

## **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, creation of the Science Council, and the launching of the Challenge Programs. The 15 Centers have also created an Alliance to more effectively facilitate and coordinate their collective activities. Even though all CGIAR Centers and Programs undergo external reviews regularly there has been no review at the system level to assess the impact and effectiveness of changes initiated during the reform program except for one of the components of the reform (the System Office).<sup>1</sup>

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 will take stock of the efficacy of the CGIAR partnership and address issues of governance, management, alignment, and other changes required at the system level.<sup>2</sup> The Review will also assess the achievements and effectiveness of the CGIAR research through an analysis and synthesis (of existing reviews and impact assessments of the Center programs and Challenge Programs) and assess if the system is well positioned to address the emerging future food security and agriculture related problems of developing countries.<sup>3</sup>

#### **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

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<sup>1</sup>This System Office External Review focused on assessing the synergies and added value of operating as a System Office, but it did not review the individual units composing the System Office, as those are reviewed individually.

<sup>2</sup> The term “alignment” has been used in the CGIAR to encompass (i) alignment among Centers in terms of program, governance and corporate services, (ii) alignment at system level among Members, and (iii) alignment between the different components constituting the CGIAR System (i.e. Members, Science Council, Centers and System Office). Alignment in this context refers to the capacity to work more effectively together toward the accomplishment of the mission of the CGIAR.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

agricultural research centers with strategic guidance, financial assistance and a forum for interaction with donors.

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 that provide funding and strategic guidance;
- the Science Council that helps to maintain a high quality of science in the CGIAR System;
- 15 legally independent international agricultural research Centers, and the Alliance they have formed for their collective action, which are the implementing agencies and research arm of the CGIAR system ,

These are supported by the CGIAR System Office (SO)<sup>4</sup> which has a pivotal facilitating role in the integration and administration of the System.

Each part of the System is expected to perform a distinct set of functions, based on its roles and responsibilities. These functions are meant to be mutually supportive and complementary, i.e. the components are interdependent and the 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, conduct and disseminate international agricultural research of the highest quality, in order to ensure that agricultural science and technology contribute significantly to sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

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 the External Review
2. Scope of the Review
3. Methodology
4. Reports
5. Budget
6. Review Panel
7. ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group
8. Tentative Timeline and key next steps

An **ExCo ad hoc advisory group** to guide finalization of the TORs for the external review and panel composition has been established. The group is composed of 1 Alliance representative, 2 CGIAR Members, and 1 SC/SPIA member.

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<sup>4</sup> The SO includes a list of nine units - Central Advisory Service on Intellectual Property, CGIAR Secretariat, Chief Information Office, Alliance Office, Gender and Diversity Program, Strategic Advisory Service on Human Resources, Internal Audit Unit, Media Unit, Science Council Secretariat.

## **Objectives of this Review**

The Review will have the following objectives with a special emphasis on (but not limited to) 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;
- To make recommendations for changes in the CGIAR system that will improve its efficacy and effectiveness in view of emerging challenges for food security, agriculture, and natural resource management of the poor.

## **Scope of the Review**

The Review would have two concurrent, closely linked and equally important parts- Part 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), the 15 research centers and their Alliance; and Part two - the review of the effectiveness of research supported by the CGIAR based on analysis and synthesis of the existing external evaluations such as center EPMRs, the ongoing external reviews of Challenge Programs, reviews of the system-wide and eco-regional programs (SWEPs), impact assessment studies, the CGIAR Member-commissioned reviews of centers/projects and other external reviews of the CGIAR programs. Findings from both parts will be consolidated in a final report that will also highlight linkages between the two components of the Review.

### **Part 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 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 association? Are there any lessons for/from other global partnerships?
- 3) How effective is the CGIAR in serving as a platform and catalyst in supporting and delivering international agricultural research for development?
- 4) In terms of the governance of the System, what has been the performance of the Executive Council since its inception in 2001 as one of the important components of the reform program? Has the Executive Council made decision-making more effective and efficient within the CGIAR partnership? Are the role, size and composition of ExCo appropriate for its mandate? How

effective are the CGIAR Annual General Meetings, including Stakeholder Meeting and Business Meeting?

- 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 and facilitating partnerships among CGIAR Centers and between CGIAR Centers and external partners (both public and private sector)?
- 7) Is the current financing structure for the system appropriate? Is it efficient and suited to the development and dissemination of international public goods? 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 and its ability to deliver research products that contribute to the fulfillment of the CGIAR mission? How effectively does the system deal with financial risks?
- 8) What is the role - the strengths and weaknesses 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.? What is the role of the other Co-Sponsors?
- 9) What are the perceptions of CGIAR membership about their involvement and change of involvement over the past few years? And the role played by the Co-Sponsors?

## **B. The Science Council (SC)**

- 1) How does the SC fulfill its role within the system? How is their performance perceived by internal and external stakeholders? 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) How has the process for setting system priorities, led by the SC, contributed to the CGIAR strategic alignment?
- 3) Is the size/composition/structure of the Science Council suitable for the key functions it performs within the CGIAR system?
- 4) How is the SC perceived by CGIAR Members and Centers?

## **C. The Centers**

- 1) How well does the Alliance of the CGIAR Centers perform collectively? Is the Alliance a cost-effective mechanism for collective action? How is it perceived by Centers, Members and other partners?
- 2) How does system governance (ExCo and the CGIAR) relate to Center governance? How does system governance relate to the governance of the Alliance of the CGIAR Centers.

- 3) How does the autonomy of the 15 research centers and of the 64 Members balance with the need for accountability and collective action at the System level? What are the challenges of keeping the system aligned while also respecting this autonomy?
- 4) How effective is the oversight and governance of the individual centers? How well-equipped are the Center Boards in playing this oversight role at the center level?
- 5) How effective is the partnering of CGIAR Centers outside the system?

#### **D. The System Office**

- 1) How effective is the System Office, as a virtual structure, in helping to increase coordination, capture synergies and increase overall performance of central service units that support the Centers and the CGIAR System as a whole?
- 2) How well do three units of the System Office, namely the CGIAR Secretariat, Science Council Secretariat and the Alliance Office - perform their functions?  
Are their structure, size and composition appropriate for the key functions they perform? Are accountability mechanisms and processes for increasing efficiency appropriate given their respective roles? Is there a potential conflict of interest in the CGIAR Secretariat's involvement in administration of the allocation of the funds from the World Bank and other donors?
- 3) What are CGIAR Members and Centers perceptions about the three units?

#### **E. Relations and synergies across the three pillars of the CGIAR System**

- 1) Are the levels of responsibility and accountability among the three pillars appropriate? Are the voices of the three pillars appropriately represented in System governance?
- 2) What are the costs, including transaction costs, and benefits of the governance structure? Is the distribution of these costs and benefits among the three pillars appropriate to enhance the implementation of the mission of the CGIAR?
- 3) What are CGIAR Members perceptions about the issues of relative autonomy and accountability and about the current layers of governance in the System?

### **Part II: Achievements and Effectiveness of CGIAR Research**

To assess the achievements (i.e. outputs, outcomes and impact) and the effectiveness of the CGIAR research, the evaluation will rely mainly on analysis and synthesis of the EPMRs, the Challenge Program External Reviews (CPEs), external reviews of system-wide programs, the CGIAR Member commissioned reviews of centers/projects and other external reviews of the CGIAR programs, Center or SC commissioned impact assessment studies, general Center reports as well as pertinent development literature. The evaluation should address the following issues:

- 1) Given the level of investment, how do CGIAR funds contribute to enhancing agricultural productivity, natural resource management and food security? What is the evidence of the relationship between achieving these and economic growth and poverty alleviation?

- 2) What evidence is there that CGIAR-generated technology and policy options are international public goods that are utilized by partners, with the former ultimately adopted by poor smallholders and the latter implemented by development agencies?
- 3) Does the CGIAR contribute to poverty reduction objectives of international development agencies (including the World Bank) and how are CGIAR outputs being utilized by them?
- 4) How effective are the Challenge Programs, both in terms of partnership models they use and also in terms of the productivity of the research?
- 5) What pressing issues should be considered for new and expanded CGIAR efforts? Are there areas where CGIAR research could be reduced?
- 6) 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 investments (such as the CGIAR) affect agricultural GDP significantly? For example, given the small share of the total investment in agricultural R&D that is represented by the CGIAR investment, and given the returns on this investment, so far, would an increased investment in CGIAR research bring about more than proportional returns in terms of impacts on the CGIAR mission?
- 7) Has the CGIAR system maintained its focus on international public goods? How well do the system priorities position the CGIAR with respect to its mission? What forces are affecting programs and decision-making in this regard? Is this the most effective focus to alleviate poverty?
- 8) How effective are current approaches to collaborative research with partners? Do the respective partnership roles properly exploit the comparative and complementary advantages of those involved? Are linkages with NARS, CSOs, ARIs and the private sector effectively supporting the achievements of CGIAR research objectives as well as meeting partner needs and expectations, e.g. how effective have Centers been in capacity building of NARS?

## **Methodology**

The methodology for the Review will include the following components:

- 1) Interviews with Members, partners, Center staff, Center Board members, SO Unit staff, other stakeholders
- 2) Review of core CGIAR documents, e.g. the Charter, CGIAR/ExCo decisions, available reviews (e.g., System Office, Stripe Review of Corporate Governance of CGIAR Centers) etc. Specific issues to look at are the programmatic and structural alignment efforts (for example, the Centers in Africa), and the systemwide management of financial risks.
- 3) Analyses and Syntheses - 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, including the independent World Bank OED Meta-evaluation of the CGIAR.
  - c. Evaluations of other Global Programs
  - d. Pertinent development literature (including independent academic research on the CGIAR)
  - e. Center reports
- 4) Assessment of CGIAR financial and funding information to better understand the use of unrestricted funding.
  - 5) The Review Panel could also commission studies to address some of the specific issues which would be outlined during the inception consultation (as described later).
  - 6) The Review Panel would also use quantitative indicators in their assessment, where possible.

## **Reports**

The evaluation panel is expected to prepare three reports:

### **1) Inception consultation and work plan**

The panel will have two inception consultations with the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group:

(i) at the outset of the work to seek overall guidance and briefing from the Advisory Group

(ii) 2-3- weeks later the evaluation panel will present a work plan to the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group seeking their feedback and suggestions.

The work plan 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.
- further specify the deliverables available for the interim report (please see below)

The panel would explore the feasibility of developing quantitative indicators which could possibly be used in the evaluation.

### **2) Interim Report**

An interim report is expected by March 10, 2008.

### **3) Final Report**

The final full report should be submitted by July, 2008, and will highlight a set of clear and actionable recommendations. A draft final report should be sent by the panel for comments.

## **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, preferably of international research for development networks or global partnerships.
- A member with extensive experience on institutional governance issues, and expertise in organizational structure issues in the public/private sector.
- A member with an understanding of networks or partnerships of multilateral organizations.
- Two members with extensive expertise in international agricultural research for development leading the program review through Part II of the Review.

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

### **b. Support and Backstopping**

One or two consultants will support the panel and report to the panel chair. The CGIAR Secretariat, the SC Secretariat and the Alliance Office will help with providing necessary background documentation supporting the Review.

### **d. Process for panel**

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 inviting nominations/applications. The TORs will also be circulated on listserves of professional evaluation associations. A long list of all nominations/applications received will be prepared and presented to the ExCo Ad Hoc Group. The proposed final list identified by the ExCo Ad Hoc Group will be sent to ExCo/CGIAR for approval.

## **ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group**

ExCo established an “ExCo ad hoc advisory group to guide finalization of the TORs for the external review and panel composition. The group should be composed of 1 Alliance representative, 2 CGIAR Members, and 1 SC/SPIA member.” (Summary Record of Proceeding of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council, May 2007).

As such the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group will guide (i) the finalization of the TOR (ii) the selection of the Review panel, and (iii) advise the review panel during the review, in particular during the inception consultation. At the same time, the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group will maintain an adequate distance from the panel to ensure the independence of the review.

## **Tentative timeline and key next steps**

- 1) ExCo Ad Hoc Group formed – June 29, 2007
- 2) ExCo Ad Hoc Group meeting to finalize TORs, discuss panel composition and next steps- July 17, 2007
- 3) Invite nominations for panel composition from July 17 to August 2, 2007 – including nominations from CGIAR Membership, the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group, open call for nominations/applications on the CGIAR website, wide dissemination of TOR to professional evaluation associations.
- 4) Long list of nominations and applications compiled and sent to ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory group – August 3, 2007
- 5) Virtual meeting of the ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group on the selection of a short list of the panelists for consideration by ExCo/CGIAR– August 7, 2007
- 6) TORs and panel composition approved by ExCo/CGIAR before September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- 7) Inception consultation/work plan discussed with ExCo Ad Hoc Advisory Group by November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- 8) Final Inception Report by December 14, 2007
- 9) Interim Report on Part 1 and Part 2 by March, 10 2008
- 10) Final report submitted by July 30, 2008.