

# **CGIAR System Office Assessment**

## **Terms of Reference for a Short Term Consultancy**

(March 2006)

### **Background**

One of the pillars of reform of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has been the creation of the CGIAR System Office (SO), a virtual structure to increase coordination, capture synergies and increase overall performance of central service units that support the Centers and the CGIAR System as a whole.

The current SO units are:

- Central Advisory Service for Intellectual Property (CAS -IP);
- CGIAR Secretariat;
- Chief Information Office (CIO);
- Future Harvest Alliance Office (FHAO);
- Gender and Diversity Program (G&D);
- Internal Audit Unit (IAU);
- Science Council (SC) Secretariat.
- Strategic Advisory Service on Human Resources (SAS -HR);

The stated objective of the SO is 1) to provide existing services of its 8 member units with greater cohesion and improved performance; 2) to pursue opportunities to enhance the SO's performance. The SO is a virtual organization that depends on the staff and resources of its member units. It is accountable to ExCo and its individual units are still accountable to their respective governing authorities, i.e.,

- CGIAR Secretariat (accountable) to the Chairman of the CGIAR;
- SC Secretariat to the Science Council;
- G&D, CAS-IP to their own Advisory Committees and their supervising Center DG;
- IAU to its Board of Sponsors (CGIAR Centers and CGIAR Secretariat );
- FHAO to the Chair of the Alliance Executive (AE);
- CIO to the CGIAR Director and the DG of the hosting Centre (IPGRI presently).

### **The Assessment**

The objective is to assess whether the SO , as a virtual structure, in fact helped to increase coordination, capture synergies and increase overall performance of central service units that support the Centers and the CGIAR System as a whole.

The Assessment will be commissioned by the System Office Steering Committee.

In the CGIAR System Office Business Case of 10 May 2002 it was suggested that performance of the SO should be measured upon a balanced scorecard that tracks both output and input measures:

- **Output measures** (i.e. improved effectiveness, reduced costs, increased funding);
- **Input measures** (i.e. drivers of the desired outcome: 1. operational measures - these relate to how well the System Office is performing against key operational goals; and 2.

relationship measures - How increasingly well are SO and other units in the System are working in alliance).

Both measures have not been comprehensively assessed since the establishment of the SO, and therefore should be examined by the assessment. Additional measures could be explored.

### **Scope of work**

The planned review should be composed of:

#### **I. An institutional assessment of the System Office, including**

1. qualitative assessment of (i) how the SO is contributing to greater coherence in the CGIAR System and the identification of opportunities for the System to operate more efficiently and (ii) the SO collaboration with other units in the system
2. an assessment of where and how the SO helped to accomplish significant cost reduction for the System's operations
3. review of the mechanisms that have been used for establishing new SO units (i.e. demand-driven, forward looking)
4. evaluation of the governance structure of the individual SO units and the SO as a whole
5. the identification of opportunities, limitations and comparative advantages of differentiating services in separate units.
6. an assessment of the incentive structure and constraints to more effective collaboration among the SO units.
7. Identify, to the extent feasible, the key factors contributing to synergies and complementarities now realized by the SO units working together

#### **II. Development of baseline measures to help assess SO improvements and benefits over the next 3-5 years, including**

- the identification of the key parameters (and indicators) for measuring effectiveness and efficiency with respect to the major functions of the SO (for each unit and collectively).

### **Recruitment of expert and preparation of assessment report**

A management expert should be hired to conduct the review. It is estimated that this task will take up to 36 working days. Knowledge about the CGIAR would be of advantage.

A draft report should be first shared with SO units for correction of factual errors and then submitted to the SO Steering Committee. The report and a response by the Steering Committee should be then submitted to ExCo.

### **Tentative time table**

March '06	Search and recruitment of suitable Consultant
May - June	Assessment work (including interviews of unit heads and users of SO services; possibly visit to a Center hosting one or more SO unit(s))
June 30	Draft report available (for correction of factual errors)
July 30	Final report submitted to System Office Steering Committee
August 30	Response by Steering Committee
September 06	Report (including response) submitted to ExCo