

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

1818 H St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20433 U.S.A.  
Telephone (Area Code 202) 477-3592  
Cable Address - INTBAFRAD

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TO: Participants in International Centers Week  
FROM: Executive Secretariat  
SUBJECT: Definition of Program Activities of Centers  
(A Note on Terminology)

Attached for information of members of the Consultative Group and of the Technical Advisory Committee is a paper giving the Secretariat's draft proposals for Definition of Program Activities of Centers.

Attachment

## Definition of Program Activities of Centers

### (A Note on Terminology)

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the Consultative Group meeting in October 1974, members took up the problem of classifying and defining the terms commonly used throughout the CG system to describe the various kinds of programs in which the international agricultural research centers are engaged. This discussion took place under Agenda Item 5b, "Structure and Finance of Off-Campus Activities," but it broadened out to cover the whole range of activities of the centers which are most commonly described as core, restricted core and special projects. This note is in response to the request voiced at that meeting that the Secretariat prepare a background paper on this subject for the July 1975 meeting of the Consultative Group. The subject has been discussed at TAC meetings in February 1974 and February 1975. An earlier version of this paper was made available to TAC for this second discussion.

2. The note elaborates some of the definitions given in the July 11, 1974 Secretariat paper on "Budgeting and Accounting Practices of International Agricultural Research Centers," particularly those activities funded by other than contributions to core programs. These definitions are based on the centers' descriptions of their activities following the Secretariat request for details of their off-campus activities.

#### II. FUNDING

3. Whilst this paper focuses on the definition of programs, it is appropriate here also to define the kinds of funding used in center operations. The following terms are currently in use.

(a) Unrestricted core funding. This comprises contributions from donors within the Consultative Group to support both the capital and operational costs of the center for its approved program and budget.

(b) Restricted core funding. This comprises contributions to an identifiable activity of the center by a particular donor. At any one center, several donors may support with restricted funds several core activities. The costs and scope of a core activity, supported by restricted funds, are agreed between the center and the donor. The budget carries its share of overheads of the activity and these overheads are shown as earned income by the center. Restricted core funding is shown as part of the overall contribution of the donors to the CG system. Grants for both unrestricted and restricted core are on an annual basis but contributions restricted to a particular

activity may carry an intent of funding for more than one year. Core activities whether financed by unrestricted or restricted contributions are undertaken as part of a center's mandate and are reviewed by the TAC.

(c) Special project funding. This comprises contributions by a single donor to an identified activity for a limited time span, commonly 3 to 5 years. The budget carries a proportion of overheads and these are shown as earned income by the center. Special project funded programs are not shown as a part of the overall contribution of the donors to the CG system and they are not reviewed by the TAC.

### III. PROGRAMS

4. As given in the budgeting and Accounting Paper of July 11, 1974 (paragraphs 3 to 9), center program activities are defined as follows:

"A program is a set of organized activities designed to progress toward defined objectives.

#### A. Core Program

(1) The core program of a center or institute is a set of long-term activities designed to progress toward the center's fundamental objectives in research and training, as described in a basic statement approved by the center's governing board (which some centers refer to as their "mandate"). The hallmark of the core program, so far as content is concerned, is that it represents the initiative of the center and carries the approval of the governing board. So far as finance is concerned, the core program is funded by several donors (often eight or more).

"(2) The core program need not be confined to headquarters of an institute. A core program may be carried on away from headquarters and even outside the host country, by an institute's own staff, by contract with another research organization or laboratory, or by other cooperative arrangements with national or regional institutes (sometimes called linkages, although this term seems to be obsolescent).

(3) A core program may consist of a number of different activities aimed at different research questions or action targets. These activities may be referred to as programs or program elements; centers sometimes call them "thrusts." A multiple-crop center, for instance, is considered to have a program for each crop (or group of related crops) with which its activities are concerned (e. g., the Grain Legumes Improvement Program of IITA).

### B. Special Projects

(1) Special projects usually are highly specific in purpose and limited to a definite span of time. They are often financed by a single donor, and may or may not be continued or renewed when the donor's support comes to an end.

"(2) In contrast to the content of a core program, the content of a special project is often stipulated by the donor and/or by the client. The project usually consists, basically, of making practical use of a center's research results or its expert staff in a single country (which may or may not be the center's host country).

"(3) A large class of special projects is composed of outreach programs. These typically are programs of technical assistance by the personnel of an international institute to research or extension efforts in a developing country, carried out under a contract with the recipient country and financed by that country with the help of an outside donor or donors."

5. Whilst core programs and their sources of funding are clearly defined and the activities of all centers follow a consistent pattern, the work under special projects tends to be more diverse and to cover a wide range of activities, many of which are at the fringe of a center's mandate. The central point is the nature of the activity rather than its location or its funding. There are indeed enough variations in the usage of such terms as "outreach", "delivery", "network" to warrant attempts at better definitions. The examples to follow will show that both core activities and special projects take place both "on campus" and "off campus". Furthermore, the same activity may be funded in either way by different centers or it may be funded partly through "core" and partly through "special projects". Since it is this aspect of centers' activities which appear to cause the most confusion, the remainder of this discussion on terminology concentrates on defining non-core activities and off-campus activities.

#### Cooperative "on-campus" research projects

6. These may be defined as a group of activities in which the center provides facilities for a special project-funded activity with an agreed life span, based wholly on the center. Examples are:

(a) Specialist documentation services like the Cassava Information Center at CIAT funded by IDRC; Agricultural Economics and Development for Latin America funded by Ford Foundation. Other documentation services are planned at CIAT.

(b) Special development projects such as the machinery project at IRRI, originally funded by USAID, and the grain storage project at IITA funded by FAO. The degree of center participation in these varies from the minimum, e. g. provision of land, to close participation and proposals for eventual integration into the center's program.

(c) Special research projects in which a research institute or university sets up a research program on the center campus. The project provides staff (paid for directly by the sponsoring institute), equipment, etc. The center provides space and presumably some equipment and assistant staff. The COPR program at IITA is an example of this; the Texas A & M group at CIAT is on the same basis.

(d) Special training courses. IDB has provided additional funds to CIAT to run special courses in animal production. Provision of funding for graduate thesis work is provided at some institutes.

(e) A project to work on an urgent problem which an international center is particularly qualified to handle and on which a substantial advance towards a solution is likely within a limited time (e. g. IITA's program on bacterial blight in cassava).

(f) Short-term holding operations, pending the permanent assignment of a research problem to the international center which will have the long-term responsibility for it: sorghum research at CIMMYT which will eventually pass to ICRISAT is an example.

#### Cooperative "off-campus" contract research projects

7. This may be defined as a group of activities carried on at an institute of advanced study on behalf of a center. These activities may be funded as special projects or as part of the core program of a center. Examples are:

(a) Research contracts financed by the centers at institutes in Europe and North America. CIP has 11 such contracts financed out of its core budget.

(b) Research contracts at institutes financed by the government or a private agency of the host country. The Rockefeller Foundation funds work at Kansas State and Oregon State of interest to CIMMYT and work at Minnesota linked to CIP. The U. K. funds work at Birmingham University for CIP.

Cooperative "off-campus" research and development projects

8. This may be defined as a group of activities in which host countries play a major role designed to test centers' materials or agricultural systems or to strengthen national research programs to hasten the spread of such materials or modified versions of them. Such activities are variously described as "outreach", "delivery", "network" systems. The initiative for these projects may come from the center, e. g., requests for sites for testing their materials or techniques, from a host country or from a host country collaborating with a donor in a relationship which the center contracts to provide services specified and funded by the client country and the donor. Examples of this kind of activity are:

(a) Cooperative nurseries testing new varieties. The host country may receive technical support only in the form of visits from the center or it may have staff or additional help as in paragraph 6 (c) above. The nursery testing program is usually core funded.

(b) At national research centers giving general research support; an example of this is the three-man CIAT team at ICTA, Guatemala. Possibly IITA may ultimately do the same under its farming systems program. CIMMYT teams in North Africa, though designated as wheat teams, work on wheat/legume cropping systems. ICRISAT will work at research stations in West Africa on farming systems.

(c) At crop research centers working on a specific crop. Teams may vary from one to several scientists. One or more man-teams are provided by IRRI, mostly in the Far East, by CIMMYT, mostly in Africa, and by IITA, and ICRISAT in Africa.

(d) At one center but serving a region, i. e., as part of a regional network. CIP has developed this approach whereby the "potato" world has been divided into seven regions: South America, Central America, tropical Africa, Middle East and North Africa, non-Arab Muslim countries, India, and S.E. Asia. Ultimately, 3 scientists will be stationed in each region, many of whom will be core funded, but some financed through special funds. CIMMYT is developing a similar program for wheat and maize.

(e) At sister centers as part of a "relay" system. The CIMMYT/CIAT arrangement at CIAT for the maize program is an example of this.

Cooperative "off-campus" extension and delivery projects

9. This group may be defined as activities in which a center works in association with appropriate agencies of the host country to demonstrate new materials or new techniques. Examples are:

(a) IITA's collaboration in the accelerated food production program in Nigeria.

(b) IITA's work on cassava in Zaire (paid for by the Zaire Government).

(c) CIMMYT's farmer demonstration plots on maize and wheat in a number of countries where it is operating. Other centers probably do likewise without specifically reporting so. It would appear that the teams provided under 8 (c) are mostly responsible for this.

(d) CIMMYT has made a survey of farmer acceptance of new varieties of wheat in a number of countries. IRRI has also studied the impact of new varieties in the Philippines. Some staff in this activity may be core funded and some provided by the host country.

Consultant Services

10. This may be defined as an activity in which center staff undertake short-term visits to advise national programs. Some centers, e.g. CIAT, provide teams to act in an advisory capacity to national production programs. CIMMYT staff (core funded) travelled about 2,500 man-days in 1974. Some of this appears to have involved advice to national programs.

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