior Officer post expected to join in late 2005) and two Junior Officers have been recruited (August 2005). However, the combination of unfilled professional staff positions during the recent past and the extended sick leave of a Senior Officer during 2004 and 2005 have somewhat slowed down the implementation of the 2004-2005 approved workplan.

The Science Council Secretariat is also collaborating with the other units of the System Office. Current and forthcoming activities include support to the ICT/KM2 Global Public Goods from Data to Food programme, CGIAR Project Manager Interface to access project information across the CGIAR, investment plan for an Electronic Natural Resources Information Center, a Centers Alliance Collaboration website and a Communication strategy for the Science Council.

Conclusion

While the above elements have been reported separately, it should be emphasized that the interdependent nature of many of these and other SC activities and the fact that all of these important actions should come together to help increase the impact of the CGIAR.

Let me finish by thanking you again for your continued support to the Science Council.