

# Towards a Strategic Framework for Engagement Between the CGIAR and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Prepared by the CGIAR Secretariat<sup>1</sup>  
(October 2005)

## Executive summary

Within the CGIAR membership and leadership there is wide agreement that the CGIAR has to reconsider its relationship with civil society for enhancing research effectiveness by taking into account globalization, changing trends in civic formation, a new understanding and best practices in partnering with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) – meaning the non-profit sector, including NGOs, farmer organizations, advocacy groups, universities and advanced research institutions. The CGIAR NGO Committee, a mechanism used in the past for engaging with civil society on the global level, has been dormant since 2002, leaving a vacuum to be filled. At System level therefore, CGIAR-CSO linkages require review and action. This paper is meant to support that process.

The paper addresses the following questions:

- **Why should the CGIAR engage with civil society organizations?**  
The CGIAR System mobilizes agricultural science to reduce poverty, foster human well-being, promote agricultural growth and protect the environment. This effort is consistent with the goals of civil society. Thus, civil society, represented by civil society organizations, is a key stakeholder in the work of the CGIAR. The paper presents key benefits that civil society can bring to the CGIAR, helping to strengthen its impact for development.
- **Whom do we want to engage with?**  
There is not ONE civil society or one type of CSO but many, touching on a wide range of agricultural science and global public goods issues that the CGIAR pursues under its mission. CSOs have different geographical outreach and are also diverse in their evolution, culture, interests and missions. In the context of CGIAR work, CSOs can be grouped along four key functions: representation, advocacy, technical expertise, capacity building and service delivery – recognizing that these roles are not mutually exclusive, and that some CSOs may undertake more than one function.
- **How can we engage with CSOs?**  
Instead of involving CSOs through a single linkage (such as the NGOC) as in the past, it is suggested to *embed and mainstream* CSO engagement throughout the

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CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes. In this context it is necessary to identify and develop points of involvement of CSOs along with appropriate ‘vehicles of engagement’ (e.g. fora, workshops) that become institutionalized within the System over time. Thus, the paper offers a range of mechanisms for engagement.

Building on this discussion, the paper describes a holistic framework for advancing an engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs that goes beyond past practices. The suggested framework defines the principle of engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs and identifies three overall goals:

### **Principles of engagement**

*Giving voice to civil society stakeholders within the CGIAR, to enable the CGIAR to better shape its research agenda and implementation, benefiting the poor.*

### **Overall goals of CGIAR engagement with CSOs**

- (1) to improve research effectiveness and impact,*
- (2) to bring innovative ideas and new perspectives to CGIAR research challenges,*
- (3) to be recognized as exemplary in meeting public accountability and transparency needs in global public programs.*

The paper also recognizes that there are already multiple activities underway that entail engagement between CGIAR and CSOs, which tend to be dispersed throughout the System and sometimes unrecognized as such. Thus, it aims at bringing together all these pieces and adding new ones to fill gaps. It describes a multi-pronged approach led by Centers and/or the System to reach the three goals by entering into targeted engagement with CSOs using a variety of instruments- including the provision of information, dialogue and/or consultation, mutual information and learning, and the establishment of partnerships. Figure 1 illustrates the holistic framework and provides an overview of the different mechanisms.

Finally, the paper offers the following **recommendations** to move forward in enhancing engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs sharing the CGIAR mission and interested in the research priority areas agreed by the CGIAR:

## **1. A more holistic approach to engagement with CSO**

As a principle, the CGIAR should follow a more holistic approach to engagement with CSOs by mainstreaming CSO engagement throughout the CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes.

This should be done through Center and System-led engagement activities and initiatives:

- 1) Consultations on thematic research area (with regional outreach) for strategic program planning Center-led

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 2) Partnerships throughout project development, implementation, evaluation and impact assessment | Center-led            |
| 3) Strategic dialogues for promoting shared visions for the future                               | Center and System-led |
| 4) Dialogue on System priorities and policies  | System-led            |
| 5) Partnerships in Challenge Programs  | System-led            |
| 6) Mutual information and learning events  | System-led            |
| 7) Public information and dialogue for meeting accountability and transparency needs             | Center and System-led |

## **2. Establishment of community of practice**

It is advisable to establish a network among CSO focal points (to be identified) at Centers, CGIAR Secretariat, and Science Council Secretariat as well as within interested CGIAR members and partners, which begins to operate as a community of practice. The objectives of this network would be:

- (i) to share views, experiences, lessons and good practice in engaging with civil society,
- (ii) to help institutionalize a deepened engagement with specific constituents within civil society;
- (iii) to manage knowledge on System, including CPs and SWP, and Center-related engagement activities with CSOs.

Arrangements for an effective facilitation of the network have to be decided.

## **3. Establishment of CSO engagement database**

The Center projects/programs that are ongoing and involve CSOs could be better documented. To gain a better understanding of the state of the art of partnerships in the CGIAR a survey should be conducted and subsequently a data base of CGIAR-CSO engagement established. Options for integration and management of the database have to be studied. The survey on Center collaboration conducted by the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS) can serve as a starting point in this effort.

## **4. Enhance current mechanisms for engagement with CSOs**

The following mechanisms should be enhanced

### **a) Public information and dialogue**

Multiple tools for public information are already established by Centers, CPs, SC, and System Office, including websites, publications, annual reports, strategy and planning documents that are made available to the public. The use of appropriate instruments helping to enter into a dialogue should be further enhanced. This includes

- the advancement of the CGIAR, Center and CP websites with interactive features, e.g. feedback, fora, blogs, weblinks to partners;

- an increased CGIAR/Center participation in CSO organized events (e.g. lectures, speeches etc.)
- a new Media Unit within the System Office, which will strengthen system-wide and Center specific media work.

**b) AGM Stakeholder Meeting: CSO Forum and Science Forum**

A bi-annual CSO Forum should be held at AGM and first piloted at AGM 06, as discussed at AGM '04. This redesigned Stakeholder Meeting should emphasize on meaningful dialogue, debate, information sharing, and consensus building among stakeholders from civil society and the CGIAR around themes of mutual interest with the final objective to increase impact. The results from the forum should help the CGIAR to make more informed decisions at the CGIAR business meeting and other CGIAR meetings.

The **CSO Forum** would alternate with the **Science Forum**, which will be first piloted at AGM 05.

## **5. Develop new mechanisms for engagement with CSOs**

The following mechanisms should be developed:

- a) Develop GFAR-CGIAR collaboration in conducting CSO consultations**  
GFAR and the CGIAR should explore options for further collaboration in conducting CSO consultations on selected themes.
- b) Develop mechanisms for engagement with CSOs in impact assessment work**  
Options for engaging CSOs more systematically in CGIAR impact assessment work at the Center, CP and System level should be explored. SC/SPIA could take the lead in the discussion of options.
- c) Develop regional consultations informing strategic planning – Pilot West/Central Africa and/or East Africa**  
The development of a sub-regional strategic plan is one of the logical steps in the consolidation of CGIAR activities in Africa. It is expected that the strategic planning process and the development of MTPs will benefit from comprehensive consultations with CSOs. As a pilot activity a comprehensive regional consultation should be developed and carried out with different types of CSOs on regional research needs, including needs for capacity building and technology transfer mechanisms integrated into the strategic planning process.

CSO focal points at Centers in collaboration with FARA could take the lead in designing such a consultation process and an action plan.

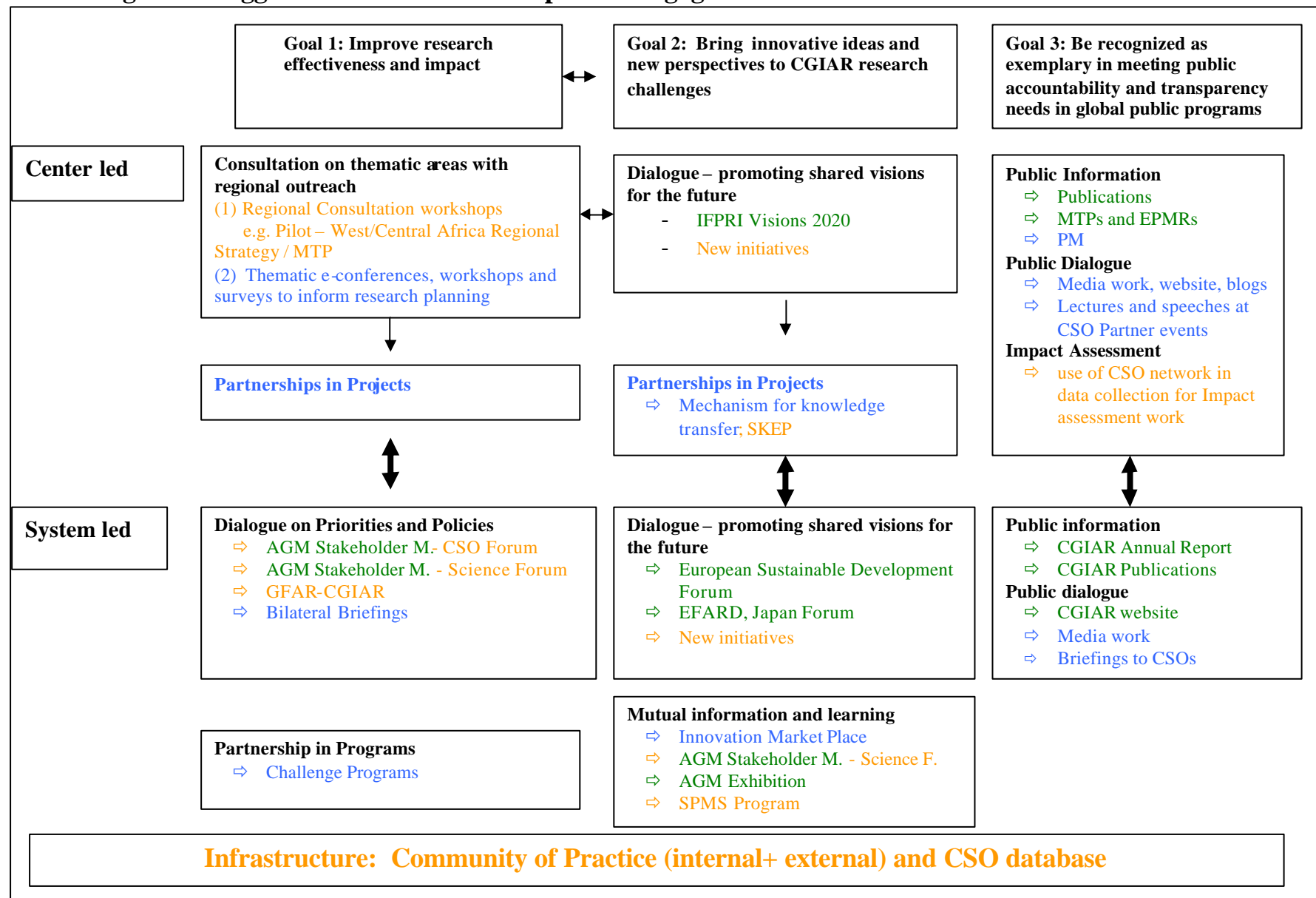
- d) Develop a Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP) with CSOs**  
Centers and the CGIAR Secretariat in collaboration with selected CSOs should explore options for establishing a Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program

(SKEP) with civil society organizations. The main purpose of SKEP would be to promote knowledge and technology transfer in designing, implementing and applying research results through exchange of staff between civil society organizations and CGIAR Centers. Whether and how this program can be interlinked with the private sector SKEP is a question to be explored.

## **6. Dissolve the dormant CGIAR NGO Committee**

Resulting from recommendations 1-6, the CGIAR will be employing a multi-pronged approach to CSO engagement by embedding different engagement activities - information, consultations, dialogues and partnerships - throughout the CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes at Center as well as System level (see Figure 1). In view of the new and comprehensive approach to be taken to CGIAR-CSO relations, there would be little need for a separate NGO Committee. Therefore, the dormant CGIAR NGO Committee should be formally dissolved. The section on Partnership Committees in the CGIAR Charter will need to be amended, to reflect this action.

**Figure 1: Suggested Framework for improved Engagement between CSOs and the CGIAR**



(1) Ongoing mechanisms – to be maintained - (2) ongoing mechanisms - to be enhanced -- (3) new mechanisms – to be developed ---

## 1. Introduction

The CGIAR has engaged with civil society organizations through different mechanisms at different levels in the System:

- CGIAR Annual General Meeting (i.e. the Stakeholder Meeting, the Farmers' Dialogue, Farmers Exchange Lunch, Innovation Marketplace), through participation in agricultural research and development fora;
- public information and dialogue at System and center level (e.g. publications, websites, briefings, lectures, seminars etc.);
- the CGIAR NGO Committee;
- and at Center research project level, where research staff consults with, or seeks participation of CSOs in project planning and implementation.

Among these mechanisms, one mechanism, the CGIAR NGO Committee, has been dormant for three years (see for more details chapter 2). Particularly, with the current emergence of a revitalized CSO movement and an increased recognition of the value-added of CSO participation in public decision-making, this vacuum could impair the development and implementation of the CGIAR agenda.

There is wide agreement within the CGIAR membership and leadership that the CGIAR has to reconsider its relationship with civil society by taking into account globalization, changing trends in civic formation, a new understanding and best practices in partnering with CSOs. A fruitful dialogue with CSOs is crucial for maintaining and further strengthening the effectiveness of agricultural research for development. A single committee is no longer considered to be a timely mechanism as it is unable to bring the wide range of CSOs perspectives into the dialogue. It is necessary to engage with civil society through a holistic approach to mainstream relations with CSOs throughout the CGIAR –at System and Center level – and yield the value-added that the CGIAR is striving for.

## 2. Experiences with the CGIAR NGO Committee

The Declaration adopted at the CGIAR Ministerial-level meeting in Lucerne, February 1995, encouraged the CGIAR to “Convene a committee of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a committee of the private sector as a means of improving dialogue among the CGIAR, the private sector, and members of the civil society who are interested in the same issues as the CGIAR”. As a result the CGIAR NGO Committee (NGOC) was established within the same year. Many NGOs were initially reluctant to participate in a CGIAR partnership committee, and from the beginning advocacy groups among CSOs did not fully cooperate with the NGOC. Some members of the NGOC complained that their views were disregarded both by CGIAR Members and Centers.

Over the years the NGOC started a number of activities and initiatives including

- the creation of a fund for collaborative research programs, involving NGOs and international agricultural research centers;
- position papers on biotechnology and intellectual property rights;
- visits to Centers;
- advocating priorities, concerns and interests of small farmers;
- establish partnerships between NGO-farmer organizations and agricultural research Centers;
- workshops, meetings and consultations focusing on identifying agricultural research issues of priority and concern to small farmers in different regions of the world.

The NGOC was operational for 7 years, but somewhat not transparent to the CGIAR, tentatively isolating itself, and with an unclear mandate as well as varying focus of work and objectives, although the NGOC budget came from the CGIAR Secretariat. Over time the relationship with the CGIAR became increasingly difficult due to divergence in views on research agenda and policy, and the perception of unsatisfactory responsiveness to NGOs and farmers concerns by the CGIAR. In addition, there was internal disagreement within the NGOC about their role and focus of activities.

This increasingly diverging relationships reached its peak, when in 2002, the NGOC decided to “freeze” its relationship with the CGIAR for the time being.

In 2004, an independent panel evaluated the two CGIAR Partnership Committees – the NGOC and the Private Sector Committee (PSC). Some of the key results were that the CGIAR–NGOC engagement appears to have been flawed from the very beginning, due to:

- a mismatch in expectations first between NGOs and the CGIAR, secondly between different members of the NGOC;
- the failure to negotiate ex ante an agreed operating framework, including rules of engagement and processes to address and resolve conflicts;
- the absence of agreed programs of action and structures of accountability.

The dialogue between the CGIAR and NGOs as facilitated by the NGOC and with some other constituencies of the CGIAR lacked a common vision and strategy, real interactive processes and a clear understanding of mutual learning as one of the key objectives for this dialogue. Therefore this resulted in frustration by all parties involved.

The panel concluded that the CGIAR still needs to carefully review the type and kind of partnership it seeks with civil society.

Key recommended next steps were

- to commission an independent survey of existing and previous relationships on the ground with Farmer’s groups, NGOs and other Civil Society actors
- to carefully examine other partnership initiatives in international agricultural research in order to determine where these efforts are or could be better made complementary to the interests of the CGIAR System

- and following from this, to focus on what kinds of partnerships the CGIAR seeks, on the costs, benefits and trade-offs required, on organizational, managerial, governance and financial implications, and on the 'rule of engagement' that it considers as the minimum to its interests, mission, requirements and core competencies.

At the ExCo meeting in Montpellier in May 2004 the report and its recommendations were discussed. The following recommendations were made to the CGIAR (excerpted from [http://www.cgiar.org/exco/exco6/exco6\\_summary.pdf](http://www.cgiar.org/exco/exco6/exco6_summary.pdf))

*ExCo adopted the following two-pronged approach as a way forward:*

1. *The CGIAR Secretariat should draft a clear statement on the necessity for CGIAR engagement with all components of civil society to be incorporated into the CGIAR Charter. The statement would be sent to ExCo for endorsement before going to the CGIAR for final approval. The Charter would recognize that a range of partnerships are essential for success, and highlight the widespread collaboration at the Center level, missing at the System level.*
2. *Regarding the recommendations of the review:*
  - *On PSC, adopt recommendation 8, "market testing" for 2-4 years.*
  - *On NGOC, send message on desire to re-establish dialogue. At the same time, strengthen ongoing initiatives with CSOs, such as innovation marketplace, SC initiatives, e-consultation on CGIAR-CSO linkage as pre-AGM activity, etc.*
  - *Develop an inventory of partnerships, study lessons learned and prepare a guide of best practices at the Center and System levels.*
  - *Draw from recommendation 3 to focus on the kinds of partnerships desired, costs, benefits, governance implications, and rules of engagement.*

*ExCo also welcomed a proposal from GFAR to work to facilitate dialogue between CSOs and the CGIAR.*

During the Stakeholder Meeting at AGM 04, 27 CGIAR Stakeholders discussed next steps for the CGIAR partnership committees during one of the parallel sessions. The outcome of the discussion was fed into the Business Meeting to help move forward decision-making on this matter. Principal outcomes include:

- Clear wish for a separate Farmers' Committee at CGIAR System level to be established
- Continuation and expansion of outreach activities already underway (Innovation Marketplace, Farmers Dialogue, Farmers Exchange) including a CSOs Forum to precede the Annual General Meeting
- On Private Sector Committee, adopt the recommendation of "marketing testing" for 2-4 years
- Consider establishing a focal point in CGIAR System Office to facilitate CGIAR-CSO- Farmers-Private Sector linkages and provision of budget for this activity
- Interim arrangement for CSO representation at System level until 2006 when the NGOs have finalized their assessment
- Ensure precise terms -of-reference, clear rules of engagement, and responsibilities for partnership at System and Center levels
- Support for an inventory of lessons learned and best practices both at System and Center levels

Finally, in the Business Meeting, the CGIAR endorsed the ExCo recommendations on Review of Partnership Committees and specifically agreed to (excerpt from AGM 04, Summary of Proceedings):

**PSC**

- Continue PSC in a “market testing” mode for 2-4 years, as recommended by the Review (Recommendation 8).

**CSOs**

*Short term:*

- Continuation and expansion of outreach activities already underway (Innovation Marketplace, Farmers Dialogue, Farmers Exchange), including a CSO Forum in alternate years to precede the reformatted AGM
- Consider establishing a focal point in the CGIAR Secretariat to facilitate CSO linkages with the CGIAR.

*Longer term:*

- Develop an inventory and typology of partnerships and prepare a guide of best practices
- Further strengthen GFAR-CGIAR linkages, specifically in relation to farmers and other CSOs

### 3. Engagement between CSOs and the CGIAR – who, why, and how?

In current times of renewed movement of civil society worldwide, the notion of global civil society becomes a platform occupied by activists, NGOs and neoliberals, as well as national and religious groups to argue about, campaign for or against, negotiate, and lobby for measures and arrangements that shape global developments. As a result, there is not one global civil society but many, affecting a range of issues such as human rights, environment etc (Kaldor, 2003). In this rapidly growing world of organized civil society it is more than ever necessary to engage with civil society beyond NGOs. At the same time, it is crucial to be sufficiently targeted in any engagement activities to be effective, while meeting the challenge of inclusiveness.

The CGIAR Secretariat reviewed current literature on concepts of (global) civil society, as well as examples and practices of engagement with CSOs by international organizations. For the latter, we particularly looked at principles, approaches and lessons learnt by the United Nations, the European Commission and the World Bank (see Annex 1). They both inspired the paper and the development of a more timely approach to CSO engagement by the CGIAR.

In the following, the paper first examines **who** is actually meant when we refer to civil society and civil society organizations as there are different assumptions and perceptions about the meaning of both terms. Then the paper focuses on **why** the CGIAR should actually engage with CSOs and what the value-added would be. It also provides a typology of CSOs relevant in research and agriculture, and describes mechanisms for engagement, and eventually describes **how** the CGIAR will engage CSOs in its work.

#### 3.1 Who do we mean by “civil society” and “civil society organizations”?

There are many different definitions of “civil society” and little agreement on its precise meaning. Definitions typically vary in the emphasis they put on some characteristics of civil society over others (Anheier, 2004).

The United Nations defines “civil society” as

*“the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector). Of particular relevance to the United Nations are mass organizations (such as organizations of peasants, women or retired people), trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people’s organizations, religious and spiritual organizations, academia and public benefit non-governmental organizations.”*

Anheier (2004) discusses various concepts of civil society and their definition. He concludes with the following operational definition of **civil society**:

*Civil society is the sphere of institutions, organizations and individuals located between family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.*

In this context Anheier considers **institutions** as structural patterns that address and regulate specific areas or tasks. For instance, in the case of social inclusion the institution would be citizenship; and for information and communication needs, the media.

He further specifies the term **organization** as comprising *voluntary organizations, non-governmental organizations, non-profit, foundations, charities, social movements, networks and informal groups that make up infrastructure of civil society.*

**Individuals** comprise citizens and participants in civil society, generally. This includes people's activities in civil society, such as membership, volunteering, people's values, attitudes, preferences and expectations.

Institutions, organizations and individuals have to be seen as interrelated. They do not exist independently. Institutions need organizations and individuals to enact their rules, norms and expectations, thereby forming and maintaining institutions as regular structured pattern of society. Similarly, organizations do not act – it is the people who manage, work and participate in them.

Anheier (2004) also refers to “**civil society organizations**” in particular, and defines them as self-organized groups characterized by:

- voluntary participation;
- relative autonomy from family, market and state; and a
- capacity for collective action to advance common interest.

Hence, civil society is not identical with the non-profit sector. It does not include the market and market firms, state and state agencies, or the family.

### **3.2 Why should the CGIAR engage with civil society?**

The CGIAR System is a network organization, financed mainly by public sector members(ODA) and to a lesser number from the private sector. As stated in the CGIAR Charter, 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 resource management. It conducts research that generates global and regional public goods to benefit the poor in developing countries (CGIAR, 2004). In this context the CGIAR is committed to research for the poor in civil society, while protecting the environment.

Civil society, represented by civil society organizations, is a key stakeholder in the work of the CGIAR. Therefore, it is crucial for the CGIAR to adequately engage with CSOs and thereby give voice to the recipient of CGIAR outputs in identifying research needs,

and in the planning and implementation of research projects. This will help to further strengthen research effectiveness and the success of the System as a whole.

Thus, there is value-added by engaging with organizations representing civil society at different stages of CGIAR work, starting at the System level by consulting on research needs for informing CGIAR research agenda setting, down to consultations on planning, implementation and outcome monitoring of individual projects at Center level that would strengthen mutual learning. Box 1 gives an overview of the key benefits that civil society can bring to strengthening CGIAR research impact for development.

Box 1: Benefits from improving engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs

**Benefits that CSOs can bring to strengthening CGIAR research impact for development**

- **Give voice** to stakeholders and help ensure that their views are factored into research priority, policy and program decisions
- **Promote ownership** for technology and policy development and outputs by building common ground for understanding research needs and program strategies
- **Bring innovative ideas**, new perspectives and solutions to research questions, as well as participatory approaches to researching and solving problems of regional and global relevance
- **Strengthen and leverage research programs** by providing local and regional knowledge
- **Increase capacity** for research uptake and thereby strengthening research effectiveness

**3.3 Whom do we want to engage with? – A typology for CSOs active in research and development**

Reaching out to civil society organizations for improved research effectiveness is not a straightforward task. Civil society is a very heterogeneous concept and civil society organizations include a wide range of stakeholders, which in turn have wide range of interests, missions and objectives, and different expertise. Their potential contribution to the development of the global agricultural research agenda are, therefore, diverse.

In other words, there is not ONE civil society or one type of CSO but many, touching on a wide range of agricultural science and global public goods issues that the CGIAR pursues under its mission. The CGIAR as an international alliance, operating internationally and producing global public goods, needs to consider the existence of various types of CSOs when thinking about partnering with civil society organizations. CSOs have different geographical outreach and are also diverse in their evolution, culture, interests and missions.

Once the **CGIAR System priority** setting exercise led by the Science Council is completed, a set of research priorities will be identified for the System. There are

numerous benefits that can accrue from engagement with CSOs sharing the same priorities as the CGIAR, in transforming these priorities into action.

Naturally, there will be different types of CSOs who are interested in or have expertise in one or more research priority areas, and whose operational or policy outreach may vary – they may be operating locally, regionally or internationally. In addition, there is a great variation in the size of CSOs, reflected by the number of members, and thereby affecting their legitimacy as representative bodies, for example.

The following is an attempt to develop a typology of key stakeholder groups within civil society, sharing the CGIAR mission, along with their function and niche in the context of agricultural research. It should be noted that these roles are not mutually exclusive, but that some CSOs may occupy more than one function:

### **1. Representation**

Organizations that aggregate and present voices of groups of citizens, such as farmer organizations (e.g. International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Via Campesina, Asian Farmer Association), (inter)national associations of NGOs engaged in development and environmental protection;

### **2. Advocacy**

Organizations that lobby on particular issues, such as development aid, environmental protection, food security, patenting, biotechnology, consumer and producer interests (e.g. WWF, OXFAM, Fairtrade Foundation, Consumer International) and fora that advocate agricultural research (e.g. GFAR, FARA);

### **3. Technical expertise**

Organizations that provide information and advice, such as universities and advanced research institutions (ARIs) in the South and the North;

### **4. Capacity-building and service delivery to farmers**

Non-profit organizations that conduct technology implementation and outreach programs and facilitate the translation of research into direct benefits for farmers, such as grassroot organizations, national and international NGOs providing services to farmers/ farmer organization (e.g. Africa 2000 Network, Sasakawa Global 2000).

The engagement with CSOs needs to develop in addition to the existing projects already developed by CGIAR Centers that engage lay citizens/farmers at multiple stages of the project cycle – e.g. participatory research. These projects, involving farmers, have shown positive outcomes due to a strong CGIAR engagement with civil society. Nevertheless, the challenge remains to scale-up this process and evaluate its outcomes.

## **3.4 How can we engage with CSOs? – A typology of “engagement”**

This paper suggests developing an approach to CSO engagement that takes into consideration the different types of CSOs across the research areas of the CGIAR and

their geographical outreach. At the same time, different approaches to CSO engagement are required depending on the intended outreach, the size of the group to be addressed, and the depth of engagement or the degree of participation.

Before engaging with CSOs some questions and expectations about the character of the involvement need to be clarified, as to **why** does the CGIAR want to give voice to stakeholders in civil society? Is the predominant objective

- to institutionalize a continuous dialogue with CSOs on research needs and outcomes?
- to ensure consultations only on certain issues?
- to facilitate mutual learning?
- to inform CGIAR policy and program decisions?
- or to allow for civil society organizations to have a decision-making role on CGIAR matters?

Following is a typology of engagement for developing a strategic framework:

*a. Information*

Information is a one-side process, by which the CGIAR reports to, but also attempts to enlighten stakeholders about programs, activities and results of CGIAR work. Thereby the CGIAR demonstrates accountability and transparency to the public through targeted communication (e.g. website, media work, publications). It is the most limited form of stakeholder engagement, but with a great outreach potential.

*b. Dialogue*

Dialogue can occur in many forms and venues, at local, regional and global levels, and can be initiated by the CGIAR or by CSOs themselves. Dialogue is not necessarily expected to result in tangible outcomes in the short-term, but it can lead to greater research impact over time by improving the climate of understanding, collaboration and joint aspiration for solutions.

*c. Consultation*

Consultation, as distinct from dialogue, is a process focused on specific topics (or also documents) on which the CGIAR solicits feedback (e.g. through e-conferences, surveys, policy meetings) and that subsequently influences their policy decisions.

*d. Mutual information and learning*

In contrast to consultations this is a two-sided process that not only seeks to increase organizational learning of the CGIAR, but also intends to bring science closer to civil society through workshops, conferences, training, publications etc.

*e. Partnership*

Going into a partnership with civil society stakeholders is an advanced form of participation characterized by the notion of shared goals and action, and by which CSOs participate or experience empowerment in decision-making.

#### **4. Development of a strategic framework for mainstreaming CSO engagement in CGIAR work**

The involvement of CSOs is most efficient if it is targeted to areas, where it has the most value-added. In addition, as globalization is affecting the way CGIAR Centers do business and also is shaping local, regional and global CSO development, a decentralized model of CSO engagement seems to be more suitable than centralization. Instead of involving CSO through one single interface like a committee (such as the NGOC) as in the past, it is conceivable to **embed and mainstream** CSO engagement throughout the CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes. Therefore it is necessary to identify and develop points of involvement of CSOs along with an appropriate ‘vehicle of engagement’ (e.g. fora, workshops) that becomes institutionalized within the System over time.

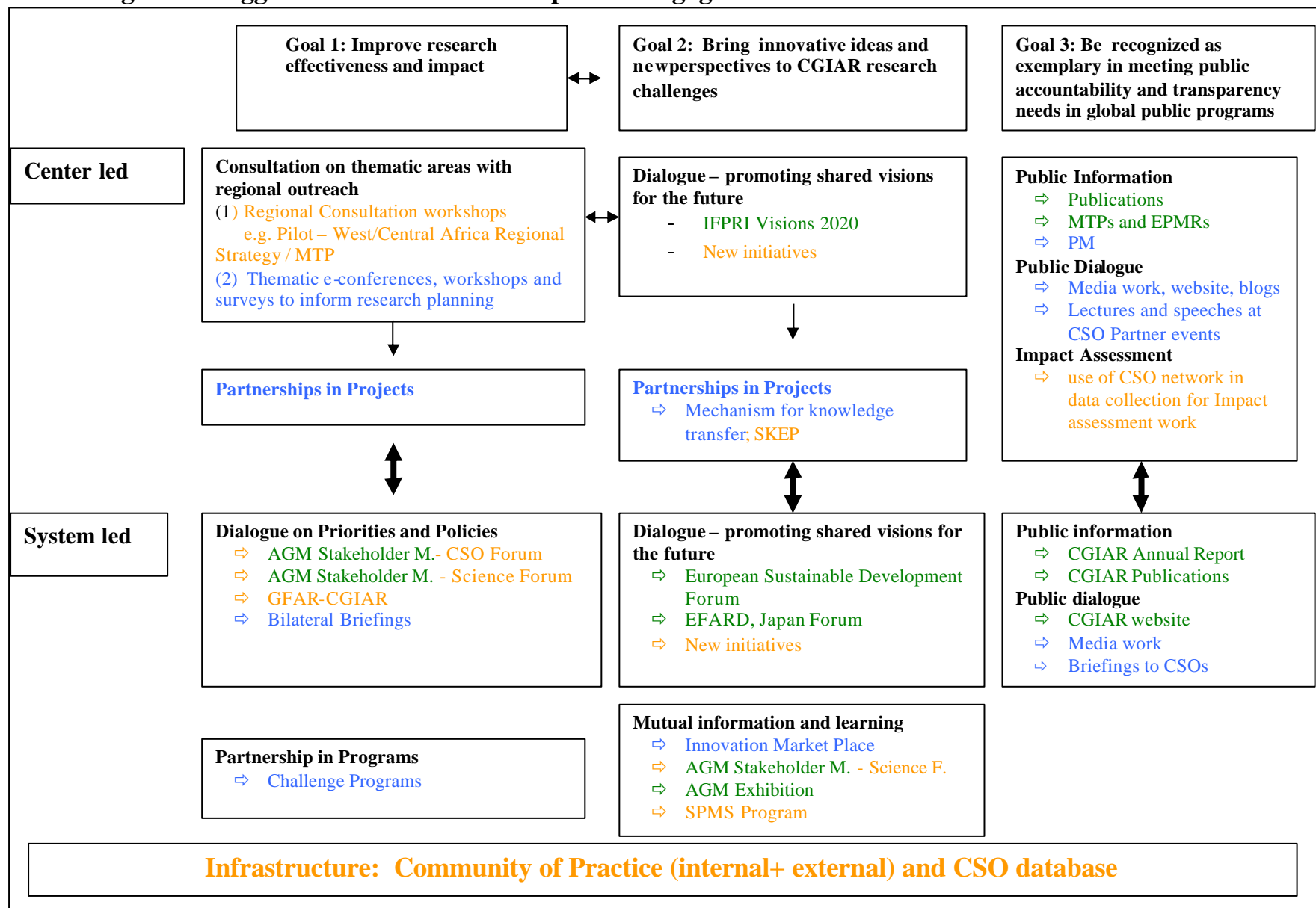
There are already multiple activities underway showing the active involvement of CSOs in the CGIAR work. These are dispersed throughout the System and sometimes unrecognized as such. A framework for managing the engagement with CSOs will bring together all these pieces and add new ones to fill gaps.

The following framework for managing the engagement with CSOs clearly identifies

- (I) Principles of engagement with CSOs,
- (II) Goals of engagement with CSOs,
- (III) Priority areas for engagement,
- (IV) Instruments for engagement with the CSO community at system/global level and Center level, including the entry points for institutionalizing engagement with CSOs.

Figure 1 (as seen in the Executive Summary as well) gives an overview of the framework and the mechanisms for engagement.

**Figure 1: Suggested Framework for Improved Engagement between CSOs and the CGIAR**



(1) Ongoing mechanisms – to be maintained - (2) ongoing mechanisms - to be enhanced -- (3) new mechanisms – to be developed ---

## ***I. Principle of engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs***

The principle of engagement between the CGIAR and CSOs should be:

*Giving voice to civil society stakeholders within the CGIAR, to enable the CGIAR to better shape its research agenda and implementation, benefiting the poor.*

## ***II. Goals of engagement with CSOs***

Three major goals have been identified:

- 1) *Improve research effectiveness and impact;*
- 2) *Bring innovative ideas and new perspectives to CGIAR research challenges;*
- 3) *Recognition as exemplary in meeting public accountability and transparency needs in global public programs.*

Goal 2) is certainly one dimension of goal 1), but it has been separated out to give it more prominence.

In order to achieve all three goals a certain set of activities on System and Center level should be initiated and ongoing activities strengthened and aligned. A set of output and outcome indicators will monitor the achievement of these goals.

## ***III. Priority areas for engagement***

Currently, there is ongoing exchange and consultations with civil society throughout the System on certain research issues. But these interactions are mostly ad-hoc and involve individual Centers as deemed appropriate. There is limited CGIAR System-wide perspective in these engagements and CSO participation is not institutionalized within regular research program planning and implementation, neither on System level nor at Center level. Furthermore, with a new framework of engagement, new questions arise: what will be the level (System/Center; local/regional/ global) and depth of engagement and in which phase of the policy and program decision making is it adequate to seek engagement with CSOs?

The following are steps in the overall programmatic planning and implementation cycle that would benefit from exchange with CSOs:

- Research agenda setting and system-wide policy development (System and/ or Center level),
- Program planning (Center-level)
- Program implementation (Center-level)
- Monitoring and evaluation of results (Center and System level)
- Impact assessment (Center and System level)

#### ***IV. Instruments for engagement with the CSO community at system/global level and Center level***

The instruments foreseen for engagement are (i) organized along the three key goals for engagements and (ii) differentiate two parallel pathways of engagement - one is Center and one is System led.

Figure 1 provides an overview of all the mechanisms, being presented for the first time in such a consolidated way. A number of the instruments are already in place, but are not recognized as such and can benefit from reinforcement and stronger strategic alignment. Some instruments are new, responding to new trends and demands and/or resulting from good practices and experiences of other organizations. Examples of how other international organizations, e.g. the European Commission, the United Nations and the World Bank engage with CSO are compiled in Annex 1.

#### ***Goal 1: Improve CGIAR research effectiveness and impact***

##### **CENTER-LED INSTRUMENTS**

##### **1) Consultation on thematic areas with regional outreach**

###### *a) Regional consultations for Center strategic planning and medium term planning*

There is a movement towards regional alignment of Center research activities, particularly in Africa. These efforts would go along with regional consultation of stakeholders in civil society on regional strategic planning as this is expected to have a positive effect on CGIAR research effectiveness and impact in a long-run.

A comprehensive regional consultation with CSOs could be piloted, e.g. for West/Central Africa and/or East Africa on CGIAR regional strategic research planning (including MTP development). Lessons drawn from this pilot can help to design and institutionalize regular CSO consultations on CGIAR regional strategic planning in other regions.

###### *b) Thematic e-conferences, workshop, and surveys informing project planning*

Follow-up events, such as e-conferences and workshops on specific thematic areas under the overall strategic plan will help to inform project planning and implementation, and will thereby bring continuity and follow through to the consultation process. It can also build the ground for partnerships in project implementation (see next section).

##### **2) Partnership in projects**

Partnerships are an advanced form of participation or engagement, which is characterized by the notion of shared goals and action, and by the participation of CSOs in decision-

making. Partnerships with CSOs in project implementation are already practiced in the CGIAR, but there is still scope for widening and diversifying engagement with different types of CSOs. Partnerships can relate to:

- joint analysis of research agenda and setting of strategic priorities in programs and projects;
- joint symposia, conferences and workshops;
- collaboration in teaching, training and capacity building;
- joint activities to enhance scientific awareness, etc.

Currently, the CGIAR documentation on how many and which projects are implemented in partnership with CSOs is not comprehensive. Also there is little systematized information on the type of CSO participation in joint projects with CGIAR Centers.

To better understand ongoing partnerships with CSOs in CGIAR project implementation, and to draw lessons about what works and what does not, and also what the benefits and good practices are, a survey of ongoing partnerships would be very useful. Results of this survey should be documented in an open access database which is continuously updated. This would not only give information about current partners in civil society, but also help to share contacts across the System. The survey on Center collaboration conducted by the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS) can serve as a starting point in this effort.

## **SYSTEM -LED INSTRUMENTS**

### **1) Dialogue with CSOs informing CGIAR decision-making on priorities and policies**

#### *a) Annual General Meeting (AGM): Stakeholder Meeting - CSO Forum and Science Forum*

The CGIAR Annual General Meeting included in the past a one day Stakeholder Meeting and a two-day Business Meeting. The intention has been that the outcome of the Stakeholder meeting would feed into the Business Meeting and thereby help to inform the decision-making of the CGIAR Membership on program and policy issues.

Starting with AGM 05, the intention is to have a CSO Forum alternating with a Science Forum each year. Both fora intend to provide a venue for dialogue on CGIAR program and policy matters that enable the CGIAR to make better decisions:

The **Science Forum** will focus on programmatic matters and is targeted towards an audience with technical expertise in agricultural and environmental research, including representatives from government agencies, civil society – particularly universities and advanced research organizations, and the private sector.

The **CSO Forum** will be more policy oriented and targeted at civil society organizations that represent farmer, (international) NGOs and associations of NGOs engaged in development and environmental protection, advocacy groups and fora that

advocate agricultural research, and CSOs that are engaged in capacity building and service delivery to farmers.

*b) GFAR and the CGIAR*

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) sees itself as a stakeholder platform, and it indicated its readiness to help facilitate the dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the CGIAR (AGM 04, Records of Stakeholder Meeting).

At the Center level there are selected activities already ongoing, where GFAR helps CGIAR Centers to draw on complementary expertise from civil society stakeholders. At the System-level GFAR helped establish a stakeholder committee for the GENERATION Challenge Program (CP). It is mandated to (i) advise the CP Program Steering Committee so that it can appropriately take into account the views, experience and perspectives of various stakeholders in formulating the overall policies guiding the CP; (ii) recommend measures to improve multi-stakeholder involvement, especially those from the South and from CSOs, in CP implementation and review; (iii) provide feedback to various stakeholders on the CP implementation and outputs (AGM 05, GFAR update to the CGIAR AGM 2004).

To further utilize GFAR's facilitation role for strengthening CGIAR-CSO engagement on System-level the institutionalization of additional instruments should be considered. As a pilot activity, it is suggested to request GFAR to facilitate a consultation of CSO's on one or more selected themes of mutual interest and relevance.

A joint GFAR-CGIAR Ad Hoc Working Group could work out details for developing a consultation process. The next GFAR conference, for instance, can provide a venue for consultation as it already constitutes a well established forum for debate by CSOs active in agricultural research for development. Results from this forum should feed into the debate and decision-making of the CGIAR.

*c) Bilateral Briefings*

CGIAR briefings and dialogues organized at various CGIAR member and non-member countries are a way to engage with national CSOs. There are 3-4 national events taking place annually that aim at engaging CSOs into a dialogue with the CGIAR leadership. These events have proven to be very fruitful as they allowed customizing the content of the dialogue to national interests. It is an instrument to be developed more strategically in the future.

## **2) Partnership in programs**

Partnerships are an advanced form of participation or engagement, characterized by the notion of shared goals and action, through which CSOs participate or experience empowerment in decision-making. The CGIAR Challenge Programs (CPs) were initiated specifically to open up the System to stakeholders, including CSOs, and to engage into partnerships for improving research effectiveness.

CPs entered into partnerships with different types of CSO, predominately universities, advanced research institutions, and non-governmental development organizations. The Generation CP has a stakeholder committee advising Program management; and the Sub-Saharan Africa CP is managed by FARA, the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa, an umbrella organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa. The CP Steering Committee has members from governmental agencies, the CGIAR as well as CSOs, including farmer organizations, ARI's, NGOs and community-based organizations. Moreover, the competitive grants system embedded in the SSA-CP allows CSOs to participate in program implementation.

*Draw lessons learnt from partnerships in program s*

All this ongoing activity can be recognized as a major element of CGIAR-CSO engagement, but lessons learnt and good practices need to be systematically captured and shared throughout the System to allow for organizational learning in this area.

*Goal 2: Bring innovative ideas and new perspectives to CGIAR research challenges*

**CENTER-LED INSTRUMENTS**

**1) Dialogue – promoting shared vision for the future**

Dialogue for promoting a shared vision for achieving sustainable food security and reducing poverty in developing countries through scientific research in agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, policy and natural resource management is key to bringing new perspectives to CGIAR research challenges and the advancement of the System as a whole.

Providing fora for dialogue where CSOs are an integral player in a multi-stakeholder debate constitutes one component to consensus building and thereby influencing action to be taken in future by all stakeholders. It is a mechanism that is geared towards all stakeholders and not CSOs exclusively, bringing a wide range of views and concerns to the table.

The IFPRI 2020 vision exercise is one of the Center led initiatives promoting this goal. Others could be developed.

**2) Partnerships in projects**

*a. Mechanism for strengthening knowledge transfer*

Establishing a mechanism that creates incentives to nurture new ideas coming from partnerships between CGIAR Centers and local or regional CSOs contributes to the

advancement of CGIAR research. This mechanism should particularly focus on developing ideas for better transferring research results into application on the ground and benefits to farmers, e.g. research delivery systems.

The mechanism should be linked to the Innovation Marketplace to raise the visibility of the innovation and thus the outreach.

*b. Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP)*

Similar to the Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP) with the private sector it is conceivable to establish a comparable program with civil society organizations. The main purpose of SKEP would be to promote knowledge and technology transfer in designing, implementing and applying research results through exchange of staff between civil society organizations, particularly those with technical expertise and those aiming at capacity building and service delivery to farmers (see typology of CSO page 14) and CGIAR Centers. Whether and how this program can be interlinked with the private sector SKEP is a question to be explored.

## **SYSTEM -LED INSTRUMENTS**

### **1) Dialogue – promoting shared vision for the future**

Also, at System level, a number of activities promote a shared vision through dialogue. Most prominently the CGIAR is participating in dialogues at multilateral and bilateral events such as the *European Forum for Agricultural Development (EFARD)*, the *European Sustainable Development Forum* organized by the World Bank and the *Japan Forum* organized by JIRCAS, where the CGIAR leadership engages with governments, but also CSOs and others in debate. These are annual events with high-level participation by CSOs and the CGIAR.

### **2) Mutual information and learning**

Mutual information and learning is a two-sided process that not only seeks to increase organizational learning of the CGIAR, but also intends to bring science closer to civil society organizations. Four instruments have been identified to serve as vehicles for mutual information and learning:

*a) Innovation Marketplace*

The Innovation Marketplace promotes knowledge sharing across the CGIAR and the CSO community by providing a venue at AGM for a variety of players from CGIAR Centers, farmer groups, civil society organizations and National Institutes to show their research innovations. It recognizes the critical contribution these groups make to international agricultural research and both acknowledges and encourages inventive civil society partnerships that will have a potentially powerful impact in agricultural development.

There is scope for further building up this instrument by strengthening its visibility and outreach through increasing communication activities. An additional option to be considered is to launch Regional Innovation Marketplaces that feed into a Global Innovation Marketplace at AGM.

*b) AGM Stakeholder Meeting: Science Forum*

As described earlier, the Science Forum will provide a venue for dialogue on scientific matters of the CGIAR involving technical experts from civil society, governmental agencies, the private sector and scientist from within the CGIAR System. With an adequate follow-up mechanism in place this is expected to enrich CGIAR research and foster advancement in research for development by providing an additional entry point on System level for other perspectives and new ideas from CSOs among others.

*c) AGM-Exhibition*

It has become tradition that at the AGM all CGIAR Centers, Challenge Programs and CGIAR Partners participate in an exhibition to display key features of their work. The AGM-Exhibition provides thereby an annual space for CGIAR Centers and Partners to learn about each other and to engage with each other face to face in an informal setting.

*d) Initiatives of the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS)*

The main objectives if the Science Council's Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science is facilitate the SC's role in enhancing and promoting the quality, relevance and impact of science in the CGIAR by catalyzing and mobilizing the research activities of the Centers to global scientific capacity. Also the SPMS will help to mobilize the global scientific community around the mission of the CGIAR and establish an international network of eminent scientists committed to science and technology as a means to promote growth and combat hunger and environmental degradation. The SPMS was further seen as the means to address the need for the System to better understand the totality of agricultural research around the globe, of which the CGIAR is only an estimated 4 percent on a budgetary basis.

Activities of SPMS are directed towards the objectives described above, and for 2005 include a survey of Centre collaboration, establishment of a roster of experts, preparation of a publication "Science for Agricultural Development", and SPMS involvement in the organization of the Science Forum AGM 2005.

**Goal 3: Be recognized as exemplary in meeting public accountability and transparency needs in global public programs**

It is a major responsibility of any organization receiving funds from the public sector, and therefore from tax payers, to be accountable and transparent about the use and the effectiveness of the investment.

Civil society deserves to know and understand what the CGIAR is doing and has been accomplishing. This information flow has to be undertaken consistently at the System and Center level and constitutes one form of engagement with civil society which should be maintained if the CGIAR wants to be recognized as a good leader in meeting public accountability and transparency needs in global public programs.

## **CENTER-LED INSTRUMENTS**

### **1) Public information and dialogue**

A wide range of Center products are made available to inform civil society about the work of a Center (i.e. publications, medium term plans, financial plans and reports, evaluation documents such as the EPMR). At the same time multiple activities are undertaken at Center level on an ad hoc basis to engage into a dialogue with civil society organizations or the public in general through the media, websites/blogs and by Center staff giving lectures and speeches at events organized by CSOs world wide.

Although this is already good practice at Centers, there remains always scope for improvement by deliberately strengthening this type of activity, and also by sensitizing Center staff about the importance of continued public information and dialogue on agricultural research for development.

### **2) Impact assessment**

There is an increasing impact culture within CGIAR research, in terms of developing internal feedback and learning processes to better understand and optimize user relevance of research activities. This is done by several mechanism including user surveys, early adoption studies, adoption constraint analysis, and participatory diagnostics. Often these impact assessments have a wide geographic scope, which can be challenging – financially and logistically. One approach to partially address this challenge is to collaborate with civil society networks in data collection and analysis. This has multiple advantages, including:

- expansion of data collection opportunities as CSO networks are often well represented through branches on the ground;
- enhancement of reliability and validity of data;
- efficiency gains for the System in measuring and documenting research impact;
- integrating perspectives of CSOs in drawing lessons from interventions.

## **SYSTEM-LED INSTRUMENTS**

### **1) Public information and dialogue**

Various communication means are used to inform and enter into a dialogue with civil society about the CGIAR objectives, activities and accomplishments. These include

- CGIAR publications (e.g. the CGIAR Annual Report, partnership brochures, fact sheets etc),

- the CGIAR website,
- media work,
- special briefings to CSO at major events such as AGM, Global and Regional Fora on Agricultural Research, and other national events.

These are already important ongoing activities and should be maintained.

## 5. Recommendations

### 1. A more holistic approach to engagement with CSO

As a principle, the CGIAR should follow a more holistic approach to engagement with CSOs by mainstreaming CSO engagement throughout the CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes.

This should be done through Center and System-led engagement activities and initiatives:

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1) Consultations on thematic research area (with regional outreach) for strategic program planning | Center-led            |
| 2) Partnerships throughout project development, implementation, evaluation and impact assessment   | Center-led            |
| 3) Strategic dialogues for promoting shared visions for the future                                 | Center and System-led |
| 4) Dialogue on System priorities and policies  | System-led            |
| 5) Partnerships in Challenge Programs  | System-led            |
| 6) Mutual information and learning events  | System-led            |
| 7) Public information and dialogue for meeting accountability and transparency needs               | Center and System-led |

### 2. Establishment of community of practice

It is advisable to establish a network among CSO focal points (to be identified) at Centers, CGIAR Secretariat, and Science Council Secretariat as well as within interested CGIAR members and partners, which begins to operate as a community of practice. The objectives of this network would be:

- (i) to share views, experiences, lessons and good practice in engaging with civil society,
- (ii) to help institutionalize a deepened engagement with specific constituents within civil society;
- (iii) to manage knowledge on System, including CPs and SWP, and Center related engagement activities with CSOs.

Arrangements for an effective facilitation of the network have to be decided.

### 3. Establishment of CSO engagement database

The Center projects/programs that are ongoing and involve CSOs could be better documented. To gain a better understanding of the state of the art of partnerships in the CGIAR a survey should be conducted and subsequently a data base of CGIAR-CSO engagement established. Options for integration and management of the database have to be studied. The survey on Center collaboration conducted by the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science (SPMS) can serve as a starting point in this effort.

#### **4. Enhance current mechanisms to engagement with CSOs**

The following mechanisms should be enhanced

**a) Public information and dialogue**

Multiple tools for public information are already established by Centers, CPs, SC, and System Office, including websites, publications, annual reports, strategy and planning documents that are made available to the public. The use of appropriate instruments helping to enter into a dialogue should be further enhanced. This includes

- the advancement of the CGIAR, Center and CP websites with interactive features, e.g. feedback, fora, blogs, weblinks to partners;
- an increased CGIAR/Center participation in CSO organized events (e.g. lectures, speeches etc.)
- a new Media Unit within the System Office, which will strengthen system-wide and Center specific media work.

**b) AGM Stakeholder Meeting: CSO Forum and Science Forum**

A bi-annual CSO Forum should be held at AGM and first piloted at AGM 06, as discussed at AGM '04. This redesigned Stakeholder Meeting should emphasize on meaningful dialogue, debate, information sharing, and consensus building among stakeholders from civil society and the CGIAR around themes of mutual interest with the final objective to increase impact. The results from the forum should help the CGIAR to make more informed decisions at the CGIAR business meeting and other CGIAR meetings.

The **CSO Forum** would alternate with the **Science Forum**, which will be first piloted at AGM 05.

#### **5. Develop new mechanisms for engagement with CSOs**

The following mechanisms should be developed:

**a) Develop GFAR-CGIAR collaboration in conducting CSO consultations**

GFAR and the CGIAR should explore options for further collaboration in conducting CSO consultations on selected themes.

**b) Develop mechanisms for engagement with CSOs in impact assessment work**

Options for engaging CSOs more systematically in CGIAR impact assessment work at the Center, CP and System level should be explored. SC/SPIA could take the lead in the discussion of options.

**c) Develop regional consultations informing strategic planning – Pilot West/Central Africa and/or East Africa**

The development of a sub-regional strategic plan is one of the logical steps in the consolidation of CGIAR activities in Africa. It is expected that the strategic

planning process and the development of MTPs will benefit from comprehensive consultations with CSOs. As a pilot activity a comprehensive regional consultation should be developed and carried out with different types of CSOs on regional research needs, including needs for capacity building and technology transfer mechanisms integrated into the strategic planning process.

CSO focal points at Centers in collaboration with FARA could take the lead in designing such a consultation process and an action plan.

- d) Develop a Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP) with CSOs**  
Centers and the CGIAR Secretariat in collaboration with selected CSOs should explore options for establishing a Scientific and Know-how Exchange Program (SKEP) with civil society organizations. The main purpose of SKEP would be to promote knowledge and technology transfer in designing, implementing and applying research results through exchange of staff between civil society organizations and CGIAR Centers. Whether and how this program can be interlinked with the private sector SKEP is a question to be explored.

## **6. Dissolve the dormant CGIAR NGO Committee**

Resulting from recommendations 1-6, the CGIAR will be employing a multi-pronged approach to CSO engagement by embedding different engagement activities - information, consultations, dialogues and partnerships - throughout the CGIAR agenda setting, planning, implementation and evaluation processes at Center as well as System level (see Figure 1). In view of the new and comprehensive approach to be taken to CGIAR-CSO relations, there would be little need for a separate NGO Committee. Therefore, the dormant CGIAR NGO Committee should be formally dissolved. The section on Partnership Committees in the CGIAR Charter will need to be amended, to reflect this action.

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## **Annex 1**

### **Principles and approaches to engagement with CSOs by selected International Organizations**

- 1. Comparative overview of how the UN family interfaces with civil society**
- 2. Summary overview of Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations**
- 3. The World Bank and civil society**
- 4. European Commission and civil society**

## 1. Comparative overview of how the UN family interfaces with civil society

Excerpt from Nora McKeon, Building links between global and local in the UN system: the civil society dimension, report of an interagency review, draft paper, FAO, Rome 2005.

### **How the UN family interfaces with civil society**

#### ***UN secretariat entities***

\*CSD: Adopts the classification of civil society into 9 Major Groups as defined in Agenda 21. Interface was initially with a CSD NGO Steering Committee. Now with Major Group Organizing Partners, self-selected major group organizations that have agreed to collaborate with the Bureau through the secretariat to facilitate input from Major Groups world-wide into the work of the CSD.

\*DPI: The 1500 accredited NGOs have elected an 18 member Executive Board which partners with the secretariat.

\*UNDP: Has established a CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator with 15 members appointed in their individual capacity to advise and guide UNDP in its substantive policy areas.

\*DAW: The interface mechanism is a self-organized NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

\*FFD: Following the Monterrey Conference various CSOs have established an International Facilitating Group on Financing for Development. The business sector and parliamentarians have also developed their own independent interface mechanisms.

\*DESA NGO Section: Adopts the classification of NGOs into 3 categories of Consultative Status. Overall interface mechanism is the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO).

#### ***Autonomous agencies***

\*FAO: Two self-organized global interface mechanisms. The International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) emerged from the parallel forums to the World Food Summit and its +5 review. It groups some 50 constituency, regional and thematic focal points concerned with food and agriculture, with emphasis on facilitating involvement of social movements in the South (peasants, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, agricultural workers). The Ad Hoc Group of representatives of INGOs in formal status with FAO is a forum of Rome-based representatives of these INGOs.

\*Habitat: Has an Advisory Committee to the Executive Director with one civil society member.

\*ILO: In a special category because of its tripartite structure which fully involves workers' and employers' organizations in governance. No formal interface mechanism for other kinds of CSOs.

\*UNCTAD: Cooperation is with international organizations and self-organized networks. No global interface mechanism.

\*UNEP: No formal global interface mechanism. An effort is made to engage all potential stakeholders beyond the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21. Host CS committees established at country level in connection with Governing Council meetings.

\*UNHCR: Formal interface conducted through annual NGO consultations and through NGO umbrella groups and their forums.

\*UNIDO: No formal interface mechanism. Consultation with CSOs conducted through seminars, workshops and conferences.

\*WFP: Annual consultation conducted with some 25 major NGO partners and networks.  
\*WHO: No single global mechanism. Interface is conducted through categories: academic, scientific, professional, development, special interest (youth, women, patient, consumers, trade unions, local authorities, parliamentarians.)

***International Financial Institutions***

\*ADB: No global advisory committee Works through existing CSO networks like the NGO Forum on ADB. Some country-level Resident Missions hold regular meetings

\*AfDB: African Development Bank – CSO Committee.

\*IADB: No global interface mechanism. Civil Society Advisory Councils exist in about half of the 26 country offices.

\*IFAD: The IFAD/NGO Consultation Steering Committee facilitates preparation of the biennial IFAD/NGO Consultation. Recently, steps have been taken to develop a forum of representatives of small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples' organizations which would interact with the Governing Council.

\*IFC: No formal interface mechanism. It is felt difficult to establish one since NGOs are not representative of global civil society. Sector or issue specific groups are being considered.

\*IMF: No formal interface.

\*OECD: Formal Business and Industry and Trade Union Advisory Committees created at the same time as OECD. No formal mechanism for other CSOs.

\*WB: Wide range of constituency and thematic mechanisms for consultation at all levels, using also new technologies like video conferencing. Interface conducted with CSOs on global policy reviews (e.g. indigenous peoples, environmental safeguards). World Bank-Civil Society Joint Facilitating Committee, an outgrowth of the former World Bank NGO Working Group, established to explore transparent and effective mechanisms for dialogue and engagement between civil society and the World Bank at the global level.

\*WTO: Works with informal business and NGO advisory bodies.

## **2. Summary overview of Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations**

In February 2003, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, appointed a panel of eminent person, to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society. The panel, chaired by the former president of Brazil, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, was asked to review the guidelines and practices regarding civil society's relations with the United Nations and to formulate recommendations for enhancing such interaction. In June 2004, the panel submitted its report and recommendations.

### *Key perspectives and recommendations of the panel*

The panel acknowledged the growing importance of civil society in international debates, as globalization expands and the scope of government power has been transformed. The panel recognizes three global trends relevant to their assignment:

- deficits of democracy in global governance
- growing capacity and influence of non-State actors
- rising power of global public opinion.

As a result, the voice of civil society has become more powerful. However, the lingering criticism by non-civil society actors questions representativity, legitimacy, integrity or accountability of CSOs.

The reason for the UN to reach out to civil society was stated by the panel as follows:

“The most powerful case for reaching out beyond its constituency of central Governments and enhancing dialogue and cooperation with civil society is that doing so will make the United Nations more effective. ... an enhanced engagement could help the United Nations do a better job, further its global goals, become more attuned and responsive to citizens' concerns and enlist greater public support.” (United Nations, 2004).

Thus, the panel proposes the following areas of reform:

- **Convening role of the United Nations: fostering multi-constituency processes**

The UN should continue to make use of its convening power, bringing together governments, but also other constituencies such as the civil society, private sector and local authorities relevant to the issue at hand. The panel proposes: (1) less generalized assemblies and more specific networks; (2) hold forums on issues of global concern; (3) retain the option for holding global conferences; (4) convene public hearing on progress on global goals; (5) recognize contributions that others can make to the General Assembly process

- **Investing more in partnerships and build on the experience of multi-stakeholder partnerships**

The panel recognizes that galvanizing, supporting and incubating partnerships between different constituencies and at different level are essential for achieving the development agenda. Therefore, it is suggested to help further mainstream partnerships through the

establishment of a Partnership Development Unit and the identification of partnership focal points throughout the United Nations organs and agencies. At the same time there should be an ongoing review of partnership advancement and mechanisms for ensuring systematic learning and its internalization in operation and management approaches. Besides, the panel proposes further strengthening partnership with the private sector as a key constituency.

- **Focusing on country level**

The panels view is that the strategic and policy work of the United Nations has to be informed by the realities on the ground in order to be meaningful. Therefore stakeholders at the country level need to be further engaged in strategic planning, coordination and learning, and an incentive structure for fostering innovative partnerships needs to be established within the UN (i.e. rewards, assessment of partnership qualities in annual performance assessment). In order to build networks of policy and operational partnerships with all constituencies, the panel proposes to establish civil society advisory groups to guide the UN country strategy and to appoint local constituency engagement specialists.

- **Strengthening the Security Council through enhancing their dialogue with civil society**

Mechanisms such as regular meetings of the Security Council field missions with appropriate local civil society leaders, and experimental Security Council seminars ( with presentations by civil society and other constituencies) to discuss issues of emerging importance to the Council should help to further inform the Security Council for their decision-making.

Additional areas of reform are proposed, which relate to a more systematic engagement of parliamentarians and the streamlining and depoliticizing of the accreditation and access process for CSO.

### **3. The World Bank and civil society**

In the early 1980s, leading international NGOs and the World Bank established the NGO-World Bank Committee which held regular meetings to discuss Bank policies, programs, and projects. Particularly during James Wolfensohn's tenure as Bank President from 1995 to present, the Bank has placed high priority on the engagement with CSOs. The Bank recognizes the fact that CSOs have become more influential actors in public policy and in development efforts, and therefore the importance of engaging CSOs as a key component of an effective institutional strategy for poverty reduction grows.

Since the 1980s the World Bank has undertaken numerous studies, promoted joint World Bank-civil society dialogues, and has adopted policies geared to promoting greater participation. However, by 2000 it became clear that the NGO-World Bank Committee needed to be replaced with a more inclusive and expanded mechanism for World Bank-Civil Society policy debate and engagement. After a period of consultation with different

constituencies, finally in October 2003 a World Bank – Civil Society Joint Facilitation Committee (JFC) was launched as a transitional body initially for 18 months. In comparison to the NGO Committee the JFC expanded its civil society participation beyond NGOs by including faith-based organizations, social movements, indigenous peoples networks and labour unions. The JFC seeks to (1) produce a guiding framework for World Bank –civil society engagement; and (2) establish transparent, accountable and democratic mechanisms for further engagement.

### ***World Bank definition of CSO***

The World Bank uses the term civil society to refer to the “wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.”

### **Rational and Policy framework governing the Bank’s engagement with CSOs**

The World Bank’s management and the Bank’s member governments have recognized that engaging proactively with a variety of other stakeholders, including CSOs improves development effectiveness and bring a variety of benefits to the development efforts (see Box below).

Benefits that civil society can bring to the development efforts include:

- **Give voice to stakeholders** – particularly poor and marginalized populations – and help ensure that their views are factored into policy and program decisions.
- Promote **public sector transparency and accountability** as well as contributing to the **enabling environment** for good governance.
- Promote **public consensus** and **local ownership for reforms, national poverty reduction, and development strategies** by building common ground for understanding and encouraging public-private cooperation.
- Bring **innovative ideas and solutions**, as well as **participatory approaches** to solve local problems.
- **Strengthen and leverage development programs** by providing local knowledge, targeting assistance, and generating social capital at the community level.
- **Provide professional expertise** and **increasing capacity** for effective service delivery, especially in environments with weak public sector capacity or in post-conflict contexts

Source:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,contentMDK:20093200~menuPK:220424~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>

### **The World Bank approach to civil society engagement**

The World Bank approach to engage civil society organizations is through three distinct avenues: facilitation, dialogue and consultation, and partnership.

1. The Bank **facilitates dialogue and partnership between civil society and governments** by providing resources, training, technical support, and often

playing a convening role in multi-stakeholder discussions. This role was expanded since 1999 into helping governments engage CSOs in the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Country Development Frameworks (CDFs).

2. The Bank **dialogues and consults with CSOs** on issues, policies and programs, by listening to their perspectives and inviting suggestions. These interactions vary from consultations (e.g. alongside the Bank's Annual and Spring Meetings) on global policies, such as social safeguards and adjustment lending, to discussions on country assistance strategies and local Bank-financed projects.
3. The Bank **partners directly** with CSOs in the area of operation and/or advocacy at national, regional and transnational levels through contracting technical assistance and training services, funding civil society initiatives, and managing joint programs..

### ***Institutional infrastructure for CSO engagement***

For implementing this approach the World Bank has positioned 120 Civil Society Engagement Specialists across the institution. These specialists are generally social scientists and communication officers with extensive knowledge and experience working with the civil society sector. The new structure introduced in 2002 has three levels and aims to both enhance coordination of the institution's civil society engagement work as well as provide greater civil society access to the Bank:

- At the country level, there are over 80 Civil Society Country Staff (CSC) working in 70 Bank country offices worldwide to actively reach out to civil society and encourage CSO participation in Bank-funded projects and programs.
- At the regional and departmental levels, the Civil Society Group (CSG) brings together more than 40 staff who work at World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC in various units, geographic regions, funding mechanisms, and with specific constituencies.
- At the global level, the Civil Society Team (CST) is the overall institutional and global level focal point which provides institutional coordination by formulating institutional strategy, providing advice to senior management, undertaking research and dissemination, and reaching out to CSOs at the global level.

However, there are also constraints on the Bank's ability to sufficiently engage CSOs. The disclosure policy is one, as it limits public access to information before decisions are made. Also the fixed nature of the Bank's project cycle often restricts the building of community and local government capacity to take ownership of development programs. Furthermore, there are reports (by Bank staff, OED and CSOs) that although CSO consultation is widely employed, the quality of these consultations is quite uneven. It seems sometimes that consultation is treated as a validation exercise rather than an opportunity to learn and inform decisions before they are finalized. This certainly can result in frustration and loss of active engagement by CSOs.

The Bank recognizes that the current approach to engaging with CSOs has to be seen as an ongoing process of learning and improving. In 2005, a paper on “Issues and options for improving engagement between the World Bank and Civil Society” was finalized after a multi-step consultation process inside the Bank and outside with civil society organizations. Four main issues and a set of 10 priority actions for the Bank to address were identified:

**Issues identified:**

- Issue 1: Promoting best practice for civic engagement
- Issue 2: Closing the gap between expectations, policy and practice
- Issue 3: Adapting to changes in global and national civil society
- Issue 4: Achieving greater Bank-wide coherence and accountability

**The set of 10 priority actions are:**

1. Establish new global mechanisms for Bank-CSO engagement to help promote mutual understanding and cooperation.
2. Establish a Bank-wide advisory service/focal point for consultations and an institutional framework for consultation management and feedback.
3. Pilot a new Bank-wide monitoring and evaluation system for civic engagement
4. Conduct a review of Bank funds for civil society engagement in operations and in policy dialogue, and explore possible realignment or restructuring.
5. Review the Bank’s procurement framework with a view toward facilitating collaboration with CSOs.
6. Institute a more structured and integrated learning program for Bank staff and member governments on the changing role, nature, and perspectives of civil society, and on how to engage CSOs more effectively, as well as capacity building for CSOs
7. Hold regular meetings of Bank senior management, and periodically with the Board, to review Bank-civil society relations.
8. Develop and issue new guidelines for Bank staff on the institution’s approach and best practices for working with civil society.
9. Emphasize the importance of civil society engagement in the guidance to Bank staff on the preparation of the CAS as well as in CAS monitoring and evaluation.
10. Develop tools for analytical mapping of civil society to assist country and task teams in determining the relevant CSOs to engage on a given issue, project, or strategy.

#### **4. European Commission and civil society**

The White Paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001) is a key milestone in reforming European governance and thereby also acknowledging the importance of civil society participation in determining the political agenda. The paper calls for “a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue.” Civil society involvement is seen as important for achieving the Union’s objectives and the Commission shows commitment to improving transparency and consultation between administrations and civil society. The Communication set out principles (participation, openness,

accountability, effectiveness and coherence), that should govern the Commission when it consults external parties.

In 2002 the Commission adopted a Communication which established a coherent framework for consulting external interested parties and established minimum standards for consultation.<sup>1</sup> The consultation standards apply to stakeholder consultations in the policy-shaping phase. They are part of the ‘Better lawmaking project’, which aims at clearer and better European legislation, and the practical follow-up of the White Paper on European Governance of 2001. In contrast to the UN, the Commission does not want to limit its consultations to a certain number of pre-screened or accredited organizations. Therefore, the European commission does not have an accreditation policy or a general registration or accreditation system for interest groups.

Moreover, as a result of the White Paper on European Governance, several internet-based mechanisms were established to bring more transparency and effectiveness into civil society consultation. This includes:

- **CONECCS**: a database for Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society. The database is expected to provide information about the Commission’s formal or structured consultative bodies, in which civil society organisations participate.<sup>2</sup>
- Internet-based activities aimed at gathering information and feedback such as, ‘**Your Voice in Europe**’<sup>3</sup>, act as the European Commission’s “single access point“ to a wide variety of stakeholder consultations<sup>83</sup>, discussions and other tools which enable the individual to play an active role in the European policy-making process. Another example is the **Dialogue with Citizens** - a web site with plenty of information and links concerning citizens’ rights and opportunities for participation in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

In this context all Commission Directorates-General (DGs) are expected to have relations with civil society and other interested parties in their respective fields. The DGs are responsible for their own mechanisms of dialogue and consultation. This decentralized structure should allow the specific nature and conditions of different policy areas to be taken into account.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission’ **COM(2002)704**.

<sup>2</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/civil\\_society/coneccs/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/civil_society/coneccs/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/consultations/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/citizens/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/citizens/index_en.html)

### **Box 2: Rationale of civil society participation in public decision-making**

Civil society participation can help to:

- Strengthen the accountability and transparency of decision-making
- Improve the quality and legitimacy of decisions
- Create acceptance and a consensus concerning decisions
- Build trust between administration/an organization and civil society
- Raises public awareness and knowledge on specific issues
- Improves the active involvement of citizens in the democratic process
- Improve cost-efficiency

Source: European Commission (2003), <http://europa.eu.int?comm/science-society/>

For the purpose of this study the approach to civil society engagement of two DGs – DG for Research and the DG for Development – will be described in more detail.

### **3.1. Governance of the European Research Area: The Role of Civil Society**

The White Paper on Governance influenced the establishment of the most recent directorate within DG Research - the directorate "Science and Society". This directorate was established in 2001 and a "Science and Society Action Plan" was developed. It is structured in three parts and addresses the following issues through a series of activities such as open dialogues, fora, e-networks, workshops, conferences and the consultation of advisory bodies:

- A science policy closer to citizens (involving civil society, producing gender equality in science, research and foresight for society)
- Responsible science at the heart of policy-making (the ethical dimension in science and the new technologies, risk governance, the use of expertise).
- Promoting scientific and educational culture in Europe (public awareness, science education and careers, dialogue with citizens)

During recent years, the European Commission has initiated or supported a tremendous number of new communication channels with experts and civil society organizations. Much effort has been invested in two areas in particular:

- the **exchange between the Commission and experts** (through EURAB, European Group on Ethics, the SINAPSE pilot project etc.), and
- the development of **Internet-based mechanisms for consultation** such as the online forum for dialogue and consultation at the Your Voice in Europe Website (IPM-initiative), supported by online databases (CONECCS, EURETHNET etc.).

An analysis of the current practices of civil society participation in European research and technology development policy-making indicates that there is an unsatisfied demand for a

more coherent and systematic dialogue with civil society that complements the recently established online consultations and that provides an added value to both the Commission and civil society. Besides, it becomes clear that workshops and conferences are important forums for a face-to-face exchange with civil society, but yet do not suffice to explore the full potential of civil society participation (European Commission, October 2003).

The study has a number of suggestions that may help to further improve the existing mechanisms:

- Civil society participation goes beyond civil society consultation. Participation is about **mutual learning**. It should be **interactive** and therefore it is neither a single-sided process (collecting opinions and information from civil society for example via online consultations) nor a process that could be limited to unrelated single events (such as individual conferences). In order to establish favorable conditions for a process of mutual learning, the Commission needs to ensure transparency with respect to the follow-up process, the justification and implementation of the policies discussed.
- The institutional bodies (advisory groups, committees etc.) for civil society participation have to be **flexible and dynamic**. Their composition has to be adjusted according to the issues at stake. They should work in a target-oriented fashion and within limited time frames.
- Civil society participation implies the **participation of citizens involved in the issues concerned**. Neither researchers on civil society participation, organised ‘stakeholder’ interests (such as representatives of the large European civil society organizations (labour unions, Environmental NGOs etc.) nor “professional citizens” (such as individual ‘consumer’, ‘local’ or ‘lay’ members of committees) can represent civil society to a full extent.
- There is a strong need for **professional standards** for civil society consultation;
- There is a strong need for a **more systematic, priority-driven approach** of civil society consultation. It would not make sense to get civil society involved in the discussion of every activity the Commission is pursuing. However what is needed is a master plan about who to consult, on which subjects and within what time frame. This should be drawn up jointly with civil society in a transparent process.
- The instruments applied for civil society participation should be more **demand-driven** rather than supply-driven.

The concluding policy recommendations from this study are

### **1. Enhancing civil society involvement throughout the policy-cycle through**

- creating a dynamic and flexible **civil society forum** that interacts with a wide range of different civil society actors (e.g. including scenario workshop, policy background workshops, public forums, Citizens panels or juries)
- systematically anchoring elements of **participatory foresight** within the process of defining and implementing framework programmes.
- enhancing the **communication with civil society** within research projects funded under Framework Programme 6.

## **2. Individual and institutional capacity building to enhance professionalism in designing and implementing participatory processes through**

- European Academy for Civil Society Participation in Science and Technology
- Citizens debating on science: Universities as platforms for “European Future Days”
- European Science and Society Exchange Program”
- Identifying benchmark projects
- Supporting Existing Advisory Bodies in the Application of Civil Society Participation

## **3. Establishing a legal framework which ensures participatory rights and principles of civil society involvement through convention on civil society participation in research policy-making**

### **3.2 DG for Development: Dialogue with Civil Society**

In November 2004, the DG Development published “Guidelines on Principles and Good Practices for the Participation of Non-State Actors in the development dialogues and consultations”. The guidelines identify stages in strategy/policy development and implementation, where consultation with non-state actors (NSA) is relevant:

- Consultation on National Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
- Consultation on EC Country Strategy Paper preparation;
- Consultation on sector strategies once the priority focal sectors have been defined;
- Involvement of NSA in project implementation in all areas of development, including activities specifically oriented towards their needs (capacity building etc.);
- Participation in the Country Strategy Paper review (annual, mid-term and final), as well as in the assessment of progress on implementation and of performance of individual projects and sector policies.

Thus, there is a two track approach to consultation: (1) at the level of national development strategies (by involving NSA in the public debate on setting development objectives and reinforcing good governance and the rule of law); and (2) at the programming level (limiting NSA involvement to those who have specific advocacy role on cross-cutting issues (e.g. poverty, gender, and environment).

Moreover, a mapping of NSA in the country or the region along characteristics such as mission, function, funding environment, legislative framework, and capacity is foreseen by the guideline.

Another guiding principle is the provision of capacity building support to enable NSA to play a constructive role in the development process. The intended approach to ensure capacity building support is through (1) mainstreaming NSA participation in programmes in focal and non-focal areas; and (2) Programmes on capacity building of NSA in specific sectors or in general.

Finally a monitoring system with a set of criteria for assessing the quality of the process of participation and the NSAs' value-added for policy formulation and implementation has to be established.

At the highest policy level, the main communication partner of the Commissioner I is CONCORD, the Confederation of European Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) for Relief and Development. The intention is to have regular meetings to discuss the Commission's present and future policy priorities and initiatives.