

Summary of ExCo 9 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on SSA Task Forces Follow-up¹

I. Johnson introduced the item and noted that following CGIAR approval of ExCo's recommendations on the SSA TF, the Chairman invited IITA and WARDA (BOT chair and DG) to meet and discuss implementation of the recommendation on West and Central Africa (WCA). He directed members to the notes included in ExCo 9 documentation that reported on the outcome of the meetings that took place on September 8, 2005, at the CGIAR Secretariat and on October 1-2, 2005, in Paris.

The Centers were also requested at ExCo 8 to further develop sub-regional MTPs in SSA. CDC Chair W. Dar invited representatives from the concerned Centers in WCA and ESA (East and Southern Africa) to update ExCo on the development of sub-regional MTPs.

Dennis Garrity (ICRAF) reported on the progress in development of a sub-regional ESA MTP which is to serve as a vehicle for programmatic integration across the region. ILRI and ICRAF are working together with a subgroup of NARS, SROs and representatives of the 15 Centers. A workshop was held in September to begin discussion on developing a framework for improved rationalization and coordination of existing activities, examination of new priority initiatives, and consideration of existing platforms which could be integrated into area based networks. Extensive consultation with over 100 stakeholders has also taken place.

Bruce Scott (ILRI) added that the framework developed for ESA is based on three elements: (1) improved rationalization of existing activities of Centers; (2) identifying new initiatives that are priority for the region; and (3) utilizing the platforms that exist as building blocks. Three key issues were identified related to implementation: (1) governance of the MTP; (2) building common research support mechanisms (e.g., for GIS, IT support, capacity strengthening, biometrics, etc.); and (3) arranging joint administrative support services. A consultant has been contracted to explore possible governance mechanisms. A second consultant will be contracted in 2006 to explore options for shared services.

Kanayo Nwanze (WARDA) reported on development of the MTP for WCA which is being facilitated by WARDA. The progress made to date includes the following:

- The CDC retreat in July 2004 identified the sub-regional MTP as a "quick win", and allocated funds to support the effort;
- Eleven CGIAR Centers showed interest, and WARDA agreed to facilitate the process;
- The building blocks for the MTP were identified to include: CGIAR Priorities and logframe, nine Center MTPs, NEPAD and CORAF strategies and priorities, USAID review of existing regional networks (e.g., the West Africa Cereals Network), and the SSA Challenge Program;

¹ Excerpt from Ninth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 19-20, 2005) Summary Record of Proceedings, October 31, 2005.

- WARDA's Council of Ministers, National Experts Committee has endorsed the concept of regional MTPs.
- WARDA has hired a consultant to assist in coordinating the processes. Following progress reports to ExCo and CDC, next steps would be to submit a report to AGM05 for feedback and then finalize the MTP.
- The MTP would serve as the backbone of the new CGIAR WCA Global Entity.

Peter Hartmann (IITA) made a follow-up presentation of his personal views on potential synergies between IITA and WARDA ensuing from their common efforts, and submitted that the model that is being developed for WCA could be applicable for ESA and other regions as well. The CGIAR Global Centers in Africa would increase the System's efficiency, reduce overlaps, increase coordination, and reduce partner frustrations. With IITA and WARDA as its nuclei in WCA and ICRAF and ILRI in ESA, the two CGIAR Global Centers in Africa would not require any superstructure above the Boards. They would serve as management entities for joint MTPs, provide common services (including training) and include common board members.

Peter Core (Australia, representing Members from Asia-Pacific) read a statement on behalf of Japan related to this agenda item. The statement endorsed the ExCo recommendations to the CGIAR on the TF report, reiterated Japan's support of the actions on consolidation in WCA, and urged the board chairs of IITA and WARDA to commence appointment of common board members without delay.

Discussion:

- Members expressed strong support for the steps being taken towards development of sub-regional MTPs. This could serve as a model for other regions outside Africa. Also, programmatic integration at the regional level could open the door for closer collaboration with development institutions, which would be able to mount complementary activities on the development front.
- The Chairman noted that it would be useful to distinguish coordination on the services front (administrative and program support) from functional integration at the programmatic level. There is a third alignment that would be needed—that of structures of governance. Program alignment is perhaps the most difficult to achieve. Administrative alignment is perhaps long overdue, as good business practice from a System perspective would demand such action.
- The CGIAR needs programmatic and structural alignment globally. Programmatic alignment is key, as form should follow function. The MTP development should be closely monitored. The SSA CP should be an integral part of the two sub-regional MTPs.
- The CGIAR should first complete the programmatic and structural alignments it started within SSA before considering similar reforms in other regions.
- The Science Council was urged to provide support to the efforts as the sub-regional MTPs provided an excellent opportunity to roll out and test the System Priorities, and bring more clarity to the research and development continuum.
- The Centers have planned an in-depth briefing on these developments during the Members-Centers Day at AGM05. ExCo members were encouraged to attend.

- The Centers pointed out that the development of the joint MTPs demonstrates the Alliance at work.

Conclusions and ExCo Recommendations to the CGIAR:

- *ExCo recognized the difficult and complex nature of the process and took note of and commended the Centers and collaborators for the progress that has been made to date in implementing the CGIAR decisions, which approved the ExCo 8 recommendations to the CGIAR.*
- *ExCo urges alignment to proceed at an adequate pace along three tracks:*
 - Programmatic;*
 - Corporate (including administrative and program support) services; and,*
 - Structural/governance (e.g., common board members).*
- *Part of the AGM05 Business Meeting should be devoted to providing a roadmap to the programmatic and structural alignment efforts in SSA.*