

Draft Terms of Reference

External Review of the CGIAR

Summary

In the last several years the CGIAR has witnessed considerable changes as part of its internal reforms, including establishing an Executive Council and the launching of the Challenge Programs. Even though all CGIAR Centers and Programs undergo external reviews regularly there has been no review at the system level to assess the impact of changes initiated during the reform program except for one of the components of the reform (the System Office).

The last CGIAR system-review was conducted 9 years ago, and it has been 4 years since the last independent meta-evaluation commissioned by the World Bank was released. Therefore this external evaluation would take stock of the efficacy of the CGIAR partnership and address issues of governance, management and alignment at the system level. The Review would also assess the effectiveness of the CGIAR research through a streamlined meta-evaluation of existing reviews of the Center programs and Challenge Programs.¹

Introduction

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the CGIAR, created in 1971, is an informal association of sixty-four independent public and private sector members, from South and North, with the World Bank, FAO, IFAD and UNDP as Cosponsors. The CGIAR provides 15 international agricultural research centers with strategic guidance and financial assistance.

A loosely connected network of several components forms the CGIAR System. The pillars of the CGIAR System are:

- the Consultative Group, its Executive Council, and partners;
- the Science Council that helps to maintain a high quality of science in the CGIAR System;
- independent international agricultural research Centers supported by the CGIAR, and Center Committees.

These are supported by the CGIAR System Office which has a pivotal role in the integration and administration of the System.

Each part of the System performs a distinct set of functions, based on its roles and responsibilities. These functions are mutually supportive and complementary, i.e. the components are interdependent and the

¹ In addition, the review would also help to meet requirements of the World Bank Development Grant Facility (DGF) whereby DGF grant recipients need to be evaluated every 3-5 years. The World Bank has contributed \$50million/year in the several past years to the CGIAR, and is the largest provider of unrestricted funds to the system. It provides the system with its Chair, Director, and houses the CGIAR Secretariat. The strategy used by the World Bank in the past several years is to support the Centers with unrestricted resources (general support) and the reform program initiated in 2001.

whole is far greater than the sum of the parts, thereby providing the CGIAR with its systemic character. The CGIAR System collaborates in research and research-related activities with many partners, to support and carry out agricultural research of the highest quality, in order to ensure that agricultural science and technology contribute significantly to sustainable development.

The mission of the CGIAR is to achieve sustainable food security and reduce poverty in developing countries through scientific research and research-related activities in the fields of agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, policy and natural resources management.

These terms of reference describe the following:

1. Objectives of this External Review
2. Scope of the Review
3. Methodology
4. Suggested composition of the Review Panel
5. Timeframe

Objectives of this Review

The Review will have the following objectives with a special focus on the impact of the recent reform program:

- To take stock and assess the efficacy of the CGIAR partnership;
- To assess the effectiveness of CGIAR research;

The review can also be an important input to the CGIAR in its ongoing discussions on alignment.

Scope of the Review

The Review would be conducted in two, closely linked phases : Phase One: the review of the efficacy of the CGIAR system operating as an international partnership building on three pillars - the Consultative Group, the Science Council (SC) and the 15 research centers; and Phase two - the review of the effectiveness of research supported by the CGIAR based on a meta-evaluation of the existing external evaluations such as center EPMRs, the ongoing external reviews of Challenge Programs, the CGIAR Member-commissioned reviews of centers/projects and other external reviews of the CGIAR programs. Findings from both phases will be consolidated in a final report that will also highlight linkages between the two phases of the Review.

Phase I: Efficacy of Partnership: governance, management and alignment in the System

A. The Consultative Group, its Executive Council, and partners

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership as a whole? Is the governance structure effective and enhancing the system? What have been the key changes in the governance and

management processes/procedures in the recent years and how did that impact the partnership?
Are there key constraints/limitations to the partnership and if so what are they?

- 2) How effective is the partnership approach taken by the CGIAR, i.e. forming an informal international institution? Are there any lessons for other global partnerships?
- 3) How effective is the CGIAR in serving as a platform and catalyst in supporting agricultural research for development?
- 4) What has been the performance of the Executive Council since its inception as one of the initial pillars of the reform program? Has the Executive Council made decision-making more effective and efficient?
- 5) Does the partnership operate in a transparent manner? How are the members of the partnership accountable to the partnership?
- 6) How effective is the CGIAR in establishing partnerships among CGIAR Centers and between CGIAR Centers and external partners (both public and private sector)?
- 7) Is the CGIAR constricting or creating synergies for aligning the funding? What is the role of unrestricted resources in supporting the system, including the reform program? How has the decline in unrestricted funding affected the system as a whole, particularly its governance? What are the role and the strength of the World Bank, as the largest contributor of unrestricted resources, in facilitating the operation of the system? How is the World Bank contribution (which is not only monetary), assisting to leverage other CGIAR Members funding into the CGIAR and impacting reform of the system, its governance, mode of operation, etc.?

B. The Science Council (SC)

- 1) How does the SC fulfill its role within the system? Has the SC effectively fulfilled the three main objectives for which it was set up:
 - enhancing and promoting the quality, relevance and impact of science in the CGIAR;
 - advising the Group on strategic scientific issues of importance to its goals; and
 - mobilizing and harnessing the best of international science for addressing the goals of the international agricultural research community?
- 2) Is the size/composition/structure of the Science Council suitable for the key functions it performs within the CGIAR system?

C. The Centers

- 1) How well do the Centers perform collectively?
- 2) How does Center governance relate to system governance (ExCo and the CGIAR) and how well is the governance aligned, or not?
- 3) How does the autonomy of the 15 research centers balance with the need for accountability? What are the challenges of keeping a system aligned while also respecting the autonomy of the research centers?
- 4) How effective is the oversight of the individual centers? How well-equipped are the Center Boards in playing this oversight role at the center level?

Phase II: Effectiveness and Impact of CGIAR Research

To assess the effectiveness of the CGIAR research, the evaluation will rely mainly on a meta-evaluation of the EPMRs, the Challenge Program External Reviews (CPEs), the CGIAR Member commissioned reviews of centers/projects and other external reviews of the CGIAR programs as well as Center or SC commissioned impact assessment studies.

- 1) Does the CGIAR contribute to poverty reduction at large? How do CGIAR funds contribute to increasing agricultural productivity?
- 2) Does the CGIAR contribute to poverty reduction action by multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank?
- 3) How effective are the Challenge Programs both in terms of partnership models they use and also in terms of their programmatic content?
- 4) How does investment in agricultural R&D relate to agricultural GDP (e.g. Sub-Sahara Africa) and what is the share of the total CGIAR investment in total agricultural R&D (for the same region)? What is the trend and would an increase in international agricultural research (such through the CGIAR) affect agricultural GDP significantly?

Methodology

The methodology for the Review will include the following components:

- 1) Interviews with Members, partners, Center staff, other stakeholders
- 2) Review of core CGIAR documents, e.g. the Charter, CGIAR/ExCo decisions, available reviews (e.g., System Office) etc. Specific issues to look at are the programmatic and structural alignment efforts (for example, the Centers in Africa), and the pooling of Center financial reserves.
- 3) Meta-evaluations - including:
 - a. Reviews of Centers External Program Management Reviews (EPMRs) together with the external reviews of the Challenge Programs (CPs) and System-wide and Eco-regional Programs (SWEPs). In addition, the evaluations of impact studies, and other CGIAR evaluations including evaluations done by Centers can serve to assess the impact of the CGIAR on poverty reduction at large. Also the annual Performance Measurement (PM) System can provide information on the system including accountability and transparency.
 - b. Review of evaluations conducted by other CGIAR Members.
- 4) Assessment of CGIAR financial and funding information to better understand the use of unrestricted funding.
- 5) The Review Panel could also commission specific studies to address some of the specific issues which would be outlined in the inception report (as described later).
- 6) The Review Panel would also use quantitative indicators in their assessment, where possible.

Report

The evaluation panel is expected to prepare four reports:

1) **Inception Report**

The inception report is due a month after the start of their contract. This will provide an opportunity to further specify methodological and organizational aspects of the evaluation, including any provisions for needed meetings, interviews, site visit travel, new data collection, etc. The inception report can also provide an opportunity for the team to point out any limitations they perceive which might affect the credibility and quality of the evaluation as envisaged in the TORs — such as inadequate budget, tight time frame, lack of consensus on program or evaluation objectives, lack of an M&E framework, poor data, or lack of provision (budget and/or time) for building participation and consultation of stakeholders into the design of the evaluation. The panel would specifically address the issue of developing quantitative indicators which could possibly be applied for the evaluation.

- 2) **Report on Phase 1-** on Efficacy of Partnership: governance, management and alignment of the System.
- 3) **Report on Phase 2-** on Effectiveness and Impact of CGIAR Research
- 4) **Final Report** – the Final Report will integrate both reports and also address linkages between findings of both phases.

The latter three reports will highlight a set of clear and actionable recommendations. The timeframe is detailed below.

Budget

While the World Bank has agreed to defray a major part of the review cost, it would be important for other CGIAR Members to share the costs. The CGIAR Secretariat would be approaching other Members on this issue of sharing costs of the Review. Estimates are being generated.

Review panel

a. Composition

The Review Panel will be composed of a core team of 5 members

- A panel chair with extensive expertise in evaluation of international networks or global partnerships for development.
- A member with extensive experience with institutional governance issues
- A member with an understanding of networks of multilateral organizations and preferably operations of multilateral institutions.
- Two members with extensive expertise in agricultural research for development leading the program review through the meta-evaluation.

It would be desirable to have 1-2 members of the panel with significant CGIAR system-knowledge.

b. Support and Backstopping

A consultant will support the core team. The CGIAR Secretariat will also help in backstopping the Review.

c. Process for panel/ firm selection

The CGIAR Membership will be invited to nominate firms/institutions/ individuals for Panel membership according to the above specified profiles. The TORs of the External Review will be posted on the CGIAR website. Based on the information received the CGIAR Secretariat will present options to ExCo for discussion and endorsement of the Panel composition.

Tentative timeline and key next steps

- 1) Draft TORs sent to ExCo for approval - April 20
- 2) ExCo approved TORs sent to CGIAR for further comments - May 04, 2007
- 3) TORs finalized by May 30, 2007
- 4) CGIAR nominates firms/institution/individuals for panel membership – June 30, 2007
- 5) Panel composition finalized - July 30, 2007
- 6) Inception Report received by August 30, 2007
- 7) Report on Phase 1 received by November 30, 2007
- 8) Report on Phase 2 received by February 28, 2008
- 9) Final Report by April 15, 2008