

SCIENCE COUNCIL OF THE CGIAR

Commentary on the CGIAR Medium Term Plans 2007-2009 for East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa

September 30, 2006

At the request of ExCo-10 (May 2006) a preliminary SC commentary on the two subregional MTPs (East and Southern Africa - ESA and West and Central Africa - WCA) was sent to ExCo mid July 2006. At the time, the SC felt that only after it has assessed all the Center and CP MTPs, could it provide a more complete commentary. The SC discussed the subregional MTPs at SC6 (September 2006) and provides the following analysis on: (i) generic issues with the development of regional MTPs for Africa, (ii) an update on the commentary to the ESA MTP and (iii) an update on the commentary to the WCA MTP.

Generic issues about the design and implementation of the regional MTPs

Do the regional MTPs show a cohesive plan of implementation of system priorities (SP) for each region? The SC finds no cohesive program emerging at the regional level. Indeed the Centers have presented their own individual MTP with little reference to the regional MTPs or to the SSACP. The result is a burgeoning of layers of overlapping programs. This view is supported by the regional MTPs particularly for ESA which has as the centerpiece a number of new “flagship” programs to be developed for the region (while maintaining the business as usual by the centers). More clarity is required on the purpose and intent of the regional MTPs. It is the SC view that the purpose of the regional MTPs, as outlined in the SSA Task Force in its 2005 Report, are an instrument to develop a cohesive set of plans to implement SPs for each region. The intent is that there will be a single MTP for each region made up of all of the activities of the centers and CP working in the region. *The SC finds that the regional MTPs (and the individual center and CP MTPs) fall far short of this goal. The SC recommends that a more cohesive and inclusive strategy is needed for the sub-regions.*

What changes need to be made in developing the regional MTPs? The SC appreciates the commitment and the hard work that have gone into the development of the regional MTPs. The main critique by the SC is not about the activities shown in the MTPs; it is about what is not included in the MTP i.e. much of the individual center activities. Without them it is simply not possible to develop a cohesive plan for the region. *The SC believes that in order to develop a cohesive plan for each region the following steps need to be taken. Mere changes and modifications to the existing MTPs will not meet the goals. The SC suggests the following changes are made:*

1. Develop a research strategy at the regional level that all Centers own. There is a sense that the large effort in the regional MTP has lacked a clear -to -all strategic direction of what was to be achieved by them. The goal is to seek cohesion among centers and inclusion of NARS in the implementation of the SP, economies of scale, and the capture of interactive (among commodities) opportunities.
2. Develop an agreed means for coordinating of the regional plans. This should not mean

“central planning”; it should leave the centers responsible for their individual contributions to the joint plan. It does mean the acceptance of a ‘regional coordinating entity’ with the main role of clearing/ endorsing contribution to the Plan.

3. Make the Regional MTPs inclusive of all Center and CP activities. The Plans would comprise a mixture of jointly executed programs (as for example described by the Flagship programs of ESA), jointly owned research platforms and shared center specific activities (the data base developed for the ESA is a very useful resource for the articulation of the shared activities). The Plan would show how these collectively contribute to the SP for the region. The regional entity would provide the overall Regional Plan and monitor and evaluate the progress towards cohesion, inclusiveness, and economies of scale; it would provide feedback on duplication and on opportunities for capturing added values from integration.
4. The Center and CP MTP would show how they contribute to the Regional Plans and contain the means to monitor and evaluate scientific outputs and outcomes.

What are the hazards to developing and implementing a regional Plan? The SC foresees two potential problems that might emerge based on the current regional MTPs:

1. The new regional programs (as now advocated in the MTPs) could create *de facto* new SWEP/CP like activities with new layers of administration (the WCA plans to produce alignment programs with calls for pre-proposals and full-proposals). This could have financial implications in addition to creating dispersion.
2. The subregional MTPs could be used to justify local activities with or on behalf of NARS. There is also a risk that Centers could be drawn into networks driven by other partners’ priorities thereby hampering the implementation of agreed priorities.

In summary. The SC in this overall commentary has aimed to provide an explicit set of principles and actions needed to meet the goals of the regional MTP i.e. a single cohesive set of Plans to implement the SP in each region. *The SC recommends that a clear-to-all collective research strategy be developed for each region, and the strategy be implemented through a cohesive and comprehensive Plan that encompasses all activities by the participating centers and through an appropriate regional organizing entity. The Plans should indicate who is going to do what and how that contributes to the SP. The expected economies of scale and scope and captured opportunities need to be laid out. The MTPs should be explicit also about the specific Center and CP activities to integrate within the MTP. The MTPs of the Centers would show how they contribute to the regional Plan and would monitor and evaluate the scientific progress toward the SP.*

The following sections provide SC commentary on the individual regional MTPs. The commentary remains basically that given in the preliminary comments (17th July, 2007) since in the SC view there has been no further movement to an integrated and cohesive plan for each region.

The Regional Plan for East and Southern Africa (ESA)

The Centers working collectively in ESA are to be congratulated for gathering the views of so many stakeholders, carrying out a detailed analysis of ongoing projects, developing a comprehensive data base of such activities, and putting together a document which could form part of a cohesive CGIAR based program in ESA featuring mainly new programs to capture more

synergies. The Council recognizes the commitment of the players and the time and effort that has been invested into merging the views of so many organizations into developing the current MTP draft. Notwithstanding that effort, and as recognized in the covering letter, the Centers have yet much more to be done before this MTP can be used as a tool for the monitoring and evaluation of a cohesive CGIAR program in ESA. The document in its current form provides mainly a description of the process and tactical considerations that may lead to a regional MTP for the new Flagship Programs (FPs) identified. *What is yet to evolve is the Plan for ALL of the other activities by the Centers and CP in the region.*

Detailed comments on the Plans based on the MTP draft of June 2006 are provided in **Annex 1**. These comments are intended to give an assessment of some of the challenges for the next stage of the development of a research plan. The SC anticipates that the Alliance will provide sufficient details for a subregional Plan to be properly assessed by the end of 2006.

In summary, the SC notes the progress made to date and the innovative approaches being adopted to implement one part of an overall Plan for the region. The Council looks forward to the addition ALL other Center activities to complete the regional Plan

The Regional Plan for West and Central (WCA)

The WCA MTP is an encouraging **start** to the development of a practical and what appears to be a realistic MTP framework for a regional research plan. The MTP provides an opportunity for the Centers working collectively in WCA to apply/develop knowledge taking into consideration its relevance to addressing unique regional development issues. The MTP as an organizing framework is a useful way to look at the needs for inter-Center alignment and the opportunities for integrated projects, as well as the further development of research platforms.

The Plan, however, does not go far enough. It is yet to include ALL of the current CGIAR agenda into a cohesive Plan. It needs to clarify the organizational structure for without such clarity the MTP could merely add another layer to the existing agendas. Finally there needs to be a commitment to action even as the additional details of the Plan are being finalized.

Detailed comments on the Plans based on the MTP draft of June 2006 are provided in **Annex 2**. These comments are intended to give an assessment of some of the challenges for the next stage of the development of a research plan. The SC anticipates that the Alliance will provide sufficient details for a subregional Plan to be properly assessed by the end of 2006.

In summary the SC notes the progress in developing a reasonably coherent research agenda, linked to System Priorities. Although it holds great promise for promoting synergies and eliminating duplication, the MTP has yet to tackle the harder issues of aligning ALL of the ongoing work (in contrast to developing "new" work), and of addressing the alignment of the research platforms along with the alignment of the programs and the implementation of the new collaborations It needs an implementation plan, perhaps beginning with a few of the MTP research programs as a beacon to see how the Plan can be implemented.

ANNEX 1. DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE ESA MTP

Capture of synergies. The Plan provides a very detailed catalogue of existing Center projects in the sub-region and present level of effort (through estimation of scientist person years). This analysis identifies some duplication of effort but more importantly recognizes the opportunities for new research based on synergies from a more cohesive program. The MTP identifies priority research areas that are presented as FPs. These have been endorsed by participants from all 15 CGIAR Centers, 10 NARS as well as by FARA and NEPAD; they contribute to NEPAD's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan. Many existing research activities already fall into these areas.

Alignment with System Priorities. The four FPs are: FP1 on Integrated natural resources management; FP2 on Information; FP3 on Management of agrobiodiversity and genetic diversity; and, FP4 on Agricultural rehabilitation in post-disaster and post-conflict contexts. The degree of development of these programs makes them hard to judge in concrete terms, but they vary in their research content and alignment with CGIAR Priorities.

In the main FP1, (parts of) 2 and 3 have the potential to address System Priorities. FPs 1 and 3 address high priority research areas for the region. In next steps for Theme 1.2 of FP1 on resilience in socio-ecological systems (pg. 49), it is suggested to add an activity to pull together on-going projects both to eliminate duplication and to provide a foundation for subsequent research. It is worth noting that organizational links and possible synergies with the CGIAR SSA CP are largely absent from the MTP.

FP2 does not include much research but rather presents a supporting platform aimed at knowledge management and dissemination. It fits the definition of a platform provided by the MTP (pg. 68) and this is how it should be developed i.e. as a contributory arrangement rather than as a research program. The SC is concerned that the description confuses knowledge management with policy research, which is not very well articulated. This appears to be recognized on pg. 57 where it is stated that "It is premature to say...". Unfortunately, it is not just the evolution of the methods that is premature. If this FP is to be maintained, it needs to be developed further. Throughout the discussions about research priorities for SSA, research on markets has been very high on the priority lists prepared by African partners. While this is mentioned in the MTP, it is not given the attention it deserves. FP2 talks about it but does not identify policy research priorities. If policy research is to be an area of focus, discrete research issues and approaches should be described and the ESA-MTP should define whether these will be pursued as a FP or through other means.

FP3 seems to be in internal conflict as to whether it is addressing the conservation of genetic diversity, the enhancement of genetic material or both. On pg. 59, the "focus is the conservation" but in the same paragraph enhancement is mentioned. In the lists of outputs and impacts on pg. 63, enhanced material is not mentioned. There also appears to be some confusion between impact and outcome.

FP4 on agricultural rehabilitation falls outside the CGIAR System Priorities for Research. It is presented as a mixture of action research and services to NGOs and governments, e.g. making seed available. While the Centers should be ready to help with seed, GIS data layers, etc. in an emergency situation, the Centers can make relatively rapid inventories of materials that are

available to assist development agencies. It does not warrant a CGIAR program supported by Priority research funding. This may be a case where regional and CGIAR priorities do not match. In fact, it is stated that this activity is “recognized by ASARECA”. This may be an area where ASARECA should seek partners other than the CGIAR. The proposed risk research is important but it is already covered, or could be covered, in Theme 1.2 (on resilience) of the FP on INRM.

The MTP for the FPs are incomplete in terms of plausible pathways, *ex ante* impact assessment and details in logical framework of outputs, outcomes and impact. This level of detail is largely missing from the Plan as proposed. Where it was clearly identified (FP2; Theme 2.1) the activities proposed were not actually research. There is a considerable disjoint therefore between the claims in paragraph 1 of “a dramatic increase in impact of research” and the research activities planned, except perhaps for FP3. However, the CGIAR has had successes in crop breeding (as suggested in FP3) in the past, but success has been less in SSA and there is limited description of why what is now proposed will be more successful. Yet, there are new opportunities through a regional approach e.g. the potential benefits of ILRI’s understanding of crop/livestock systems and constraints to the adoption of new varieties could add value to research by Centers with expertise in plant breeding but these sorts of opportunities are not described in the text. The criteria for evaluation of the proposed FPs could have been strengthened to consider those sorts of potential synergies. It will be helpful if the proposers consider this and the articulation of how the research will develop global public goods as the programs are fleshed out in more detail.

In summary: FPs 1 and 3 are aligned with the System Priorities. Parts of FP2 (policy research) could be as well, if it is identified as such rather than knowledge management. The rest of FP2 is an important research supporting activity. FP4 is outside the System Priorities. Some of the activities mentioned in FPs 2 and 4 are not research. It is not possible to determine if there are plans to design, monitor and evaluate regional research within the sub regional MTP which are different from those applying to CGIAR research in general.

Partnerships. All 15 Centers, along with 10 NARS and two SROs, ASARECA and SADC participated in the preparation of the MTP. The partnerships are, in principle, based on the recognition of institutional comparative advantage, encouragement of synergies, promotion of openness and knowledge sharing between all CGIAR Centers and other partners.

The MTP deliberations have enthusiastically endorsed the establishment of a Network Cluster with clearly defined guidelines to improve alignments at the operational level with agreed rules of engagement that take cognizance of previous weaknesses and strengths in collaborations among CGIAR Centers as well as with NARS. The Hub structure is suggested to help integrate research among the CGIAR Centers, SROs and NARS. It is only possible presently to comment favorably on the process proposed. Much of the detail of operation has to be worked out and only then can it be estimated if the proposals will add value. It is expected that the landscape approach (espoused in FP1 and by the System Priorities) will create the agenda for a new style of working, and there are similar opportunities for the scaling up/scaling out aspects of FP2.

There is limited description of capacity building activities in the MTP. At this early phase of development, it is envisaged that the CGIAR Centers, SRO and NARS will play varying but complementary roles, partly determined by institutional capacity. The recognition of asymmetrical contributions from NARS partners should become a focus for planning institutional strengthening, as successful devolution of activities will ultimately be the mark of

success of the System. The MTP only identifies some of these opportunities on the basis of current activities. Since the activities of the Network Cluster are dynamic, institutional roles will change with time as defined by needs and capacity.

If properly implemented, some of the activities in the MTP should facilitate inter-Center and partner's collaboration on the basis of comparative advantage, identification of synergies and rationalization of resource allocation, all of which should improve efficiency of achieving System Priorities. However, the impact pathways for the proposed activities are not identified. That is something promised by the end of the year.

Implementation. The ethos of "getting going" on a few doable programs may well be the best way forward for the implementation of a cohesive Plan for the subregion. The network comprises CGIAR Centers, NARS and SRO and the management challenges are not inconsiderable. There are few attributed responsibilities within the FPs. However, the difficulties encountered in previous attempts to carry out collaboration in agricultural research have provided opportunities to discuss means for their circumvention openly; building trust and a shared knowledge base, providing resources to develop capacity for those with less, strategic pooling of resources and giving credit, where due, have all been discussed in the MTP. The SC notes that there is a tremendous opportunity to realign the current networks around, or as part of, the available research platform: however these details are not yet clear. It is also not clear how the Program Advisory Committee will place the ESA priorities in the wider context.

The suggested implementation and organizational approach appears to be appropriate. The Alliance should be complimented for the inexpensive and non bureaucratic mechanism proposed. The SC commends the agreement on the Alliance being the single level of governance. Although there is a wide range in the capacities of the institutions participating in the MTP, the participants are becoming aware that CGIAR Centers can carry out some of the work needed, but that there is a good deal to be learnt from NARS in the area of implementation. There is awareness on the part of all stakeholders that a well-articulated capacity building program with projected targets is an essential component of the MTP.

While the proposed network seems innovative and appropriate more description is needed on governance. A key to success of any network is sorting out the accountability issue, since that determines more than anything the incentive for "nodes" to participate actively in the network. The term "accountability" is only used once, and then in a sentence which is difficult to interpret: *"Accountability for delivery of the MTP's value proposition will be supported by monitoring the progress of the activities and the delivery of the Network Cluster's commitments to the region."* The "Hub" obviously is a key element determining the success of the network. There needs to be more discussion of the powers and authority held by the Hub. If it is operating totally by persuasion, will anything other than "business as usual" result with some Centers cooperating when it suits their purposes and others going their own way, driven by donor funding. The MTP needs to go further on governance and *de facto* management of the programs that are proposed, and particularly taking into account that the key to managing Center and partner interactions will lie in the commitment of the Centers to the "role of the hub" as the innovative knowledge source.

ANNEX 2. DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE WCA MTP

Synergies. In general, the MTP provides a useful overview of a reasonably coherent research plan for the sub-region, based on extensive consultation and analysis. The proposed research fits within the capabilities of the Centers and partners. An analysis has been made of the research conducted through Systemwide and Challenge programs and complementarities with these programs are presented. The research agenda is, however, lacking in explicitly showing the complementarities between the global agenda of the CGIAR and the regional agenda of the MTP.

The MTP identifies three types of research programs for WCA: aligned CGIAR programs; integrated sub-regional programs; and platforms for innovation. For each of these, a rationale of the program, potential limiting factors and key operating principles are given. Potential inter-Center alignment programs (13) and integrated sub-regional programs (15) have been identified. A logframe is provided for seven thematic clusters. There seems to be some overlap in all these three sets. Furthermore, both the alignment programs and the integrated programs include several similar topics within the sets, particularly in genetic resources. Therefore clarification is needed on how these sets actually fit together and how they will be used in the implementation phase.

The MTP presents (Annex 5) a very detailed and helpful look at the clustering of on going work around a set of well-defined research domains. These current research outputs do not show a large amount of duplication. However, the MTP does not propose that ALL Center activities in the sub-region are part of the MTP. On pg. 23, the MTP states that "The programmatic suggestions of the MTP do not cover all the programs and activities that the Centers or their partners implement in the region" and on pg. 4 and pg.35, the MTP states that each Center is at liberty to do whatever it wants. Therefore, the programs planned do not clearly show enhanced synergies from current Center agendas. What are the opportunities foregone of not having a more cohesive program? This is a major weakness of the plan. The SC would like to see commitment by the Centers that everything they do in the WCA region is identified *a priori* in the MTP. The way the MTP is presented could be interpreted as an additional activity to the continuously dispersed activities, with the associated waste of research funds and lack of impact.

The MTPs ability to capture the critical mass and add value to the CGIAR's agenda will depend on addressing the research platforms, which in the MTP are hardly dealt with. It is therefore not clear that the proposed programs are based on identification of researchable problems that are automatically best addressed through the collaborative research arrangements being proposed. Such research platforms as frameworks, arrangements, or initiatives providing space and resources should facilitate a timely achievement of the CGIAR goals by identifying and strengthening synergies and eliminating duplication, both within the Centers as well as with NARS. For example adding value and capturing critical mass in much of the ongoing activities for Theme 4 "dealing with environmental constraints" requires that all parties begin integration at common research platforms that are representative of the ecosystems of the region (the MTP describes 3 main ecosystems). This difficult but critical issue is not yet addressed in the MTP, and there seem to be no clear plans for it to be addressed in the planning of upcoming activities (pg. 37).

Alignment with System Priorities. The WCA stakeholders have appropriately developed five selection criteria for prioritization of future research programs within the integrated framework:

potential for impact on poverty and food security; need for a critical mass of research capacity, comparative advantage of the CGIAR to contribute, complementarity and value addition to be achieved by integration, and the potential contribution to regional capacity that could be achieved.

The MTP also makes an effort to identify where CGIAR and SRO activities and priorities fall within the new CGIAR five priority areas (presented under *Current Research Outputs and On-going CGIAR Activities*). The partners have used these areas as a basis for identifying research domains for the MTP that match with CORAF's priority areas. They have identified three areas: (1) markets and trade, (2) natural resources management and (3) conservation and sustainable utilization of plant and animal genetic resources. Two additional areas – policy and institutions (science and technology policy, innovation and extension) and diversification and competitiveness of agricultural production – were judged to involve common elements.

The MTP in general identifies the most appropriate areas of research to be addressed at the sub-regional level for the CGIAR. A good example of addressing new CGIAR priorities is in Theme 2 using genetic diversity for income generation particularly with fruits and vegetables. But a look at the detailed analysis of ongoing work in Annex 5 clearly shows a large portion of local goods research in the current agenda, and an array of activities already performed by many Centers (pgs. 53, 58, 59). The SC emphasizes that modifying ongoing activities and programs and incorporating them into the MTP requires hard work which is not yet evident. While most of the proposed research fits within System Priorities, the SC notes that the MTP recognizes (pg.13) a potential conflict between CORAF's and CGIAR's priorities. The former wants to rework existing knowledge while the latter wants to generate new knowledge.

Some of the work suggested has strictly development, not research-for-development, orientation. The research content of some of the integrated research programs such as *Establishment of nodal Centers of excellence for WCA (for plant genetic resources conservation)*; *Development of fruit trees industry for WCA*; *Management of risk and vulnerability*; and *Enhancing science and technology policy, research and extension* is not yet clear.

In the process of developing the MTP the respective roles of the Centers in relation to the other partners have been analyzed. This comes across in Table 2 describing the types of research programs in the region (pg. 21). In the program design, the MTP would benefit from further clarity on which elements in the agenda are within the comparative advantage of the CGIAR Centers viz. a viz. NARS, and should possibly consider consortia approaches with other actors for them to supply the missing components at the development end of the continuum. For example, among the research described for the Themes, some of the work proposed in theme 6 (*Optimizing the sustainable use of natural resources at the landscape level*) moves too far away from the interaction with productivity (such as carbon markets described on pg. 32), and therefore such work could be left for others. Work proposed in theme 7 (*Making the best use of agriculture science and technology for regional development*) that looks at strategies for sustainable financing of R&D, mechanism for diversifying funding sources, may be better left to international financial institutions.

Partnerships. The MTP arose from the CORAF partnership earlier aiming at integrating the CORAF partners' individual activities with those of the scientific partners in the sub-region, including the Centers. It has since moved to involving a much broader base of partners, and has

modified the framework used in the ESA MTP to include alignment of activities between Centers, joint development of regional programs, and the creation of platforms for area-based innovation or for addressing major technology and development trends.

Participation in the development of this MTP was broad and included essentially all stakeholders with the assignment of five of the ten Centers to coordinate activities of each of the five CGIAR System Priority areas. There is, however, lack of bringing in other partners, particularly from ARIs that may have more expertise in new area of research within those priorities.

The SC recognizes that regional MTPs are as much about collaboration among equal Centers as with other partners with disparate resources and capacity. Provided the MTP will support a well-focused capacity-building program that specifically strengthens NARS, enabling them to grow, the Centers will gradually have less involvement in implementation activities. The need for capacity building is acknowledged throughout the MTP and one of the MTP research themes includes capacity building in plant genetic resources conservation and seed systems as an area of focus. The detailed outputs have yet to be developed, however.

The MTP aspires to promote local dialogues (pg. 13). This is the foundation for the SSA CP and the SC finds it unusual that there appears to have been little or no interaction between the team preparing this MTP and the team that prepared the SSA CP MTP. The absence of a linkage with the SSA CP where capacity strengthening through the research partnerships is likely to be a large component is seen as a major deficiency of the WCA MTP. While acknowledging that the SSA CP is still in an initial phase, the SC encourages this linkage to be made explicit in the MTP.

Although the participating Centers' role – primary/secondary research provider, catalyst, facilitator, advocate are not yet clearly identified in the MTP, the intent is there and should be evident in the next iteration of Center MTPs.

Implementation. The management structure is not completely clear in the MTP. The SC is concerned that, there is a great deal of responsibility in terms of governance and accountability resting with Alliance of Centers Executive and thus providing another layer of governance. The SC favors the concept of a Coordinating Unit with an MTP administrator with a major role the development of the regional Plan and for the monitoring of the gains from the plan in terms of economies of scale; inclusiveness of NARS and cohesion of programs The SC notes that. The operation of the Coordinating Unit will be in accordance with the Alliance's Principles and Procedures. The collaboration sought in the MTP Implementation Plan is to be guided by a code of ethics of the Alliance, which appears to be an effective cost efficient mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the collaboration, and for resolving disagreements. The SC reinforces the role of the Centers and regional organizations for monitoring and evaluation of the scientific outputs and outcomes that contribute to the Plan. The SC therefore seeks clarification on the plans (pg. 12) that in the future "most of the MTP activities will be funded through the SROs". If this is correct, the circumstances and conditions for and implication of devolving coordination and funding responsibilities to the SROs within a relatively short period need to be better thought out and elaborated. This is particularly important for maintaining the Plan's focus on CGIAR priority research.

In order to become effective and realize the potential it has, the MTP need to begin a stepwise Implementation Plan rather than further analysis on the broad front of all research themes at

once. It will need to include the articulation and rationalization of the research platforms. A staged Implementation Plan would: a) minimize the disruption to ongoing work; and b) ensure some action and outcome (and thus overcome any paralysis by analysis, which is a real threat to research output in the region).

It is recognized in the MTP rationale that the plans to design, monitor and evaluate regional research within the MTPs need to be fully aligned with those applying to CGIAR research in general. Although the 7 thematic clusters proposed are in the main consistent with the new SPs, the logframes lack clearly defined outputs and outcomes in most cases. Articulation of plausible impact pathways and *ex ante* impact assessment plans are needed. Indeed, there is a lot of work yet to be done on the Logframes before they can be used by the Alliance to monitor and evaluate progress toward described research output targets and outcomes.

The networks seem to be clearly designed and likely to be efficient for facilitating the implementation of the MTP. But, again, there must be a tremendous opportunity to realign the current networks as part of an “aligned research platform”. For example, are separate networks needed for each of the commodities?

The MTP also states that it “provides for accountability and transparency through public review and peer pressure”, which is fine in terms of accountability of results to the region, but not in terms of normal accountability for expenditure of funds. There obviously are management and governance issues that remain to be worked out.