

The ILRI Board and Management thank the EPMR panel chair and members for their thoughtful review of ILRI's program and management. We found the panel's comments on ILRI's past performance and future directions both insightful and helpful.

We are in agreement with the recommendations of the panel. A specific response to each recommendation is given in the Table below.

No	Recommendation
With Respect to Strategy and Planning	
1	Considering the competitive operating environment, the substantial assets of ILRI and the naturally long horizon for measuring results in livestock research, ILRI should expand its planning horizon to complement the MTP. The Panel recommends a planning cycle in which strategic vision and goals with ten year horizons yield strategic five-year business plans, operationalised annually.
	Agreed – ILRI currently has a strategic vision and goals that were developed in 2002 and reviewed in 2005 prior to its 2nd EPMR. The 10-year strategy will be reviewed prior to each subsequent EPMR. ILRI has begun developing 5-year implementation plans that bring together research, resource mobilization, staffing, partnership planning and communications and linking these to annual workplans and performance management. The 5-year horizon is appropriate for planning how research outputs lead to development outcomes.
2	The ambition of global impact requires a more geographically distributed allocation of a critical mass of resources. Projects with global outcomes can beneficially be managed from locations other than east Africa. The Panel therefore recommends that ILRI redefine its physical location strategy (using CGIAR Centres wherever possible) and its <i>modus operandi</i> for each region. The Board should assess progress in three years through external review.
	Agreed - ILRI accepts this recommendation, recognizing the major programmatic, partnership and financial challenges this acceptance implies. We see an expansion in geographic scope as an evolutionary process in which the Board and management will develop a plan to engage with key partners in different regions and through that mechanism develop strategies and resource mobilization opportunities. Our approach will be to focus on key global livestock issues backed up by a global knowledge management and communications strategy that takes account of the context, needs and opportunities in different regions.
With Respect to Research Programs – Themes	
3	Noting that the BecA network will offer ILRI and its partners opportunities to study a range of diseases, the panel recommends that ILRI maintains a clear focus in vaccine research, and that before ILRI enters any new disease for developing a vaccine or diagnostic, it clearly defines its role and that of its partners, and evaluates the viability of any new technology.
	Agreed – In vaccine and diagnostic research we plan to follow two approaches, one when ILRI plays the leadership role (such as for East Coast fever) and one in which ILRI contributes a specific component to a larger initiative led by others. In vaccine projects that ILRI plans to lead, we will carefully consider our comparative advantage, research capacity and financial resources before committing to lead the project. When ILRI is requested to participate in vaccine projects led by NARS or ARI partners, we would agree to provide specific research inputs if we have the capacity and financial resources are made available.
4	As pastoralists are an ancient and continuing component of the livestock sector, and as they are increasingly marginalized by agricultural development, the Panel recommends that People, Livestock and the Environment Theme research related to transhumant livestock keeping be oriented to pro-pastoral policies globally and that knowledge developed to date be published in a global context as a priority.
	Partially agreed – Strengthening ILRI's global contribution by publishing methods and practices for pro-poor pastoral research for development is a logical next step. This contribution to global fora will build initially on research results from studies in East and West Africa, that have provided important insights such as sustainability, diversification and vulnerability issues for pastoral communities. ILRI's contribution to global pastoral issues

	will focus on pastoral systems in the tropical zones, as others have comparative advantage in pastoral systems of temperate zones.
5	In view of the imminent new capacity for plant biosciences in BecA, the Panel recommends that ILRI maximize use of the facility for the forage genebank activities while also increasing research collaborations, particularly with the CGIAR Centers, that enhance the use of the germplasm.
	Agreed –Our plans for interactions between the forage genebank and BecA would focus on the identification and selection of traits for key abiotic and biotic stresses for a few selected forages. Broad-scale molecular characterization of forages is unlikely to be a priority. We see opportunities for other Centres to use the grass germplasm in the ILRI collection to look for genes of interest to their breeding programs. A critical short-term focus will be to work with CIAT and ICARDA to increase the efficiency of global forage genetic resources in the areas of genebank management and strategic utilization of conserved materials.
6	The Panel views the People, Livestock and the Environment Theme as both broad and uneven. To remedy this, the Panel recommends that OP2 be focused on pastoralists and INRM and a refocused OP3 be transferred to the Markets Theme.
	Partially agreed – ILRI recognizes the need for greater focus and coherence within the People, Livestock and Environment Theme. We see the coherence coming from a focus on two main issues, sustainability of land and water resources in livestock production systems and the intensification of crop-livestock systems given the need for greater production from limited land and water. These issues will be considered and implemented through a number of strategic realignments of the theme portfolio over the next 18 months. Research on zoonotic diseases of importance to the poor is a priority for ILRI. We will review how to structure this between the People, Livestock and Environment and the Market Themes.
7	Following success of ILRI facilitating the creation of a large regional initiative (BecA), the Panel recommends that ILRI look at how it can generate adequately resourced, high impact initiatives for each Theme.
	Agreed - ILRI will continue to improve its resource mobilization by strengthening the current strategy and how it is implemented. A selected number of livestock issues of global concern to which ILRI research can make a contribution have been identified as priorities for concerted resource mobilization efforts.
8	Given the risks to ILRI of being perceived as conducting development activities, the Panel recommends that the IPMS project be managed, budgeted and reported in two parts with research allocated to respective Themes and project management done by the DDG's office, and that ILRI decline management roles in future development projects.
	Partially agreed – To have impact, ILRI research needs to actively engage with development projects and partners. We agree it is critical that ILRI constantly assess its research for development role. We also agree that in the management of large research – development projects, ILRI concentrates on its research role and partners with others who have expertise in development activities. ILRI believes it is important to manage the IPMS project as one entity. However, ILRI agrees to better link the research components and their reporting to its research programme.
	With Respect to Cross-cutting Issues
9	In the interests of continuing to improve the quality of its research output, the Panel recommends that ILRI immediately and systematically invest in increasing its Internet capacity for research purposes.
	Agreed - ILRI is committed to expand its internet capacity with increased expenditures in 2007. ILRI and ICRAF are establishing a common ICT unit which should improve our capacity for strategic investment. Currently we are undertaking an internally commissioned review on ICT to advise on practical approaches and the investment required to increase internet capacity, taking into account regulatory and infrastructure conditions.
10	As a critical component of ILRI's systems approach, the Panel recommends that ILRI management charge the research themes to conduct ex post impact studies on selected programs using methodologies developed by the new Innovation and Impact Unit, and using external inputs where needed.
	Agreed - ILRI will take steps to strengthen its <i>ex-post</i> impact assessment capacity. These will include the participation of scientists who carried out the research, methodological support from impact assessment specialists in ILRI's Innovation and Impact Unit and review by outside experts to ensure objectivity.

11	As part of ILRI's contribution to strengthening capacity, the Panel recommends that ILRI make this activity explicit and measurable in research program design and report results for both training and follow up activities.
	Agreed - ILRI has recently recruited a senior Capacity Strengthening Manager and is finalizing a capacity strengthening strategy for the institute. Procedures will be put in place so that capacity strengthening contributions are explicitly recognized in its program planning, implementation and reporting.
With Respect to Governance, Management and Finance	
12	The panel recommends that ILRI provide new members of the board with a thorough orientation to the financial issues and trends that shape ILRI's budget, strategy, and capacity as well as to the processes that support the board's responsibilities for financial stewardship and oversight.
	Agreed- An orientation program is being developed and a financial briefing session was presented to the Board prior to its November 2006 meeting. This program will be updated to reflect the changing environment and the changes within ILRI's priorities and structure as well as the evolving requirements of the Finance & Audit committee of the Board.
13	The Panel recommends that ILRI management and the board chair redefine the responsibilities and scope of work of the Board Secretary and improve ILRI's practices with respect to meeting preparation.
	Agreed - A detailed checklist on Board meeting preparation and the conduct of Board affairs throughout the year is being developed by the Secretary and the Board Chair and will be implemented by ILRI management and Board.
14	The panel recommends that the board increase the quality of its board recruitment process by developing a multi-year strategy for the recruitment of new board members, which supports the global mandate of ILRI and provides it with a board that is a sustained asset to the accomplishment of its work.
	Agreed - The ILRI Board of Trustees will finalize a Board of Trustees Development Strategy which includes the recruitment of Board members based upon complementary skills to ensure continuity in providing oversight to the business of ILRI.
15	ILRI having identified the weaknesses in key management proficiencies, the Panel recommends that the DG and DDG institute comprehensive training and development opportunities for all managers and hold themselves and managers responsible for improvements in performance.
	Agreed – ILRI, with external consultants, has reviewed its human resource management and individual manager skills. Follow-up actions identified as part of this review have been agreed. These will be implemented in the next 12 months and their effect monitored and reviewed as part of a continuous management improvement program.
16	The Panel recommends that ILRI undertake a comprehensive reassessment of its current sites in Kenya and Ethiopia, exploring all options with respect to the management and disposition of its properties.
	Agreed – Within its evolving global strategy, a comprehensive review of ILRI properties and assets in Kenya and Ethiopia will be conducted with a view to assessing their relevance and increasing their effectiveness and efficiency.
17	The Panel recommends that as part of overall improvements to the HR function, ILRI develop a staffing plan which is cognizant of geography, anticipated disciplinary expertise and gender, and is consistent with the ILRI priorities.
	Agreed – This recommendation will be implemented as part of the business planning and globalization of ILRI's activities (response to recommendations 1 and 2).
18	The Panel recommends that ILRI continue to improve its financial management through adoption of a new investment strategy, a more comprehensive resource mobilization plan, and more efficient grants management.
	Agreed – An investment policy was approved at the November 2006 Board meeting. In line with recommendation 7, ILRI agrees that it needs to increase its skills and experience in resource mobilization and enhance coordination of resource mobilization activities within the institute. We also concur that, as far as possible, restricted fund raising should focus on large and medium-size and longer-term grants and should also attempt to recover staff costs and overhead to the largest extent possible.