

August 25, 2003

Dr Francisco J B Reifschneider
Director
The CGIAR
The World Bank
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Dear Francisco:

On behalf of ICRISAT, I would like to submit to you in the attached file our responses to the recommendations made by the recent EMR Panel under the chairmanship of Dr. Julie Noolan. We would like to record our appreciation to the well-conducted review. In general, we are satisfied with the outcome and we believe that this review will be a good guide for ICRISAT in the coming years.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,

William D Dar
Director General

cc: Emil Javier, Julie Noolan, Uzo Mokwunye, Manny Lantin

ICRISAT EMR 2003 RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

CHAPTER 2: BOARD GOVERNANCE

- 1. The Panel recommends that the Center consult with the host country to reduce the number of host country positions on the Board and to ensure that host country nominees can serve full Board terms of appointment.**

We agree with the spirit and intent of the recommendation. We will work hard to ensure that host country nominees can serve at least one full Board term. We also recognize that the number of host country positions is stated in the ICRISAT's constitution and is agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of India (GOI). The process and implications of implementing this recommendation will therefore require common understanding between ICRISAT and the GOI.

- 2. The Panel recommends that neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair position on the Governing Board be held by a host country member.**

We agree with the recommendation especially in the case of the Board Chair. The current Vice-Chair arrangement is but a convention that is not unique to ICRISAT. We remain vigilant to ensure that whatever process is followed does not weaken ICRISAT's partnership and relations with the GOI.

- 3. The Panel recommends that the Board continue to meet twice a year, one meeting at the headquarters site and the other at the African regional sites on a rotational basis.**

We agree with the recommendation.

- 4. The Panel recommends that the new Board members receive a comprehensive indoctrination on Board governance responsibilities in addition to their orientation to the Center's programmes.**

We agree. A comprehensive process of orienting the Board members is currently in place. We will make sure that this process is further enhanced. The understanding of the governance responsibilities among Board members will be strengthened.

- 5. The Panel recommends that the entire Board regularly and systematically review and document its own performance (including the Chair's), set performance objectives based on that assessment, and intentionally address on-going Board development, based on the assessment. Committees should be encouraged to do likewise.**

We agree. We will work to improve the existing process.

- 6. The Panel recommends that the Center adopt the practice of an annual “in camera” session to discuss the overall organization performance, without the Director General present.**

We accept the recommendation. This is already being done in the context of the DG’s performance evaluation.

- 7. The Panel recommends that the ICRISAT Board adopt the “model” grievance and appeal process as proposed by the Committee of Board Chairs, including as a final step for IRS staff the right to appeal to the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal in Switzerland (which can be done at minimal cost).**

The model grievance and appeal process proposed by the CBC will be studied and relevant provisions will be adopted. We will study the financial feasibility of adopting the ILO’s Administrative Tribunal as an appeal mechanism at the Institute.

- 8. The Panel recommends that the Finance Committee be disbanded and that its responsibilities for financial planning and oversight be assumed by the Executive Committee and that the oversight of both the external and internal audit functions be assumed by the Audit Committee.**

We agree with the recommendation.

- 9. The Panel recommends that the Technology Exchange Committee be disbanded and its responsibilities be added to the Program Committee. This addition will also ensure that the major programmatic items that should be discussed by the full Board will be taken up at that level.**

We accept the recommendation.

CHAPTER 5: FINANCE

- 10. The Panel recommends that, keeping with existing Board policy, the Board and management commit to a break-even or better budget in the Center’s annual financial planning and operations.**

We agree to the need for a balanced budget policy as a guiding principle. Despite the continuing uncertain financial circumstances prevailing in the CGIAR system, the Institute will strive to do its best to achieve this position.

CHAPTER 6: HUMAN RESOURCES

- 11. The Panel recommends the introduction of an improved system of performance evaluation for all IRS and SMG, which incorporates elements of the 360-degree system.**

The recommendation is accepted. A review of the Performance Management System has already been started and the 360-degree system is being studied to enrich the performance evaluation process.

CHAPTER 7: FACILITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- 12. The Panel recommends that benchmarking against *best practice* norms be undertaken for the Facilities and Support Service units.**

The recommendation is accepted.

CHAPTER 8: REVENUE GENERATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 13. The Panel recommends that the competencies of the PDMO be reviewed in the light of the Terms of Reference for the Office, and that missing experience and skill sets be added.**

We will undertake a review of PDMO competencies, including the skills required by the contemporary task environment of this office.