

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

INTERIM SCIENCE COUNCIL

Eighty-Fourth Meeting of iSC/TAC
FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy 9-13 June 2003

STATUS OF REVIEWS

Progress Report

(Agenda Item 7)

For Information and Comments

The attached report provides an update on the implementation of External Reviews of Centres and a proposal for the evaluation processes within the CGIAR.

iSC Members are invited to provide comments on the progress being made with these Reviews and on handing these activities over to the Science Council.

iSC SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

May 2003

STATUS OF REVIEWS

Progress Report

1. EXTERNAL REVIEWS OF CENTRES

1.1 Introduction

In fulfilling its monitoring and evaluation function, TAC/iSC conducts quinquennial external review of Centres. On average three Centres are evaluated every year. The lead time for planning each review is 18-24 months. The review process in the CGIAR has been a subject of discussion, and during the transition, the external review calendar has been maintained. By the end of 2003 iSC/TAC will have completed the reviews of IPGRI and ICRISAT. The IPGRI review followed the EPMR format while the ICRISAT review includes a separate but linked External Programme Review (EPR) and External Management Review. The System is in transition since the external review process is being re-designed pending endorsement. Accordingly, the CGIAR-approved terms-of reference for EPMRs will be used.

1.2 ICRISAT External Programme Review

The review of ICRISAT is the last external Centre review to be completed by the iSC/TAC. The ICRISAT case is also a separate but linked review in which the iSC is conducting an External Programme Review (EPR) while the CGIAR Secretariat is responsible for the management component. Lesson will be drawn from the ICRISAT review for further development of the Centre review process.

The Panel for the programme component consists of: Paul Vlek (Netherlands), as Chair, Dunstan Spencer (Sierra Leone), Desirée Hautea (Philippines) and Anthony Hall (USA) as Members, and Amir Kassam of the iSC Secretariat as Resource Person.

The EPR began with an initial visit to ICRISAT headquarters in March 2003 (from 12 to 18) by the full Panel and the Panel Secretary. The visit coincided with the ICRISAT Board meeting from 10 to 14 March. This allowed three days overlap with the Board as well as interaction with senior management and staff.

Field visits were conducted to sites in Africa: Paul Vlek and Dunstan Spencer visited Mali and Niger 13-16 May and Desiree Hautea and Amir Kassam visited Zimbabwe and Kenya 4-10 May.

The Main Phase will take place from 16 to 26 June at ICRISAT to validate the preliminary findings and revision of draft chapters. The EPR Report will be finalized by mid-July and transmitted to the Science Council Chair. The iSC will prepare a commentary for discussion by ExCo and the Group at AGM in October 2003.

1.3 IRR and IFPRI External Reviews

The External Reviews of IRR and IFPRI have been commissioned by iSC for implementation starting in late 2003 and completion in 2004. The Centres have provided

suggestions for Panel Chair and membership and information on important dates and CCERs conducted. The Panel profile and short lists for Panel Chair candidates and members will be discussed by the Standing Committee at SCOER39 and progress will be reported to the iSC at iSC/TAC84. Based on the lessons learnt from the ICRISAT review and on the Group's guidance, these two reviews could take the form of separate but linked model or revert to the former EPMP pattern. Sirkka Immonen will be the iSC/SC Secretariat resource person for the IRRI review and Tim Kelley for the IFPRI review.

1.4 CIMMYT External Review

Although CIMMYT was due to be reviewed at 2003, the external review has been postponed at the request of the Centre until 2004.

1.5 ICRAF and CIFOR External Reviews

The planning of these external reviews would have been initiated by now in order to adhere to the 18 months lead time. However, in view of the transition and the prevailing discussion on the evaluation process – these two reviews will be taken up by the SC at the earliest opportunity. The iSC Chair has interacted informally with one of the Centres on the planning and organization of the review

2. EVALUATION PROCESSES within the CGIAR

SCOER will discuss a final draft document titled “*Changing Monitoring and Evaluation in the CGIAR System*” at its 39th meeting. The Standing Committee will make recommendations to the iSC.

3. SYSTEMWIDE PROGRAMMES

To date, the iSC/TAC has conducted external reviews of the Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP), eight SWPs with an ecoregional approach, Systemwide Livestock Programme (SLP) through an ILRI commissioned external review, in which TAC participated, Systemwide Programme on Integrated Pest Management (SP-IPM), and Systemwide Programme for Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRi). These reviews, unlike the Centres ones, are financed by iSC/TAC.

In 2003, a provision has been made to conduct the evaluation and impact assessment of the Systemwide Programme on Alternatives to Slash and Burn (ASB). The implementation of this activity will be completed by the Science Council in 2004. SCOER will discuss the draft Terms of Reference and a short list of Panel Chairs and member candidates and report progress of the planning to the iSC at iSC/TAC84.

Subject to availability of resources, the future SC could consider the reviews of the Soil and Water Nutrient Management (SWNM) and the Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PR&GA).

4. OTHER REVIEWS

4.1 Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Training in the CGIAR

The study on training is part of the review of capacity strengthening activities in the CGIAR which was commissioned by TAC in TAC 79. The desk study phase has been nearly completed and the first draft report will be available at iSC/TAC84. The desk study is based on information collected from Centres, through stakeholder consultation, from evaluations done by the Centres themselves and from other reports and documents. It provides information on Centre training strategies, processes, organisation, trends, past evaluations, data on training events and training participants. It also provides draft design for the Main Study and Terms of Reference for the Panel.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF A SC ROSTER OF SCIENTISTS

At AGM'02 the CGIAR Group endorsed the report and recommendations of the Executive Council's Working Group on the establishment of a CGIAR Science Council (WGSC). One of the recommendations for SC's functions was catalysing and mobilizing global science and technology expertise. The main tasks in this function include the development of a peer-reviewed expert roster. The SC is to:

Develop, in collaboration with the Centres, the System Office and external partners, a Roster/Inventory of the most active and committed researchers in agricultural and related sciences. The Council should establish a peer-review based evaluation System to facilitate decisions on inclusion of scientists in the Roster/Inventory.

SCOER will discuss a proposal for establishing an electronic database which builds on the earlier recommendations made by SCOER to the iSC. SCOER will make recommendations to the iSC on how to proceed with the roster development with regard to the vetting procedure, structure and functions of the database.