

Report from the Alliance of the CGIAR Centres

The Alliance's focus during 2007 has been to maintain the momentum that its paper on 'The Way Forward' created, both within the Alliance and within the System. We did this by working closely with the Science Council and the Secretariat on a number of strategic issues, as well as by pursuing some key partnerships outside of the system.

1. Development of framework plans for the 20 System Priorities

Following discussions of the six preliminary framework plans developed by the Alliance with the Science Council and the ExCo Ad Hoc Committee on Funding the Priorities lessons were drawn about the most useful and strategic way of designing framework plans for all system priorities. Both the format of framework plans and the timeline for their completion (see Table 1) were agreed upon with the SC. Alliance Deputy Directors General for Science and Alliance scientists worked together and have to-date finalised and submitted seven framework plans (1A, 1C, 3A, 1D, 3C, 4B and 5C). Seven more framework plans will be submitted by the end of the year. Other framework plans are in various processes.

2. System level assessment process

At the invitation of the Science Council Chair, the Alliance prepared a paper analysing the current set of assessment mechanisms in the System, and proposing improvements in some of these mechanisms. The paper was discussed with the Science Council, during its last meeting. It is being used as an input in the process of designing improvements into the System level assessment process.

3. Challenge Programmes

In preparation for the submission of full proposals for new Challenge Programmes, the Alliance undertook a survey on the lessons learned from the existing Challenge Programmes. These lessons are drawn from the perspective of the Centres (e.g., value addition to on-going research programmes), and complement the lessons drawn by the Science Council and by the Secretariat. Such lessons are essential for designing new Challenge Programmes in an effective manner.

4. Contributions to the Scoping Team and the organisation of the External Review of the System

The Alliance is very active in its participation in the work of the Scoping Team (the Alliance Executive Chair, Emile Frison, is a member who also contributes to the

preparation of documents) and of the advisory group for the External Review (the Alliance Chief Officer, Anne-Marie Izac is a member).

5. Collaboration with FAO

A high level meeting was held between the Director General of FAO, the Alliance leadership and the SC to agree to a collaborative programme between FAO and the Alliance. Seven thematic areas were identified as priorities: Genetics (international Treaty), Policy, Ecosystem services, agricultural biodiversity and conservation agriculture, scaling up and promotion of appropriate technologies and capacity building.

To develop collaborative programmes in each of these areas, the Alliance and FAO held a follow-up meeting to discuss actual implementation for these priorities for collaboration. In particular, the Alliance coordinated with FAO the participation of relevant Centres in the regional meeting on the National Programme on Food Security in Nigeria and will continue to do so for a number of other countries. This is to provide a direct mechanism for mainstreaming Centres' research outputs (improved technologies, practices and institutional arrangements and policies) in the national food security programmes of countries where FAO has been facilitating such programmes. The scaling up effects are expected to be very substantial.

Progress regarding another priority for collaboration –climate change- was made as FAO is one of the partners in the challenge programme involving the Alliance, the global climate change community and a number of key scientific institutions outside of the CGIAR.

6. Collaboration with the private sector

The Alliance is working with members of the Private Sector Committee to implement a collaborative programme of exchange of scientific knowledge and know how, through staff exchanges between Centres and private sector firms, in areas of common interest. When these areas are finalised, we will report on the implementation of this scheme. The aim is to enhance mutual understanding and trust between the private sector and the Centres and to improve efficiency of Research & Development processes through transfer of technologies, knowledge and information to the mutual benefit of all participating parties.

7. Continuing with 'The Way forward'

In order to more effectively contribute to the on-going reform and change management process, and on the basis of the document which was presented at ExCo 12 -'The Way Forward'- the Alliance is engaged in a discussion of the key development challenges

that face agriculture over the coming years. We are also engaged in a more internal discussion on the ways in which the Alliance can increase its own accountability, transparency and effectiveness. We will report on this issue at next ExCo.

8. Disclosure of salaries

The Alliance has designed a process for all Centres to post information about the salary of the DG and the salary scales of their internationally recruited staff in a coherent and transparent manner. As agreed at ExCo 12, the information is being made available on the 'members only' part of the CGIAR website through the CGIAR Secretariat.

TABLE 1. Status of implementation of Framework Plans

Priority		Status of implementation
Area 1	<i>Sustaining biodiversity for current and future generations</i>	
1.A	Staple crops	Completed and submitted.
1.B	Underutilised plant genetic resources	To be completed before the 2008 mid-year Science Council meeting.
1.C	Indigenous livestock	Completed and submitted.
1.D	Acquatic resources	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
Area 2	<i>Producing more and better food at lower cost through genetic improvements</i>	
2.A	Food staples	To be initiated in the second half of 2008.
2.B	Abiotic stress	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
2.C	Nutrition	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
2.D	High value species	Further discussion needed with the Science Council.
Area 3	<i>Reducing rural poverty through agricultural diversification and emerging opportunities for high-value commodities and products</i>	
3.A	Fruit and vegetables	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
3.B	Livestock	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
3.C	Fisheries and aquaculture	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
3.D	Forests and trees	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
Area 4	<i>Promoting poverty alleviation and sustainable management of water, land, and forest resources</i>	
4.A	Landscape level	Further discussion needed with the Science Council.
4.B	Aquatic ecosystem	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
4.C	Water productivity	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
4.D	Agro-ecological intensification	Further discussion needed with the Science Council.
Area 5	<i>Improving policies and facilitating institutional innovation to support sustainable reduction of poverty and hunger</i>	
5.A	For science and technology	To be completed before the 2008 mid-year Science Council meeting.
5.B	Markets for the poor	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
5.C	Rural institutions	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.
5.D	Vulnerability	Currently in draft form to be completed by end of 2007.