

Advisory Group for Organizing the CSO¹ Forum at the CGIAR Stakeholder Meeting at AGM06

- A Draft Concept Note for Discussion

I. Introduction

At the Annual General Meeting in 2005 the CGIAR endorsed the organization of a CSO Forum, as part of its Stakeholder Meeting for AGM06. The CGIAR Secretariat was asked to take the lead in the planning and implementation of this Forum.

For advise on the content and design of this upcoming CSO Forum, the CGIAR Secretariat has established an Advisory Group with representatives from various civil society organizations CGIAR Members, and Centers. The Advisory Group will have one initial face-to face meeting on May 23 in Washington DC, and later operate mostly through virtual meetings. The Group will advise the CGIAR Secretariat in the planning, design and content of the CSO Forum, including possible follow-up mechanisms.

This note provides some initial ideas and options for the design of the CSO Forum, and forms a basis for further discussions with the Advisory Group.

II. Objectives of the CSO Forum

1. Provide a forum for dialogue between CSOs and the CGIAR on major issues of research for development.
2. Enable CSOs to engage in substantive discussion with the CGIAR and make recommendations on a series of issues facing the international community.
3. Increase mutual understanding about challenges in research for development faced by a wide range of stakeholders in the area of natural resource management, food security and poverty reduction.
4. Open additional channels for collaboration between CSOs and the CGIAR

Expected Outcomes from the CSO Forum

- Specific recommendations on mechanisms to improve CSO-CGIAR dialogue and collaboration on the research-development continuum.
- Better understanding and acknowledgment of common objectives, differences, and comparative advantages between the CSOs and the CGIAR on agricultural research and development issues.

¹ Civil Society Organizations, particularly organizations that represent farmers, (international) NGOs and associations of NGOs engaged in development and environmental protection; advocacy groups and fora that advocate agricultural research, and CSOs that are engaged in capacity building and service delivery to farmers (based on the United Nations definition of “civil society”).

III. Suggested Agenda for the CSO Forum

The CSO Forum could be composed of

- (i) a number of dialogue sessions on selected themes (plenary and parallel sessions)
- (ii) Innovation Marketplace.

(i) Possible themes for dialogue sessions

- *How to strengthen the complementary roles of the CGIAR and CSOs in the research-development continuum*
 - examine experience of various countries and allow for a frank, thorough and forward-looking discussion (e.g. experience from participatory research).
 - for CSOs to formulate specific ideas and recommendations on key aspects of the research-development continuum
- *Strengthening the implementation of the CGIAR System Priorities through active CGIAR-CSO collaboration*
 - identify common priorities and areas for collaboration
 - dialogue on mechanisms for closer collaboration in implementation of system priorities
 - Discussion on concrete areas of collaboration (e.g. in parallel sessions) on some CGIAR priority areas e.g. (i) increasing water productivity, (ii) promoting agricultural diversification.
- *CGIAR-CSO Relations: Ways forward*
 - Discussion on the paper “Towards a Strategic Framework for Engagement Between the CGIAR and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)”
- *CSO representation in CGIAR/ExCo*

(ii) Innovation Marketplace

To help spark and reward innovative ideas in agricultural research across the world the CGIAR launched the Innovation Marketplace at its Annual General Meeting in 2003.

It is suggested that for the upcoming CSO Forum the Innovation Marketplace should have a prominent slot as it serves to promote knowledge-sharing between the CGIAR and the CSO community, helps in recognizing the critical contribution that both make to international agricultural research, and more importantly, promotes the importance of inventive partnerships and their impact on agricultural development.

Suggested Options-

- to identify some thematic areas (e.g. effective use of water saving technologies, improving poor peoples nutrition with new technologies), and to call for proposals on those selected themes.
- hold either a Regional Innovation Marketplace or Global Innovation Marketplace

IV. Planning Methodology

(i) Selection criteria for inviting CSOs

Selection criteria should be identified early on in order to ensure a balanced representation of CSOs on the basis of geographic regions, gender, nature of CSOs work (policy advocacy vs. service provision), types of CSOs (i.e. NGOs, farmers organisations, etc.), and networks vs. individual organizations.

Resource mobilization options to support the participation of developing country CSOs could also be explored.

(ii) Design options for an effective dialogue

There are different ways of facilitating and also sequencing (pre-AGM meetings and AGM meetings) the dialogue on the selected topics. The principle should be to allow for as much discussion as possible.

Some Options are:

- *Round Tables*
Groups composed of CSOs from the north and the south, Center staff and CGIAR members could be organized in “Round Tables” with a moderator/facilitator/ chair and a rapporteur. Discussion could be initiated by 2-3 short presentations by CSO representatives/ CGIAR staff. Finally, each group could compile all recommendations that they wish to put forward..
- *Plenary session followed by break-out groups*
Depending on the topic it might be suitable to have an initial plenary with a presentation on an “issue” (e.g. “framework paper” or “research-development continuum”) followed by 2-3 commentaries from a CSO representative, a CGIAR member, and a third neutral person. Break out groups could then discuss the analysis and the recommendations made by the plenary session panel, framed by a set of guiding questions. Each group would then report back the results to the plenary, followed by a general discussion.
- *Parallel sessions*
Parallel session on selected topics could be organized jointly by a CSO and/or GFAR and the CGIAR. For each session a presenter could initiate the discussion with a presentation, followed by a few discussants, before the dialogue is opened to all participants.

The outcome from each session could eventually feed into the Business Meeting and other CGIAR meeting agendas for subsequent discussions.

V. Follow-up

Key to this exercise is to ensure that the results and recommendations from the Forum are followed-up adequately and in a transparent way to CSO and stakeholders. Appropriate mechanisms for follow-up on discussions at the CSO Forum would need to be outlined ahead of time. Possible venues for further discussion of CSO Forum recommendations could be Science Council meetings, Executive Council meetings, Center Board meetings and Center internal program review meetings.

VI. Other ongoing initiatives in preparation for the CSO Forum

1. The paper “Towards a Strategic Framework for Engagement Between the CGIAR and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)”

A paper was prepared by the CGIAR Secretariat to help facilitate the discussion on how to strategically move forward in strengthening the engagement between CGIAR and the CSOs. The paper benefited from inputs provided by Monica Kipiriri (the former CGIAR NGO Committee Co-Chair), some CGIAR members, NGO leaders and experts on CSO engagement.

The paper addresses the following questions:

1. Why should the CGIAR engage with civil society organizations?
2. Whom do we want to engage with?
3. How can we engage with CSOs?

Building on this discussion, the paper describes a holistic framework for advancing an engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs that goes beyond past practices. It defines three major goals for a multi-pronged approach to a targeted engagement using a variety of instruments.

At AGM05 the paper was discussed and the following decisions were taken:

- The background strategy paper should be revised, following an additional round of comments from Members, and then re-submitted to ExCo for final discussion and approval.
- The dormant NGO Committee should be left dormant until AGM06 so that dialogues held during the CSO Forum could feed into a further discussion on the future of the NGO Committee.

2. Proposed Study by the Science Council

The Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS) of the Science Council proposes to conduct a study to understand reasons behind some successful and not so successful collaborations between CGIAR Centers and some CSOs- specifically NGOs and farmer organizations.

Composition of Advisory Group for CSO Forum

	Stakeholder Group	Name	Affiliation
1	CSO	Glyvyns Chinkhuntha	Farmer; Member of the Farmers Union of Malawi ; CGIAR ExCo member
2		Raul Montemayor	Federation of Free Farmers Cooperatives, Inc, Philippines and Executive Committee member of IFAP
3		Guillermo Frias	CARE Peru
4		Marco Quinones	Sasakawa Global 2000, Regional Director for Africa
5		Zohra Lakhdar	El Manar University in Tunisia
6	GFAR	Monica Kapiriri	GFAR
7	CGIAR Member	Franklin Moore	USAID
8		Njabulo Nduli	South Africa
9		Denis Desperaux	France
10	Center	Rajul Pandya-Lorch	IFPRI

Resource Persons: Maria Iskandarani (CGIAR Secretariat)
 Beatriz Avalos Sartorio (Science Council Secretariat)
 John Garrison (CSO Team World Bank)