

## Briefing Note on CGIAR External Reviews

### QQRs, EPRs and EMRs, EPMRs

1. The CGIAR has a strong tradition of reviewing the activities it supports through panels of external experts. A system of quinquennial reviews (QQR) of centers was started in 1975, with the first review of IRRI, organized by TAC. In addition to external panelists, the staff of the TAC Secretariat and the CGIAR Secretariat participated in these reviews. The modality of the reviews was modified in 1983, based on the recommendations of the Second System Review, with the addition of a separate external management review (EMR) organized by the CGIAR Secretariat, conducted concurrently with the “external program review” (EPR) (i.e., the re-named QQR). The CGIAR received and discussed the reports of EPR and EMR panels simultaneously.

2. The EPRs and EMRs were merged into a single evaluation (called external program and management review, EPMR) in 1991, after each center had gone through at least one EMR. The EPMRs are the joint responsibility of TAC and the CGIAR Secretariat, with the two secretariats providing the necessary backstopping in the organization and conduct of the review. The EPMRs assess a center’s performance in four broad areas: (a) mission, strategy and priorities; (b) quality and relevance of the science undertaken; (c) effectiveness and efficiency of governance and management; and (d) accomplishments and impact of the center’s research and related activities. To the extent possible, they use as reference and rely on the findings of other external reviews commissioned by the center’s board or management (the so-called “center-commissioned external reviews—CCERs).

### The CGIAR Reform Program

3. Responsibility for CGIAR evaluations was examined as part of the Reform Program initiated in 2001. As part of the Reform Program, the CGIAR decided to establish an Executive Council (ExCo) and delegated to it “functions necessary for carrying out the regular business of the Group, as specified in Attachment 1...”<sup>1</sup> (referring to one of five attachments appended to the Integrated Proposal prepared by the Interim Executive Council—the document containing the key reform proposals discussed by the CGIAR at AGM2001.) These functions include, among others, evaluation and monitoring activities carried out on behalf of the CGIAR.

4. Table 1, below (reproduced from Attachment 1<sup>2</sup>) summarizes the CGIAR-agreed responsibilities for “functions necessary for carrying out the regular business of the CGIAR.” Accordingly, in the area of evaluation, the Executive Council (ExCo) is responsible for providing oversight of evaluation activities on behalf of the Group, with the Science Council responsible for commissioning evaluations of

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<sup>1</sup> CGIAR AGM2001 Summary Record of Proceedings and Decisions. The quote is from Decision 1, which concerns the authority of the Executive Council.

<sup>2</sup>The original attachments to the “Integrated Proposal” were closely scrutinized, and discussed at length at AGM01. The Chairman assured the meeting that the attachments would be modified to reflect fully the consensus views expressed at the meeting. The revised attachments (dated January 23, 2002) were endorsed by ExCo. They were subsequently posted at the CGIAR web site.

a programmatic nature and the System Office commissioning evaluations of governance and management.

### Matrix of Responsibilities

Product	Timing	Stakeholders	CGIAR	Executive Council	Science Council	System Office	Centers and Challenge Programs
<b>Planning Context</b>	5 Years	Collaborate	Approval	Oversight	Prepare	Facilitate	Collaborate
<b>Planning Guidance</b>	3 - 5 years	Collaborate	Approval	Oversight	Collaborate	Prepare	Collaborate
<b>Medium Term Plans</b>	Rolling						
<b>i) Periodic</b>	3 Years	Collaborate	Approval	Oversight		Consolidate	Prepare
<b>ii) Project Portfolio</b>	as required	Collaborate		Approval	Review of Science	Consolidate	Prepare
<b>Annual Operating Plan</b>						Consolidate	Prepare and Approve
<b>Annual Financing Plan</b>	October		Approval	Oversight		Consolidate	Prepare
<b>Evaluation &amp; Impact Assessment</b>	Periodic	Collaborate	Decision	Oversight, follow-up	Commission (programmatic)	Commission (management)	Collaborate
<b>Annual Ex-post Report</b>	April			Oversight		Consolidate	Prepare

### The ICRISAT External Reviews

5. The Reform Program advocated a shift in the focus of the Science Council more towards quality and relevance of science, and away from financial (resource allocation) and management concerns. The responsibilities matrix reflects the intended shift. One outcome has been to bring the EPMRs jointly commissioned by TAC and the CGIAR Secretariat to an end, with the completion of the IPGRI EPMR. The iSC Chair briefed ExCo of this change at the second ExCo meeting (London, April 2002) and announced that for the next center to be reviewed (ICRISAT) the iSC was commissioning an external program review (EPR) and had identified the chair of the panel that would conduct the review. Subsequently and in view of its responsibilities in the evaluation area, the CGIAR Secretariat commissioned an external management review, using a process similar to that of the EPR, which was thoroughly discussed with and agreed to by ICRISAT's Board and management.

6. The ICRISAT reviews will provide a pilot test of conducting CGIAR evaluations of centers through separate but linked external program and external management reviews. The EMR would help provide a more focussed attention to governance and management issues than in the EPMR format. The pilot would be evaluated at the end of the ICRISAT reviews to determine if a similar approach should be used in other center reviews.

7. During this period, the Science Council-commissioned program reviews and the System Office-commissioned management reviews will continue to be guided by the existing, CGIAR-approved terms of reference (TOR) for external program and management review (EPMR). The majority of the topics included in the TOR (topics “a”, “b”, and “d”, of the four topics noted in Para. 2, above) would be covered by the External Program Review. The External Management Review(EMR) would be directed towards topic “c” which deals with the effectiveness and efficiency of management. The two panels would work closely in addressing issues that overlap programs and management (such as questions of research organization and management.) The two panels would coordinate their evaluations and integrate their outputs. There would be a single discussion of the panels’ report(s) by the CGIAR.

### **Performance Measurement Working Group**

8. In related developments, both the Working Group on the Establishment of the Science Council (WGSC, August 2002) and by the CGIAR Executive Council (ExCo, Sept. 2002) stressed the need for taking a fresh look at performance measurement issues in the CGIAR. The CDC also noted that the development of measures of the Center performance is also of great interest to the DGs.

9. The CGIAR Working Group on the Science Council urged “much wider use of self-assessment in reviewing and enhancing the quality of science in the CG System” and suggested consideration of a performance assessment framework based on quantitative indicators of outputs and impact.

10. ExCo discussed the issue both as part of the consideration of the WGSC Report and in connection with the discussion of the CIP EPMR. The need for the CGIAR to “move towards systematic and periodic measurement of the centers, possibly through a self-assessment process” was raised. (p. 11, Summary Record of ExCo3) At ExCo3 the Council concluded, among others, that “the System Office should bring recommendations to ExCo on matters of systemwide significance emanating from the CIP review and its discussion at ExCo (e.g., ... systematic and periodic measurement of performance.” (ibid) Consequently, the following item was included in ExCo’s business agenda:

“Development of a performance measurement system that can be implemented across the System, benefiting from the experiences of other institutions using such systems. The new performance measurement system should include indicators of not just quality of science, but also of outputs and impact, as well as finance and governance. The SO, SC, ExCo/FC and PC should play a role in developing such a system.” (p. 13, Summary Record of ExCo3)

### **Reforming the CGIAR’s Evaluation Process**

11. The external center reviews are the main mechanism through which the System gathers information on results (i.e., center outputs, outcomes and impact) as well as on efficiency and quality. But much of this evaluative information is qualitative and does not permit comparison across centers or

groups of centers, or against benchmarks. Also, this information is gathered at five-yearly intervals and quickly becomes outdated with rapid changes taking place at the centers. There has been no attempt to date to measure center performance along harmonized “performance scales”, in part because of the many complex measurement issues involved. Now, the advances made by other institutions (both public and private) in developing quantitative performance measurement systems opens new possibilities for the CGIAR in this area.

12. The work by the Performance Measurement WG would extend the earlier efforts by TAC/iSC, the CGIAR Secretariat, and the centers to reform the CGIAR’s evaluation model. If the outcome of the WG’s efforts leads to the development of a performance measurement procedure that generates data on some indicators of performance more frequently than the current external review model does, the CGIAR may wish to adjust its existing review process in order to avoid duplication and increase efficiency. But, in the interim, the external evaluations of the centers would continue uninterrupted, using the existing TORs and procedures guiding external reviews.

CGIAR Secretariat  
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