

Summary of ExCo 13 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on IITA EPMR¹

R. Rabbinge presented SC comments on the IITA EPMR. He thanked the EPMR panel and highlighted the following points:

- SC believes that the development of a new strategic plan by IITA is essential in order to address the EPMR recommendations;
- SC is pleased to note that the panel finds large impacts on cassava and commends IITA scientists for communicating these results. However, SC expressed concern about the long debate between IITA and CIAT on the work on cassava and looks forward to a timely resolution of the issue.
- SC notes the panel's cautions about possible misinterpretation by donors of some indicators in the Performance Measurement System, e.g. the nature of the impact indicators.

N. Datta presented the CGIAR Secretariat's comments on the governance, management and finance aspects of the report. She highlighted that the CGIAR Secretariat:

- Appreciates the steps the IITA Board has taken in reducing its size and promoting stronger alignment with others Centers through common board members;
- Emphasizes the importance for a senior level Board Secretary to coordinate all Board-related matters;
- Commends the DG for bringing the Center out of a deficit in 2001 to its current financial state.

IITA DG Peter Hartmann was invited to comment on the EPMR and SC/CGIAR Secretariat commentaries. He noted that the Center has expanded its partners to include ARIs, universities and the private sector. IITA activities cover approximately 85 percent of national systems in Africa. He stated that he is not sure why the statement that "there has been similarly slow progress in the initiation of the SSA CP at the West African site" is in the report or how it affects IITA since the Center has a very limited role in the CP. He pointed out that all senior management positions in the Center have been filled since 2006 and the use of elected project leaders ended in 2005.

Discussion:

- ExCo congratulated IITA for a positive review and expressed support for the Center.
- The issue of IITA capacity building role in Africa was raised.
- EIARD expressed concern that neither the partnership with FARA nor the role of the regional MTP for West and Central Africa were addressed by the EPMR.
- Communication of IITA activities and impacts could be improved.
- ExCo expressed concern about resolving the issue with CIAT on cassava research.

¹ Excerpt from Thirteenth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 16-17, 2007) Summary Record of Proceedings, November 2, 2007.

- P. Hartmann thanked ExCo for the positive feedback. On CIAT-IITA, he noted that IITA does more work with CIAT than with any other Center. On cassava, CIAT and IITA exchange germplasm, which benefit Latin America, Asia and SSA. CIAT and IITA also collaborate on high-end research via the CPs. He noted that he is not aware of any “debate” on the topic, except the concerns about possible spread of diseases between Africa and Latin America. A meeting is scheduled on this issue in 2008 in Tanzania which will involve the African Union.
- CIAT Board Chair Yves Savidan was also in attendance and noted he looks forward to participation in the meeting and coming to a conclusion soon.

Conclusion and ExCo Recommendation to the CGIAR:

- *ExCo congratulated IITA for a positive review and thanked the panel.*
- *ExCo recommends that the CGIAR endorse the 6th IITA EPMP recommendations.*
- *ExCo encourages more publication of results from IITA to ensure better communication of activities and impacts to the CGIAR community.*