

SCIENCE COUNCIL OF THE CGIAR

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CGIAR PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH: A WORKING DOCUMENT ON THE SUGGESTED PROCESS

April 30, 2006

This Working Document lays out the components of the process for the implementation of the newly endorsed CGIAR Priorities for Research.¹ Noting that there will be substantial additional detail to be developed in the formulation of the Priority Research, the SC recommends the consideration and endorsement by ExCo of the general principles described to guide the more specific planning, budgeting, finance and oversight steps that will be required in the transformation and focussing of CGIAR research.

The development of Priority plans are a key issue. It is logical that each of the 20 System Priorities (SP) should have an agreed plan – referred to here as a “framework plan” - by means of which agreed research goals will be reached within a specified time frame. However, the immediate holding of twenty Planning Meetings and developing workplans for each SP was initially rejected during SC discussions (September/ December 2005). It was considered instead that Centers should make the first steps towards adjusting their research portfolio – and that system level planning processes should follow this first Center-led adjustment. These initial changes will therefore be reflected in the MTPs for 2007-9 to be received by the SC for review in July 2006. This will mark the beginning of the “three year transition period” for the CGIAR in moving towards the implementation of Priority research suggested in the Priorities document.

This document outlines activities in train and the SC’s recommendations on how best to encourage the strategic formulation of System-wide framework plans, the vehicles to conduct the chosen research and the provision of advice to donors. Some of the recommendations on process are somewhat modified over the text of the SP document after SC and stakeholder discussions that have taken place since December 2005.

Requirements and actions to date

Determine current budget allocated to Priorities

- All parties (including Members of the former Donor Task Force on Funding System Priorities, and the subsequent formulation of this body, the SC and the Alliance Executive) have interest in knowing the current allocation of research effort to approved SP. The SC Secretariat has provided inputs to the CGIAR Secretariat over needs for changes in the MTP Finance Tables in relation to evaluating Priority research and the budget per Priority.
- However, if this had been done as planned in conjunction with the submission by

¹ System Priorities for CGIAR Research 2005-2015. Science Council. December 2005.

Centers of their MTPs the information would not have been available until late June 2006. Thus, in conjunction with the Alliance Deputy Executive Committee, a simple version of the Center Project x System Priority matrix is being developed. Centers and Challenge Programs (CPs) have indicated budget allocation to their activities per Priority.

- As part of this action Centers/CPs have also been invited to show activities in other categories i.e. stand-alone training, new research (not part of the Priorities) and development activities not linked to IPGs. Following early assessment (through discussion, more formal submission to the SC through MTPs and review), the SC will seek a “validated” picture of what activities are in place for the new Priorities. It will be necessary to determine not only what activities fit what new Priorities but also what activities are being phased out, as well as the funding associated with the changes.
- A “first draft” System-level view of activities by Priority was informally discussed by the SC Chair in a meeting with the Alliance Executive in late-April. This informal review and discussion will take place before the formal MTP returns for 2007-2009, which should result in more accurate and coordinated MTPs this year in relation to data on Priorities.
- The CGIAR Secretariat has created Tables to be incorporated into the set of MTP Finance Tables (and the on-line reporting system) in time for the formal submission of MTPs by Centers in June.

Continuing discussions on IPGs/Research for Development

Arising from the Priority discussions, the SC undertook to assist the CGIAR stakeholders and Centers with further elaboration of ideas on: a) the International Public Goods concept, and, b) the placement of the CGIAR in relation to the Research for Development (R for D) Continuum. The following steps have been taken:

- The SC has developed a paper (led by Jim Ryan) on IPGs that was shared with DDGs at AGM05. Incorporating the outcomes of that discussion, the paper has been further revised. The paper will be tabled as a background document for the R for D Continuum Workshop (see below).
- The SC will hold a Discussion Workshop with stakeholders on the R for D Continuum on the 19th of May in The Hague, with the cooperation and support of the Dutch Government and Wageningen Agricultural University.
- A companion paper, on issues more expressly related to the placement of CGIAR research and the complementary partnerships required for the delivery of IPGs, has also been prepared by the SC Secretariat as a discussion document for the Workshop.

It is expected that the discussions and consensus which result will help inform the research planning process.

Programmatic implementation and funding of the CGIAR Priorities

The SC and ExCo have the key roles to play in relation to programmatic and funding aspects respectively.²

² It should be noted that in the *System Priorities for CGIAR Research 2005-2015* document it was suggested that a working group with representation from CGIAR stakeholder groups would be

The SC will continue to provide strategic options for the programmatic implementation of Priority research at the System level. The Science Council's role in monitoring and reviewing the process of implementation and the research outputs by Centers and CGIAR-led Programs is expected to be continuous.

ExCo is in the process of finalising an Ad-Hoc Committee to examine funding issues related to the implementation of Priorities. The Ad-Hoc Committee is expected to show some continuity with the earlier donor Task Force which started to address this issue (and may include ExCo and non-ExCo CGIAR Members including representation from the SC Secretariat and liaison with an Alliance focal point). The Ad-Hoc Committee's major task will be to continue the impetus of the Task Force on funding System Priorities, with increasing specificity as Centers align their programs with Priorities, donors establish their preferred targets for funding and the individual Priority framework plans are established.

Following confirmation or modification of the general principles presented here, it will be important to set up a timetable for the likely implementation process, so that both the oversight role of the SC in developing the framework process, and the required longevity of the Ad-Hoc Committee addressing funding can be established.

Timetable

It is anticipated that the Ad-Hoc Committee will be convened as soon as possible after the ExCo Meeting in May. As a first step, the Ad-Hoc Committee will be recipients of SC advice on the distribution of activities and budget by Priority (e.g. identification of unsubscribed cells in the 20 Priority x Center/CP Project matrix).

In September 2006 (based on the SC's review of MTPs) more formal advice on the current distribution of Center activities to Priorities and plans at the Center level will be available.

It will be necessary to confirm the draft Strategy for Implementation in time for the consideration of the SC and ExCo Meetings in September and October 2006. With the agreement of the SC and ExCo, the first steps of the plan for implementation can be initiated in October 2006. This should not constrain the use of logical opportunities to discuss framework programs for Priorities in the interim.

It is proposed that the Ad-Hoc Committee's report will identify initial actions that are required to support planning for the benefit of CGIAR Members at AGM in December 2006.

Strategic principles in planning for implementation of Priority Research

Whilst at present it is not possible to be categorical about all aspects of the development of 20

established to develop the strategy for implementation jointly. However, given the initiative of ExCo to form the Ad-Hoc Committee, the planned articulation with the Alliance Executive and the intention to involve non-CGIAR experts in the development of framework plans the recommended steps for implementation are as described in this document.

different research Priorities with which the CGIAR has different degrees of current involvement, the SC proposes the following basic principles to guide the process:

- The Centers are best placed to provide the first analysis of how their continuing activities match new Priorities. This orientation will be reflected in the MTP submissions in 2006.
- The analysis of alignment should also include current activities that are not part of the Priorities (i.e. the 20 % of activities).
- The Centers have variable experience with the different Priority areas and the number of Centers/CPs and key partners differ so that there should be an optimal match of the best instrument to implement the priority; the process should avoid a “one size fits all” approach.
- A coherent system-wide approach and a “framework program” will be required to be developed for each Priority around which research can be planned and progress can be gauged at the system level.
- This does not automatically mean 20 meetings - with much depending on potential syntheses, virtual meetings, capitalising on other global events etc. More than one Priority may be planned for in concert where this makes sense to do so (see list of priorities below).
- It would be sensible to focus on areas such as high value fruit and vegetables in the first instance (where there is minimal CGIAR involvement at the moment and development of a coherent framework program most heavily depends upon external partners).
- Form follows function so the type of research program required will follow agreement on the scope of the research and aspects to be covered. This can be informed by Reviews of existing vehicles for research: it is anticipated that a meta-review of SWPs will be conducted at the end of 2006 that can provide lessons learned in consideration of vehicles for research.
- Decisions about the utility of Challenge Programs, System wide or Ecoregional Programs as potential vehicles for Priority research should be made on a case by case basis.

In light of the above, the SC has considered alternative options for decision-making over the presently unfunded pilot CP-proposals (listed in the Annex). In essence the options range from discarding the proposals on the grounds that the subject matter was differently oriented and proposed partnership arrangements have lapsed and each is likely to need reconstitution³ or, adjudicating on the relevance or otherwise of outstanding unfunded CP proposals submitted earlier for inclusion in Priority research.

After due consideration the SC *recommends* that:

1. All earlier pilot CP Proposals which are not yet funded are considered to have lapsed. Following review of Center plans in 2006 and following the development of framework plans for the SP, Centers will be invited to identify collaborative program arrangements in the future which directly address the specific goals of the Priorities.
2. Priority research proposals in the framework programs will be subject to external

³ This consideration particularly related to the four CPs which progressed to the “Block B” stage but were then not proposed for funding (the Rain Forest Challenge, Making the Most of the Coast, Climate Change and Desertification).

peer review and the SC will confirm and endorse or suggest modification or rejection of plans that do not meet Priority research requirements. Not all Priority plans are likely to lend themselves to establishment as CPs and development of the appropriate time-bound vehicle for completing the research is encouraged.

3. Proposal of new CPs (as well as of new system wide and ecoregional programs) – addressing potential integrative or cross-cutting themes - will only be considered for review and endorsement if they a) respond to meeting goals for Priority research, b) do not lead to the distortion of the scope of work plans for Priority research by undertaking non-priority research at the expense of high Priority areas for the CGIAR. The SC will encourage the Ad-Hoc Committee to enhance Members support to Priority research.

Individual Priorities

For the planning of individual Priorities, flexible arrangements should be sought as suggested below. Following the establishment of an agreed framework for research on a particular Priority, the SC will advise the Ad-Hoc Committee on minimum investments required for a feasible work program. On the basis of time-bound proposals the SC will also advise on the trajectory of funding requirements for Priority research (which will be different between established and new research and between research subjects). As individual Center and CP research portfolios become aligned with system Priorities, estimates of “optimum” investments would be required to advise on funding requirements trends.

1A: *Conservation of staple crops* – Following identification of activities through MTPs, link system-wide plans to global plans being developed by the Global Biodiversity Trust Fund.

1B: *Conservation of underutilised plant genetic resources (UPGR)* – IPGRI and concerned Centers (with their partners) to assess linked Center activities following submission of MTPs. Research should focus on IPGs and be framed as support to a rational global system of conservation of these species.

1C: *Conservation of livestock genetic resources* – concerned Centers and CGIAR Programs can engage in planning with FAO following the SC Report and Commentary in this area. Because of this existing background, initial steps to develop a planning forum are in train.

1D: *Conservation of aquatic animal genetic resources* - concerned Centers and CGIAR Programs can engage in planning with FAO following the SC Report and Commentary in this area. Because of this existing background, initial steps to develop a planning forum are in train.

2A: *Enhancement of yield of food staples* – this Priority will probably encompass the largest set of activities and should be approached in a step-wise manner over the transition period. Initially, framework development will follow the synthesis afforded by MTPs in 2006, with emphasis in the first iteration on streamlining activities and avoiding unnecessary overlaps (in research and regions). There will be a need to consider breeding capacities within the system, and amongst partners, as the framework program is developed. It will be necessary to identify Centers to write crop-specific strategies within the overall plan, as well as to

develop inter-Center mechanisms for the sharing required for genetics/genomics research efficiency.

2B: *Tolerance to abiotic stresses* – the work of the Generation CP, with its activities on drought and salinity-tolerance, is expected to contribute a large proportion of CGIAR research in this area (noting that the GCP research relates to other areas besides abiotic stress). A system-wide framework will be developed, examining possible research additions in line with the Priorities document following review of the MTPs in 2006.

2C: *Enhancing nutritional quality and safety* – the work of the Harvest plus CP will be a major component of the work towards this Priority. The extent of internationally relevant research that the Centers may contribute on aflatoxin resistance will be determined, starting in 2007.

2D: *Genetic enhancement of selected species to increase income generation for the poor* – the contributing elements of research to an overall framework will be identified in the first instance through the individual MTP submissions in 2006 – for example, ILRI may contribute to research on livestock, WorldFish for aquaculture, the WorldAgroforestry Centre for perennial plants etc. However, the form of the research and any further selection of plant species should follow clarification of the work plan of 3A, and will be subject to stringent review in relation to its IPG character.

3A: *Increasing income from fruit and vegetables* – there have been several regional and global planning meetings on high value species (at CIAT in September 2005 and most recently the launching of the Global Horticultural Initiative in Montpellier, March 2006). Based on this framework, the CGIAR Centers already engaged in this area should take steps immediately to identify, catalogue and prioritise research of an IPG nature on high-value fruits and vegetables which is consistent with CGIAR goals. Care should be taken to distinguish potential Center research responsibilities from a) existing research, and, especially b) non-research activities, which may be undertaken by others within the developing international frameworks (expected to include AVRDC, CIRAD, GFAR, national partners etc). A Report on the identification and potential contribution of CGIAR research in this field should be developed by the instigating Centers in the form of a pre-proposal by November 2006 in order to inform planned meetings of the GHI, and the Group at AGM06.

3B: *Income increases from livestock* – an initial framework may be developed following the MTPs of ILRI, ICARDA and CGIAR Programs from MTP submissions in 2006, seeking possible additional input from Asian and LAC partners.

3C: *Enhancing income through increased productivity of fisheries and aquaculture* – the framework for the CGIAR research will follow the WorldFish MTP and subsequently may build on system-wide and external partner interactions e.g. convening meetings on food safety/market research with FAO, INFOFISH, and other ARIs etc. over the next two years.

3D: *Sustainable income generation from forests and trees* – an initial synthetic framework may be established from CIFOR and ICRAF MTPs, and the plans of CGIAR programs and the Rain Forest Consortium partners (whilst paying attention to the roles of major forest

organisations like IUFRO, IPCC, FAO etc. to ensure the best placement of planned research).

4A: *Integrated land, water and forest management at landscape level* – advancing this Priority requires face-to-face meeting(s) and the selection of global benchmark sites where this approach and hitherto disparate research efforts can be brought together. It is suggested that a small Task Force be convened in early 2007 to establish a general framework and to prioritise specific research and its scheduling.

4B: *Sustaining and managing aquatic ecosystems for food and livelihoods* – a CGIAR framework for this Priority will initially be derived from the planned activities of WorldFish and the approaches of the Water and Food CP. The proponents across the system may wish to examine if earlier discussions on coastal small-scale fisheries can also inform the subsequent development of a system-level approach.

4C: *Improving water productivity* – an initial CGIAR framework for this Priority will be established on the basis of MTPs provided by IWMI, and the Water and Food CP.

4D: *Sustainable agro-ecological intensification in low- and high-potential environments* – this Priority represents another large set of current and potential activities. It will require face-to-face meetings amongst commodity and resource Centers with CGIAR System-wide and ecoregional Programs to define a strategic framework and plans for contributing research. The identification of whether the SSA-CP has research to offer this Priority or not is required. A workshop will be required in 2007 to advance planning for this Priority.

5A: *Science and technology policies and institutions* – much of the CGIAR's potential approach already exists within the System as sector- or commodity-specific activities. Establishment of the Priority framework will include a rationalisation of what is currently available. This may be developed to an extent by information embodied in Center MTPs and Strategies. However, a desk study will be required and contacts with Center focal points. The study will also need to address issues of Center coordination, data handling and policy support to countries. The study should be conducted jointly by IFPRI/IPGRI and should seek full cognizance of other providers of similar policy-relevant data - such as the regional Development Banks. It is most likely that this Priority can be framed through the work of a carefully time-bound Task Force.

5B: *Making international and domestic markets work for the poor* – although often appearing in MTP project titles current work across the System on markets is scattered and (with some exceptions) often not of international quality. As markets are particular forms of institutional arrangements a coherent planning approach to institutions is favoured together with partners (see 5C and 5D).

5C: *Rural institutions and their governance* – current CGIAR research will be synthesised following review of the MTPs in 2006. In the first instance, the approach will link IFPRI research on institutions with NRM Center approaches on governance etc. However, the scope of the framework program is expected to be larger than currently and its development should capitalise on the possibility of joint planning with work on institutions at the World Bank (planned for this summer) and with other interactions with regional Development

Banks in 2006/7.

5D: *Improving research and development options to reduce rural poverty and vulnerability* – careful diagnosis will be required of how system-wide information (e.g. social science data) can be handled and made available to inform the CGIAR’s IPG research on poverty and to bring in new analytical capacities through partnerships. Again, to formulate the framework successfully for this area it will be necessary to understand and complement the extent of data collection, analysis and policy formulation done by other international initiatives concerned with poverty research, including ARIs and the international Development Banks. Chief amongst these are the preparations for the World Development Report. It is suggested that a workshop on Rural Institutions be held with major international players from the perspective of defining a research framework on rural institutions (5B, 5C, and 5D) for the CGIAR.

In summary: The SC and Alliance should be able to move from compilation to planning on the basis of declared activities in the MTPs. A temporarily staggered approach is suggested without defining exact timelines since the approach takes advantage of existing fora in some cases, in others catalysing the construction of working groups and either actual or virtual Meetings. The areas in which consortium planning is required over and above the MTP synthetic step are firstly: 3A, 2A, 4A, and Priority Area 5 (B, C, D) which has some options for consolidated review.

All Priorities should be subject to System-level planning processes and the development of a framework program over a two-year period (from October 2006). All pre-proposals involving Systemwide and CP approaches will be subject to review by peer reviewers commissioned by the SC.

The Ad-Hoc Committee (or other similarly tasked sub-committee of the Group in future years) will continue to require advice on future targets (minimum budgetary requirements and likely trajectories) for the conduct of a feasible research plan per Priority. Further, the SC will identify essential scientific avenues, as component elements of individual Priority framework plans, which are not being addressed by the System. This may be due to the necessary skills not being available within the System (and would be an appropriate target for mobilization of the required science as part of the activities of the Science Council’s Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science). Advice and support to such “scientific gap-filling” will only be feasible once agreed and System-level frameworks for each Priority are in place.

Annex 1

List of Pre-proposals for potential Challenge Programs submitted in 2002 (In alphabetical order by title)

- Agricultural Biodiversity for Sustainable Development: Conservation of Biodiversity of Tamarind through Utilization for Sustainable Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation
- Biological Nitrogen Fixation for Increased Crop Productivity, Enhanced Human Health and Sustained Soil Fertility
- The Challenge of Climate Change: Research to Overcome its Impact on Food Security, Poverty, and Natural Resource Degradation in the Developing World
- Desertification, Drought, Poverty, and Agriculture Improving Livelihoods and Natural Resource Management in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Forests As Resources For The Poor: The Rainforest Challenge
- Harnessing IPM Initiatives For Sustainable Harvests, Improved Livelihoods And Healthier Production Environments
- Making The Most Of The Coast - A Pre-Proposal For A Challenge Program To Reverse Degradation Of Coastal Resources And Enhance Livelihoods
- Managing for Resilience: Building and Sustaining Livelihoods in Mountain Ecosystems
- Reducing Poverty by Eliminating Constraints to Market Access due to Animal Diseases
- Reversing the Trend: Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Securing Livestock Genetic Resources for Present and Future Food Security
- Urban Harvest: A Challenge Program on Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture