

Summary of ExCo 12 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on ILRI EPMR¹

R. Rabbinge presented SC comments on the ILRI EPMR. He congratulated ILRI for a very positive review and highlighted the following points:

- SC is pleased to note that ILRI accepted eight and partially agreed with three of the 11 recommendations on strategic planning and research. SC also noted that considerable progress has been made in implementing the recommendations.
- SC agreed with the panel's recommendation to broaden the geographical coverage of ILRI's research. However, it has to be undertaken through an evolutionary process, and in consultation with national partners.
- SC expressed concerns about the disciplinary imbalance in ILRI staffing citing that economists form a high proportion of the research staff.

N. Datta (CGIAR Secretariat) presented the CGIAR Secretariat's comments on the governance, management and finance aspects of the EPMR. She pointed out the following:

- The CGIAR Secretariat was pleased to note that ILRI has also taken action to implement the EPMR recommendations on governance and management but highlighted the need for the Center's continued focus on strengthening work of the Program Committee, separating the Audit from its Finance Committee and increasing frequency of committee meetings.
- The CGIAR Secretariat encourages ILRI to continue its work on alignment with ICRAF, and also the initiatives it has taken in cultivating a positive organizational culture.
- It was suggested that ILRI continue to strengthen cost recovery from projects, and also its control environment.

Discussion:

- ExCo members congratulated ILRI for a positive external review report. The following points were made during the discussion:
- The value of capacity building and extensive partnerships with NARS was discussed, including how others could learn from ILRI.
- While members recognized the advantages of expanded geographical coverage, a cautious and strategic approach was advised.
- ILRI's position on the research-development continuum debate was noted.
- Given the importance of livestock, the question was raised whether the System places sufficient focus on this sector.

Carlos Sere, ILRI Director General (DG), thanked ExCo for positive feedback. In response to some of the comments, he pointed out that ILRI is a small institute with a huge sector under its mandate. He believes that ILRI will continue to devote significant attention to activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. In implementing the recommendation to

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have a stronger presence in Asia, ILRI has to think about it in a non-traditional CGIAR way. It should be an issues-driven approach, and it should be an Asia-owned and Asia-driven process. On research-development continuum, he argued that the paradigm has to be grounded in an innovation systems approach and has to engage with development partners, not to execute the approach but to provide intellectual input.

On governance issues, he pointed out that the Board Program Committee had already streamlined its process for approving resolutions. The Board has also agreed to commission an external review on governance in 2007 during which the issue of the terms of reference of the Finance and Audit Committees' responsibilities will be examined further.

Conclusion and ExCo Recommendation to the CGIAR:

- *ExCo commended ILRI for a positive EPMR, and recommended that the CGIAR endorse the ILRI EPMR recommendations.*
- *In order to institutionalize knowledge sharing among Centers, ExCo suggested that the Alliance explore ways in which Centers with positive EPMRs share their experiences/practices with other Centers.*