

Fourth CGIAR System Office Workshop

**21/22 October 2005
Stockholm, Sweden**

Summary Results from the Workshop



November 2, 2005

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Summary Results from the Workshop

The fourth System Office workshop was held in Stockholm, Sweden, on October 21-22, 2005. All System Office (SO) units were represented either by the unit head or a designate. The System Office Steering Committee was represented by two members – Kanayo Nwanze (CDC representative) and Francisco Reifschneider (CGIAR Director). Maria Iskandarani served as focal point in the CGIAR Secretariat, responsible for the overall organization of the workshop (please see Annex 1 for the complete list of participants).

The overall purpose of the workshop was to further strengthen the SO as an entity, with particular focus on

- sharing experience, expectations and lessons learnt from operating under the System Office umbrella;
- identifying emerging opportunities and service needs in the CGIAR System, and discuss and agree on collaborative service activities in 2006 for meeting those needs;
- review options for approaching impact assessment of the System Office as a whole.

The workshop was preceded by a half-day informal inter-unit consultation in preparation for the workshop.

Key results from the workshop

1. What have we learnt from operating under the System Office umbrella?

The System Office Business Case was developed in 2002 and identified three goals for the System Office: (1) Increasing efficiency, (2) Reducing cost, (3) Increase funding for the System as a whole.

Vicki Wilde (G&D) facilitated a discussion of the group about the goals and the perceived positives and negatives of the current operation of the SO.

The following key positive aspects of the System Office were mentioned:

- improved information flow across SO service units (e.g. regular teleconferences);
- intellectual exchange;
- increased communication and familiarity about all SO units work, which allows the single unit to better see opportunities and needs of servicing the CGIAR System;
- operating under the SO “identity” helps in the daily work of a single unit.

Concerns and frustrations were raised about:

- current governance set-up of CDC funded SO units;
- matching aspirations with what is eventually accomplished, or is financially possible;
- some lack in collective spirit, and “true” and full participation in the SO by all units;
- need to build more trust among units;
- finding a good balance in info-sharing across units;
- transaction cost of the SO and understanding the limits - or can/should transaction cost be considered as investment?

2. Systems Office work plan 2006 – collaboration and coordination

a. Collaborative Management Services in 2006 – with special consideration of the Virtual Resource Center (VRC) and alignment of other shared management services (e.g. expertise and contacts databases).

Enrica Porcari (CIO) introduced to the group the structure and features of the new VRC (i.e. intranet), which will be launched at AGM '05. The group commented and advised the CIO on selected planned features, and agreed that the VRC should include a System Office “community space”, which could be built up and populated over time.

Vicki Wilde (G&D) introduced the *Inclusive Workplace E- Resources Center* and Jason Yauney (CGIAR Secretariat) gave a demo of the *CGIAR Contacts Database*. Both applications will be linked to the VRC.

b. Communication and Resource Mobilization Services in 2006

Facilitated by Fionna Douglas (CGIAR Secretariat), the group brainstormed about changes in the SO broad working environment that may have an effect CGIAR communication by the CGIAR Secretariat and the Marketing Group (MG), and therefore should be considered in the system-wide communication strategy. Resulting from this exercise four collaborative activities were identified for responding to internal and external needs:

	Collaborative activities agreed for 2006	SO units
1.	Communication of System Priorities	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec with MG
2.	Communication of CGIAR engagement with CSOs, including preparatory communication work for the CSO Forum at AGM '06	CGIAR Sec, ICT-KM with MG
3.	Communication of CGIAR M&E work, including performance measurement, reflecting the CGIAR efforts in meeting accountability and transparency needs	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec
4.	Communication of System Office collective activities	CGIAR Sec in collaboration with all SO units

Secondly, the group discussed the System Office presence at AGM'05, particularly the System Office booth in the exhibition area. The group concluded:

- The System Office booth would have 16 posters – one poster per unit, two introduction posters on the System Office, and 7 posters on collaborative activities of the System Office. For the latter, selected unit members will take the lead in developing the content of the posters:

Collaborative activities	Responsibility
Virtual Resources Center	Enrica Porcari
Monitoring and Evaluation	Jenny Nasr and Maria Iskandarani
Support to FARA	John Fitzsimon
Scientific and Knowledge Exchange Program (SKEP)	Selcuk Ozgediz
Inclusive Workplace E- Resources Center	Vicki Wilde
Staff training and other capacity building efforts	Vicki Wilde
Risk management systems	John Fitzsimon and Victoria Henson-Apollonio

- Deadline for submission of the poster information to the CGIAR Secretariat for both – the individual unit poster and the poster on collective activities – is **October 28** (final version no later than Nov. 4). The CGIAR Secretariat will ensure a harmonized outlay and the printing for AGM.

c. Strategic Planning and Development

The group reviewed ongoing activities and identified emerging opportunities for strengthening the CGIAR system as whole.

Ongoing collaborative activities that continue in 2006:

- support to the implementation strategy of the CGIAR Priorities (SC Sec/CGIAR Sec);
- strengthening the relationship with private sector/SKEP – follow-up activities (CGIAR Sec, FHAO, CAS-IP).

New opportunities

- support the MTP development process, in particular the consistent use of logframe terminology and the alignment of MTP and Financial Plan (support the MTP development process, in particular the consistent use of logframe terminology and the alignment of MTP and Financial Plan);
- support to CGIAR-CSO engagement (CGIAR Sec/SC Sec/FHAO);
- mobilizing women in agricultural sciences (G&D, SC Sec, CGIAR Sec);
- initiate dialogue on hybrid IP regimes with IP experts (CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, FHAO, CAS-IP);
- develop Center alliance principles and procedures (FHAO, CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP);
- develop good practice notes
– finalize note on ICT-KM, Human Resources Management (IAU, CIO, SAS-HR)

- develop note on IP risks (IAU, CAS-IP)
- “whistle blowing” guide on grievance and harassments (IAU, G&D, SAS-HR)
- HR and HIV (G&D, SAS-HR);
- initiate the update of Board guidelines (CGIAR Sec,G&D, IAU, CAS-IP, SC Sec);
- assignment of rights (CAS-IP, SAS-HR);
- facilitate the development of a new ICT-KM investment plan (CIO in collaboration with all other units).

d. Monitoring and Evaluation

Ruben Echeverria (SC Secretariat) introduced this discussion item as the last of the four pillars of the SO work plan. After a discussion the group agreed on the following collaborative activities in 2006:

- update and expand CGIAR Project Portfolio Database (SC Sec/CGIAR Sec/CIO/FHAO);
- update EPMP Guidelines (SC Sec, CGIAR Sec);
- strengthen search process for membership on EPMP panels (SC Sec, CGIAR Sec, FHAO, G&D);
- support the development and implementation of a Performance Measurement for Challenge Programs (CGIAR Sec, SC Sec);
- develop guidelines for improved verification of Center performance measures (CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, IAU, FHAO);
- initiate dialogue on streamlining bilateral M&E needs (CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, FHAO);
- support to Centers in further developing risk management systems (IAU in collaboration with all units):
 - information risk management and IP risks
 - initiate collective analysis of shared risks
 - compliance with emerging donor requirements;
- develop and conduct a new “HR Census” for the CGIAR (G&D, SAS-HR);

e. Agreed deadlines for Integrated Operating Plan 2006 and SO Annual Report

Units agreed to submit by **January 30** their contributions to the IOP 2006 and the SO Annual Report.

- **IOP 2006** : (1) finalized table with activities, financial input and planned outputs (2) unit work plan summary, (3) planned budget by object-line-item.
- **Annual Report 2005**: (1) narrative report of three key program accomplishments/outcomes for 2005, (2) table of activities, actual inputs, and actual outputs measured against earlier set targets.

Maria Iskandarani, focal point for the SO, will send the necessary templates by **November 7**.

3. Exchange with System Office Steering Committee

The objective of this session was to have an open discussion between the unit heads and the Steering Committee on SO policy issues. The following matters were discussed:

- *Establishment of a new System Office unit: the Media Unit*
Francisco Reifschneider briefed unit heads about the establishment of a Media Units, which will complement the work of the System Office. The Media Unit will provide expert media relations and outreach support to the seven CGIAR Centers, raising the profile of the Centers and CGIAR System in influential media outlets while also strengthening media and message delivery capacity of Centers. The unit will be hosted by ILRI in Nairobi.
- *The developing profile of the System Office and its gradual movement in responding to system needs as an entity.*
- *Governance and budget approval process for selected SO units – G&D, CIO, CAS-IP*
Concern was raised by G&D and CIO about the budget approval process by CDC, as there appears to be a disconnect between program oversight and decision making responsibilities in terms of the financing of the programs. Program oversight lies with the DG of the hosting Center for G&D and with the CGIAR Director and the DG of the hosting Center in the case of CIO. Budget proposals to CDC, however, have to be sent to CDDC, who eventually makes a recommendation to CDC concerning the approval of the program budget. The concern is that there is a knowledge gap about the System Office and its working plan among CDDC members, and therefore subsequent recommendations to CDDC may be based on incomplete information.

Kanayo Nwanze indicated that a “System Office liaison and coordination sub-committee of CDC” was established (Chaired by the CDC representative on the Steering Committee of the System Office and composed of the hosting Center DG’s), which should allow a more consistent oversight of the CDC funded SO units. The committee is requested to revisit the oversight matter.

It was also suggested that the presentation by the individual units to CDDC could be preceded by an overall presentation on the System Office for providing a better understanding of the context and the vision of the SO.

The group agreed that, if at all possible, the CGIAR Director or a designate could do this brief presentation to the CDDC in Marrakech.

4. How to approach impact assessment of the System Office?

John Fitzsimon (IAU) introduced this topic and facilitated the group through a brainstorming session on how to approach impact assessment of the SO. The group agreed that there are multiple examples and cases in the work of the SO that can be examined in a study (e.g. cost-benefit analysis) and can serve as evidence for gaining increased efficiency in the CGIAR through the work of the SO.

Agreed next steps:

The SC Sec in collaboration with the CGIAR Sec will draft ToRs for the assessment of the System Office, which will be shared with all SO unit heads for comments. The CGIAR Director will explore options for financing the study.

5. Summary of deadlines and agreed collaborative activities in 2006

a. Deadlines

- **October 28** - Deadline for submission of poster information to the CGIAR Secretariat for both – the individual unit poster and the poster on collective activities.
- **November 7** – Maria Iskandarani submits templates for IOP 2006 and SO Annual Report 2005
- **January 30** - Deadline for submissions of unit contributions to the IOP 2006 and the SO Annual Report 2005.

b. Agreed collaborative activities in 2006

	Collaborative activities agreed for 2006	SO units
	Communication and Resource Mobilization	
1.	Communication of System Priorities	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec with MG
2.	Communication of CGIAR engagement with CSOs, including preparatory communication work for the CSO Forum at AGM '06	CGIAR Sec, ICT-KM with MG
3.	Communication of CGIAR M&E work, including performance measurement, reflecting the CGIAR efforts in meeting accountability and transparency needs	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec
4.	Communication of System Office collective activities	CGIAR Sec in collaboration with all SO units
	Strategic Planning and Development	
5	Support the MTP development process, in particular the consistent use of logframe terminology and the alignment of MTP and Financial Plan	SC Sec and CGIAR Sec
6	Support to CGIAR-CSO engagement	CGIAR Sec/SC Sec/FHAO;
7	Mobilizing women in agricultural sciences	G&D, SC Sec, CGIAR Sec
8	Initiate dialogue on hybrid IP regimes with IP experts	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, FHAO, CAS-IP
9	Develop Center alliance principles and procedures	FHAO, CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP
10	Develop good practice notes on certain issues	All units
11	Initiate the update of Board Guidelines	CGIAR Sec,G&D, IAU, CAS-IP, SC Sec
12	Assignment of rights	CAS-IP, SAS-HR
13	Facilitate the development of a new ICT-KM investment plan	CIO in collab. with all units
	Monitoring and Evaluation	
14	Update and expand CGIAR Project Portfolio Database	SC Sec/CGIAR Sec/CIO/FHAO
15	Update EPMR Guidelines	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec
16	Strengthen search process for membership on EPMR panels	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec, FHAO, G&D
17	Support the development and implementation of a Performance Measurement for Challenge Programs	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec
18	Develop guidelines for improved verification of Center performance measures	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, IAU, FHAO
19	Initiate dialogue on streamlining bilateral M&E needs	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, FHAO
20	Support to Centers in further developing risk management systems	IAU in collaboration with all units
21	Develop and conduct a new "HR Census" for the CGIAR	G&D, SAS-HR

Annex 1

List of Participants for SO workshop - October 2005

System Office unit Heads

Name of SO Unit heads	SO unit
Ruben Echeverria	Science Council Secretariat
John Fitzsimon	Internal Audit Unit (IAU)
Victoria Henson-Apollonio	Central Advisory Service on Intellectual Property (CAS-IP)
Enrica Porcari	Chief Information Officer (CIO)
Francisco Reifschneider	CGIAR Secretariat
Vicki Wilde	Gender and Diversity Program (G&D)
Kerri Wright-Platais (attended instead of Meryl Williams)	Future Harvest Alliance Office (FHAO)

Steering Committee¹

Kanayo Nwanze	CDC representative to the SO
Francisco Reifschneider	CGIAR Director

Other Participants

Fionna Douglas	CGIAR Secretariat
Maria Iskandarani	CGIAR Secretariat – Focal Point for SO
Jenny Nasr	SC Secretariat
Selcuk Ozgediz	CGIAR Secretariat
Shey Tata	CGIAR Secretariat

¹ Per Pinstrup-Anderson (Chair of the Science Council) is member of the Steering Committee, but was unable to attend the workshop.