

Summary of ExCo 11 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on ICARDA EPMR¹

P. Pinstруп-Andersen presented the SC comments on the ICARDA EPMR. He highlighted the following points:

- SC is pleased to note that ICARDA accepted all 22 recommendations and has already started implementing the recommendations.
- SC agrees with the recommendation that ICARDA should raise its focus to a more strategic global mission and to de-emphasize its purely regional activities which should be taken up by NARS instead.
- The review noted that in many programs, scientific outputs have been below an acceptable level. SC agrees with the panel that the ICARDA figure of 8.4 percent of its resources being devoted to “development” is most likely an underestimate, and noted that 20 of the 44 outputs listed in the MTP for 2006 reflect very low research content.
- ICARDA should explore new research work in high-value crops, but before doing so should develop criteria and priorities for their involvement in this relevant area of research.
- ICARDA should strengthen its socio-economic research expertise.

N. Datta (CGIAR Secretariat) presented the CGIAR Secretariat’s comments on the governance, management and finance aspects of the EPMR by pointing out:

- The CGIAR Secretariat welcomes that ICARDA has accepted the recommendation to increase the frequency of Board meetings, and to have a Center Commissioned External Review (CCER) on management and finance. The CCER should address among other things clarity in the authority and the processes for expenditure approvals.
- The CGIAR Secretariat encourages ICARDA to reduce the size of the Board while also strengthening the formal financial expertise on its Board.
- The area of human resource management needs special attention, particularly related to HR policies for attracting and retaining high quality staff, revisiting salary structures, etc.

Discussion:

- ICARDA should better define its global versus regional role.
- Some panel recommendations (e.g. related to human resources and audit) seem to suggest that there is a need to streamline procedures in Center governance.
- The recommendation to develop a new strategic plan (planned to be finalized in February 2007) is welcomed.

M. Solh, ICARDA Director General (DG), was invited to comment on the steps taken to implement the recommendations and comments made. In his response he indicated that:

¹ Excerpt from Eleventh Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 17-18, 2006) Summary Record of Proceedings, October 30, 2006.

- A new strategic plan is under preparation and will be finalized in February 2007. ICARDA has developed a number of strategic plans in the past, the last one in 1998. With the Board oversight, consultations with stakeholders in view of a new strategic plan started in 2004. The Board delayed the development of the new plan until the completion of the EPMR and until the new ICARDA management was in place (ICARDA's DG began his tenure in May this year).
- ICARDA agrees with all recommendations in principle, but does have different views regarding the approach for implementing some of the recommendations.
- ICARDA's positioning on the research to development continuum depends on the strength and capacity of the collaborating NARSSs, and devolution of research activities is done accordingly.
- ICARDA has already initiated the preparations for a CCER on finance and management.
- ICARDA has a global mandate on three crops, where their research activities go beyond the CWANA region and has already started research activities on natural resource management in the dry areas in Latin America.

Conclusions and ExCo Recommendations to the CGIAR:

- *ExCo recommends that the CGIAR endorse the EPMR recommendations.*