

***CENTER DIRECTORS COMMITTEE: TOWARDS A
FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION***

***REPORT FROM THE COLLECTIVE ACTION
RETREAT
8-9 JULY, 2004
ILRI, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA***

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ACTION RETREAT***

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CENTER DIRECTORS COMMITTEE: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF RETREAT

The CGIAR system will reach its complex goals only if Centers collaborate more, and more effectively. During a retreat from 8 to 9 July 2004 in Addis Ababa at the campus of the International Livestock Research Institute, Directors General, invited Board Chairs and senior Center staff together determined the changes needed in the functioning of their existing mechanisms to create, enhance and enforce the dynamic of collaboration. Some changes will begin immediately; others will be finalized during the October Mexico City Annual General Meeting.

The present document is the Report of the Retreat and the preceding Center Directors Committee (CDC), National Agricultural Research Systems, Subregional Organizations, and the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) Consultation held on 7 July 2004. It represents a record of the Retreat debates and discussions and, as such, not the totality of CDC thinking on the issues addressed.

Two primary motivations impel the changes proposed: the real world challenges that must be faced if poverty alleviation and rural development are to be achieved; and a sober analysis of deficiencies in the existing collaborative relationships which must be addressed if viable, ongoing dynamic cooperation is to be achieved. Centers are also very mindful of the need to meet donor requirements for economy and system wide response on a variety of issues

The Challenge: As the key research and delivery mechanisms of the CGIAR system, Centers have evolved beyond successes with specific crops to encompass a range of profound and complex development and technological issues, including poverty alleviation, food security, environmental protection and biodiversity. These cannot be achieved by a single Center and require complex partnerships with each other and with an increasingly large and diverse range of partners.

The more significant deficiencies addressed during the retreat included conflict resolution mechanisms for inter Center agreements, incentives to collaborate, early action on poor performance by any Center, and the absence of shared standards and practices. Real world time constraints are also an issue.

To capture the opportunities and address the problems, key recommendations changing the mandate and functioning of existing inter Center mechanisms will be pursued:

- ✓ Formal establishment of the Future Harvest Alliance built on the platform of existing collaboration in managerial, administrative and policy work.
- ✓ The CDC will become a new Alliance Executive to strengthen the strategic management
- ✓ The Committee of Board Chairs (CBC) will be asked to constitute itself into the Alliance Board with major oversight on Center contributions to system wide issues and Center compliance with these

- ✓ Alliance mechanisms and processes will be adopted to create fair and independent means of mediation and arbitration to resolve conflicts among peers.
- ✓ A strengthened Centers' secretariat will add capacity to the System Office of the CGIAR, and will add support to more frequent, coordinated interactions with Chair and Director.
- ✓ The Center Deputy Directors Committee will map the standards and practices currently involved in Centers work, and with the direction of the Alliance Executive (ex CDC) as to priorities, create new system-wide working methods.
- ✓ Greater use of contract mechanisms will add clarity, transparency and enforceability to existing and future collaborative arrangements.

These changes will benefit the whole CGIAR System. The thrust of collaboration will be collective programs around common goals with national partners, regional and sub-regional organizations, etc, to deploy collective Center resources more strategically and efficiently and meet the articulated demands of our partners, as well as emerging opportunities and responsibilities. Collective actions of the Centers will lead to stronger common policy positions, and policy impact.

Programmatically, the urgency is in Africa. New collective actions will begin immediately with pilot consolidated sub-regional efforts in Eastern Africa with ASARECA¹, followed by other sub-regions. The pilots will align Centers representation, partnerships, programs and operational support at the sub-regional level. It will be a collaboration with ASARECA, FARA, national research systems, civil society, regional, sub-regional bodies and international bodies and investors as appropriate. A strategy process will be launched in 2005 for developing a coordinated Sub Saharan Africa capacity building plan for national agricultural research and extension system partners, largely implemented at sub-regional organization level in Sub Saharan Africa. Working with the two System Task Forces, solutions will be found to the current managerial burdens at the national level.

Globally, collaboration should be driven by opportunities for more impact, e.g., aggregating research assets, creating improved analytical power and seizing economies of scale through more shared services and standardized research and reporting practices. Collaboration will also be driven by the need for common policies and positions on such matters as facilitating governing germplasm exchange and use. A more collective approach will allow quicker response to issues such as system wide comparability in remuneration, performance measurement and others. In addition, the Centers will be able to make a stronger and more strategic contribution to the Executive Council of the CGIAR and the System Office.

Cost efficiencies have already been realized in the operation of a shared salary, pension and benefit system in the international agricultural research centers. Centers benefit from a communally organized contract for telecommunications including e mail. A shared Library subscription system expedites services at lower cost. A system internal audit is available to and used by many Centers. A shared Gender and Diversity office has allowed Centers to develop leading edge policies, learn from each

¹ ASARECA Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa

other and created system wide reporting. Centers often share the same physical plant, and common services. These have reduced operating costs and promoted cooperation.

Achieving the quality and scale of the new changes to which CDC are committed is no easy task. They plan to engage in this process in a consultative, professional and well-resourced manner that does not shy away from the complexity of the reforms. The next stage will therefore be to complete this work during the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in October 2004 in Mexico City in establishing a common platform for moving forward.

The specific recommendations of the Retreat are:

Recommendation 1: Formal establishment of the Future Harvest Alliance built on the platform of existing collaboration in managerial, administrative, policy and programmatic work.

Recommendation 2: The Center Directors Committee (CDC) will become a new Alliance Executive to strengthen the strategic management.

Recommendation 3: The Committee of Board Chairs (CBC) will be asked to constitute itself into the Alliance Board with major oversight on Center contributions to system wide issues and Center compliance with these.

Recommendation 4: To enable the Centers to make their vision of collective action a reality, a robust set of Guiding Principles (following), to which all are committed, should be agreed.

- 1: Our allegiance is first to the poor. Institutionally, our allegiance is to the Future Harvest Alliance as well as to the Centers.*
- 2: Centers will abide by formal decisions of the Future Harvest Alliance and the Alliance will be given the authority, by the Centers, to resolve issues that arise between Centers and which are perceived to negatively affect the reputation of the Alliance.*
- 3: The Centers of the Future Harvest Alliance will ensure transparency through open communication among themselves and with partners and stakeholders.*
- 4: Each participating Center is accountable to the collective action governing mechanism and the collective action governing mechanism is accountable to the stakeholders*
- 5: Collective Actions shall be based on the principle of partnership among equals (internal and external), open consultation and participation*
- 6: Collective action implies no hierarchy of Centers and mutual respect among Centers. Except under clearly defined circumstances, no Center will make an automatic assumption of leadership for an action. Centers do not assume line responsibility for other Center's staff. No Center will be permitted to free ride on other Centers.*
- 7: Priority setting should be based on open, transparent practices, including stakeholder consultation including participating Centers, research and development partners and investors.*
- 8: The problem to be addressed or the opportunity to be sought through collective action takes priority i.e. the best possible*

team and/or mechanism should be assembled from center resources, beyond history and mandate (Boundary Principle).

9: For each collective action problem to be solved or opportunity to be captured, clear specifications and reachable objectives will be identified.

10: Shared standards and practices (for administration and science) will be employed whenever justified to minimize transaction costs and increase efficiencies and increase transparency.

Recommendation 5: Alliance mechanisms and processes will be adopted to create fair and independent means of mediation and arbitration to resolve conflicts among peers.

Recommendation 6: Greater use will be made of contract mechanisms to add clarity, transparency and enforceability to existing and future collaborative arrangements.

Recommendation 7: The Alliance Board and its Executive will be supported by a secretariat office of suitable capacity. The secretariat office will add complementary capacity to the System Office of the CGIAR and will support more frequent, coordinated Alliance interactions with the CGIAR Chair and Director.

Recommendation 8: The Center Deputy Directors Committee will map the standards and practices currently involved in Centers work, and with the direction of the Alliance Executive (ex CDC) as to priorities, create new system-wide working methods.

CENTER DIRECTORS COMMITTEE: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) System is changing rapidly. As the main implementing arms of the CGIAR, the 15 Future Harvest Centers are taking active part in many System changes, both as individual Centers and as a collective. The Centers have decided that they should be helping the reforms in the CGIAR by together taking a more pro-active role in the change agenda, rather than responding as individual units of the System.

As the CGIAR mission and objectives have changed over time (Box 1), the Centers have evolved from independently created Centers with commodity, agroecosystem or sectoral mandates to Centers which need more aligned programs that are focused on the complex challenges of helping people through reducing poverty and that use research for agriculture, forestry, fisheries and water management as development tools and not ends in themselves.

Box 1: Evolution of the Mission of the CGIAR: 1971 to the Present:

First Decade (1971-1980): ‘...the founding objective of the Group was to "increase the pile of rice" – in reality, food – in tropical countries that faced serious scarcity. Highest priority was given to research on cereals. Soon, however, the research portfolio was broadened from rice, wheat, maize, cassava, and pastures to include such commodities as chickpea, sorghum, potato, millets and, eventually, to a list of 27 commodities. The emphasis on "increasing the pile of food" brought great benefits to developing countries, but other aspects of agricultural development were not neglected.

The founding resolution of the CGIAR had declared that in supporting agricultural research "account will be taken not only of technical, but also of ecological, economic and social factors." The same resolution urged that national and international research centers should work together. In keeping with these sentiments, the CGIAR branched out into several new areas of activity such as livestock research, farming systems, conservation of genetic resources, plant nutrition, water management, policy research, and services to national agricultural research centers in developing countries.’

1981-1990: The objective of research was defined as increasing *sustainable* food production in the developing countries in such a way that the nutritional level and general economic well-being of the poor are improved. This approach implied a move towards a poverty focus, as well as heavier emphasis on protecting biodiversity, land, and water.

1991: Mission Statement: *Through international research and related activities, and in partnership with national research systems, to contribute to sustainable improvements in the productivity of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in developing countries in ways that enhance nutrition and well-being, especially of low-income*

people.

1995: Mission Statement: *To contribute, through its research, to promoting sustainable agriculture for food security in the developing countries*

1998: Mission Statement: *To contribute to food security and poverty eradication in developing countries through research, partnership, capacity building and policy support, promoting sustainable agricultural development based on the environmentally sound management of natural resources*

2000: Mission Statement: *To achieve sustainable food security and reduce poverty in developing countries through scientific research and research-related activities in the fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, policy, and environment.*

Source: CGIAR http://www.cgiar.org/who/www_history.html#first

Starting in 2001, the System implemented major reforms based on 4 ‘pillars of change’, namely:

- Adoption of a programmatic approach to CGIAR research and endorsement of Challenge Programs
- Approval of an annual general meeting and creation of an Executive Council
- Transformation of TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) into a Science Council
- Creation of a System Office to support the work of all parts of the System

With the 4 ‘pillars of change’ in place, the CGIAR is now giving priority to reforms in the Centers, such as developing a performance measurement system. At AGM03, the CGIAR established 2 Task Forces (one on Programmatic Alignment and one on Organizational and Structural Alignment) to focus first on the CGIAR work in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), but with global implications. At its May 2004 meeting, the Center Directors Committee (CDC) recognized the need to act and agreed the Future Harvest Centers should greatly increase their capacity for collective action. The CDC decided to re-examine models for collective action, and develop a new Centers’ framework for enhancing collaboration.

A CDC Retreat was held on 8 and 9 July 2004 (see Annex a for Retreat objectives) to address how the Centers could improve their capacity for collective action. On 7 July, the Retreat was preceded by a Consultation with the leaders of key Sub Saharan African regional, sub-regional and national research bodies. The Retreat was not obligatory due to the short notice given. It was attended by 8 Directors General, 3 Board Chairs and 7 senior Center staff. All but 3 Centers were represented (see Annex b for list of attendees).

This report presents the outcomes of the Retreat. The key recommendations of the Retreat will be put to the October 2004 meetings of the Committee of Board Chairs and the Center Directors Committee.

2. *THE ANALYTICAL STEPS IN THE PROCESS*

The main objective of the CDC Collective Action Retreat was to clarify how CG centers will enhance cooperation and collective action in the milieu of the new CGIAR. A framework for collective action with a plan outlining follow up was to be developed in the 2-day meeting, facilitated professionally by 2 consultants. A rigorous analytical process, before and during the workshop, ensured a clear and unbiased outcome. The main steps in the process are now described.

Preparation

A background ‘state of the art’ paper, pulling together the previous efforts towards more collective action, was developed by the Future Harvest Alliance Office (FHAO) and circulated for comment before the workshop. Many participants and DGs who could not participate in the workshop, commented on the paper. Most of the aspects of the paper were broadly accepted and thus the paper served as a foundation for the workshop.

In a telephone conference between the CDC chair, the Executive Officer of the FHAO and the two consultants/facilitators, it was further decided that the independent consultants would interview a cross section of DGs, Board chairs and the CGIAR Secretariat by telephone to capture a range of views on the Centers’ collective action. Particularly for the DGs who could not attend the meeting, this gave an opportunity to air their views. This input was utilised by the consultants to further develop the process.

In Addis Ababa, 2 more preparation days were spent on the development of the workshop process. Firstly, the ‘workshop process steering group’ comprising the organisers and a cross-section of participants, met to design the details of the programme and also, after the first day, to review and adapt the programme. Secondly, a one-day consultation with national agricultural research system (NARS) partners, regional and sub-regional leaders right before the workshop was organised by the CDC Chair to capture their views on how CG centers could better respond to their needs. This input helped to reach clarity on the perspective of the client’s side and proved to be valuable.

Workshop Process

The interactive workshop followed clearly outlined and agreed upon analytical steps building upon each other:

- a. **Where do we come from?** – Presentation and discussion of previous actions and processes towards collective action.
- b. **Why did things not happen previously?** – Analysis of re-current patterns that prevented decisions being implemented.
- c. **What do we want to achieve/fix through collective action?** – Analysis of the vision and purpose for collective action.
- d. **What are the guiding principles to be successful in the way we organise ourselves for collective action?** – Analysis of principles on which to base the action.
- e. **How can we operationalise these principles?** Analysis of mechanisms and rules to be put in place and outline of the process to set up these mechanisms.

The outcomes of this analysis comprise the core of the framework for collective action. In addition, ‘Quick-Win Actions’, promising achievable results in a rather short time span, were identified. The main results of these analyses are now presented.

3. CONSTRAINTS AND BLOCKAGES:

One of the reasons the CDC Retreat was held was the frustration experienced amongst Directors General in their own lack of progress in improving collective decision making and action by the Centers. This was well illustrated by the lack of implementation of many plans developed, since 1999, with African research partners through the Meeting of Minds and related initiatives. From the experience of these, and other exercises, the Retreat analyzed recurrent patterns in the ability of Centers to take collective decisions and to take forward collective actions. The blockages and constraints are now described.

a. CGIAR System factors

One fundamental factor has been the change in the CGIAR and Center missions, from simpler production goals to the more complex, development oriented goals of poverty eradication, food security and environmental protection. This has necessitated a shift from a simple, center priority setting process to a complex, participatory partner-consortium priority setting system. This has also been coincident in SSA with the growing strength and need for an equal say in research planning by the SROs and their NARS and other development partners.

A second reason that problems have arisen recently among the Centers has been the rapid erosion of core support by donor agencies over the 1990s and its only partial replacement by special project and competitive funding mechanisms. These funding pattern changes have necessitated change in the ways and pace with which Centers do business, firstly to survive and, secondly in their growing need to undertake collective actions to achieve demonstrable development impact, not just production.

b. Capacity for executive decision making, accountability and turnover

One of the principal causes of frustration over effective decision making within CDC is the lack of a clear mechanism by which decisions, once made, can be implemented. The CDC instituted a three-quarter majority decision making rule in 2003 and is learning how to use this effectively. When decisions are made, however, there are no mechanisms of accountability to see that the decisions are either first implemented or later followed through. The work of the Committee of Board Chairs (CBC) is only loosely linked to that of the CDC through some shared meeting topics. The roles of the CBC and the CDC in fostering collective Center actions have never been clearly differentiated.

The Centers lack evident peer pressure to ensure that CDC decisions are indeed adhered to and implemented in a timely fashion. CDC can do little to remedy inaction at a particular Center. These problems are heightened by the rapid turnover of the CDC Chair (annual rotation as per the agreed rule), and by the generally short tenures of Center Board chairs and the chair of the CBC. This leads to reduced influence in CDC Executive Committee decision making and poor institutional memory amongst office holders.

On the positive side, the CDC is starting to build its executive support through the use of its Executive Committee and the creation of the Future Harvest Alliance Office as the CDC secretariat.

c. Clarity of decisions, accountability and enforcement mechanisms

A symptom of the problem of lack of accountability is that when clear decisions are made, their implementation may depart from the original intent of the decision, rendering it ineffective in the long run. Problems may arise in implementation through lack of a clear method for conflict resolution within the CDC or among Centers. If the CDC does not reach consensus, there are mechanisms for arbitration but no mechanism for appeal following arbitration. Since even arbitration mechanisms are new, there are not yet clear formal rules within the CDC to settle disputes over arbitration. At this point in a conflict, the independent nature of the Centers tends to take over. Certainly, even if collective action is agreed upon by majority vote, there are no penalties that can be imposed even if there is transgression of the collective action agreement by a Center. As a result, disagreements or failures to perform in collective actions are often left festering and unresolved. Lack of trust between some CDC members and a general unwillingness to raise sensitive issues in the CDC is the inevitable consequence.

d. Territoriality and individuality

The independence of the Centers, the territoriality promoted by their mandates and the tough funding environment of the last few years have been major disincentives for collective action even when this is perceived to be more effective for development than individual Center efforts. This is the result of having no clear value proposition for the CGIAR System to which the Centers can respond and the tendency therefore for the primary allegiance of scientists and managers being only to individual Centers. This primary allegiance means that evident problems are not put on the table and there is a tolerance of territoriality and a general bunker mentality. This issue is magnified by the tendency to seek independent recognition of success for Centers. In reality, incentives and rewards for performance are experienced by individual scientists and managers only at Center level. Moreover, in a continuing climate of budget competition, every Center will fight competitively with its peers for its own survival.

e. Governance mechanisms: oversight, information, and linkages to the Board

One mechanism which should assist inter-Center collective action is pressure from the Center's board if a specific Center is reluctant to participate. However, this mechanism does not function very effectively when:

1. The Board and the Board Chair may be insulated from interaction with the staff who are generally more pro-collaboration with their peers than management; and,
2. The Center's management has an intensive role in board member and chair selection and the Chair and the DG develop an unhealthy mutually over-dependent "Enron" type relationship.

f. Management of multi-center initiatives and the need for transparency

Although multi-Center collective action is seen as a desirable goal by the Centers, many of the multi-Center initiatives run into difficulties in practice. The difficulties

can arise from several different causes and all result in distrust and even rancour. Some of the common difficulties are from:

- *Force majeure* actions, e.g. when a Center reneges on the partnership arrangement because of other priorities or budget shortfalls;
- Current reward systems being entirely Center-based. This can lead to:
 - short term pressure on the budget holders from within the project lead Center to allocate a disproportionate share of the budget to the lead Center or Centers. This may occur even if the budget holders and Centers appreciate that it causes long term negative consequences;
 - Inequitable management fees or at least an inequitable distribution of such funds from the project leaders;
- Low levels of management ability and experience of scientist budget holders who have been pressed into such positions by the recent urgency of obtaining special project funding.
- Lack of transparency so that the budget of the project proposal is not shared with other contributing Centers prior to submission to the donor agency.

g. Under resourcing and insufficient planning

After plans and strategies are formed, a chronic problem is that the resources for collective action are often underestimated, carrying as they do extra transaction costs. Frequently, insufficient budget and other resources are provided for the add-ons to Center and partner work, and the collective action is effectively unfunded. With respect to CDC intentions that the Centers do more work collectively, Centers often do not appreciate the major additional work needed to put this intention into practice. The CDC itself has performed no in-depth analyses of the implementation mechanisms, learning costs and how to benefit from experience. At the same time as being unprepared for, and under-invested in, the changes needed, the ‘complexity index’ of the working environment has increased considerably and processes haven't kept pace.

In view of the above blockages and constraints to collective action, the Retreat considered that change in the ways of doing business in the CDC and between centers is therefore timely and inevitable. An important factor in the above analysis is to understand the benefits as well as the constraints to collective action. The next section gives the results of the Retreat's considerations on purpose and benefits of collaboration.

4. TOWARDS A SHARED VISION: THE PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF MORE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH AMONG THE CENTERS OF THE FUTURE HARVEST ALLIANCE

The Future Harvest Centers of the CG System are embarking on a deliberate effort to increase collaboration with each other to better address the CGIAR mission. It is increasingly important that the Centers combine their expertise and capacities to increase their effectiveness in reaching the collective objectives. The Centers recognize that in order to achieve better efficiencies and effectiveness, they need to expand their existing collaboration in programming (presently exemplified by the

Challenge Programs, System-wide and ecoregional programs and many bilateral projects), as well as building significantly on existing approaches to shared facilities and management services (presently 5 major collective services shared by all Centers, 2 shared by some Centers and a host of bilateral shared appointments and arrangements). Collective action is not a goal in itself, but a means for improved effectiveness and efficiency

The elements of a shared vision of the benefits for the CGIAR mission is beginning to emerge. The draft Guiding Principles given below are also contributing to bold changes in how the Centers operate – changes that will support the Centers collective work in a manner that adds value to the current Centers work and that is highly complementary to other System support activities, especially those already in the System Office.

The Centers are convinced that there will be major benefits to those they serve, to the CG System as a whole, and to individual centers through greater collaborative action. At the same time, they recognize that not all of the current activities of Centers will be subject to collaboration; a great deal of individual work should and will continue.

The Retreat concluded that, through collective action as the Future Harvest Alliance, the Centers will develop:

- More multi-faceted knowledge together with partners
- More focused collective programs around common goals between NARs, SROs etc and the Future Harvest Centers
- More strategic and efficient deployment of collective Future Harvest Center resources to meet the articulated demands of partners
- An increased ability to respond appropriately and flexibly to emerging opportunities and demands that further the achievement of our mission
- More automatic dissemination and application of Global Public Goods developed in one center
- Easier access to the knowledge of Centers through common information platforms

Within the CG system, the Centers will, through collective action:

- Bring more disciplines and more lines of thoughts together to enhance opportunity for innovations and promote new ways of looking at old concepts
- Support the cross fertilization of ideas
- Enhance their ability to speak with one authoritative voice on global issues such as desertification, water basin management, integrated pest management etc
- Achieve further cost efficiencies in key areas of corporate services, building on the existing success of shared contracts and systems already in operation (e.g. shared salary, pension and benefits scheme; internal audit system; the Gender and Diversity program etc)
- Reduce the tensions and inefficiencies within the system that divert resources from the collective goals

At the specific level of the Centers, they will:

- Enhance their ability to attract additional resources to tackle complex development issues

- Increase the visibility and reputation of the Future Harvest Alliance Centers to impact on critical policy issues
- Develop faster learning, based on the richness of diverse expertise and approaches across the centers
- Achieve further cost efficiencies in key areas of corporate services, (building on the existing success of shared contracts and systems already in operation)
- Improve career opportunities for staff to attract and retain the skills we need to achieve the System goals
- Overcome unproductive rivalries by establishing genuine and transparent collaborative mechanisms and practices between Centers
- Underpin the drive for collective action by establishing and enforcing Alliance codes of conduct

One of the benefits of increasing the ways in which the Centers collaborate is that further collaboration becomes easier. As habits and rules evolve, more opportunities for sharing knowledge, expertise and costs emerge. Thus, the logic of the Centers' collective action will be defined in the context of the institutional and investment environment in which the Centers operate. This includes the complex global research system -which differs by center- with many actors, and the diversity of investors objectives.

5. CRITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

To capture the opportunities and address the problems, the following key recommendations for changing the mandate and functioning of existing inter Center mechanisms will be pursued:

Recommendation 1: Formal establishment of the Future Harvest Alliance built on the platform of existing collaboration in managerial, administrative, policy and programmatic work.

Recommendation 2: The Center Directors Committee (CDC) will become a new Alliance Executive to strengthen the strategic management.

Recommendation 3: The Committee of Board Chairs (CBC) will be asked to constitute itself into the Alliance Board with major oversight on Center contributions to system wide issues and Center compliance with these.

Issues and implications

The Retreat gave considerable time to discussing different options for the governance of the Alliance. To establish the Alliance, the Future Harvest Centers would need to draft and agree a formal charter or similar instrument. Each Center Board that wished to join the Alliance and undertake to abide by its charter and principles would need to endorse the agreement. The instrument that establishes the Alliance would need to incorporate the roles, responsibilities and membership of the Alliance Executive and the Alliance Board, and clarify the relationship of each to the other.

The responsibilities of the Alliance Board would include that of final adjudication in disputes between Centers. In instances when discharging this and other special

responsibilities, the Alliance Board may need to incorporate several independent members of exceptional international standing to guard against parochial interests.

Some of the essential and most difficult functions of the Alliance Board are in Recommendation 5 below.

The Chairs of the Alliance Board and the Alliance Executive will represent the Alliance and the Centers on the Executive Council of the CGIAR.

Recommendation 4: To enable the Centers to make their vision of collective action a reality, a robust set of Guiding Principles, to which all are committed, should be agreed.

Recommendation 5: Alliance mechanisms and processes will be adopted to create fair and independent means of mediation and arbitration to resolve conflicts among peers.

Recommendation 6: Greater use will be made of contract mechanisms to add clarity, transparency and enforceability to existing and future collaborative arrangements.

Issues and implications

The recommended set of Guiding Principles are given in detail in the next section, along with the implications for operationalizing them.

The Retreat recognized that the Centers operate in a competitive environment where partners and investors are part of the decision process related to priorities and therefore an essential feature of an Alliance among Centers would be a capacity to resolve conflicts among member Centers. As indicated in section 3 (Constraints and Blockages), factors such as competition among Centers and lack of rewards for collaboration can lead to potential conflicts among partners. The predominant current reaction is to try to ignore the friction, thus leaving it to become more serious. The preferred path for addressing conflict would be its early identification and effective resolution through the Executive and the Alliance Board. The Retreat felt that the Alliance Board would need to co-opt independent members for the judicial resolution of the more serious matters.

With respect to Recommendation 6, several of the Guiding Principles address the circumstances under which collective actions will be embarked upon, managed and deemed to have achieved their agreed objectives. Collective action is appropriate for many well-defined issues, but not for all Center research and outreach activities.

Recommendation 7: The Alliance Board and its Executive will be supported by a secretariat office of suitable capacity. The secretariat office will add complementary capacity to the System Office of the CGIAR and will support more frequent, coordinated Alliance interactions with the CGIAR Chair and Director.

Issues and implications

The work of the Executive and the Alliance Board will need to be supported with a service-oriented secretariat that satisfies the criteria of being service oriented, efficient

and cost effective and whose capacity value adds to multi-center activities to serve Center and System needs. Since the CGIAR is a complex System embodying, among other, investor and delivery components together, one central unit cannot provide all the collective support without conflicts of interest. This was part of the logic behind creating the virtual System Office. Within the System Office, however, the Centers current support for their collective work is very light – consisting of two part time personnel of the Future Harvest Alliance Office and a number of shared service unit heads for specific functions. This thin level of support for the collective actions, e.g. the decision-making and implementing power of CDC and CBC, is one cause of current frustrations.

Recommendation 8: The Center Deputy Directors Committee will map the standards and practices currently involved in Centers work, and with the direction of the Alliance Executive (ex CDC) as to priorities, create new system-wide working methods.

Issues and implications

The Future Harvest Alliance will be committed to an ongoing program of creating efficiencies in working together. The independent Centers have created many different systems and practices, often at the expense of not then being able to harmonize and share them. For example, compensation policies, the formats of annual report and research work plans exist in many different forms in the Centers. The flexibility and the freedom this has allowed is welcomed by the Centers but it has also led to significant challenges in collaboration and putting together synoptic reports across Centers.

Another area where experience should be tapped to draw out lessons learned and create a platform for faster cross-Center learning is in the existing collaborative programs. To capture this, the Alliance Executive could convene (or endorse) a learning workshop to bring together the coordinators and chairs (i.e. the leaders) in the SW-EP/CPs to learn from our past/existing platforms as a way to go forward.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES, ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

The Retreat considered that a sound set of guiding principles for the collective action of the Centers is an essential prerequisite for such action. As a starting point, the Retreat used the earlier set drafted during the 2000 CDC/CBC proposal and others from the corporate sector and developed the set below over several intense working sessions. The Guiding Principles are for the work of the Centers within the proposed Future Harvest Alliance.

Each Principle raises fundamental issues and changes to the current way of doing business and these have also been examined in a preliminary way. Based on the Guiding Principles, and the preliminary analysis of their implications, a first draft set of implementing mechanisms has been developed and these are laid out in a preliminary matrix in Annex c, along with suggestions for performance indicators and next steps. As the Retreat recommendations are followed up, further development of the implications and implementing mechanisms of these recommended Guiding Principles will have to ensue.

Guiding Principle 1: Our allegiance is first to the poor. Institutionally, our allegiance is to the Future Harvest Alliance as well as to the Centers.

Issues and Challenges

This principle will invoke a major change in the loyalty mindset of all Center employees. It will require considerable efforts from Boards and senior management to ensure the re-focusing of allegiance and priority commitment to the change. There will need to be overt changes in corporate identity to facilitate this process. Normal ways of doing business will have to change but efforts will need to be made while doing this to avoid the introduction of unwieldy and constraining layers of bureaucracy. Central capacity will support and facilitate the Alliance work and hence help bring substance to it. Moreover, the new way of doing business must be flexible and increasingly entrepreneurial.

Guiding Principle 2: Centers will abide by formal decisions of the Future Harvest Alliance and the Alliance will be given the authority, by the Centers, to resolve issues that arise between Centers and which are perceived to negatively affect the reputation of the Alliance.

Issues and Challenges

Developing a new culture is now mandatory in which formal decisions made by the Alliance Executive are either readily accepted or if not, then a sufficiently responsive and agile appeals process and sanction procedure is called into action to prevent disagreements undermining overall Alliance Executive mutual trust and confidence.

Guiding Principle 3: The Centers of the Future Harvest Alliance will ensure transparency through open communication among themselves and with partners and stakeholders.

Issues and Challenges

If inter-Center collaboration is to flourish, then transparency and mutual trust are essential prerequisites for good business. Transparency will require open communication of relevant matters for the collaboration. The roles, responsibilities and resources needed for collaboration will have to be defined at the early stages of negotiation and any conflicts of interest will need to be brought out. Difficulties should be resolved in all stages of working together, from the early concept note through to potential project proposal submission stages.

Guiding Principle 4: Each participating Center is accountable to the collective action governing mechanism and the collective action governing mechanism is accountable to the stakeholders

Issues and Challenges

In collective action, it will be vital to ensure that it is clear about who is holding whom accountable and for what actions. In addition, the Alliance will decide how this will be decided and how resulting conflicts may be best resolved. If delivery failures occur in collective actions, then a clear code of sanctions and an agreed means for applying this is required. Mechanisms to ensure the tracking, harmonizing

and archiving of information on delivery (quality, quantity and timeliness) against agreed outputs (monitoring costs and responsibilities) will need to be clearly articulated for each collaborative effort.

Guiding Principle 5: Collective Actions shall be based on the principle of partnership among equals (internal and external), open consultation and participation

Issues and Challenges

If action is called for to address a problem, then criteria need to be made explicit to help decide whether individual or collective action will likely be more effective. If collective action is proposed, then, to be successful and sustainable, the Alliance will need a means to determine those who will be the operating partners and those who will not be required to participate. Additionally, if the principle of equal partnership is to be adhered to, the Alliance will need to recognize and accommodate differences in the capacities and resources of partners.

Guiding Principle 6: Collective action implies no hierarchy of Centers and mutual respect among Centers. Except under clearly defined circumstances, no Center will make an automatic assumption of leadership for an action. Centers do not assume line responsibility for other Center's staff. No Center will be permitted to free ride on other Centers.

Issues and Challenges

These sensitive issues require that there be a transparent (to all Centers) and logical mechanism by which leadership authority is assigned by the Alliance Executive or collaborating Center consortium members. There can be no formal obligation to participate if a Center is initially unwilling and there can be no bona fide reason assumed for Centers to be members of any collaboration if their contribution is either token or deemed to be superfluous. A mechanism of appeal and adjudication in such cases will need to be developed by the Alliance Executive.

Guiding Principle 7: Priority setting should be based on open, transparent practices, including stakeholder consultation including participating Centers, research and development partners and investors.

Issues and Challenges

The old concept of top down priority setting is not appropriate to the complex challenges the CGIAR mission addresses. It makes pragmatic sense that the Future Harvest Alliance will have to conduct and engage in many different priority setting processes and these must be cost effective, efficient and timely. Moreover, a pragmatic approach calls for a clear separation of consultation from decision making which is evident to all parties. In addition, beyond the Centers' influence, it is vital for partner research investors and managers to transparently discuss their preferences with respect to the programs and activities they intend to fund. Effective priority setting calls first and foremost for ensuring that "buyers" and "sellers" are well-informed.

Guiding Principle 8: The problem to be addressed or the opportunity to be sought through collective action takes priority i.e. the best possible team and/or mechanism should be assembled from center resources, beyond history and mandate (Boundary Principle).

Issues and Challenges

Such an approach requires a mechanism for who decides what team is best to tackle the problem and how to manage the opportunity costs. The pitfalls of collective actions (incentives, group size, free riding) will always be considered, when we define an area for collective action. This mechanism will have to take into account the need for subsidiarity in decision making to ensure that team building is essentially pragmatic and occurs at the lowest possible level in the System. Nevertheless, the Centers need to have new courage to be flexible and where necessary to look beyond their history and mandates and to proffer their demonstrable explicit competencies instead. This should ensure a needed measure of flexibility and a capacity to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances evident in today's world. However, the process will require immediate mentorship by the CDC and other senior actors if it is to be seen to be active immediately.

Guiding Principle 9: For each collective action problem to be solved or opportunity to be captured, clear specifications and reachable objectives will be identified.

Issues and Challenges

This principle insists that proposal development, resource budgeting and accounting be strictly realistic and avoid the need for hidden subsidies. It implies that each collaborative action is strictly time-bound and that there is an effective, overt performance measurement system in place by all partners.

Guiding Principle 10: Shared standards and practices (for administration and science) will be employed whenever justified to minimize transaction costs and increase efficiencies and increase transparency.

Issues and Challenges

Several pertinent issues arise where shared services are proposed which must be addressed before change is considered. These are:

- Ensuring that transaction costs, in the implementation and operational phases, are accurately weighed against medium/long-term and individual/collective benefits. Center collective action is called for if it favorably compares with other types of actions (individual action; teams with partners; administrative rules) in terms of costs/benefit.
- Dealing with asymmetries in cost and benefits.
- Ensuring that real needs are met rigorously by the standard systems developed so that the incentive does not exist to create parallel or duplicate systems.
- Recognizing that development and adoption of standard practices applies also in research practices. Standardization can greatly enhance the capacity for and power of comparative scientific analyses. Such comparative power is at the heart of the science that the Future Harvest Centers practice as international research institutes. However, in considering greater standardization of some

practices, the Retreat also stressed the importance of the key roles of research innovators (and the incentives and research environments which facilitate their productivity) for the success of the CGIAR system's innovation capacity.

The Retreat considers that priority be given to starting immediately the process of harmonization of international staff policies and accounting principles and practices, where appropriate, to facilitate collective action. This should be given more immediate priority in Sub Saharan Africa

7. *QUICK WINS*

Consolidation of Subregional Efforts

The major changes recommended above will benefit the whole CGIAR System but they will take time to implement. The Centers are aware of the challenges they represent and also that immediate actions are also needed while the larger changes are developed. Programmatically, the urgency is in Africa. Therefore, new collective actions will begin immediately with pilot consolidated sub-regional and national efforts in Eastern Africa with ASARECA, followed by other sub-regions. The pilot will align Centers representation, partnerships, programs and operational support at the sub-regional level and nationally. It will be done in a collaboration with ASARECA, FARA, national research systems, civil society, regional, sub-regional bodies and international bodies and investors as appropriate. The 'quick wins' recommended here are based on the suggestions of the work of the CDC Sub Saharan Africa Working Group (see Annex d) and the valuable needs analysis for each level conducted during the CDC-NARS, SROs, FARA Consultation held on 7 July (Annex e).

In addition, a strategy process will be launched in 2005 for developing a coordinated Sub Saharan Africa capacity building plan for national agricultural research and extension system partners, largely implemented at sub-regional organization level in Sub Saharan Africa. Working with the 2 System Task Forces, Centers will seek solutions to the current national level managerial burdens. The following specific recommendations are made.

1. SSA Programmatic Alignment Pilot: The Future Harvest Centers will establish an inter-center task force at senior management level to develop sub-regional or regional medium term plans. A pilot output of this type will be developed for the eastern and central Africa sub-regions in 2005 in time for negotiation and feedback into the annual sub-regional organization planning processes (*Lead agency to be determined by the CDC Executive Committee*).
 - a. This process of concerted action by the Centers will be further facilitated by a request for the establishment of a Centers/SRO and other partner organization facilitation body which will review the proposed MTP, coordinate it with sub-regional priorities, determine gaps and individual agency responsibilities. The revised document will feed into the SRO

- annual planning process (*Initial responsibility – Chair CDC SSA Sub-Committee*).
- b. This process of closer FHA center integrated effort will be assisted if the SROs in SSA and elsewhere accede to a request to place the Centers' task force coordinator (who will be appointed for 3 years) on their advisory boards.
 - c. The FHA will initiate in 2005 a coherent strategy for ICT/KM schemes aimed at SSA.
2. Country Representation: The Centers, through the CDC, will interact with the SROs and NARS to develop better coordination at the country level. Initial action would involve the identification of pilot countries in SSA for meetings at national level in 2005 to bring together the various Ministries responsible for Future Harvest Centers type activities to improve coordination of research and development activities.

Capacity Building:

3. SSA Capacity Building: The CDC will initiate a strategy process in 2005 for developing a coordinated SSA capacity building plan for NARES partners and this will be largely implemented at SRO level in SSA.

8. GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Achieving the quality and scale of the new changes to which CDC are committed is no easy task. They plan to engage in this process in a consultative, professional and well-resourced manner that does not shy away from the complexity of the reforms. The next stage will therefore be to complete this work during the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in October 2004 in Mexico City in establishing a common platform for moving forward. Overall, acceptance of the recommendations will mean that Centers have initiated a major change program among themselves, albeit one with great benefits to the CGIAR System, partners, beneficiaries and their staff. The implications differ for parties at different levels within the Centers and System, as now outlined.

a. For the CGIAR System

The creation of a well functioning Alliance will provide the CGIAR System, of which the Centers are the vital implementing arm, with better Center performance and accountability, greater programmatic alignment with the mission and easier entry to the Centers. The diagram shows the complex System framework within which the Centers operate. With the changes recommended in this Report, the Centers will be able to provide the System with one, highly credible voice on critical global issues.

b. For Centers

i. Directors General

The Alliance and the creation of the Alliance Executive will clarify the Center and collective roles and responsibilities for DG's. It will give greater credit to the work that DG's do on behalf of the Alliance – work that presently goes unrewarded or is

even denigrated as taking away from a DG's attention to their Center. The Alliance and its governance processes will provide more effective decision-making and dispute resolution. All of these benefits are expected to compensate DG's for any loss of Center independence. The Centers will have greater impact and greater access to policy influence at a global scale because of combining their strengths.

ii. Executive, senior management and other Center staff

The creation of the Alliance and standardization of elements of the Centers' operations and conditions will create better career paths for Center management and staff and more open collaboration. Center staff will more readily be able to combine multiple sources of expertise to tackle real-life problems in development. Individual's work will be more readily scaled up and out through collaborative Center efforts. Center staff will gain greater recognition for the work done for the Alliance, as well as that done for the Center.

iii. Center Board

The boards of each Center will need to become more familiar with the workings of the System. The overall Alliance Board will consider how Center boards can be reduced in size to reduce the governance overhead of the System as a whole. Such reductions could occur through consolidations among Center Boards and even of whole Boards if appropriate. More training of board members will be needed, and this training should focus more than at present on the System and the Alliance. To ensure greater continuity on the Alliance Board, tenure rules will need to be changed in Centers.

c. CBC

CBC will be transformed into the Alliance Board and perhaps be augmented for its much greater responsibility and accountability. The Alliance Board role will be much clearer than is the current role of CBC. CBC will be supported by the Future Harvest Alliance professional secretariat to ensure that it has the full capacity to carry out its duty and receives the appropriate level of policy and implementation support. Critical roles of the new Alliance Board will include management of dispute settlement, oversight of Alliance reputation and management of Alliance performance risk.

b. CDC

CDC will be transformed into the Alliance Executive, with greater decision-making power and accountability. New procedures for electing and nominating the Chair and Executive Committee will need to be considered to ensure a degree of accountability and that the Alliance has the best caliber of leadership.

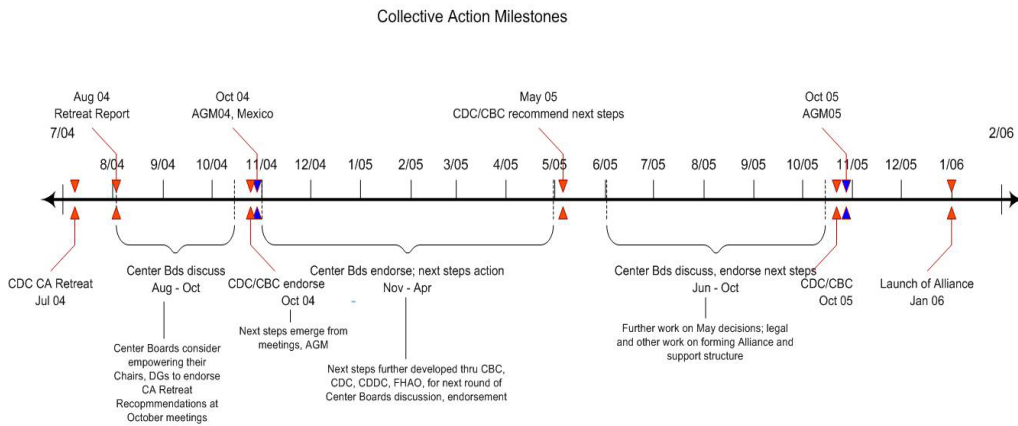
c. Corporate ID

Noting the confusion that already exists in the complex CGIAR System due to the large number of parts of different form and status, including several bearing the words 'Future Harvest' in their names, an early priority will be to develop clear corporate identities for the Alliance, the Alliance Board, the Alliance Executive and the Alliance secretariat.

9. OUTLINE OF NEXT STEPS

Between July and the October 2004 CDC and CBC meetings, the next steps will cover the following:

- Completion of communication products (2 page communication release, this Retreat Report, and a standard PowerPoint presentation for DGs and Boards to use with staff and partners – by end of August
- One on one communication of the main message by Retreat participants to DGs and Board Chairs not present, and to other key parties;
- Clarification of some key concepts and changes to assist discussion and decision making in October
- Possible CDC and CBC teleconferences to discuss the outcomes
- October CDC and CBC joint meeting to make key decisions to permit progression to the next steps of Alliance development and implementation



Annex a: Excerpt from Terms of Reference for Retreat

**CDC RETREAT
FUTURE HARVEST CENTERS: FRAMEWORK FOR COLLECTIVE
ACTION**

DATES: 8, 9 July 2004

VENUE: ILRI campus Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

OBJECTIVES OF THE RETREAT:

The July CDC Retreat is designed to:

- Reach broad agreement among the Future Harvest Centers on the key problems to be fixed and the opportunities to be gained through greater collective action;
- Develop and agree a vision for collective action among the Future Harvest Centers, including the guiding principles on which the action will be based.
- Using the knowledge of the group and Retreat resource persons, and background papers developed for the Retreat, agree on a number of organizational models that are relevant to consider. Develop and analyze the most promising options, taking into account the vision and guiding principles and how the model(s) might apply in the case of Sub Saharan Africa.
- Further develop 1 or 2 promising models, paying particular attention to
 - Terms of reference of the collective action entity
 - Implications for the Centers and for the CGIAR of governance of the collective action entity
 - Investment required for and efficiency of the proposed collective action arrangements
- Develop a consultation and implementation strategy for the preferred model(s)
- Develop a communication strategy to support the next steps for the Future Harvest Centers in achieving their vision for collective action

Annex b: List of participants: CDC Retreat July 8-9, 2004
ILRI, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

No	Name	Center	Position
1	Joachim Voss	CIAT	Director General
2	Wilfred Mwangi	CIMMYT	Principal Scientist, Africa Partnership, CIMMYT-Nairobi
3	Alexander Frederic McCalla	CIMMYT	Board Chair
4	Pamela Anderson	CIP	Director General Designate
5	Adel El-Beltagy	ICARDA	Director General
6	Margaret Catley-Carlson	ICARDA	Board Chair
7	William D. Dar	ICRISAT	Director General
8	Uzo Mokwunye *	ICRISAT and CBC Chair	Board Chair, Chair of Committee of Board Chairs
9	Dyno Keatinge	ICRISAT	Deputy Director General, Research
11	Carlos Seré	ILRI	Director General
12	Bruce Scott	ILRI	Deputy Director General, Partnerships
13	Emile Frison	IPGRI	Director General
14	Frits Penning de Vries	IWMI	Principal Scientist, IWMI Africa Regional Office.
15	Kanayo F. Nwanze	WARDA and CDC Chair	Director General, Chair of Center Directors Committee
16	Shelleemiah Keya	WARDA	Deputy Director General, Research & Development
17	Samuel Bruce Oliver	WARDA	Executive Officer
18	Dennis Garrity	World Agroforestry	Director General
19	Stephen Hall	World Fish	Director General
21	Oumane Badiane	IFPRI	Senior Research Fellow
20	Meryl Williams	FHAO	Executive Officer, Future Harvest Alliance Office
NARS Leaders at 7 th July Consultation			
21	Tsedeke Abate	EARO	Director General
22	Papa Abdoulaye Seck	FARA	Chairman
23	Monty P. Jones	FARA	Executive Secretary
24	Seyfu Katema	ASARECA	Executive Secretary
<i>Facilitators:</i>			
22	Juergen Hagmann		Facilitator
23	Lesley Ellarby		Resource person, organizational change expert

Annex c: Detailed matrix of mechanisms needed to make the guiding principles operational

Mechanism	P	Who	Performance Indicators	Next Steps	By When
A formal charter/agreement (incl operating principles, procedures, eg appeals and grievance, sanctions, incentives etc.)	All	FHA Exec	Agreement signed	First Draft (FHA EO/CDC Chair)	AGM 04
Revised Governance Structure	All	FHA Board	FHA Board and Executive in place and functioning.	First Draft (FHA EO/CDC Chair)	AGM 04
Communication campaign	1,2,6,7	FHA Exec, FHA Marketing Gp	Plan signed off. Progress against plan milestones Degree of recognition of FHA	- 2 Pager - Communication with Key Stakeholders on workshop outcomes - CDC/CBC - Retreat Report	- Mid July -Before AGM 04 mid Aug
HR policy revisions and FHA staff expertise database	1,2,3,4, 7	HR SAS PL, HR Managers	Policy revised and adopted by Center Boards. Staff expertise database established.	Working group to be established (CDC Chair)	Post AGM 04
Harmonized Corporate Identity policies	1	FHA Exec and FHA Marketing Gp	Guidelines identified and agreed Coherent FHA identity apparent.	Working group to be established (CDC Chair)	Post AGM 04
Shared services, practices and standards	7,8	FHA Exec	No of shared services operational	CDDC to identify priority actions to increase use of shared services.	AGM '04
Inter-center and stakeholder communication guidelines	1,2,4,5, 6,9	CDDC, Res. Directors	Fewer complaints	CDDC: draft comm'n guide & procedures for collective action proposal development.	Post AGM '04
Joint planning and budgeting (shared outputs in MTP's)	1,2,4,5, 6,7,8,9	CDDC and CSD/Finance Heads	Regional MTP's Standard costings and hosting agreements etc.	Trial regional MTP for SSA	Mid 05
Harmonization of financial systems	1,3,4,5, 7,8,9	CSD/Finance Heads	Standard accounting and auditing procedures	Working group to be established (CDC Chair)	Post AGM 04
Senior management training (team building open communication etc)	3,5,6,7	FHA Exec	Course(s) held and well attended	Identify appropriate course (FHAO) Course Held	AGM '04 Spring '05
MOA's for project execution and accountability	3,4,5,7, 8,9	Center Management	Exemplar contract prepared	CDDC to prepare exemplar contract	AGM '04
Principles and Guidelines for engagement with external partners	2,3,4,5, 8,9	FHA Exec	Document Completed	Working group to be established (CDC Chair)	Post AGM 04
Joint regional capacity building programs for partners	1,2,3,57 ,8,9	FHA Exec, CDDC	Regional capacity building plans implemented	Formulation of SSA regional capacity building program	May 05

Annex d: Summary Report of the CDC Sub Saharan Africa Working Group with the Recommendations Adopted at the Retreat

There is an urgent need to address the issues of hunger and rural poverty in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). The Future Harvest Centers have been engaged with partner institutions in SSA in a process of dialog and action to better integrate and rationalize their work in relation to the Centers' mandates and the articulated needs of the African institutions engaged in agricultural and natural resource management research and development.

To support this effort the Center Directors' Committee (CDC) created a Working Group on Programmatic and Organizational Alignment in SSA, and to assist the CGIAR Task Forces on Programmatic and Organizational Alignment in SSA. The Working Group was asked to provide a report to the CDC on concrete recommendations for action.

The Center Directors' Working Group analyzed the recent history of the process of dialog and integration of efforts in SSA to draw out some of the key lessons. These were the basis for developing a framework for concrete action by the CDC in collaboration with the Sub Saharan African institutions, at all levels, with whom we are engaged.

This document is a summary of the Working Group report, the final of which is now being prepared. The contents of the full report will include three parts:

- (1) The history of agricultural research consultations in Africa, with problems, lessons learned, and positive developments.
- (2) The roles and target populations of the different components of the systems: NARS, SROs, FARA, NEPAD and the Future Harvest Alliance, and
- (3) Recommendations for action at four scales.

This summary will focus specifically on the key recommendations, which were presented and discussed at the CDC retreat on 8-9 July, 2004.

A key point of departure is the recognition that the Centers are engaged at four scales in relation to SSA, and that clarity in both programmatic alignment and organizational alignment is imperative at each of these scales. These four scales are:

- The global level
- The SSA continental level
- The subregional level, and
- The national level

The Working Group identified issues and needs at each of these levels, and based on the understandings reached in the 'Meeting of Minds' (MOM) process, and subsequent subregional processes, recommends the following approaches to move forward vigorously on all of these fronts, in a coherent and interlinked manner.

Global-Level Recommendations

One of the key aspects of the entire process of creating a shared understanding of the realities, potentials, and definitive action needed in programmatic and organizational

alignment is the sheer complexity of the scope of players at each of these levels, and the interactions among the domains at different scales.

Thus, the Working Group **recommends that:**

1. Programmatic and organizational change be pursued in the context of a shared model of the ecology of this system, with the programmatic and organizational elements and their linkages formally articulated. The basic model implies that:

Scale	Programmatic Alignment	Organizational Alignment
<i>Global</i>		
<i>SSA Continental</i>		
<i>Subregional level</i>		
<i>National level</i>		

Explicit linkages need to be examined both horizontally and vertically.

2. Effective programmatic and organizational integration at the SSA level depends to a great extent upon **a stronger governance mechanism for the Centers’ collective action at the global level**. We recommend a stronger governance mechanism for the Future Harvest Alliance that will facilitate programmatic and organizational alignment in many ways that go beyond SSA, but will be particularly crucial to achieving more effective collective action among the centers and between the Centers and African institutional partners. Fortunately, such mechanisms are emerging as elucidated in the report of the Retreat.

3. More conducive and comprehensive **policies should be created for the hosting of staff of one Center by another Center, and for joint appointments between Centers**, to encourage greater inter-Center programmatic integration.

SSA Continental Level

The Working Group took note of the strong consultative relationship that has evolved between FARA and the Future Harvest Centers, and the progress made on the evolution of the SSA Challenge Program. Nevertheless, we asked: “How can the centers as an alliance interact more coherently with FARA? What mechanisms ought to be put in place to ensure increased coherence with FARA? Likewise, we are asking the same questions regarding how the centers as an alliance can interact more coherently and effectively with the NEPAD processes?”

We **recommend** that:

1. To further improve consultation and integration by having **the Chair of the CDC Sub Committee on SSA continue to serve as the focal point for the Future Harvest Alliance to FARA**; and that this person also serve as member of the FARA Board.

2. **Linkages between Future Harvest Alliance and NEPAD** be coordinated by Chair of CDC Sub Committee on SSA.

Subregional Level

At the subregional level (West & Central Africa, Eastern & Central Africa, and Southern Africa) we noted that the Subregional Organizations (viz CORAF, ASARECA, and SADC-FANR) have made considerable strides in laying out comprehensive strategic plans for their subregions. They have also created a number of subregional networks to create synergies in implementing these strategies.

We **recommend** that:

1. An **Advisory/Steering Committee** representing the Future Harvest Alliance and the SRO be created in each region. The purpose of this body would be to provide a formal bridge for consultation and coordination between the Alliance and the SRO. Its composition would include representatives from the SRO, the NARS, the Centers and other players. The representation from the Alliance would be determined by the Subregional Task Force. An independent chair would be appointed.
2. The Future Harvest Alliance develops suitable coordinating mechanisms for its engagement in the above Advisory/Steering Committees, such as through **Subregional Task Forces of FH Centers** with suitable Terms of Reference, chair and membership selection processes.
3. The Alliance articulates **an integrated medium term plan for each subregion** in a manner that effectively supports the subregional strategies. This could be done for one subregion during 2004-05 as a pilot exercise, and then expanded to all SROs in 2005-06.
4. The Future Harvest Alliance have a **representative on each of the boards of the SROs**. This would further strengthen consultation and integration at the subregional level. This person would be the Future Harvest Alliance Subregional Task Force leader, who would serve on a three-year appointment.
5. The Centers carefully analyze and move to **rationalize their administrative support mechanisms** at the subregional level to gain needed efficiencies.
6. One element that needs to be brought into the picture is that there are a number of centers working in domains of natural resource management that may not be explicitly covered by the scope of the subregional organizations. These centers include those working on forestry, water, fish, and policy research. **Mechanisms are needed for bringing these aspects into the model at the subregional and national levels.**

National Level

Many countries host staff and offices of several Centers, creating the perceptions of a proliferation of Center programs and sites. At the CDC-NARS/SROs/FARA consultation on 7 July, attendees specified clearly the national level mutual needs of NARS and Centers (see following **Annex e** for full details). Heeding this needs analysis, we **recommend** that the Future Harvest Alliance:

1. Undertake a country level pilot project, preferably in a country such as Kenya in East and Central Africa to analyze how the needs of NARS and Centers can be met in practice. The pilot would look into patterns of Centers' partnerships, how each Center plans with its partners, is represented nationally, appoints staff and establishes compensation packages, delivers programs and services and disseminates its results. The pilot would then develop improved mechanisms for coordination and delivery, based on the analyses.

In closing, the Working Group senses that the Alliance is on the verge of implementing an entire series of changes in programmatic and organizational alignment that are much more effective than in the past. These then would benefit all partners and provide the platform for achieving the aspirations of creating a much more effective agriculture research in Africa, and help enable Africa to truly achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Annex e: DRAFT Representatives' Summary: CDC/NARS, SROS, FARA CONSULTATION, 7 July, 2004, Ethiopia Agricultural Research Organization, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Co-Chairs: Tsedeke Abate, DG EARO, Kanayo F. Nwanze, CDC Chair

- On behalf of all participants at the Consultation, we are pleased to present a joint summary of the rich discussions held on 7 July 2004.
- The Consultation reviewed the joint program and planning exercises between the Future Harvest Centers and the national agricultural research systems of Sub Saharan Africa (NARS), sub-regional organizations (SROs) and regional organizations (ROs, especially the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa – FARA) since 1999. Among these is the Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Program proposal which has been a very useful practical device for implementing a part of the jointly-derived priorities, namely that for integrated natural resource management to be carried out at a carefully selected set of pilot sites.
- Despite some positive progress and many good intentions, however, all of us feel that more progress could have been made. We do note, however, that the last 6 years was a period of considerable institution building and change, including the creation of FARA, substantial shifts in the relative strengths of several of the sub-regional bodies and CGIAR reforms.
- The Consultation identified our mutual needs, focusing first on the analysis of the different levels of interaction, each of which is reported below, and second on discussions of a set of key issues.

PART I: MUTUAL NEEDS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION

1. NARS

- NARS want collaboration rather than competition for resources from CG Centers. Collaboration in resource mobilization would be greatly appreciated. Resulting from collaborative activities, NARS want scientific recognition in the form of fair shares of any intellectual property rights, publications and other public goods. All products produced collaboratively should be recognized appropriately. The dissemination process should go right through to the NARS level and with NARS, but we all recognize that there are more than two categories of parties.
- CG should define its role and concentrate on issues where it has a comparative advantage and reduce duplication. In particular, the CG Centers should cut down overloading NARS such as when several centers approach the same NARS.
- NARS recognize that there may be implementation disagreements on priorities between the different parties due to their own requirements. All parties need a better understanding of the target populations for research products, e.g. commercial agriculture versus combating poverty and hunger.

- Priority setting and planning cycles are currently out of synchronization and they need to be brought together across different country sectors, often from different ministries.
 - NARS want assistance in institutional support and capacity building. Different levels of support will be needed for different NARS - material, science (value added).
 - With respect to what Centers expect from NARS, the Centers expressed their concerns that the capacity of some NARS with which they had worked is actually degrading. This showed the great need for continued capacity building.
- 2. SROs**
- SROs require collaboration mechanisms for cooperation with Future Harvest Centers on strategic issues and mechanisms for jointly defining priorities, now and for the medium term. The SROs noted that there was now no joint resource mobilization, joint coordination with NARS and FARA and no implementation mechanism for projects.
 - One mechanism for joint work could be through greater cross-postings of representatives of CG Centers and SROs on each others Boards, as currently happens with FARA. In considering how such representation could be implemented, one suggestion is to accord the SRO representatives at least Board observer status.
- 3. FARA**
- FARA considers that it should serve as the main CG entry point for continental level activities. Thus, the CG should recognize FARA as the facilitating/coordinating body for Africa. FARA and NEPAD have an agreement for FARA to be NEPAD's technical arm.
- 4. ALL LEVELS**
- We recognize that the collaborating parties should be involved from the initial phase of the development of project proposals and in the joint identification of problems, interventions and solutions. This form of involvement is important in building the trust necessary for strong collaborative relationships.
 - The parties will use FARA plenary meetings and the CG AGM as natural events around which to schedule collaborative meetings and events.
 - The research agenda for CGIAR and African partners is still too long and the list needs further prioritization. The SROs could be a particularly important level of organization to help to identify countries with greatest needs.
 - Language barriers can still be obstacles to good communication.
 - Strong support was expressed for joint agricultural R&D advocacy at all levels.
 - Boards of all agencies should be opened more to users at the national level, SRO level, FARA, etc. NGOs, foundations. It was necessary to bring various development forces to bear on the research.

PART II: DISCUSSION ON KEY ISSUES

FARA and SROs views on the structure of CG Centers in Africa: The discussion clarified that much has happened since 2000 and the NARS representatives no longer subscribed to the recommendation to have only 2 Centers in Africa. The Centers are seen to have evolved in the last 5 years since the recommendation was made. The NARS, SROs and FARA very much appreciate the importance of the global centers such as ILRI, as well as the ecoregional centers. Our work should be program driven. All participants hoped that the CGIAR SSA TFs will appreciate the new relationships and needs for Africa, as their was some concern that the TFs were starting off from an earlier view of structural alignment needs. The TFs would soon be consulting NARS, Centers.

Recommended Joint Action: FARA, SROs, NARS and CDC to make this current position known to the CGIAR SSA Task Forces.

Institutional support: The NARS are undergoing large changes and are thus required to attend to several agendas at once. The Consultation identified that the CG could help NARS develop into their new roles given the CG experience in managing complex operations. Through collaborative projects, training on the job, material, technical support, helping persuade agencies such as the World Bank to support NARS capacity and in providing professional advice, the CG could help NARS build up IT facilities, build laboratories, improve their governance and accountability. Thus, although CG Centers are not donors, they have many avenues to help with institutional support. Joint research programs will often need to be aware of the institutional support needed by NARS and ensure that these are also covered. Without such support, NARS will often not be able to take part adequately in projects.

Project pass thru money from the CG Centers can be very important to many NARS. These funds can go a long way for travel, professional development, etc. and thus help build the national institutions.

Recommended Joint Action: NARS and Future Harvest Centers to factor appropriate institutional support into project plans.

SRO-CG Relationships: The ASARECA commodity network system is a good evolving model. The CG Centers are on the ASARECA oversight committee for this.

Recommended Joint Action: Given the productive and maturing relationship in the Eastern and Central Africa sub-region, the CDC should be requested to use this sub-region to pilot programmatic and structural/organizational alignments work.

Reversing the SSA Agricultural Research ‘Brain Drain’: Although the capacity of NARS researchers should be increasing in SSA, the Consultation recognized that many of those who have benefited from training have left their countries and the region, draining the national capacity. Many PhD researchers don't stay after

graduating. Due to this ‘brain drain’, we need to simultaneously continue the capacity building programs and focus on how to retain the trained people. At national, regional and international levels, there are strong markets for ‘minds’. The CG must recognize that many national researchers do not even earn enough salary to support their families. Researchers are difficult to retain nationally if they are attractive to the market.

We discussed options to stop the brain drain, such as:

- Bonding the researchers after they get their PhDs,
- Retaining them in the regions thru post doctoral fellowships in the CG Centers;
- Examine the option of instituting some form of transfer fee for the receiving organization to compensate the home institute;
- Joint appointments with CG Centers to achieve a win-win;
- Changing national retirement policies which, with a few notable exceptions, mean huge losses of very productive scientists in their mid-fifties;
- Incentives for scientists who secure projects;
- Tax incentives, and
- Sabbatical leave.

The meeting also recognized that most Africans also wanted to help Africa and their countries, even if they worked outside.

Recommended Joint Action: The CDC and FARA address the issues of reversing the African agricultural research ‘brain drain’ as a priority. Pilot countries and sub-regions could be chosen to start with.

Improving support for agricultural research through advocacy and promoting impacts: The Consultation recognized that ministers and the public needed the results of compelling impact assessments and indicators of performance of research institutes to be convinced of the value of agricultural research and to show that past funds have been spent responsibly. The Future Harvest Centers are urged to undertake more of these in collaboration with NARS partners, in order to build NARS capacity for the assessments and to produce more evidence of returns on research investment. Local examples are critical to help get the message across. The Consultation recognized that it is more difficult to show impact in subsistence agriculture systems. Program assessment and evaluation should be institutionalized so that all research is assessed as a matter of course.

The combined efforts of African partners and the CGIAR are needed to stress the importance of research for development.

Recommended Joint Action: FARA, the SROs and CDC develop a joint project on advocacy for African agricultural research.

Entry points for the CGIAR: The main port of entry of CG for its research would be the NARS. At the subregional level, the SROs and at continental level, FARA

provide valuable planning and priority setting partners. NARS have their national priorities and CG centers can assist each country on some of its priorities at one level. At another level, SROs seek the common agenda and priorities among many NARS and so they represent an entry point to a bundled set of priorities, e.g., ASARECA serves 10 countries, CORAF 21 countries. Continental level priorities are also entry points and can provide insight into goods shared by even more countries. SROs, FARA, etc, however would need to find how to incorporate fisheries, forestry and water interests. Investors and development partners such as FAO and IFAD also have to take part in this debate, not just the SROs and the CGIAR.

Joint planning and management needs to work at what ever level it occurs and it needs to be well documented. Memoranda of Understanding and other reference documents are valuable. These could be used to good effect to standardize the contracts between the CG and SROs, NARS and FARA.

Recommended Joint Action: The CDC, FARA and the SROs clarify among themselves the most suitable entry points according to the program of work involved.

Location of CG researchers: The NARS, SRO and FARA representatives stressed the need for CGIAR researchers to be posted to programs as well as at the Centers sites and headquarters. They need to be more on the ground to produce impact and to be kept abreast of needs.

Recommended Joint Action: The CDC convey this view back to all Centers for their consideration when placing staff in the region.

Pace of strategic change: We recognize that the CGIAR, NARS and others still change too slowly. We all need to follow the same pace as the realities of change. Jointly, we should be able to set up an alert system to signal the need for change.

Recommended Joint Action: CDC, FARA and SROs address this issue at their next meeting.