

**CGIAR Executive Council—Ninth Meeting
(Stockholm, Sweden)
19-20 October, 2005**

Agenda Item 6.a. SSA Task Forces Follow-up

-- Progress on Development of Sub-regional MTPs: Centers' Update

- 1. East and Southern Africa***
- 2. West and Central Africa***

Introduction

At ExCo8, the Centers were requested to:

to continue to develop the sub-regional MTPs, at a faster pace, including the elements required for full and effective facilitation. This should be done in partnership with SROs, NARS, and FARA, with implementation to start in 2006. CDC/CBC, CGIAR Centers and their staff with a particular interest in SSA, should strive for ownership and full engagement of NARS, SROs and FARA in the process. ExCo requests that Centers organize a dialogue with the above institutions between now and ExCo 9. ExCo further requests that MTPs are fully aligned with the System priorities and fully consistent with the SSA Challenge Program currently under implementation. As noted by the TFs in Recommendation 5(i), the Centers should carry out this responsibility “during the interim period until the formation of the recommended SSA-based global entities.”

In addition, with respect to structural issues in east and southern Africa:

- *ExCo recognizes the need for further discussions and analysis of best options for the East and Southern Africa Global Entity, and requests Members to specifically share with ExCo their views on options for discussion at ExCo 9 in October 2005.*
- *With regard to Recommendation 4, ExCo recommends this to be discussed at AGM05 as part of the discussion on Recommendation 1.*

Consequently, on 8 June, the Alliance of Future Harvest Centers and FARA convened a meeting in association with the FARA General Assembly in Entebbe, Uganda. The meeting was attended by 12 NARS representatives, 6 representatives from the sub-regional organizations, 4 FARA representatives, including one from the SSA-Challenge Program, a representative of the CGIAR Science Council, representatives from France, the Netherlands and USA (USAID) and 11 Centers represented by 23 people – a total of 49 attendees.

The meeting made the following recommendations to FARA:

“In summary the recommendation of the CGIAR Executive Council was well received. After a fruitful discussion where many useful suggestions were made, the following points were noted:

1. Enhanced impact in SSA will only come when there are strong NARS partners

2. Strong SROs are dependent on having strong NARS
3. Future Harvest Alliance Centers are dependent on strong NARS and SROs

Recommendation one: Steps need to be taken to enhance the capacity of NARS and SROs so that they become effective partners of the Future Harvest Alliance Centers. It was agreed that the development of joint MTPs is a useful first step in enhancing the effectiveness of the Alliance of Future Harvest Centers, NARS, and SROs at the intersection of the IPGs developed by the Alliance, and NARS and SROs focusing on national and sub-regional public goods.

Recommendation two: Reference groups are established for WCA with CORAF as lead institution – to include forestry and fishery institutions - and ESA with ASARECA/SADC FANR as joint lead institutions to work with the Alliance of Future Harvest Centers of the CGIAR in the development of joint MTPs that should start immediately and be ready for submission to the SC in June 2006. This process should consider what has been done in the past, and take into account the different initiatives that are already underway, especially the SSA CP.

Recommendation three: FARA to catalyze and support the joint MTP process.”

Subsequently, the Centers and partners are moving forward strongly, and have given high priority to the development of the MTPs, including contracting dedicated senior consultants to work solely on drafting the plans. Here are the most recent reports of progress.

1. Integrated Medium Term Plan for eastern and southern Africa (MTP-ESA) including options for governance

Summary

In response to the SSA TF proposal and Exco’s decision to request the development of regional MTPs for SSA, the Alliance, SROs and NARS are developing a response which encompasses clearer alignment of Center and partners activities in an iterative manner, development of forward-looking flagship activities in programmatic areas with high potential for synergies, as well as building on the SSA CP and its benchmark sites as key loci of geographic and production systems integration of our activities. This will be further underpinned by shared research support and corporate services as well as a governance mechanism that utilizes existing structures to minimize transactions costs. This represents a forward-looking approach to enhancing coordination in developing an integrated MTP along with shared research and management services. The MTP takes ESA on a path to greater integration in a manner that is consistent with institutional trends in the region.

Background

This report informs ExCo on progress achieved developing the Medium Term Plan for eastern and southern Africa as requested by ExCo 8.

The integrated Medium term Plan for eastern and southern Africa covers the intersection of the activities undertaken by CG centres with NARS and SROs in the ESA region. It includes the rationalisation of existing activities and the identification of new cross cutting activities. The MTP also identifies common research support areas and deals with mechanisms of implementation and governance. The MTP is not a master plan of agricultural research in the region; it is a plan for the development of key themes, benchmark sites and research approaches that are of high priority to both NARS and CG centers, offer high returns to integration, and permit an evolutionary path towards further integration which does not preclude later structural change and allows further integration as experience and success demonstrate.

To follow up on the recommendation of the ExCo to develop a regional MTP, the following process was set in motion.

- An analysis of the Centre MTPs to identify activities undertaken in eastern and southern Africa that present possible duplication or, conversely, potential for gains through integration.
- An analysis of plans and priorities of ASARECA and SADC-FANR as well as other regional plans (e.g. NEPAD/CAADP).
- Individual meetings with SROs and CG Centres
- Two formal consultations with agricultural research leaders from NARS, SRO, FARA and CG Centres.
- An electronic dialogue involving participants, NARS leaders, SRO representatives and selected resource persons was undertaken to prepare for an expert consultation/workshop on the integrated regional MTP
- A workshop/expert consultation was held to develop a framework for an integrated regional MTP with stakeholders from the region.

The progress achieved through this process is outlined below:

- Preliminary analysis of the MTPs of Centers shows a good fit at a higher level with priorities of the InterAcademy Council, NEPAD/CAADP, and sub-regional priorities of SADC-FANR and ASARECA.
- The electronic dialogue provided useful cases of successful collaboration and coordination mechanisms that will be followed up for lessons in the design of the MTP.
- The expert consultation/workshop confirmed a desire on both sides, CGIAR and NARS, to design a real collaboration around a feasible set of themes with mechanisms leading to integration in areas of high payoff to closer collaboration. The MTP is the vehicle for this enhanced collaboration.

The Framework for the MTP-ESA

The expert consultation developed a shared understanding of the role and scope of an integrated MTP that fits the current trends of organizational change and organizational innovation in eastern and southern Africa. Political and administrative decentralization at the national level are driving a demand for integrated agricultural research for development with important implications for the strategic to adaptive research balance and broad partnerships. The centralizing force of new science (biotechnology, genomics, GIS and systems modeling) is driving scientific

collaboration at the regional level with the emergence of sub-regional networks helping to mediate the two trends.

The expert consultation spent time dealing with the questions of “what should be integrated?” and “how should it be integrated?” The consultation developed a framework encompassing three components:

- 1) Improved coordination among Centers and with partners. It examined the fit between Center MTPs and the priorities suggested by the InterAcademy Council, NEPAD/CAADP, FARA and the sub-regional organizations and NARS. It seeks the elimination of duplications, overlaps, and gains from coordinating at the NARS and field level
- 2) Synergies from integration of research. It identified eleven thematic areas where integration produces significant gains from economies of scale, scope and size in research.
- 3) Platforms for integration. The area-based integration around benchmark sites, as in the SSA-CP, provides mechanisms to enhance collaboration.

Proposals for improvement in all three domains could go from improved communication, to coordinated activities to integrated decision making and integrated/fully interdependent research projects.

The consultation looked at the MTP as being part of the CGIAR but identifiable in terms of objectives, resources, and management to be a force for change.

1. The MTP-ESA will be seen as fully part of the CGIAR. It will receive oversight and advice from the Science Council and support for the CGIAR investors. While its legitimacy would be enhanced by the integration it has with NARS, SROs and other partners, it is fully in the CGIAR system
2. The MTP-ESA will have a specific objective to which its participants contribute. This objective is to create synergies in agricultural research for development in eastern and southern Africa in strategic themes, problem areas and agro-ecologies where the gains from integrated planning and execution of research are greater than the added transactions and operational costs.
3. It will restrict its scope to identified intervention domains. The MTP-ESA will avoid areas beyond its competence and where partners would question its legitimacy.

The MTP-ESA will be a tool for the CGIAR in ESA to plan its contribution to the strategic-and-applied versus adaptive research pulls that new science and the agricultural research for development paradigms call for. It will use area-based approaches where it can develop international public goods in partnership with NARS, NGOs and the private sector. In this respect, the MTP-ESA will work out appropriate arrangements with the SROs (who manage the sub-regional pilot learning sites). The Centers provide specialized knowledge, skills and facilities that are needed for building capacity in partners through on-the-job training

The workshop built on previous consultations in the region, updated the discussion of goals of integration and identified 11 themes for integration. Based on the perceived

gains from integration, the four priority themes (ranked) for early integration of action are:

1. Integrated Natural Resources Management (approaches and policies)

Integrated Natural Resources Management is an area of overlap among the commodity, systems-based and factor-based centers. This type of science requires a vast array of skills and expertise beyond what most individual centers can provide and thus is particularly amenable to integration efforts involving both strategic research partners and those closer to the field.

2. Information for diagnosis of problems and policy formulation and for sharing of methodology and knowledge.

The long-term role of the CGIAR as information broker requires information for analysis and policy making (e.g., SAKKS) and effective knowledge sharing (e.g., manuals for participatory approaches and information for technology up-scaling). The Centers in ESA can do more by working together and working in an integrated way with NARS.

3. Management of agrobiodiversity: Improvement of germplasm

Integration of traditional activities in germplasm conservation and enhancement is already occurring through networks, regional genebanks, and other frameworks for collaboration. The consultation noted the need to integrate better germplasm work with respect to biotechnology.

4. Post-conflict reconstruction and recovery of National Research Systems (as a regional and even international public good).

Post-conflict reconstruction and recovery of NARS in the region has a public good character that raises the attractiveness of the region for development. It is definitely a regional public good (five of the eastern African countries and at least two of the southern African countries will be looking for assistance). The theme figures in subregional priorities. There is experience in both sub-region with reconstruction and the CGIAR can make inputs consistent with its IPG mandate.

Each of these integration domains would require specialized coordination mechanisms.

Research support services will be addressed in a similar manner but in close consultation with the programmatic alignment effort. The MTP will look particularly at services such as biometrics, GIS, and decision support systems. Management and governance structures will have to consider all three parts of this strategy (programmatic alignment, shared corporate services, shared research support services) in a comprehensive manner.

The expert consultation laid out the guiding principles for integration, the sources of the gains that were expected and the problems that needed to be addressed. These are summarized below:

	Guiding Principles	Sources of Gain	Addressed by MTP:
1	Mutual Benefit ("win-win")	Complementarities exploited	Benefit sharing agreements
2	Integrity and Trust	Reduces transactions cost	Alliance principles and policies, mutual consultation and review
3	Sharing of decision-making, resources and credit	Relevance, commitment, local knowledge	Partnership principles
4	Participation and ownership	Commitment to objective	Representation on Board or Program Advisory Committee
5	Open, timely and effective communication	Equal information available to all parties	Alliance principles and policies
6	Timely resolution of conflicts	Reduces transactions cost, Eliminate overlaps and duplication	Alliance principles and policies, MTP director, country coordinators
7	Low transactions costs	Start-up costs of collaboration reduced	Use existing coordination mechanisms, strengthen IT platform
8	Incentives for compliance	Ensures commitment	MTP will require resources as incentives and sanctions for poor behavior, key role of donors to ensure compliance

Shared corporate services

ILRI and ICRAF have drafted TORS for consultancies to address the feasibility of rationalizing corporate services for the CGIAR centers operating in the ESA region, possibly including ICIPE. The reorganization of corporate services would have to have more than a simple cost-savings objective. Substantive investments may be needed especially in information technology and possibly human resources in the transition process itself. Transaction costs may also rise in the short run. The objectives for rationalization are:

1. Economies of scale, efficiencies
2. Taking advantage of possible synergies
3. Better, more up-to-date, more customer-oriented services and cutting edge systems and technologies
4. Pulling expertise together that can benefit all centers (and therefore improve overall performance) e.g. Internal Audit.

The reorganization of corporate services would have to follow a phased approach as we deal with a number of very different organizations, contexts and existing structures as well as a sometimes challenging external environment.

Status of thinking on governance options

ICRAF and ILRI engaged the services of an independent consultant to identify options for governing an integrated CGIAR programme for ESA. The consultant, who was from Australia, had engineered the establishment of an unincorporated joint venture between Australia's CSIRO Division of Forestry and New Zealand Forest

Research. He spent 10 days in Nairobi and attended the workshop/expert consultation referred to in this report. He assisted the workshop participants to think through the various options.

The working group recognized the need for improved governance at several levels. It was noted that the overall effort to rationalize and integrate activities in ESA will require a leader with the authority to manage the MTP process, promote integration modalities, monitor progress, and address conflicts. This position would need governance oversight. Here the working group explored several options. One option is establishing this as an entity linked to one of the centers in the region (similar to the ISNAR program under IFPRI governance). Other options considered oversight by the Alliance Executive/Alliance Board. Specific instruments such as clear contracts between partners, the Alliance's role in conflict resolution, and existing structures such as the SSA CP would be used as much as possible.

An advisory body will also be needed to ensure alignment with regional interests. The dilemma is to ensure that the African partners have a significant say in the governance of the entity while avoiding the creation of new governance layers with additional costs,

Next steps

This progress report reflects the present status (late September) of the collective thinking of NARS, SROs, CG centers and other stakeholders. Feedback from Ex Co on the overall direction will be critical to inform further steps. If these ideas are endorsed in principle, more in-depth analysis and planning are required in all areas but particularly a consultancy for planning shared services will be needed, as well as further development of the governance mechanisms. For AGM05 an initial regional MTP should be available and the present concept could be discussed with the membership, including discussion of suitable governance mechanisms. Detailed planning for shared services will require intensive study into 2006.

Note

The report of the CGIAR-NARS-SRO Expert Consultation on Effective Collaboration through Integrated Medium Term Planning, held in Nairobi, September 12-15, 2005 will be available on the ILRI and ICRAF websites. For further information please contact

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2. Medium Term Plan for West and Central Africa (MTP-WCA)

Background

This report provides ExCo with an update on progress made towards the development of the Medium Term Plan for West and Central Africa (WCA) led by WARDA. It is based on a series of formal and informal discussions in various fora, all of which expressed support for the development of the WCA MTP. The urgent need for the CGIAR Centers to have a common framework enabling capitalization of comparative advantages, integration of research programs and support services, harmonization of policies and governance structures and consolidation of partnerships with NARS was wholeheartedly accepted and supported by those contributing to the MTP discussion.

In response to the call from ExCo for the development of regional MTPs for Africa, bringing in manifold voices from the broad agricultural and scientific sectors, a number of cross-sector meetings were convened and the services of a consultant obtained to facilitate development of an agreed MTP acceptable to all interests.

Ten CGIAR centers (WARDA, IITA, ICRISAT, ILRI, IWMI, ICRAF, IPGRI, CIAT, CIFOR and IFPRI) met to discuss a general framework for collective action towards programmatic integration. It was agreed that CORAF and ASARECA should be intimately involved, and WARDA and a number of CGIAR centers participated in the CORAF General Assembly at which it was agreed the MTP be developed as proposed.

CGIAR-NARS consultation also took place at the second FARA general assembly in Entebbe. The need to involve FARA was emphasized, particularly to ensure that the sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program (SSA CP) is reflected in the MTP.

Progress since July 2005

Dr Henning Baur from Germany started work as a consultant for MTP-WCA on 25 July. He has worked with staff of IITA and WARDA in Benin and consulted with CORAF in Dakar. To date, the following has been achieved:

- I. *A draft compilation of all CGIAR outcomes and outputs planned for West and Central Africa.* This compilation has been prepared by Dr Baur, based on Center submissions and a review of individual Center MTPs 2006-2008. It is structured along the 20 priorities and the logical framework format of the Science Council.
- II. *Draft narratives for each of the 20 priorities.* Up to now, these narratives reflect the anticipated outcomes and research approaches of the CGIAR Centers. They are yet to be enriched by the strategies of the other research partners in the sub region.
- III. *Harmonization of MTP development in ESA and WCA.* Both Dr Shellemiah Keya, WARDA ADG R & D, and Dr Baur attended the CGIAR-ESA expert consultation towards an integrated Medium Term Plan. One of the results of the expert consultation was a framework for integration for joint agenda setting, research collaboration and impact monitoring in the sub-region. Dr Baur participated in the writing group capturing the results of the expert consultation and will continue to interact with Dr Howard Elliott, the consultant to ASARECA, to harmonize as much as possible the approaches taken on both sides of the continent.

Priorities

These are based on the priorities identified by the Science Council. They fall under five thematic headings:

- I. Sustaining biodiversity for current and future generations
- II. Maintaining and enhancing yields and yield potential of food staples
- III. Increasing income
- IV. Integrated land, water and forest management at landscape level
- V. Science and technology policies and institutions

Next steps

Having done a fair amount of the analytical work, the next steps will be the preparation and implementation of a workshop with research partners and stakeholders in WCA.

- I. Preparation of a workshop with stakeholders from WCA to find the common ground for future partnerships and develop the framework and procedures required for enhanced collaboration. Prior to the workshop we will provide the participants with background materials. Based on the experience in ESA we will also seek their input regarding the most important claims, concerns and issues related to the integrated sub regional MTP.
- II. Stakeholder workshop with NARS leaders, CORAF, CGIAR scientists and a few representatives of farmer organizations and the private sector/civil society. This workshop will be held on 25-27 October 2005 in Accra. It will have the same objectives as the expert consultation in ESA and follow a similar (but not identical) approach.

Note

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