

**CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
SCIENCE COUNCIL**

**SC STANDING PANEL ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SPIA)**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SPIA REPORT TO AGM '05**

The full SPIA Report to AGM05 is available electronically  
as a supporting document to this AGM Agenda item.

**SCIENCE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT**

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This report describes the progress made by SPIA since the last report to the Group at AGM '04, highlighting major activities and impact assessment (IA) studies commissioned by SPIA. This is done against the back-drop of an overall strategy considering the future IA needs of the System as perceived by SPIA and endorsed by the CGIAR, i.e., improving the relevance and quality of IAs; expanding IA coverage; and improving the dissemination and use of IA.

There are two major, recurring-type activities of SPIA: one related to CGIAR performance monitoring (PM); the other to dissemination and communication. With respect to the former, SPIA is contributing to the overall PM of CGIAR centers by (i) developing guidelines and criteria for indicators of center impact and (ii) evaluating center performance in the area of IA. The guidelines have been revised in the light of an internal assessment of the Centers' submissions for 2005. Three key activities are described that target wider dissemination and better communication of CGIAR IA results: (i) development of the CGIAR Impact Website; (ii) production of brief synopses of IA findings and 'think pieces' on advancing IA in the CGIAR; and (iii) organizing an IA focal point workshop in mid 2006 to identify System-level IA needs and opportunities and further develop Systemwide strategic guidelines for IA.

Of the six on-going IA studies commissioned by SPIA, four will have been completed, up to publication stage, by the end of 2005. The *Impact of the CGIAR on poverty alleviation* study coordinated by IFPRI is in the final stages of manuscript revision for book publication expected in early 2006. The *Impact of CGIAR NRM research* study documents NRM research impact through seven case studies of center projects or programs and one systemwide initiative (ASB), main results of which will be presented in a special AGM '05 luncheon session and available in the final report (available at AGM '05). Some follow-up activity will

be necessary to finalize the publication of a CABI-book in early 2006. The *Impact and Evaluation of Training in the CGIAR* study report is targeted for completion by early 2006 but the main findings will be presented at AGM'05. The study on *Donor demands for and uses of evidence of research impact*, undertaken to better understand donor views about ex-post IA work is now completed - final report is available on the SC website and available at AGM'05. Two 'exploratory studies' were initiated in 2005 and reported on this report: The *Impact in Africa - Phase I* study involving a comprehensive collection, synthesis and assessment of evidence on the impacts of new technologies and improved policies as a result of CGIAR and partner research in SSA; and the *Policy-oriented research impacts scoping study*, compiling an inventory of relevant studies, defining terminology and exploring methodological issues involved in documenting the impact of "policy-oriented" research in the CGIAR.

Two follow-up studies are planned for implementation in 2006. The *Policy-oriented research impacts (Phase II)* study will involve a series of case study IAs in cooperation with CGIAR Centers, as well as some focus group meetings, to document more rigorously the impact pathways from CGIAR research to changed policies. The *Research in Africa (Phase II)* study, building on Phase I results, will systematically identify factors constraining adoption and impact of agricultural innovations in the African context. Two new scoping studies are planned in 2006: the *Impacts of Participatory Research in the CGIAR* and *CGIAR Research Benefit Diffusion & Impacts in South Asia*, both of which are designed to explore what is currently known about impacts in these areas and whether full-scale impact studies would be justified.