

Progress Report on CGIAR Alignment in Eastern and Southern Africa

Presented to the 11th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the CGIAR

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This progress report to ExCo 11 covers three dimensions of CGIAR alignment in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA):

1. CGIAR programmatic alignment in ESA
2. Alignment of research support and corporate services between ICRAF and ILRI
3. Governance processes between ILRI and ICRAF

This report addresses the recommendations from the report of the sub-Saharan Africa Task Force, of previous ExCo meetings (nos 8, 9 and 10) and the business meeting of the CGIAR membership at AGM 2005.

CGIAR Programmatic Alignment in ESA

The SSA Task Force came to the conclusion that increased programme alignment between CG Centres and CG Centres and partners in the region was required to avoid overlaps that had been identified.

ExCo 8 recommended that Centres address these issues by developing regional MTP's that should be prepared in partnership with SRO's, NARS and FARA, and that these regional MTPs be aligned with the CG System Priorities and linked with the Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Programme.

The Alliance Executive asked ILRI to take the leadership in developing a regional MTP for ESA. From May to October 2005, we undertook a preliminary analysis of the activities of the Centres in ESA by examining the Centre MTPs (2006-2008) and by engaging in direct contact with management and scientists of all centres operating in the region. We held two stakeholder consultations with FARA, SROs, NARS and CG Centres and developed an electronic forum to discuss the key issues. In total more than 200 stakeholders were directly involved in these discussions and consultations. The conclusions were:

1. There was some, but relatively little, overlap of CG Centre activities in the region and that the few areas of activity overlap needed to be addressed.
2. There was a need to develop integrated activities between centres and regional stakeholders on important research issues for the future.
3. There was a need to build upon existing mechanisms and facilities rather than creating new structures.

4. Given the complex nature of developing alignment and integration between existing institutional partners, an innovative management structure was required.
5. The MTP should focus on areas where benefits to integration significantly surpass associated transaction costs and not attempt to encompass all CG Centre activities in ESA.

These conclusions formed the framework for developing the regional MTP. The concerns raised by the SSA Task Force and the way the regional MTP responds to these concerns is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: The CG/MTP/ESA as a Response to the SSA Task Force Concerns

Concern	Response
Need for a cohesive strategy for Africa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy responds to MDGs, CAADP, FARA, ASARECA and SADC priorities 2. Priority for integrated programs respond to regional priorities. 3. Addresses SRO priorities that have a development and poverty reduction goal
Need for a mechanism for effective interaction among Centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hub mechanism will support alignment and development of integrated initiatives 2. Hub as information source will facilitate identification of opportunities for integration
Reduce duplication and unproductive competition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network Cluster Hub provides transparent source of information, flexible response feedback to partners and Centers, and first line of mediation in cases of potential conflict 2. Alliance Executive and Board enforce Principles and Procedures of good collaborative behavior
Avoid crowding out local research service providers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated program framework provides longer perspective to plan research capacity building 2. Gap filling is encouraged only where provision is made for capacity building
Reduce burden on NARS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cluster-wide agreements reduce transactions costs 2. Cluster designates country focal person 3. Cluster-wide harmonization of policies, compensation and resource sharing reduce tensions and negotiation costs 4. Internal mechanisms for avoidance or timely resolution of conflict 5. Single point of entry to CGIAR for smaller NARS 6. Point of strategic communication and interaction with sub-regional organizations where considered convenient for Centers and SROs
Create synergies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better alignment of Center work 2. Incentives for collaboration through integrated programs 3. Create and ensure optimal use of platforms

The framework for the MTP was presented to ExCo 9 in October 2005 and discussed at AGM 05. At AGM 05 the CG members requested the centres to finalise the regional MTP for submission to the Science Council on 15 June 2006.

All partners and stakeholders who have been involved in the development of the draft regional MTP fully endorse the product and are committed to its implementation.

The draft MTP incorporates all of the criteria that have been established by the CGIAR members and the stakeholders in the region. ExCo 10 specifically asked that further details be developed on the governance of the regional MTPs. In the case of ESA, the regional plan will be managed in the form of a Network Cluster which is composed of a Hub and Nodes. The Hub will be hosted by one of the CG centres based in the region. The details of how the Network Cluster will operate, and associated costs are elaborated in the MTP document. Further it has been agreed that the Alliance will provide the overall governance for the ESA MTP implementation. MTPs, annual work plans, monitoring of achievements will be approved by the Alliance Executive. Conflicts will be resolved through the Alliance conflict resolution procedures. There will be a Programme Advisory Committee of stakeholders in the region to provide scientific guidance to the MTP programme.

Based on the Science Council comments detailed log frames are now being developed for priority alignment issues (i.e. where existing overlaps and duplications exist), and priority flagship initiatives in line with Science Council priorities. An interim core operations team for the Hub has been established. This team is working to finalise the regional MTP by December 2006 and to develop a resourcing plan for its implementation in 2007.

Alignment of Research Support and Corporate Services between ICRAF and ILRI

ExCo 9 recommended that Corporate Services alignment should be examined in ESA. ICRAF and ILRI were tasked to lead on this issue given that both centres have their headquarters in ESA. Subsequently, the two centres expanded the notion of Corporate Services to also include Research Support Services. ILRI and ICRAF have developed a collaborative arrangement to share support services to increase quality, effectiveness and efficiency in their provision for the two centres, all the CG Centres that they host, and for other CG centres operating in ESA.

Specific areas that form the basis of this alignment are:

1. A common Research Methods Group (which includes biometrics, data management, GIS etc.).
2. Common HR strategy, systems and policy
3. Common IT platforms and systems
4. Common financial policies and procedures
5. Rationalised and harmonised procurement and operations services.

The key actions in this process are being implemented over a three-year period with the bulk of activities undertaken in 2007. The schedule is realistic at this time. However, the calendar may be influenced by the implementation of the recommendations of the EPMRs of the two centers as well as the evolution of the regional MTP. Long term savings are anticipated, but during the start up process significant investment is required to ensure the success of the initiative, especially in the areas of research support services, human resources and information technology.

The total budget of the research support and corporate services alignment is estimated at UD\$4.3 million over 3 years. The CGIAR Secretariat has been assisting to develop this initiative and has agreed to support it technically and financially. ILRI and ICRAF have requested a 22% contribution from the CG Secretariat of US\$944,500 to support the alignment of services. The ICRAF-ILRI contribution is being shared equitably among the two centers, resulting in pro-rata or equal shares for most investments.

Governance between ICRAF and ILRI

ExCo 9 requested ILRI and ICRAF to examine the issue of common Board membership. Currently, the Government of Kenya representative sits on both Boards in an *ex-officio* capacity. This is by virtue of the host country agreements that the Government of Kenya has with both centres. The boards of ICRAF and ILRI have agreed to identify an additional joint Board member through the CGIAR nomination process. The profile of the nominee will be an individual to provide expertise and oversight to the alignment of corporate services that is underway. The profile has been submitted to the September 2006 round of the CGIAR nomination process. We expect to have an approved candidate during the first quarter of 2007. In addition, the Boards have agreed to review and evaluate progress through:

- A joint meeting (once per annum) of the Executive Committees of both Boards
- Regular meetings of the Board Chairs and Directors General of both centres.

We look forward to receiving comments from ExCo on the progress achieved and discussing the way forward to improve the alignment of the CGIAR in eastern and southern Africa.