

Summary of ExCo 15 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on Independent Review of the CGIAR System¹

CGIAR Independent Review Panel Chair Elizabeth McAllister presented the findings and recommendations of the Panel's report "Bringing Together the Best of Science and the Best of Development."

The objectives of the review were to:

- Take stock and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the CGIAR partnership and governance;
- Assess the effectiveness of CGIAR research; and
- Recommend changes in the CGIAR System to improve effectiveness in view of emerging challenges for food security, agriculture, and natural resource management for the poor.

Findings

The Panel presented its key findings as follows:

1. The CGIAR-supported Centers contribute substantially to agricultural productivity and natural resource management;
2. The CGIAR and Centers need to take a more strategic approach to partnership;
3. The Centers have made progress in addressing intellectual property protection, but more needs to be done;
4. Gender and diversity is not adequately integrated into Centers' research mandates and outreach;
5. The Centers are in a quiet financial crisis; and
6. Dysfunctional governance and management constrain the System's potential.

Discussion:

- ExCo members congratulated the Review Panel on a comprehensive and very useful report that has helped enrich the Change Management process.
- The review was overly negative about CPs, which, in ExCo's view and as supported by each CP's external review, have had positive outcomes in terms of partnerships and in addressing problems through application of new tools of science.
- The report also did not sufficiently address the role of GFAR.
- The review could also have examined the external environment more closely to understand better the changes that have taken place in agricultural research since the founding of the CGIAR, what shifts need to take place, and where the CGIAR fits into the overall picture, e.g. the role of the CGIAR in the multilateral system.
- The review could have benefited from more data/analysis on impact assessment at the System level, and not only at the Center level.

¹ Excerpt from Fifteenth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 1 – 2, 2008) Summary Record of Proceedings, October 27, 2008.

- A question was raised on why there has been success in achieving impact in Asia but not Africa.
- ExCo welcomed the Independent Review's comments on gender issues and was happy to see the importance of partnerships emphasized in the review.
- The findings of the review should be used to carefully consider how the CGIAR can most effectively use its existing funding, and determine how it would use additional funding it may receive in the future.
- The Panel responded to some of the issues raised. It agreed that CPs have positive aspects in terms of scientific achievement, and establishment of useful partnerships. However, the Panel also noted that financial management and governance systems currently in place are problematic and should be audited. The Panel also believes CPs should strive to diversify its donor funding base. A section on GFAR was included in the report and support to a revitalized GFAR was recommended. The Panel was encouraged by GFAR's new leadership and the potential role it can play. It was clarified that the full technical report examines more fully the external environment and the assessment that needs to be undertaken to determine how and where the CGIAR System fits in the international architecture vis-à-vis FAO, WFP, World Bank and other organizations. This is crucial to future establishment of delivery mechanisms for international public goods in Africa, where impact has lagged due to a lack of such mechanisms. The Panel agreed that more work needs to be done on impact at the System level. However, its TOR were limited to a meta-review of existing materials produced by SC and other studies.

Recommendations

The Review Panel's report made five overarching recommendations for renewing the CGIAR System:

1. Rebalance the Center-donor partnership to sustain the CGIAR's unique contributions:
 - a. The CGIAR System should separate governance and management functions. The roles of donors and management should be separated to avoid conflicts of interest. The management responsibility for operations should be separated from oversight.
 - b. The donors should establish a CGIAR Fund for Agricultural Research as a new channel for predictable, unrestricted funding to Centers and restricted funding to programs. Money should be allocated from the Fund to Centers and to programs in a rules based manner, partly according to performance. In deciding how much grant funding to channel through the pooled Fund, the donors should keep in mind their Paris Declaration commitment to provide two-thirds of their development aid on a program rather than a project grant basis by 2010.
 - c. The Centers should strengthen their institutions for common action by consolidating common services, common policy and strategy, and program administration in a jointly owned Consortium.

- d. Both donors and Centers should set up decision making procedures based on clear authorities and shared strategic objectives. Nonbinding approaches to decision making are no longer adequate for a collective enterprise that spends half a billion dollars of public money annually, resources set to increase substantially if the foregoing actions are taken.
2. Establish a legally structured Consortium of Centers that should:
 - a. Improve financial management and financial reporting.
 - b. Simplify the Challenge Programs to focus on Center-led consortia.
 - c. Establish common services such as strategic communications, financial and results management systems internal audit, information technology, and properly equipped human resources function.
 - d. Centers should develop a common strategy to protect their internally generated intellectual property and know-how, including filing their own patent applications.
3. Establish a CGIAR Fund for Agricultural Research; its functions would include:
 - a. Establishing a multiyear financing mechanism on the lines recommended in this report and based on the Monterrey principles of good donorship (adequacy and predictability of financing and mutual accountability for results).
 - b. Approving transfers from the Fund to the Consortium based on agreed schedules, performance based indicators, targeted milestones and reviews of the specific program proposals that would follow from the agreed strategic framework.
 - c. Ensuring accountability and standards of due diligence over all funds held and assigned to the Consortium.
4. Support the Consortium and CGIAR Fund with a science advisory board and an independent evaluation unit, with at least three common institutions:
 - a. A joint strategy and results framework developed for the inaugural conference and renewed preferably as part of replenishment like negotiations on a triennial basis.
 - b. An independent evaluation unit, reporting to the council of the Fund, but working closely with the board of the Consortium as well.
 - c. A committee of eminent advisors that form a science advisory board. It might be called the Science Council, as at present, or perhaps something broader if the inaugural conference decides to include anti-poverty expertise as well as science expertise.
5. The Consortium and the CGIAR Fund together take a more strategic approach to partnerships with other actors in the production and delivery of international public goods.
 - a. Within the balanced partnership model, the Panel recommends as the highest priority for partnership development in the CGIAR, that

partnerships be approached as integral components of a medium-term strategy and results framework.

- b. The Panel recommends that the CGIAR donor community and the governments of developing countries approach the needs of Africa systemically by assuring adequate provision for institution and capacity building in a CGIAR-NARS-ARIs partnership.
- c. The Panel also recommends the establishment of a separate financing facility as a contingency fund for partnership opportunities, not envisaged in the strategic framework.
- d. The Panel recommends a facilitated high-level dialogue with Chatham House rules among representatives of CSOs, the private sector, representatives of Centers and the Consortium, and independent experts on intellectual property rights.
- e. The Panel recommends the CGIAR continue to apply its new policy for building partnerships with NGOs.
- f. The Panel recommends expansion of the Gender and Diversity AWARD Program into a global scientific capacity-building program for women and Group 2 nationals.

On the issues of gender and diversity, the Panel also highlighted the need to move from advocacy to accountability model in tackling gender issues in research. In addition to expansion of the AWARD Program, the Panel suggested that IFPRI, together with the Systemwide program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA), develop a gender policy with a results framework for inclusion in the first Consortium strategy. One of the first mega-programs should also focus on gender to reap productivity gains and increase well-being of families.

Discussion:

- How is accountability to the poor achieved, as well as accountability between the Consortium and donors?
- More details on the Fund recommendation are needed. Many of the Panel's recommendations on the Fund and finance are very similar to those of Working Group 4 of the Change Management process.
- It's not clear why the Panel believes programmatic funding will be successful now, when it has not been very successful in the past.
- The recommendations in terms of gender issues were highly appreciated.
- Further clarifications were requested on how the Panel sees the role of the System in the debate over upstream science vs. downstream delivery.
- The recommendation on independent evaluation was welcome, but there needs to be a strong link between *ex post* evaluation and *ex ante* planning.
- Establishing a Consortium of Centers seems to go counter to the call to open up the System.
- Advice was also sought from the Review Panel on the critical factors for success in the Change Management process.
- In response to ExCo's comments, the Panel clarified that the CPs have been successful in science and creating partnerships. The Panel's criticisms of the CPs

were focused on issues of financial management, risk, and organization. The Panel also agreed that GFAR needs to be revitalized. On the upstream/downstream debate, the Panel noted that it is not appropriate to fund Centers to do delivery, since so many other delivery organizations and funders are already doing that. However, there is a need for the CGIAR to work more closely with complementary resources and organizations and for the CGIAR to articulate the line between the upstream and downstream. On the Fund, the Panel believes that it should be a new strategic body to raise funds.

Conclusion and ExCo Recommendations to the CGIAR:

- *ExCo congratulated and thanked the Independent Review Panel for the report, for its depth, and for the professionalism in conducting the evaluation.*
- *ExCo expressed broad agreement at the highest level with the Panel's recommendations. There is, however, no total agreement in terms of some of the sub-recommendations. That will have to be fleshed out to see which ones are to be adopted and which ones are to be modified as the CGIAR goes forward. Many of the issues will be discussed in more detail during the CGIAR Change Management Process discussion.*
- *ExCo will prepare a CGIAR response to be submitted for CGIAR approval at AGM08, where the report will be discussed by the full CGIAR.*
- *The CGIAR Secretariat was requested to prepare a draft CGIAR response to the report based on ExCo comments by October 24, 2008, and submit to ExCo for virtual endorsement prior to discussion at AGM08.*
- *The report will also be submitted to the World Bank's Development Grant Facility.*