



Report to AGM 2008 from the Alliance of CGIAR Centres

In 2008 the main priority of the Alliance was to foster the emergence of a clear Alliance position in key areas of the Change Management Process (CMP) in order to 'speak with one voice' and in so doing to more effectively contribute to the design of a new CGIAR.

The Alliance and the Change Management Process and Independent Review

Alliance members participated in all of the CMP Working Groups and the Alliance Chair represented the perspectives of the Alliance on the Change Steering Team (CST). Alliance members participated in all the retreats in the change process and in all the stakeholder consultations organized by the Independent Review. In addition, the full Alliance concentrated on pro-actively designing scenarios for the future CGIAR and we did this through various Alliance meetings and consultations. Outputs included Alliance position papers that were circulated to the teams in the change management process.

The Alliance initially discussed the new governance models required to re-position the CGIAR along the new lines proposed by Working Group 1, as well as current System bottlenecks and inefficiencies. It derived a set of principles that must drive the change process for it to be successful. These principles were then used to discuss three system governance scenarios and rank them. An Alliance position paper ensued, outlining the principles, the scenarios and the Alliance's preferred scenario. This position paper was circulated to all the Working Groups in the change process.

The Alliance subsequently analysed the models advocated by the Independent Review and the Governance Working Group in the change process. It came to the conclusion that a 'hybrid' of these two models would be the best way forward for the System. It thus presented the concept of this 'hybrid' model during the stakeholder consultations organised by the Independent Review and the Change Management process in Los Banos. This 'hybrid' governance model meets the criteria and principles which the Alliance considers are the cornerstone of the success of the reform.

These principles include:

- Success requires a strong commitment to change on all parts of the system, captured by a new 'Compact' between Donors and Centres. The 'Compact' is about building an even stronger Global Research Network at the service of the poor, with a broad range of partners. It is based upon mutual accountability between centres and donors for delivering on agreed outcomes
- The international landscape in agricultural research for development has changed; to play a more significant role in global debates we agree there should be a corporate entity and a central entry point in the System
- There should be clear separation between oversight and management responsibilities within the System, with clarity and enforceability.
- Decision making bodies must be empowered to take binding decisions in their area of competence and have authority to ensure implementation
- The System should have increased efficiency through common services and functions to improve their cost/benefit ratio
- The Centres must be able to undertake long-term research, essential for delivering impact
- The principle of subsidiarity should be respected: innovation can not be centrally planned (not a soap factory)
- The new System should be simpler and less bureaucratic than the current one and should not overly centralize programmatic decision making
- The new System should move toward programmatic funding with accountability based on performance contracts
- Our partnerships, both among the Centres and with a wide range of partners, need further strengthening and we would expect a revitalised GFAR to facilitate this further strengthening, at all levels, including with ARIs and the private sector. There is a strong demand for the Centres to undertake more capacity development, and this also calls for a broad range of partnerships.

The Alliance's final recommendation on governance, based upon the above principles, was submitted to the CST.

The Alliance committed itself to further specifying the Consortium part of the model proposed by the CST to the Business Meeting of AGM 08. After ExCo 15, the Alliance designed a process, which it proposed to the CST, for nominating and selecting Board Members and the Chair of the new Consortium Board. The process involves a tri-partite search and selection committee, in which the Alliance, partners and donors are represented. The Alliance also proposed to the CST terms of reference for a consultancy to advise the Alliance on the design of an effective Consortium and for the legal incorporation and draft constitution of this Consortium.

Our intent is to continue working on the design and implementation of the Consortium during 2009, in full congruence with the indicative timeline and deliverables in the CST Report.

During 2008, the Alliance also was involved with the External Review providing significant inputs to the Review, at the request of the Panel. Panel members visited some of the Centres and the Alliance Office, observed a number of Alliance meetings and requested numerous documents from the Alliance. The Alliance's perspective on System level issues was discussed in a totally open manner with the Panel.

Confronting Global Food Price Inflation

The Alliance has continued to focus efforts on global food prices. The work has been taken on two fronts in 2008: a Plan of Action for Confronting Global Food Price Inflation and an inventory of the Centres' 'best bets' for boosting crop yields in sub-Saharan Africa.

A Plan of Action for Confronting Global Food Price Inflation

At ExCo's request, the Alliance worked with the Science Council and the CGIAR Secretariat to produce a plan of action for the current food crisis. This plan of action (now available on the CGIAR website), was presented at the FAO High Level Conference on world food security, climate change and bioenergy (June 2008, Rome) by the Chair of the Alliance Executive, during one of the plenary sessions of the High Level Conference. This undertaking has further enhanced the partnership between FAO and the Alliance. The resulting press release and Alliance Action Plan on the Food Crisis have contributed to a greater recognition of the importance of agricultural research and of the role of the CGIAR, as noted by speeches and remarks by the President of the World Bank and the G8 summit in Japan.

The Action Plan proposes as immediate actions for the Alliance to work closely with FAO, IFAD, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and small- and medium-scale agro enterprises to assist national agricultural research and extension systems in stepping up the dissemination of 'best-bets', such as higher yielding crop varieties and livestock and fish breeds and more effective and sustainable soil and water management practices and appropriate policies.

In the medium term the Alliance will work with its partners and the FAO, IFAD, United Nations and World Bank in strengthening support for agricultural research and extension systems as well as farmers' organisations. Other options such as generating more productive crops and animals that show greater resilience in the face of changing climatic conditions and pest and disease pressures; more integrated approaches to achieve sustainable increases in agricultural productivity; equitable policies and institutional arrangements that enable small farmers to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, will be supported by Alliance research.

In the longer term, the Alliance will apply science, in collaboration with its partners, to combat emerging diseases in crops, livestock, fisheries and tree-

based systems; to develop viable alternatives to deforestation, while seeking to intensify agricultural production on land already under cultivation. It will also work to strengthen capacity in the agricultural sciences. Finally, it will work with international partners to secure increased investment in agricultural research and rural infrastructure at the national and international levels.

'Best' Bets to Boost Crop Yields in sub-Saharan Africa

The Alliance entered into a dialogue with the World Bank to document currently available 'best bet' technologies to boost crop yields in Africa. After a series of consultations, up to ten of each Centre's most promising 'best bets' for boosting crop yields in sub-Saharan Africa have been identified and fully documented. The data collected for each of these 'best bets' have been categorized under specific fields to facilitate integration into an e-database. The documentation of CGIAR 'best bet' technologies to boost crop yields in sub-Saharan Africa has been accepted by the World Bank and further interest on this database has been shown by FAO and FARA.

Collective Action

The Alliance is a focal point for enhancing collective spirit and action and provides a systematic basis for participation in collective action among the Centres and with other agencies on major global agricultural, forestry, fisheries and water issues for which no one Centre could deliver alone. The Alliance continues to foster more coherent and systematic collection action among the Centres and their partners and disseminate this information both within and outside of the CGIAR System. Recognizing the need to ensure that the collective action of the Alliance of CGIAR Centres is more rigorously captured, the Alliance approved steps and principles for creating and implementing collective actions that provide for a simple, low cost and transparent process for all collective actions with the Alliance 'brand'. An inventory of the Alliance collective actions has been started and will be further reviewed and made widely available within the next few months.

Challenge Programs

The Alliance continued to coordinate the preparation of the three proposals for new Challenge Programs (CP). Internal processes were put in place to ensure that new innovative science – and associated partnerships – that add value to the on-going CGIAR agenda would drive the preparation of the proposals.

In preparation for the submission of full proposals, the Alliance undertook a survey of lessons learned from the existing Challenge Programs. These lessons, drawn from the perspective of the Centres (e.g. value addition to on-going research programs), complemented the lessons drawn by the Science Council

and by the Secretariat. The Alliance paper on lessons learned and the proposal of more effective mechanisms for new CPs was taken onboard by the three new CP proposals. The Challenge Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCCP) was approved by the Science Council. It initiates a new scientific collaboration between the Alliance and the Earth System Science Partnership. Professor Thomas Rosswall was nominated and has accepted the position of Chair of the CCCP Steering Committee. The process for nominating and selecting members for the Steering Committee is underway and is expected to be finalized shortly. Also in process is the recruitment of a Director and a call for expressions of interest in hosting the newest Challenge Program.

Climate Change

In preparation for the Climate Change Initiative which Kathy Sierra launched in Bali, the Alliance prepared an inventory and an analysis of the on-going work of Centres on climate change and agriculture. The current research agenda of the CGIAR on climate change and agriculture represents a significant research effort on key issues in current international discussions and negotiations. The analytical synthesis of Centres on-going activities on climate change produced by the Alliance has increased overall recognition of the extent and value of climate change research in the CGIAR.

Regional Plans for collective action in sub-Saharan Africa

The Regional Plans for Collective Action are based upon the shared interest, among the Alliance Centres and partners to increase the impact of agricultural research in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The agreed overriding goal of the Regional Plans is to foster the emergence of a coordinated, cohesive program of agricultural research that produces clear economies of scale and scope at low transaction costs, in order to successfully address regional priorities.

During 2008, the Alliance has furthered linkages between these two regional plans and the Conference of Leaders of Agricultural Research in West and Central Africa (CORAF) and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA). Both plans were presented at the annual general meeting of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and have been formally endorsed by FARA as contributing to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) and the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP).

As far as research on rice is concerned, CIAT, IRRI and WARDA have identified areas of common intervention in the rice sector in Africa through a collaborative program. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the three Directors General to provide a framework of common understanding for the work of the CGIAR on rice in Africa.

A coordination and management plan has also been conceived under a sub-Saharan Africa Rice Research Consortium (SARC) which will liaise with already

existing networks in ESA (Eastern and Central Africa Rice Research Network - ECARRN) and WCA (West and Central Africa Rice Research Network - ROCARIZ) to provide a sustainable access to the National Research Programs already in place in Africa.

Strengthening Partnerships

The Alliance is a focal point for enhancing corporate spirit and action and provides a systematic basis for participation in collective action with sister Centres and other agencies on major global agricultural, forestry, fisheries and water issues for which no one Centre could deliver alone. Major collaborations in 2008 that have been strengthened are with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Forum for the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technology Development (FORAGRO)

Collaboration with FARA

A FARA-CGIAR consultation was co-organised by the Alliance and FARA to improve collaboration and collective action in sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of the consultation (held September 2008) was to increase understanding and harmonize research initiatives from FARA and from the Alliance in Africa, with a special focus on those involving collective action. The consultation was also aimed at strengthening partnership and alignment to the overall agenda of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development program (CAADP).

The consultation identified a number of concrete areas (e.g., need to align the work of the Centres with the CAADP frame, need to set up a mechanism to systematically engage the Alliance in more effective roles in the various structures of FARA and CAADP, need to more systematically communicate with FARA and better participate in FARA Forum activities,...) where agreement is needed for progress to be made. The outputs of this consultation have been used to prepare a high level meeting between FARA and the Alliance leadership at AGM 2008, to come to a more formal agreement on how the Centres and FARA will be mutually accountable in this new phase of their partnership.

Collaboration with FORAGRO

The Alliance had a strong presence at the Fifth International Meeting of FORAGRO, Montevideo 2008 (Institutional innovations for Agriculture with Knowledge in the Americas in the 21st century). The Alliance has decided to strengthen its collaboration with FORAGRO most notably through the DECLARATION OF MONTEVIDEO 2008 in which it was agreed *“To promote a renewed agenda of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and to specifically coordinate the development of elements for the strategic repositioning of LAC in the CGIAR and new strategic partnerships with the International Centres on priority topics for research and*

technological innovation that have an impact on agriculture and food security in LAC.”

The Alliance has been discussing the need to develop regional strategies for the sub-regions where we work and the LAC region is an obvious prime candidate for such a development. The Alliance will hold substantive discussions on this, with its partners, early in 2009.

Collaboration with FAO

The Alliance continues to build the partnership with FAO initiated, in part, through the actions in 2007 at the high level meeting held between the Director General of FAO and the Alliance leadership to agree to a collaborative program between FAO and the Alliance. Progress regarding a priority for FAO-Alliance collaboration -climate change- was made as FAO is one of the partners in the new Challenge Programme on climate change. The Alliance contributed to the preparation and organization of the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy in June 2008 and sits on the Steering Committee of the FAO International Conference on the use of biotechnologies for food and agriculture in developing countries (2009).

Enhancing the quality and impact of research in the CGIAR

The Alliance is a channel for consolidated Centres' contributions to areas of programmatic planning and design.

Development of Framework Plans for the System Priorities

Scientists from the Centres worked together to prepare, under the guidance of the Alliance Centres Deputy Directors for Science, twelve framework plans for twenty of the Systems priorities. These plans result from a consultative process including main CGIAR actors, and sometimes partners and global experts in the field. The plans describe the CGIAR's research role in the context of global initiatives and cutting edge research being carried out elsewhere, by agencies, industry, advanced research institutes and national agricultural research systems.

Performance Measurement

The Alliance has contributed actively to the ongoing evolution of the CGIAR performance measurement system (PMS). Discussion and analysis has resulted in recommendations for improving the credibility and usefulness of the system whilst streamlining it. These recommendations have been discussed with both the Science Council and the CGIAR Secretariats and the Alliance continues to work to provide constructive feedback for the improvement of the PMS.

Data Management

Empirical data from field and laboratory observation are, when connected with secondary information, the raw material of all Alliance research outputs. They are therefore very valuable, yet it has been increasingly recognized that they are looked after in a sometimes casual way. Compared with our financial data the CGIAR has few standards or recognized good practices of data management, relatively few professional staff responsible, few incentives for good performance and no indicators of success.

The Alliance has supported a process with those responsible for management of research data in different centres to discuss common problems and solutions. Arising from these consultations have been the articulation of ten principles of research data management and the development of a strategic and action paper on data management in the Alliance aimed at identifying what needs to change at system and centres levels and potential impact and methods of including 'data publication' in the CGIAR Performance Measurement System.

Intellectual Assets and Genetic Resources

The Alliance has discussed four strategy issue papers prepared by the GRPC. The objective of the new policies is to establish common standards and procedures for CGIAR Centres regarding the acquisition, management and release of intellectual assets. The four issues include:

- A policy of the Alliance of CGIAR Centres on intellectual assets: The Alliance has reviewed and commented upon a draft policy proposed by the Genetic Resources Policy Committee
- A policy of the Alliance of CGIAR Centres concerning distribution of materials for non-food/non-feed related research or direct use: Derived from background studies concerning the distribution, by Centres, of materials for non-food/non-feed related purposes the Alliance has considered a policy that states that the Centres should distribute materials for non-food/non-feed purposes with a unique MTA (developed by adapting the existing SMTA)
- Guidelines for the Alliance of CGIAR Centres' germplasm acquisition: The GRPC has coordinated the development for Alliance consideration of draft 'Guidelines for Germplasm Acquisition Agreements'
- Guidelines for the Alliance of CGIAR Centres on the acquisition and use of Traditional Knowledge by CGIAR scientists: A first draft of these guidelines has been prepared, considered and revised by the GRPC, commented on by the ICWG-GR and further revised for the consideration and approval of the Alliance.

Further to the discussions at ExCo15 (October 2008), the policy proposal is on the agenda of the Alliance meeting in Maputo.