

Fifth CGIAR System Office Workshop

20 October 2006

Paris, France

Summary Results from the Workshop



November, 10 2006

5th System Office Workshop

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1. Introduction

The fifth System Office (SO) workshop was hosted in Paris, France, on October 20, 2006 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Among the participants were all System Office Unit heads and two members of the Steering Committee (see annex 1). The meeting was formally opened by Pascal Bergeret (General Directorate of Education and Research, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries).

The overall purpose of the workshop was

1. to discuss the follow up actions of the System Office Review Report
2. to plan collaborative activities of the System Office for 2007.

As part of a round of self introductions, special note was given to the two newest unit heads of the System Office: Catherine Mgendei (Media Unit) and Unni Vennemoe (Strategic Advisory Service on Human Resources).

2. Follow-up to System Office Review

The System Office Steering Committee commissioned a System Office Review in 2006 to assess whether the System Office, as a virtual structure, helped to increase coordination, capture synergies and increase overall performance of central service units that support the Centres and the CGIAR System as a whole. Maria Iskandarani presented the key findings of the review and reiterated the Steering Committee's request to use the System Office workshop for developing follow-up actions, particularly on the following findings/recommendations:

- **Recommendation 12:** While the SO should not produce a common strategic plan, it should develop a more strategic approach. The SO should identify the strategic goals it aims to achieve in each of its four functional areas. This would involve only a subset of the SO units in each function. Many of the existing activities that are classified as falling within each function would not be covered.
- **Recommendation 16:** The G & D and the SAS-HR units should negotiate a formal protocol that identifies their separate spheres of activity and those areas where they will work jointly.
- **Recommendation 13:** Performance indicators should be developed once the SO has identified strategic objectives and outcomes for each of the four SO functions.

It was noted that the System Office is an evolving entity and it was agreed that with the improved operational activities the System Office can now work on clearer definitions of the goals and collaborative synergies across units. It was also agreed that strategic goals should be clearly defined for each thematic area and that key performance indicators be developed.

Actions:

- The SC Secretariat with the help of the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation of the Science Council will develop a small set of System Office performance indicators (2-3 indicators) to assess effectiveness, efficiency, and if possible innovation and change management of the SO. It was noted that fewer valid indicators would be preferable to multiple indicators. These indicators should be included in the next Integrated Operating Plan (2007).
- In order to address the recommendation on the HR-SAS and the G & D Units, the two units will negotiate a joint protocol to identify their respective spheres of activities in the next 3-4 months
- The HR-SAS and the G & D will prepare clearly articulated explanations of the specific roles of each of the units for inclusion in the System Office Annual Report of 2006.
- Lessons from the various organizational models of SO units (e.g. servicing all Centers versus a subset of Centers) should be documented, including risks, advantages and disadvantages of the different models. The group agreed that this could be included in the think piece on governance of the System Office vis-à-vis the governance of the individual units that is going to be prepared by the CGIAR Secretariat as agreed by the CGIAR Director with the AE Sub-Committee on System Office at their meeting on October 17, 2006.

In conclusion, it was noted that the SO review is very much based on anecdotal evidence and shows some analytical weakness and lacks any views and input from CGIAR members. The review should be therefore considered as a report on work in progress of the SO rather than a comprehensive review.

3. Streamlining the Preparation of the Integrated Operating Plan (IOP) and Annual Report of the System Office

Participants discussed ways to improve the structure and format of the Integrated Office Plan (IOP) for the System Office in 2007, while ensuring adequate accountability and transparency about SO activities, performance and finance.

The group agreed that

- the 2007 IOP will focus on reporting collaborative activities (involving two or more units) along the four main strategic areas of activities of the System Office Units.
- Individual units will have to ensure that their individual activities, planned outputs and budgets are still presented in a standardized format and web-linked with to the main IOP.

Actions:

Maria Iskandarani will prepare a revised reporting template for use by all System Office units (to be distributed by December 30, 2006). The following deadlines have been agreed:

- January 30, 2007: submission of inputs for IOP 2007
- April 30, 2007: submission of inputs for SO Annual Report

4. System Office Work Plan 2007

a. Strategic Planning and Development

Ruben Echeverria (SC Secretariat) facilitated the group's discussion in identifying strategic goals and joint activities under the SO functional cluster "Strategic Planning and Development".

Two initial strategic goals were identified, but it was clear that this discussion needed to be continued. The two initial goals are the following:

- Support to the implementation of the CGIAR System Priorities
- Development and implementation of an integrated CGIAR staff development plan

The following collaborative activities were identified for 2007:

	Collaborative activities agreed for 2007 – SP&D	SO units
1.	Development of Framework Plans for System Priorities (e.g. organization of planning workshops, on-line discussion platform)	SC Sec, AO, CIO CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP
2.	Support to Member coordination for funding System Priorities (including follow-up to Member Coordination Forum at AGM06, integrated window for investment opportunities)	CGIAR Sec, AO, SC Sec, CIO
3.	Design of an integrated approach to Center staff development	SAS-HR (lead), G&D, CGIAR Sec, CIO
4.	Development of a common web-based portal to system-wide training opportunities for CGIAR staff	SAS-HR, CIO, G&D and CGIAR Sec

In respect to the last two activities it was noted that the following training programs are currently offered:

- First Level Development Program
- Senior Leadership Program
- Mentoring;
- Women's Leadership Program;
- Women's Negotiation Course,
- Advanced Women's Leadership Program
- Online Course for High Performing Global Teams;
- Dignity Advisors Training;
- Secondments;
- Participatory Facilitation
- Board Orientation Program

The group received a brief presentation by Unni Vennemoe (SAS-HR), who noted that staff development activities for 2007 will be considered in detail and prepared in a coordinated manner by the new SAS-HR unit head. The ongoing needs analysis will continue to indicate the key requirements on staff development within the CGIAR system.

b. Monitoring and Evaluation

Anne-Marie Izac (Alliance Office) facilitated the group in (i) defining strategic goals for the SO functional cluster “Monitoring and Evaluation” and (ii) identifying joint activities in 2007.

The group defined two key strategic goals under the M&E function of the SO:

- **Improving and streamlining the M&E processes**
The CGIAR M&E system stands on three pillars: Evaluation (i.e. EPMRs, CP ERs and SWEP reviews, CCERs), Performance Measurement, and Medium-Term-Plans.
- **Strengthening M&E capacity in the CGIAR system**

In addition to the ongoing regular collaborative activities under this function (e.g, implementations of PM, EPMRs) one new activity was identified for 2007:

	NEW collaborative activities agreed for 2007 – M&E	SO units
1.	Support to streamlining and harmonizing M&E demands from CGIAR Members	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec, AO,

During this session two additional items were discussed:

- *Consolidation of system-wide databases*
The CGIAR Secretariat administers the CGIAR Contacts Database, which has an open architecture to enable Centers and Stakeholders to enter and update contacts and nominations (e.g. to Center Boards). The SC Sec holds a “SC Experts Database” with an internal controlled list of vetted names. Both units will discuss the benefits and risks of integrating the databases.
- *Capacity building in M&E of SO units*
The group thought that there would be value added in sharing approaches to and learning from evaluations of SO units (e.g. outcome mapping). Enrica Porcari and John Fitzsimon were asked to organize a half-day workshop as part of the next SO workshop to share lessons and train unit heads in relevant M&E methodologies.

c. Communication and Resource Mobilization Services in 2007

Catherine Mgendi (Media Unit) facilitated this session and invited Fiona Douglas to provide some initial ideas for collaborative activities in 2007. Fiona Douglas updated the group on the discussion about strengthening the “family look” of CGIAR Centers and System Office, and presented some sample ideas of logos and letter heads. All units indicated strong support and agreement to the proposed new “family look”. All SO units are therefore requested to send their contact information (for new business cards, letter heads) to Caryl Jones-Swahn (Mjoneswahn@worldbank.org) by **November 1, 2006**. The CGIAR Secretariat will also discuss adapting the family logo for additional SO units who currently have logos. Discussion about additional collaborative activities followed.

The following collaborative activities were identified for 2007:

	Collaborative activities agreed for 2007 – C&RM	SO units
1.	Create “Family Look” of the CGIAR, Centers and System Office units	CGIAR Sec (Lead) with other units
2.	Expand the communication work related to Science Council activities and CGIAR Impact	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec
3.	Prepare Media event series on Women in Agricultural Science	CGIAR Sec, G&D, Media
4.	Coordinate presence of SC at selected international conferences as an opportunity for additional external communication and resource mobilization	SC Sec in collaboration with CGIAR Sec
5.	Identify opportunities for ensuring mobilizing science is included as an objective of communication activities wherever adequate	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec with Marketing Group

In addition, some other **opportunities for mobilizing science** (one of the four responsibilities of the SC) were discussed and should be explored in more detail by the group under the leadership of the SC Secretariat:

- development of a series of theme-based workshops (e.g. horticulture, fruit crops, climate change) bringing together scientists from inside and outside the system
- use of virtual knowledge sharing tools to open up meetings of the SC Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science to a broader audience. For example, the organization of an e-conference to gather input to the SPMS work was identified as an option.

d. Management Services in 2007

Enrica Porcari (CIO) facilitated this session and helped the group to brainstorm on key management services needed in 2007.

The following collaborative activities were identified for 2007:

	Collaborative activities agreed for 2007 - MS	SO units
1.	Drawing lessons learnt from Secondments and other assignments to SO units	SAS-HR in collaboration with all units
2.	Development of a Media toolkit for Centers	Media, CGIAR Sec
3.	Integration of FIS, Project Portfolio and Performance Measurement database	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, CIO
4.	Support to CP's on legal, governance and risk management issues	CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP and IAU

The group also agreed to explore joint appointments between SO units based in Rome, e.g. administrative support position supporting several units.

5. Preparation for AGM and SO representation

Vicki Wilde, Facilitator of this session, invited Fionna Douglas to update the group on the preparations for AGM and the set-up of the System Office booth (please see AGM at at http://www.cgiar.org/pdf/agm06/agm06_agmataglance.pdf). The group then brainstormed on an overall theme for this year's SO booth (e.g. Innovation for Institutional Excellence,

Innovating Organizational Excellence etc), but the group then agreed that Fionna Douglas will take all the suggestions made and make a proposal to the group on the overall theme of the booth and the 10 poster headings.

Inputs for the posters should be submitted to Maria Iskandarani by **November 3**.

6. Summary of deadlines and agreed collaborative activities in 2007

a. Deadlines

- **November 1, 2006 (at the latest):** Deadline for submitting contact information for new business cards and letter heads to Caryl Jones-Swahn (Mjoneswahn@worldbank.org)
- **November 3, 2006:** Deadline for submission of poster information to the CGIAR Secretariat
- **December 30, 2006** – Maria Iskandarani submits templates for IOP 2007 and SO Annual Report 2006
- **January 30, 2007:** Deadline for submissions of unit contributions to the IOP 2007
- **April 30, 2007:** Deadline for submissions of unit contributions to SO Annual Report 2006

b. Agreed new collaborative activities in 2007

	Strategic Planning and Development	SO units
1.	Development of Framework Plans for System Priorities (e.g. organization of planning workshops, on-line discussion platform)	SC Sec, AO, CIO CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP
2.	Support to Member coordination for funding System Priorities (including follow-up to Member Coordination Forum at AGM06, integrated window for investment opportunities)	CGIAR Sec, AO, SC Sec, CIO
3.	Design of an integrated approach to Center staff development	SAS-HR (lead), G&D, CGIAR Sec, CIO
4.	Development of a common web-based portal to system-wide training opportunities for CGIAR staff	SAS-HR, CIO, G&D and CGIAR Sec
	Monitoring & Evaluation	
5.	Support to streamlining and harmonizing M&E demands from CGIAR Members	SC Sec, CGIAR Sec, AO,
	Communication and Resource Mobilization	
6.	Create “Family Look” of the CGIAR, Centers and System Office units	CGIAR Sec (Lead) with other units
7.	Expand the communication work related to Science Council activities and CGIAR Impact	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec
8.	Prepare Media event series on Women in Agricultural Science	CGIAR Sec, G&D, Media
9.	Coordinate presence of SC at selected international conferences as an opportunity for additional external communication and resource mobilization	SC Sec in collaboration with CGIAR Sec
10.	Identify opportunities for ensuring mobilizing science is included as an objective of communication activities wherever adequate	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec with Marketing Group
	Management Services	
11.	Drawing lessons learnt from Secondments and other assignments to SO units	SAS-HR in collaboration with all units
12.	Development of a Media toolkit for Centers	Media, CGIAR Sec
13.	Integration of FIS, Project Portfolio and Performance Measurement database	CGIAR Sec, SC Sec, CIO
14.	Support to CP’s on legal, governance and risk management issues	CGIAR Sec, CAS-IP and IAU

Annex 1

List of Participants for SO workshop - October 2006

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)
Anne-Marie Izac	Alliance Office
Catherine Mgendi	Media Unit
Enrica Porcari	Chief Information Officer (CIO)
Francisco Reifschneider	CGIAR Secretariat
Unni Vennemoe	Strategic Advisory Service on Human Resources
Vicki Wilde	Gender and Diversity Program (G&D)

Steering Committee¹

Willie Dar	Alliance representative to the SO
Francisco Reifschneider	CGIAR Director

Other Participants

Fionna Douglas	CGIAR Secretariat
Namita Datta	CGIAR Secretariat
Emile Frison	IPGRI
Maria Iskandarani	CGIAR Secretariat – Focal Point for SO
Shey Tata	CGIAR Secretariat
Annabelle Waruhiu	SC Secretariat
Kerri Wright-Platais	Alliance Office
Bob Zeigler	IRRI

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