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Charting the CGIAR's Future --
Reshaping the CGIAR's Organization

System-Wide Reviews in the CGIAR:
Concepts, Options and Recommendations

At ICW99 the Oversight Committee commissioned a study team, headed by Martin Pineiro, to carry out a retrospective review of the Third System Review of the CGIAR. The report of the study team is attached, along with the Oversight Committee's comments on the report.

October 22, 2000

To: CGIAR Members
cc: Centers, Partners, CGIAR Committees

**SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEWS IN THE CGIAR: Concepts, Options and
Recommendations**

Dear Colleagues:

The Oversight Committee has great pleasure in commending to the Members of the CGIAR, the Report of the Study Team on "System-wide Reviews in the CGIAR: Concepts, Options and Recommendations."

The Oversight Committee commissioned this study, following the Third System-wide Review, with the purpose of identifying the lessons learnt in carrying out the review. It was agreed that the Study Team should not confine its work solely to the Third Review but to range more widely over all three system-wide reviews and other reviewing processes in the CGIAR.

The Study Team comprised Martin Pineiro, Elliot Stern and Dana Dalrymple. They carried out their work over the past year.

The report looks at review processes in general, discusses different options that are available to the CGIAR and concludes with 15 recommendations that could help guide future system-wide reviews.

The Oversight Committee thanks and congratulates the Study Team for an excellent report. The OC endorses the recommendations and commends the report to the Member of the CGIAR as timely guidance as we take forward the 2010 Vision and Strategy. Many of the lessons learnt and recommendations are very relevant to how to take the next steps in finalising and implementing the 2010 Vision and Strategy - and indeed to any organisation that is planning and carrying reviews.

The OC proposes to move forward with the recommendations of the report and to:

- set up a register of current and future reviews within and of the System;
- establish a site on the CGIAR web page where planned reviews can be registered and review results displayed; and
- analyse this register to identify gaps, overlaps, overloads and opportunities for collaboration amongst the partners of the CGIAR.

The longer-term objective will be to develop a more systematic approach to system-wide reviews across the CGIAR.

The Oversight Committee will welcome any comments on the review either verbally during ICW2000 or afterwards and intends to report on progress at future meetings of the CGIAR.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Washington, D.C.

**SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEWS IN THE CGIAR:
CONCEPTS, OPTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A Working Paper

Report of a Study Team
Commissioned by the Oversight Committee

October 2000

October 11, 2000

Mr. Andrew Bennett
Chairman
CGIAR Oversight Committee

Dear Mr. Bennett:

I am pleased to submit to you, and through you, to the Oversight Committee the report *System Wide Reviews in the CGIAR: Concepts, Options and Recommendations*. Part A of the report takes a broad view of the review process in the CGIAR as an overall framework for looking more carefully into the processes that were utilized for the implementation of the Third System Wide Review. Part B looks at review processes in general, discusses different options that are open to the CGIAR and ends by making 15 recommendations that may be useful for the organization of future system-wide reviews.

Our task has been difficult but at the same time an interesting learning experience. We sincerely hope that the report is useful to the CGIAR.

I would like to thank the other members of the Panel, Drs. Elliot Stern and Dana Dalrymple for their hard work, significant substantive contributions and willingness to work as a team.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Martín Piñeiro

**SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEWS IN THE CGIAR:
CONCEPTS, OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reviewing and thinking about the review process in the CGIAR, has been a difficult but rewarding task. It gave us the opportunity to learn about the complex review system that has developed in the CGIAR through the years and to reflect on review activities in scientific institutions.

During our work we have greatly benefited by interacting and discussing our ideas and perceptions with a number of people that generously offered their time and knowledge. Among them we would specially like to acknowledge Ismail Serageldin, Andrew Bennett, Hans Gregersen, Lucia de Vaccaro, Alex MacCalla, Carl Gustaf Thornström, Paul Egger and members of the CBC and CDC.

We had considerable interaction with most members of the review secretariat, in particular: Mahendra Shah, Bo Bengtsson, Michel Griffon, Karin Perkins and Barbara Shear. We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the time they allocated to us, the very valuable information they provided and the frankness of their comments.

At the CGIAR Secretariat, we benefited from: discussions with Alexander von der Osten, Selçuk Özgediz, and Manuel Lantin; assistance in gathering data and reference material from Feroza Vatcha, Danielle Lucca and Gunnar Larson; and help in many ways from Barbara Eckberg. Ernest Corea had the difficult task of editing the final version of the document. We thank all of them for their very professional help.

Finally, we are grateful for the contributions of these and other individuals and hereby wish to absolve them of responsibility for any shortcomings in the report.

Martín Piñeiro, Chair

Elliot Stern

Dana Dalrymple

Martin Piñeiro is Director of Grupo CEO. He was Director of Economics Research in INTA, Argentina; Undersecretary for Agriculture; Director General of the Inter American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). Has been involved in CGIAR matters in different capacities as Board member in CIAT, ICARDA, ISNAR and IFPRI where he was Chair of the Board. He was a member of the study team of the Second System Wide Review and of the Conway and Winkel Panels. Has published extensively in Agricultural Policy, Development and Economics of Technical Change.

Elliot Stern is the Director of the Evaluation Development and Review Unit at the Tavistock Institute London. He was the founding President of the UK Evaluation Society and is currently Vice President of the European Evaluation Society. He has worked as an Advisor on evaluation and review assignments for the UK Government, the European Commission, UNESCO, IFAD and a number of other regional and international agencies. He has specialized in the design of evaluation systems and in the review of institutional practices that support innovation in complex organizations. He is currently the Editor of Evaluation: the international journal of theory research and practice.

Dana Dalrymple is an Agricultural Economist with the Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He is on long-term detail to the Office of Agriculture and Food Security in the Global Bureau of the U.S. Agency for International Development where he serves as Research Advisor. Dr. Dalrymple has been involved in CGIAR affairs since 1972 and is the co-author, with Jock Anderson, of "The World Bank, the Grant Program, and the CGIAR: A Retrospective Review" (World Bank, OED, March 1999).

INTRODUCTION

This review was initiated by the Oversight Committee (OC) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). As originally conceived, it was to be a “Retrospective review of the Third CGIAR System Review process.” The overall purpose of the review was to “...learn from the experience of the Third System Review by identifying best practices and drawing lessons for system reviews to be conducted in the future.” The more specific purpose was to “...focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the processes used in planning, conducting, reporting, and follow-up the Third System Review.”

This was our initial focus. Two of the team members had experience with the Third System Review, one as a donor representative and one as a Center Board Chair. Personal files as well as the archives of the review in the CGIAR Secretariat library were examined. Conversations and e-mail exchanges were conducted with the Executive Secretary and individual members of the Review Secretariat. A similar process was carried out with other members of the CGIAR System, including the past and present Chair of the Oversight Committee as well as members of the current Oversight Committee.

As we got into our examination of the Third System Review, we began to think that the value of the process would be enhanced if we took a broader look at the larger CGIAR System-Wide and System-Level review processes¹. System-Wide Reviews do not exist by themselves. Moreover, any one review is to some extent, “of its own kind”. It is shaped by the circumstances and the personalities of the time. The lessons drawn from it may not in their own right be sufficient for the future. A broader look, encompassing the overall System-Wide/Level review process and its implications, might better set the context and illuminate the complex inter-relationships involved.

¹ a) System Wide Review refers to a review that looks at the CGIAR as a System; b) System Level Review refers to a review that has significance for the System as a whole but is focused in one specific issue or area.

The assessment of how a particular System-Wide Review was organized and run provides an important -but only one- set or vector of lessons. Other issues that also have to be considered concern the need, place, and role of System-Wide Reviews more generally. Why are they needed? What can they be expected to accomplish? What goals are beyond their reach? What are their major advantages and limitations? What are the alternatives to System-Wide Reviews? What role might be played by System-Level reviews? When are they appropriate and how might they best fit in?

Thus, while the Third System Review was the initial focus of our review and evaluation, and remains at the heart of it, we have tried to put it into a larger context. In Chapter I, we briefly examine the Review System in the CGIAR. In Chapter II we even more briefly summarize the main elements of the Third System Review. A detailed description of both subjects is presented in Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

In Chapter III we highlight those issues and questions that emerge from the descriptive chapters which we consider of special relevance for an analysis of System-Wide Reviews in the CGIAR.

In Chapter IV we analyze the special characteristics of the CGIAR as a system of research organizations and how those characteristics define the Review needs. We also review some conceptual elements that provide guidelines and impose limits on the objectives and organization of System-Wide Reviews. Finally in Chapter V, we present some recommendations that flow from our analysis.

This more comprehensive evaluation of the System-Wide/Level review process has stretched us a bit. Given relatively limited resources of time, it has meant that we have not spent as much time as we might have in looking into the details of the Third System Review. But we think that the trade-off -the marginal benefits compared to the marginal costs- is worth it, and will be of greater value to the CGIAR System.

PART A. THE REVIEW SYSTEM IN THE CGIAR

I. The Overall Review System

1. Introduction

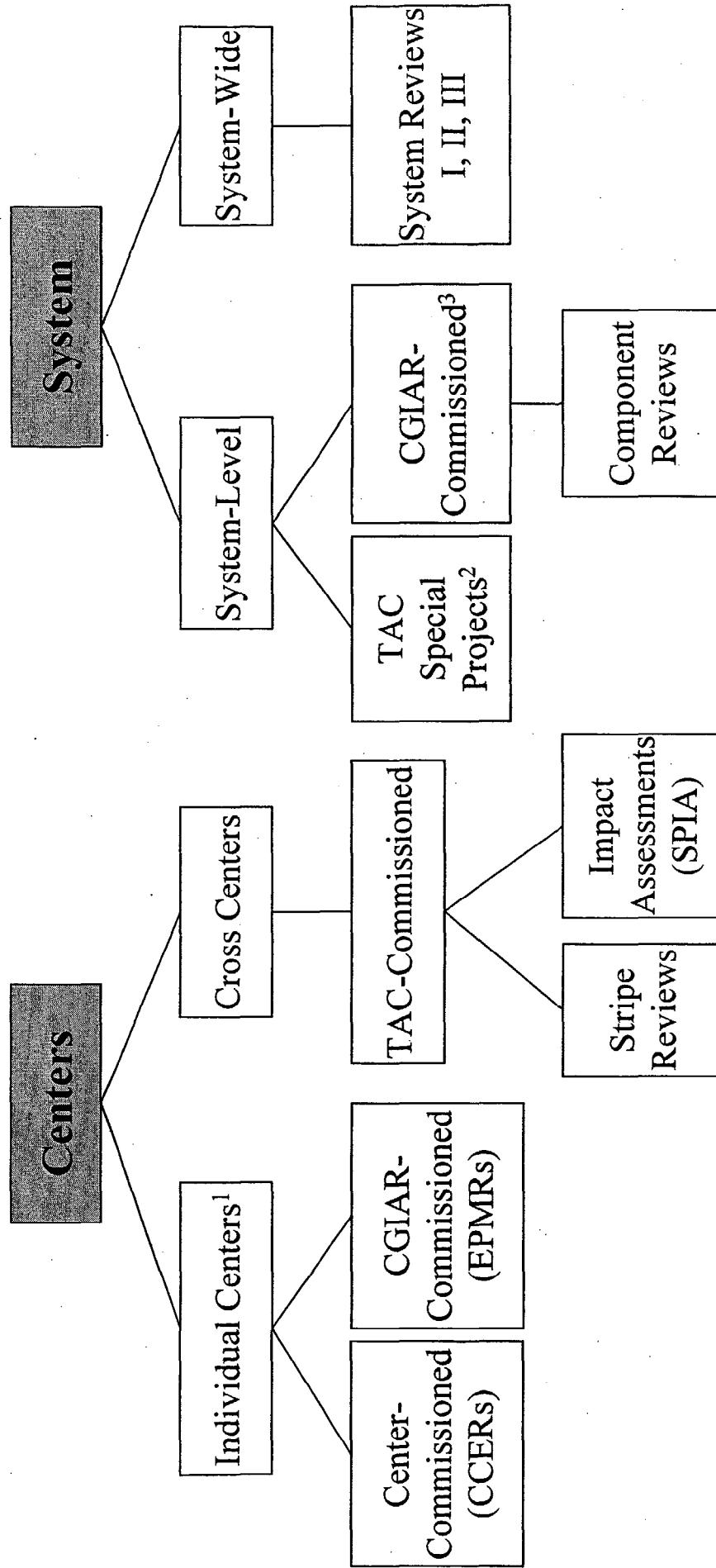
The CGIAR System has a rather comprehensive system of reviews, both at the System-Level and the Center-level. The key elements are depicted in Figure 1. The diagram is drawn in terms of vertical linkages, but there are also horizontal linkages, though perhaps fewer than might be desired. The figure shows that traditional System-Wide Reviews are only a part of a much larger review process.

2. Center Reviews

The basic component of the review system is the review of individual Centers. The conduct of these reviews may be divided into two main time periods. The first period extended from 1976 to 1983 when the reviews were arranged entirely by TAC. From 1983 to the present, responsibility for one new aspect of the reviews - center management - has been shared with the CGIAR Secretariat. The first Center review was of IRRI in 1976 and was followed by CIMMYT in 1976, CIAT in 1977, and IITA and ICRISAT in 1978. Through 1997, over 70 center reviews had been conducted.

Center-commissioned external reviews (CCERs) have long been part of the center management process. Although initially program-oriented, they have also grown to include management matters. Some are prepared in advance of the TAC reviews, in some cases to tidy up the shop, and increasingly have been made available to the review teams as reference material. They vary widely in scope, depth, and coverage and are not necessarily public documents. A former TAC Chair has suggested that if certain criteria are met, they could become "...a principal source of information on relevance and quality of science in CGIAR-commissioned external reviews." (Winkelmann, 7/28/98).

Figure 1: CGIAR Review System



4

¹ Excludes donor-commissioned reviews of individual restricted funded projects (special projects).
² Projects in the governance area that fall to TAC because there is no comparable group to do them.
³ Commissioned in a variety of ways, but often by the CGIAR Chairman.

3. Cross Center or Stripe Reviews

The *first* System Review recommended "...that the TAC give greater [sic] emphasis to periodic, across center analysis of particular topics (stripe analysis)." In subsequent years, particularly in the mid to late 1990s, a number of stripe reviews were carried out, for instance; off-campus training (1986), rice (1994), CGIAR center operations in Africa (1995), root and tuber crops (1997), soil and water natural resource management (1997), harvest and postharvest problems, policy management and institutional training (1997); CGIAR center operations in Latin America (1999), and an ecoregional study (1999). In retrospect, they might be said to have fallen into three categories: program, region, and program/region.

4. Impact Studies

Impact studies have grown into a big and important area. Impact studies in the CGIAR have gone through three basic phases. (1) In the mid-1980s, a massive impact study was undertaken. It originally proposed by Sweden and funded by all (?) CGIAR donors. It was composed of about two dozen individual studies which were summarized in a general publication several years later (Anderson, Herdt, and Scobie, 1988). Some centers conducted impact studies of various types in the following years. (2) In the mid-1990s there was a rebirth of interest in this topic on the part of the donors. In 1995, an Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) was established. It got off to a slow start but in time began to pick up steam. (3) As a result of a recommendation in the Third System Review, IAEG became affiliated with TAC in 1999 and is now known as the TAC's Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA). A number of promising studies are underway, both in cooperation with the individual centers and utilizing outside consultants.

5. System Level Review of Central Components on Functions

The CGIAR and TAC Secretariats were both reviewed in the late 1980s. The CGIAR Secretariat was reviewed in 1987. Most of the recommendations were of a fine tuning nature, both within the CGIAR Secretariat and in terms of its relations with the TAC Secretariat. More contentious recommendations, which were not adopted, included the establishment of a Policy Council to advise the CGIAR Chairman; administrative combination of the CGIAR and TAC Secretariats, and reducing the number of science advisors in the CGIAR Secretariat from two to one.

The TAC Secretariat was reviewed in 1988. Key issues examined included: overall performance of the Secretariat (recommended that analytical capacity be strengthened); location of the Secretariat (recommended staying in FAO but alleviating constraints which limited the Secretariat's effectiveness and efficiency); selection of TAC members (suggestions for improving the process); and the need for a comprehensive review of TAC. Some changes that helped improve operations were subsequently made, but no comprehensive review of TAC was ever undertaken.

6. Reviews of Management and Structure

During the 1990s, four studies were carried out on these subjects. The main focus of each one of them was on 1) processes in the CGIAR financing structure; 2) governance, decision making and financing structure; 3) strategy consultation on role and promoting structure and linkages, funding and resource allocation and system management; and 4) the future of international agricultural research.

7. System-Wide Reviews

1) Background

The first attempt to establish a policy on reviews was undertaken by the CGIAR during its meeting in November 1972 (Baum, 1986, p. 220).

Subsequently, a Subcommittee on Review Procedures was established under the leadership of David Bell. A draft committee report was discussed during the November 1973 meeting on the CGIAR. The report was then further revised and circulated on November 5 for further comments; no further changes were made and the report was declared "as having the general agreement of Group members" on January 23, 1974.

2) The First System-Wide Review

This took place in 1976. It was organized on the basis of two main components: (1) an overall Review Committee that would make recommendations to the group, and (2) a Study Group. The Review Committee was headed by the Chairman of the CGIAR and composed of 14 members who represented a cross section of donors, TAC, and the centers. The Study Group was headed by Alex McCalla (later to serve as Chairman of TAC) and three other members. Rather broad Terms of Reference (TOR) were prepared. The report contained 22 recommendations, principally relating to governance and management.

3) The Second System-Wide Review

During the Fall meeting (ICW80) the group decided to undertake a second review of the system. This was also a period of financial stress for the centers. Baum notes that "...in considering the scope and purpose of the review, the Group placed heavy emphasis on matters of governance, resource management, organization, and accountability. Even though the terms of reference were written more broadly."

The organization of the review was again based on 1) a Review Committee chaired by the Chairman of the CGIAR and composed of 18 members drawn from the members, and 2) a Study Team, headed by Michael Arnold and three other full time members and a number of consultants.

The report made 24 recommendations. Most focused on governance and management of the CGIAR and the centers. All but one were accepted by the group. The exception was a recommendation to establish a budget review committee. The committee “would make recommendations on budgetary procedures, the formulation of guidelines, and the allocation of resources.” This was, in Baum’s words, “... too radical a change for the group”. The group’s refusal to adopt a committee mechanism meant that it wished to continue to act as a ‘committee of the whole’ on “all important matters...”.

Although a third review was expected to follow in approximately another five years, this did not happen. In anticipation of a third System Review being held, the CGIAR Secretariat prepared a brief discussion note on September 14, 1984, which discussed purpose, timing, and process. But the matter was not taken up then or for another decade. The major reasons, as recalled by Özgediz (Özgediz 1996) were twofold: (1) the system was engaged in several major studies on other topics, and (2) “CGIAR Chairs Hopper and Rajagopalan preferred having internal, ad hoc examinations of aspects of the System in lieu of a comprehensive system review”.

II. The Third System-Wide Review

1. Background

The Third System-Wide Review was a long time coming. First contemplated in 1984, it was put on the back burner while other more specialized System-Level reviews were conducted. The idea of a System-Wide Review was mentioned from time to time, but did not begin to take root until a decade later under a new CGIAR Chair.

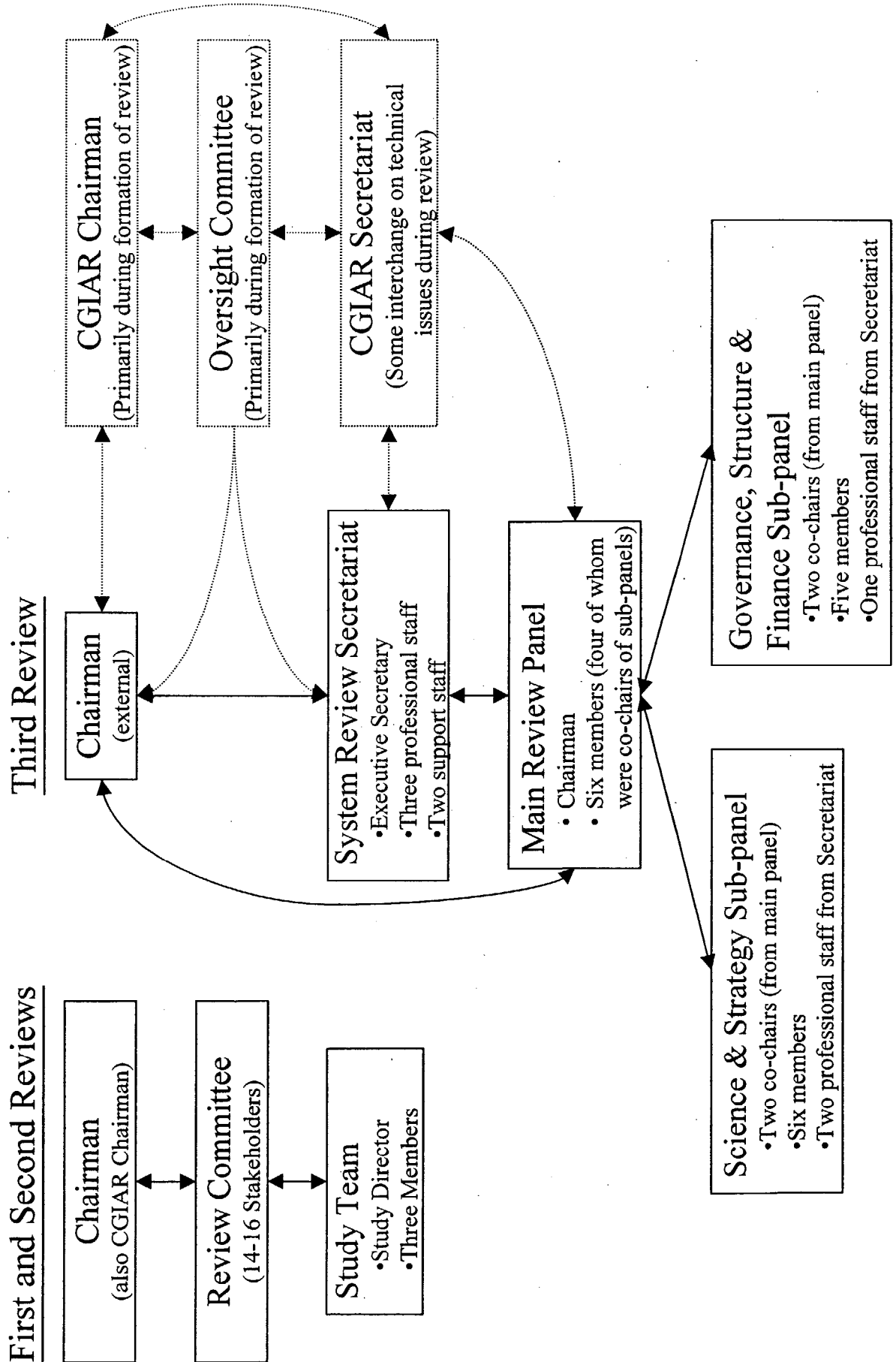
The review's general TOR went through several iterations and, in final form, contained three main categories: (1) "...to examine, with a broad forward-looking perspective, the role and positioning of the CGIAR system within the rapidly changing global scientific, communications and institutional settings and arrangements"; (2) "...assess the CGIAR's effectiveness in fulfilling its overall mission..."; and (3) "...assess a number of generic issues, including... (i) CGIAR's strengths, past achievements and impact... (ii) CGIAR's potential future contributions... (iii)...partnerships, with other components of the global agricultural research system... (iv) global developments with respect to international conventions and agreements..."

The TORs for the three Specialist panels that were originally proposed as part of the review structure, were more specific to their fields. These panels were later combined into two: Science and Strategy, and Governance, Structure, and Finance. In the process, Co-Chairs were named.

2. Organizational Structure

The major elements and structure are depicted on the right side of Figure 2. It was, by comparison with earlier reviews, a fairly complex and quite different structure. We have noted that the first two reviews had a Review Committee made up of stakeholders overseeing the work of a Study Team. These study teams were constituted mainly with outsiders and did all the analytical work and drafted the recommendations.

Figure 2: Organizational Structure of First Three CGIAR System-Wide Reviews



The Third Review had no such Committee. The review was carried out by a six-member panel, chaired by Maurice Strong, and two subpanels, one on Science and Strategy chaired by M.S. Swaminatan and Bruce Alberts and one on Governance, Structure and Finance chaired by Whitney MacMillan. The panels were assisted by a Secretariat headed by Mahendra Shah. The analytical work and writing the report were done by the panels and to a considerable extent also by the Secretariat.

3. Output and Outcome

The report was made available on September 30. It was 111 pages long, and was composed of: an Executive Summary, 17 chapters, and five annexes. The chapters fell into three categories: Introductory (3), Science and Strategy (8), and Governance and Finance (6). Altogether, the report provided 29 recommendations and 104 sub-recommendations. The actual number was slightly more than this because some entries in both categories had several components.

The report was in general very supportive of the CGIAR and included substantial and innovative recommendations.

In general, the recommendations in the Science and Strategy chapters proved relatively uncontroversial. Those in the Governance and Finance category, many of which centered on the creation of a new, central body with legal status, proved to be more contentious. When the central legal body idea was questioned, many of the other Governance recommendations also came into question.

III. Reflections on the Review System

In the preceding two sections we briefly summarized the main elements of the overall review process in the CGIAR and of the Third System-Wide Review, emphasizing those elements we consider most relevant for our analysis. In this section we present some observations that emerge from our own analysis and from the comments or observations of people we interviewed. They provide the initial stepping stones leading to the recommendations we present in Chapter V.

- 1) The CGIAR is a complex organization and through the years it has developed a sophisticated review system where most organizational components are thoroughly reviewed. This is particularly true for Centers and less true for central governance components.
- 2) The review system presents some weaknesses in relation to the systematic review of the central components that are responsible for governance activities. CGIAR and TAC Secretariats, and the CGIAR committees, for instance, have not been reviewed except on an ad hoc basis since 1980.
- 3) The Center Reviews are the centerpiece of the Review process in the CGIAR. They are the main sources of information and transparency for the stakeholders. One possible shortcoming, from the perspective of this study, is that consideration of the interrelations of each Center being with the CGIAR System as a whole is frequently weak.
- 4) System-Wide Reviews are an integral and important component of the review system. However, during its 30 years of existence, the CGIAR has experienced only three System-Wide Reviews. The first was in 1976, and the second in 1981 followed an agreed five-year cycle. The third took place only in 1998, after a 17 year lapse.
- 5) The long time between the second and third System-Wide Review is partly explained by the heavy load of other review activities taking place during the period. On the other hand, the third System-Wide Review seems to have developed quite independently of the previous System-Wide Reviews as well as of other review activities that could have been better used as sources of information and analysis.

These reviews represent the institutional memory of the evolution, success and changes that the System has undergone.

- 6) The three System-Wide Review have some elements in common and a number of important differences. These differences are specially noticeable and relevant in regards to the third System-Wide Review.
- 7) The first two System-Wide Review had similar TORs and the recommendations focused on governance and management. Both reviews were the responsibility of a Review Committee composed of stakeholders chaired by the CGIAR Chair and was served by a small Study Team that worked almost full time for a period of time.
- 8) The third review was quite different in focus and organization. The organization was based on a Panel and two Subpanels composed mainly of persons from outside the CGIAR and a Secretariat. The TOR emphasized the examination of the role and positioning of the CGIAR, its effectiveness and potential future contributions. These TORs were considerably more complex than those of the first and second System-Wide Review and were more strongly directed to an external audience. As a consequence, considerable attention was given to external reputation and standing in selecting the Chairman and the members of the main panel. However, as it turned out, the recommendations strongly focused on governance issues.
- 9) In the first two System-Wide Review the Study team had a good knowledge of the organization of the CGIAR, a balanced disciplinary specialized knowledge and worked full time for a considerable period, developing issues and options. In the third review, its Secretariat, which in certain ways substituted for the Study Team, did not have the organizational structure and autonomy to identify issues and develop options. As a consequence, the responsibility for making analytical contributions and drawing possible recommendations were diluted between the Secretariat and the panels. This made the work of the Panel Chair and the review Secretariat especially difficult in regards to coordinating the multiple activities taking place at the same time and in drafting a concise and uniform final report clearly focused on the mandate defined in the TORs.
- 10) Looking at this problem from a different perspective, it is also probably correct that the extended nature of the TORs, and the organizational structure adopted based on a

main Panel, two Subpanels, a Secretariat and a number of specialized contributions, led to an effort of such magnitude where diseconomies of scale probably played a significant role.

- 11) A similar observation can be made in regards to the continuous nature of System-Wide Reviews and the absence of an organizational entity with the continuing responsibility for monitoring System-Wide Review processes. A consequence of this was the lack of adequate preparatory work previous to the time the panel started working. This preparatory work could have identified the major issues and strategic choices faced by the CGIAR, developed the necessary consensus among stakeholders on the selected issues and allowed for a more focused and acceptable set of recommendations.
- 12) Additionally, the organizational structure used in the third System-Wide Review could have benefited from stronger mechanisms for systematic interaction between the panel and the CGIAR Stakeholders through the whole process. The mechanism in place, based on the communications between the Chairman of the Review Panel and the Chairman of the CGIAR, proved to be insufficient. It is possible that other CGIAR structures such as the Oversight Committee could have played a larger role in this function.
- 13) One consequence of selecting a largely external main panel was that some of the recommendations were not sensitive to the long established culture of the organization. This fact, independently of the judgment one may have on the value of these recommendations, and the absence of sufficient interaction and discussion with the stakeholders, made it more difficult for the later to understand and accept some of the recommendations.
- 14) System-Wide Reviews have been important elements of the review process and in the development of the CGIAR. The recommendations made by the first two System-Wide Review were, for the most part, adopted. The third review, while more contentious, is also having an important impact by setting in motion a number of activities that will most probably have an important impact on the future of the organization.

PART B. FUTURE REVIEWS: FRAMEWORKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IV. Concepts, Framework and Design Options

1. Introduction

In this chapter we seek to define the kinds of review options that we see as available to the CGIAR. The chapter begins with a general consideration of review processes in organizations and systems. It then seeks to locate these general considerations within the specific context of the CGIAR. The chapter then discusses a number of 'design considerations' in terms of three main dimensions: considerations for review objectives; considerations for review structure and organization; and considerations for the process of reviews. The chapter does not make specific recommendations which are contained in chapter V that follows. One rationale for highlighting design considerations separately is to allow the readers of this report to consider their own preferred options and if necessary to construct their own option-set from the design possibilities presented. Our concern, however, is that the dimensions and choices are addressed, because in our judgment the lessons of previous reviews is that failing to make these choices can undermine the effectiveness of System-Wide Reviews in the CGIAR.

2. The Contemporary Pervasiveness of Review Processes

Institutionalized review processes are becoming increasingly common at organizational, policy and program levels especially in the public and public/private sectors, where multiple stakeholders and partnerships abound and where simple measures of performance such as profitability are hard to find. The 'drivers' for the present pervasiveness of reviews are especially strong when organizations and systems mature, when tasks become more complex, when uncertainty or the speed of change increases and when decision making is dispersed -either because of networks or partnerships or

decentralization strategies. In general, organizations today increasingly are embedded in an environment: they need to manage external relations and respond to external factors—sometimes for reasons of interdependence and sometimes for reasons of competitiveness. This requires intensive monitoring both of internal and also ‘cross-boundary’ processes. Indeed, we find that in these circumstances, the costs of routine monitoring as well as of less frequent reviews tends to become a more costly and time consuming component of organizational operations. To that extent the CGIAR needs to recognize that these exercises are likely to become a permanent and unavoidable organizational overhead, if they are to be done well.

The wide-spread growth of evaluation, audit and quality assurance functions is evidence of these new and widely recognized needs. Reviews usually involve some explicit and systematic process of objective-setting, data-gathering, interpretation and recommendation. Reviews also require an implementation or follow-up process. We will return to these various activities below. However, it is important to recognize the extent and duration of a review process, one that necessarily includes preparatory and follow-up phases.

Reviews at an institutional, organizational or system level are intended to fulfil several purposes:

- to *demonstrate accountability* to stakeholders that have no easy access to information and who value transparency;
- to *learn lessons* from current practice in a systematic fashion so as to improve future performance; and,
- to clarify *strategic choices* and guide strategic decision making.

Additionally, and more problematically, reviews are commonly used to address crises or urgent problems of a non-routine kind (e.g. to respond to a crisis or to deal with a funding deficit or to a change in the policy environment). These kinds of ‘survival’ reviews are more problematic because they are usually associated with fundamental

challenges to the status quo, a circumstance in which it is difficult to apply systematic methods in an a-political ways. In this report we concentrate on the kinds of review that do not focus on survival threats or crises – although we do recognize and on occasions also address these circumstances.

3. The Distinctiveness of the CGIAR Context

The System-Wide Review in the CGIAR it meant to serve all of the purposes identified above, but in addition is necessarily embedded in a particular and distinctive system (see Figure 3).

The CGIAR is an unusual body, combining aspects of an international organization; research administration; a multi-purpose network of scientific, professional, donor and beneficiary stake-holders; and a political forum. More specifically we can highlight the following characteristics of the CGIAR:

- autonomous Research Centers with their own Boards of Trustees;
- a consultative mode of governance and decision making based on consensus and backed up by independent technical advice;
- a mode of resource that combines respect for the ‘sovereignty’ of independent donors with a pooling of resources within priorities that are arrived at collectively; and,
- the integration within a single framework of both donor countries and developing countries, including equal representation on the key boards and committees.

The consequences of these structural characteristics include: the lack of clear and unequivocal lines of authority; unusual heterogeneity among the CGIAR’s key stakeholders; and the loosely coordinated procedure by which dispersed financial resources are allocated to agreed priorities.

This diversity of form and function follows from what the CGIAR seeks to achieve in relation to scientific research, food security, international development and poverty

reduction. Because of its unusual and multi-purpose character, it faces particular problems of governance and coordination. It needs to maintain a consensus among many stakeholders and in particular to convince them that the CGIAR is efficient, well managed and relevant to their interests. It must, in addition, foster a strong sense of ownership of process and outcome which is essential to the functioning of a "system". It needs to find ways of addressing strategic choices in an area of scientific research that is fast changing, high cost and often high risk. It needs to draw on a community of insiders who are usually the only knowledgeable persons in highly specialized areas of expertise. Nor is it only concerned with the CGIAR community: it also has to maintain credibility with a broader international audience that includes governments, international bodies, the private sector and NGOs.

A System-Wide Review, we would argue, is one that overviews the systemic qualities of the CGIAR and seeks to enhance its functioning as a system. It must be concerned with system-wide governance, decision-making and consensus-building, scientific developments, the CGIAR secretariat and system-wide responsibilities of the Centers. In the CGIAR context, a System-Wide Review must address the demands of a very diverse constituency of stakeholders, including donors and beneficiaries as well as scientists and the private sector. It needs to contribute to learning in a non-hierarchical, networked context and in so doing help develop consensus as well as generate knowledge and understanding, *per se*. A review also needs to ensure that the CGIAR is prioritizing new needs and evident gaps rather than simply maintaining traditional patterns of activity and investment, while at the same time avoiding being buffeted by short term priorities and demands.

4. Review Design Option 1: Objectives

The objectives of a System-Wide Review can, as noted above, be in part deduced from the characteristics of the system. At the very least it is these systemic characteristics that define the *scope* of a review. In the case of the CGIAR a System-Wide Review must

therefore pay attention to governance, structure, mode of finance etc. However a range of more specific objectives overlay this definition of the 'scope' of a review.

One useful way of classifying such objectives has been put forward in the research evaluation literature (see Steen and Eijffinger, 1998; Rip and Van der Meulen, 1995). We have elaborated on this classification which seems to encompass the range of objectives that we find in the different components of the CGIAR's System-Wide and System level reviews. These objectives start from a number of criteria that are essentially qualitative. Thus reviews may be in terms of:

- *scientific quality*, including the way strategic priorities are translated into research agendas; the originality and rigor of the research undertaken; and the research resources in place, in terms of both human and physical infrastructure;
- *relevance to societal needs and priorities quality*, including the relevance of the institutional mandate and of the research efforts; their responsiveness to changing policy priorities; and the effectiveness with which intentions are achieved and results are utilized; and,
- *operational quality*, including efficient implementation; the governance of the system, including resource allocation; and strategic priority setting for research.

In the case of the CGIAR not all these sets of objectives are likely to be of equal weight or to pre-occupy the review team/panel to the same degree.

- We would anticipate that *operational quality* is likely to be the most consistent source of objectives in most if not all reviews.
- *Scientific quality* is mainly the concern of center reviews and will only be the concern of System-Wide Reviews indirectly as they pick up on those aspects of center reviews that are of System-Level relevance. System-Level reviews will also be able to draw

on TAC activities regarding scientific direction and priorities. Instituting a more regular cycle of system reviews, as is suggested below, will also reduce the salience of science related objectives in any particular review. However, it is worth noting that the speed of scientific change varies in different periods and sometimes a System-Wide Review will continue to need to give attention to science objectives.

- What has been called *relevance to societal needs quality* will also be a less frequent pre-occupation, and appropriately so, if System-Wide Reviews occur more regularly.

In addition we would suggest that at a system-wide level in particular, a review should look for *coherence* across these different definitions of quality. By coherence we include consistency; balance; and completeness. Thus, we would wish to consider:

- the *consistency* with which different parts of the CGIAR system operate: are strategic priorities translated into scientific programs; does governance support good science; and are long term scientific programs disrupted by short-term policy priorities;
- the *balance* between different objectives; i.e. the extent to which appropriate resources are devoted to different activities; and the relationship between resources available and outcomes achieved and expected; and,
- the *completeness* of the CGIAR portfolio: are there currently gaps and omissions either in the management arrangements, the scientific portfolio or in the way synergies are obtained between the CGIAR's various activities?

5. Review Design Option 2: Structure

A review can be structured in many different ways. Among the most common design choices regarding structure are:

- *time-frame*: i.e. should a review be continuous, time-bounded or periodic;

- *composition of the Review Panel*: i.e. should a review be internalized or in some way externalized or out-sourced;
- *integration*: i.e. should a review be a self-contained exercise or tied into other functions of review and governance.
- *organization and management*: i.e. should a review be the responsibility of mainline managers, a governing body or a key role-holder such as a chairperson.

Regarding *time-frame*, the classical review is periodic, occurring at discrete intervals, within a bounded time period. A panel is appointed and it must report by a certain date. Preparatory and follow-up activities are separated off from the main review period. This was indeed the way the first two System-Wide Reviews were conceived. The third review which was some 17 years after its predecessor was an extreme case of this.

The alternative is to regard reviews as a continuous process: in today's rapidly changing world, review and the feedback and action that follow are a continuous need. In the case of the CGIAR we have become convinced of the need for a review that is closer to a continuous process than has been the case hitherto -although there should be some differentiation between what aspects of the system are reviewed, when and how frequently (this is elaborated on further below).

The notion of time-frame as used here includes at least three stages: a preparatory, an intensive and a follow-up stage. It is all of these that together constitute the review process. There are different ways by which these three stages can be designed. In Chapter V we make some specific recommendations².

Regarding the composition of the Review Panel, there is an inevitable tension between the need to draw on the in-house knowledge of an organization or system and the need to bring in new and challenging ideas. In the case of the CGIAR this tension is especially strong because of the unique 'internal' expertise that the CGIAR contains –

² A further dimension of the concept of a more continuous review process has been explored separately by Dana G. Dalrymple in "The Possible Role of a CGIAR System Wide Monitor", USAID/G/EGAD/AFS. September 15, 2000 5 pp.

expertise that is probably unequalled, given the involvement of most global experts in the CGIAR's areas of activity in some way. There is also the issue of credibility and the need to assure external audiences that a review is independent and unbiased: a function that also pulls for the involvement of outsiders in a review process.

- We have come to the conclusion that at a *center level*, resources, independence and credibility are especially important. However, even here the choice may ultimately be between known experts who are familiar with CGIAR research and known experts who are also directly involved in a Center's activities and committees.
- At a *system wide* review there is probably no alternative to a stronger than usual internal role in the reviews of a body such as the CGIAR. Without such a strong internal role the best available knowledge will not be accessed and the implementation process is likely to be more difficult. There are various ways that an external voice can be incorporated. These include direct participation in panels and commissioned external studies or consultancies. It should nonetheless be possible to use external persons to certify or ensure the quality, independence and unbiased nature of the System-Wide Review process. These alternatives are also discussed further below.

Regarding *integration*, a review that is periodic is usually also relatively separate from other in-house review activities. This is also a characteristic of the System-Wide Review process in the CGIAR. Yet in the CGIAR as in other contemporary organizations, reviews of elements of the system have become increasingly common: earlier parts of this report have detailed how System-Level elements are present in Center reviews, 'Stripe' reviews and other ad hoc management and governance reviews.

What appears to be missing in the CGIAR is a closer integration of the formal and periodic System-Wide Reviews and these other system level reviews. This integration can provide a stronger basis for system wide reviews by broadening the available knowledge-base, extending the time period over which data is available and limiting the

workload demands being made of a review team or panel members. To achieve such integration requires some adjustment of the other System-Level review processes to align them with system-wide issues. For example, in the case of the CGIAR we would recommend that there be some adjustment of the TOR for External Program and Management Reviews (EPMRs) and CCERs, especially with regard to those aspects of center activities that pertain to the CGIAR as a system.

Regarding *organization and management* there is clearly a need that the responsibility for System-Wide Reviews be identified in specific terms. This would include initiation activities within what we have called a preparatory stage; liaison with the review team/panel whilst it was doing its work; and follow-up activities, in particular with regard to the implementation of recommendations. A further activity within the review cycle that needs to be managed is confirming that the review has been completed and that recommendations have been addressed if not acted upon. In the CGIAR, the review has mainly been the responsibility of the Chair (overseeing in the case of the first two reviews; initiating in the case of the third review). Although it is clear that the CGIAR Chair will continue to need to formally authorize and endorse any System-Wide Review, in the present stage of CGIAR development there are also arguments for other actors – such as the Oversight Committee – that could have key roles in the organization and management of System-Wide Reviews. If structural changes are introduced as a result of the institutional processes now underway, other bodies will have to be considered.

6. Review Design Option 3: Procedure

In an earlier chapter we described a number of procedural issues that surfaced in the third System-Wide Review in particular, although they also featured to some extent in the earlier reviews. In this section these issues are re-presented in terms of a list of principles regarding procedure that need to be addressed in any future System-Wide Review.

These procedures include:

- *Preparatory actions and review focusing.* The definition of the priorities (i.e. purpose and focus) of a review has to be planned, authorized and in some way legitimated by the main CGIAR stakeholders. This is an inherent part of the review process, as it is ensuring that the necessary information at system level is in place and available to the review panel or team when it begins its work.
- *A clear statement of purpose and focus expressed in the terms of reference for a review.* No review can be entirely comprehensive and some choices will always have to be made. Clarity about purpose and focus will also help review teams to allocate their resources efficiently and other stake-holders to set realistic expectations.
- *Selection of persons appropriate to the task as defined in the TOR.* Matching people to task requirements can be contrasted to an alternative that re-defines terms of reference to the persons chosen. Appropriate selection must also include availability and willingness to contribute to the review as specified.
- *Division of labor between different functions.* These functions may include chair persons, panel members, secretariats and specialists, consultants and study teams. How these are defined, and responsibilities assigned, should be made very clear.
- *Modes of working.* This has to include consultation processes and who is consulted when; the timing of meetings; the integration of different inputs; and how transparency is assured. While many of these processes can be taken for granted, it would probably enhance the credibility of a System-Wide Review if some standard operating procedures were adopted.
- *Intermediate feedback to stake-holders and role-holders.* Should there be intermediate feedback and if so to whom? Explicit agreements as to the role of the

Oversight Committee, the CGIAR Chair in the feedback process is necessary; acknowledging that there are arguments for and against such intermediate feedback.

- *How the final report is prepared, presented, authorized and signed off.* To some extent this is a matter of timing and allowing sufficient time for finalization to occur. It is also a matter of setting and managing expectations among the stakeholder community.
- *Follow-up procedures and implementation.* We regard follow-up and implementation as an inherent part of the review process. The management of the dialogue that necessarily follows a review report and recommendations should therefore be considered as part of the review itself.

In a subsequent chapter we make specific suggestions as to the way in which these procedural principles might best be addressed in the case of CGIAR system level reviews.

V. Recommendations for Future System-Wide Reviews in the CGIAR

An overall Review Process must be organized taking into consideration among other things the nature of the organization, its stage of development, its external environment, and the circumstances that surround the Review Process. In this chapter we summarize some of the main elements that have been developed in previous chapters of this report and present some recommendations that we see emerging from the arguments that have been developed in the main text. These recommendations address four main issues that define the design and characteristics of Reviews: a) The need, b) Objectives and focus, c) The structure and d) Procedures for implementation. The recommendations we make imply we have made some choices that, in our minds, are the correct ones for the CGIAR at present. A different set of choices could be more appropriate when circumstances change.

1. The need, place and frequency of System Wide Reviews in the review system

Complex organizations such as the CGIAR require continuing and systematic evaluation procedures that provide for transparency and accountability, clarify strategic choices, and help the organization to function in a permanent learning process. System-Wide Reviews are one important element of the overall review process. They are, however, complex and demanding institutional exercises that require intensive preparation and should not be overdone. On some occasions the CGIAR may be confronted with new problems or difficult choices on matters of great importance that have a system level relevance but are localized and self-contained. On these occasions, more limited and focused System-Level review activities may be the best way to address the need. The two types of reviews should draw on each other and might be grouped in cycles.

Recommendation 1. System-Wide Reviews are a necessary and important component of the overall review process in the CGIAR. They should be organized periodically as part of a continuous evaluation process.

Recommendation 2. System-Level Reviews, limited in scope and addressing specific and self-contained issues of system level significance, are a natural complement to full fledged System-Wide Reviews. Both types of Reviews should be integrated into a pattern of evaluation procedures. As part of the preparatory activities for future reviews (see recommendations below) existing System-Level Reviews, Stripe Reviews, Center Reviews, TAC Reports and other Reviews should be collated as an input to each System-Wide Review.

Recommendation 3. The frequency of System-Wide Reviews will depend on a number of circumstances and conditions, including the number and coverage of System-Level Review activities that are being developed. Within a flexible structure, cycles of 6 to 8 years would seem most appropriate.

2. Objectives and focus of System-Wide Reviews

System-Wide Reviews may be organized around a wide range of objectives. The universe of possible objectives can be grouped in three broad categories that focus on: a) the operational quality of the organization; b) the scientific quality of the work being done by the organization; and c) quality, as societally defined relevance of the organization, which refers to the relevance of its work and its contributions to society.

It seems to us that System-Wide Reviews should focus on the first category of objectives. Scientific quality is addressed in a number of different review activities. The main one is in the individual Center reviews and is a subject which is addressed on a permanent basis by TAC. Other activities include stripe reviews and system level review activities such as the one recently completed on Plant Breeding Methodologies. The strength of these types of reviews is built on the objectivity and independence of peer review. On the other hand, the evaluation of the relevance and mandate of the organization (societally defined quality) is a difficult and institutionally traumatic exercise. It should be developed with great care and prudence and only when there is a very clear indication of its need.

Recommendation 4. System-Wide Reviews should normally focus on the operational quality of the organization including governance, priority setting, and resource allocation. This operational quality needs to be assessed in the broader scientific and research context which is provided by other elements of system level reviews that are, in general, led by TAC.

3. The Structure of System-Wide Review

A review can be structured in many different ways. Among the most common design choices which are described in Chapter IV are: a) time frame; b) composition of the panel; c) integration with other review activities; and d) organization and management. On each one of these dimensions our main recommendations follow:

Recommendation 5. Regarding time frame, System-Wide Reviews should be seen as a continuous process made up of three stages of different intensity:

- A preparatory stage where issues and strategic choices are selected as the main focus of the review;
- an intensive stage where the review is actually conducted; and
- a follow-up stage, where recommendations are analyzed, institutionally internalized and agreed upon and later implemented.

Recommendation 6. Regarding the composition of the Review Panel of a System Wide Review we think that it will need a stronger than usual participation of persons closely associated to the CGIAR. This will contribute to the panel having sufficient detailed knowledge about the System and will later facilitate the implementation process.

Recommendation 7. On integration with other review activities we stress that other review activities must be adjusted to align them more closely to System-Level issues. Terms of reference of EPMRs should specifically consider Center activities that interrelate to the activities of other Centers (System-Wide activities) and on their

management implication. The definition of the Terms of Reference of System-Wide Reviews should carefully consider the results of all other review activities.

Recommendation 8. Regarding who has the responsibility for the organization and management it seems to us that there is a need for an organizational locus within the CGIAR to take responsibility for system level review activities and their coordination. These responsibilities would include organizing and monitoring the preparatory stage, liaison with the review panel and follow-up activities leading to implementation. The Oversight Committee could have that responsibility. However, if structural changes within the CGIAR result from the discussions taking place at present, other organizational units should be considered.

4. Procedures for the implementation of System-Wide Review

A number of procedural issues surfaced in the analysis of the review system and in particular the third System-Wide Review. Procedures are quite specific to particular circumstances defined by time, availability of resources and opportunity. However, on the basis of the general principles discussed in Chapter IV, some general recommendations are drawn.

Recommendation 9. Preparatory activities should be carefully organized. They should lead to a) well defined TOR's endorsed by stakeholders, b) information gathering and c) a set of issues and questions that could be addressed by the review.

Recommendation 10. Review focusing. The Chair of the Review panel, the Head of the Study Team and the Secretary to the Study Team (see Recommendation 12) should be appointed in advance of the review in order to facilitate preparation. The head of the Study Team should lead the process of internal consultation with the stakeholders and refining the main focus and terms of reference of the Review. The process will end with approval of the terms of reference by the CGIAR.

Recommendation 11. Terms of Reference. The review panel should receive Terms of Reference that include a clear and reasonably detailed statement of purpose and focus. This statement of focus should be built upon the issues and strategic choices identified during the preparatory stage. The persons chosen to the panel and study team or secretariat should match the themes selected to be the focus of the review. A detailed Plan of Work should be developed at an initial step of the Review Process.

Recommendation 12. The operational structure and division of labor. On the basis of experience to date the organization of System-Wide Reviews could adopt a structure made up by two components. First, a panel of 10 to 15 persons, some from inside the organization, partially drawn from the members of the Oversight Committee, and some that have independence from it and bring specialized knowledge and experience relevant to the specific focus of the review. Second, a study group, mainly external but with some knowledge of the organization and specialized professional training on subjects relevant to the review. The Study Group would be supported by a Secretary.

Recommendation 13. On division of labor. The Study Group would have the responsibility for carrying out the substantive and analytic work required, and designing the options and opportunities confronted by the CGIAR. The Panel would have the responsibility for monitoring the work of the Study Team, serving as the institutional mechanism for feed back and ownership development by the stakeholders and finally presenting the recommendations to the CGIAR.

Recommendation 14. The process of feedback, information and development of ownership of the results of the review on the part of the stakeholders is a very important part of the whole process. The organization, budget structure and management style should incorporate this need in an appropriate manner. The review panel should have a major responsibility in the process.

Recommendation 15. The independence and transparency of the Review process in relation to the different constituencies and stakeholders is important. For this reason we

recommend that the decisions made at each stage of the System-Wide Review are documented, i.e., how TOR's were agreed on, how Panel members were chosen, what consultations took place, what data was collected, the process of drafting recommendations, and preparing and finalizing the report. Providing such an audit trail will also allow the CGIAR to go further and, if it should so wish, certify the independence and proper conduct of any System-Wide Review by appointing authoritative external "referees" or "scrutineers" who are able to review the process through available documentation.

Finally, we would like to stress that the way that all these various recommendations come together will depend on the way they are adopted and implemented. It is certainly possible to imagine a future "scenario" that anticipates how a new System-Wide Review might work in practice. A key element of any scenario within the framework we are advocating is that the review process for the System-Wide Review of the future is explicitly differentiated into stages. This will ensure adequate preparation and pre-review consultation, and adequate consultation with key stakeholders that will need to implement the System-Wide Review recommendations before the report is finalized. This will, we believe, improve the efficiency of the System-Wide Review and make ownership of its recommendations by the CGIAR more likely.

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Annex 1. THE REVIEW SYSTEM IN THE CGIAR

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Annex 1. THE REVIEW SYSTEM IN THE CGIAR

1. Introduction

The CGIAR system has a rather comprehensive system of reviews, at the System-Wide and System-Level, as well as the Center level. The key elements are depicted in Figure 1. The diagram is drawn in terms of vertical linkages, but there are also horizontal linkages, though perhaps fewer than might be desired. The traditional System-Wide Reviews are, it will be seen, only part of a much larger review process.

These components will be briefly described in chapter I. It starts with the traditional, though recently infrequent, System-Wide Reviews (particularly the first two reviews; the third will be the subject of Annex 2) and the equally traditional individual Center reviews. It then moves on to a somewhat more recent and varied category of System-Level reviews. This is followed by some brief remarks on overlaps and gaps in the review system and on costs, benefits, and perceptions of the review system.

Although individual components of the System side of the review process, as compared to the Center portion, are of major importance and interest from time to time, the System sector has not received as much attention as an entity. We hope that the broader view of the review system provided in this Annex will provide greater clarity and perspective to our discussion of System-Wide and System-Level components.

2. System-wide Reviews: main elements

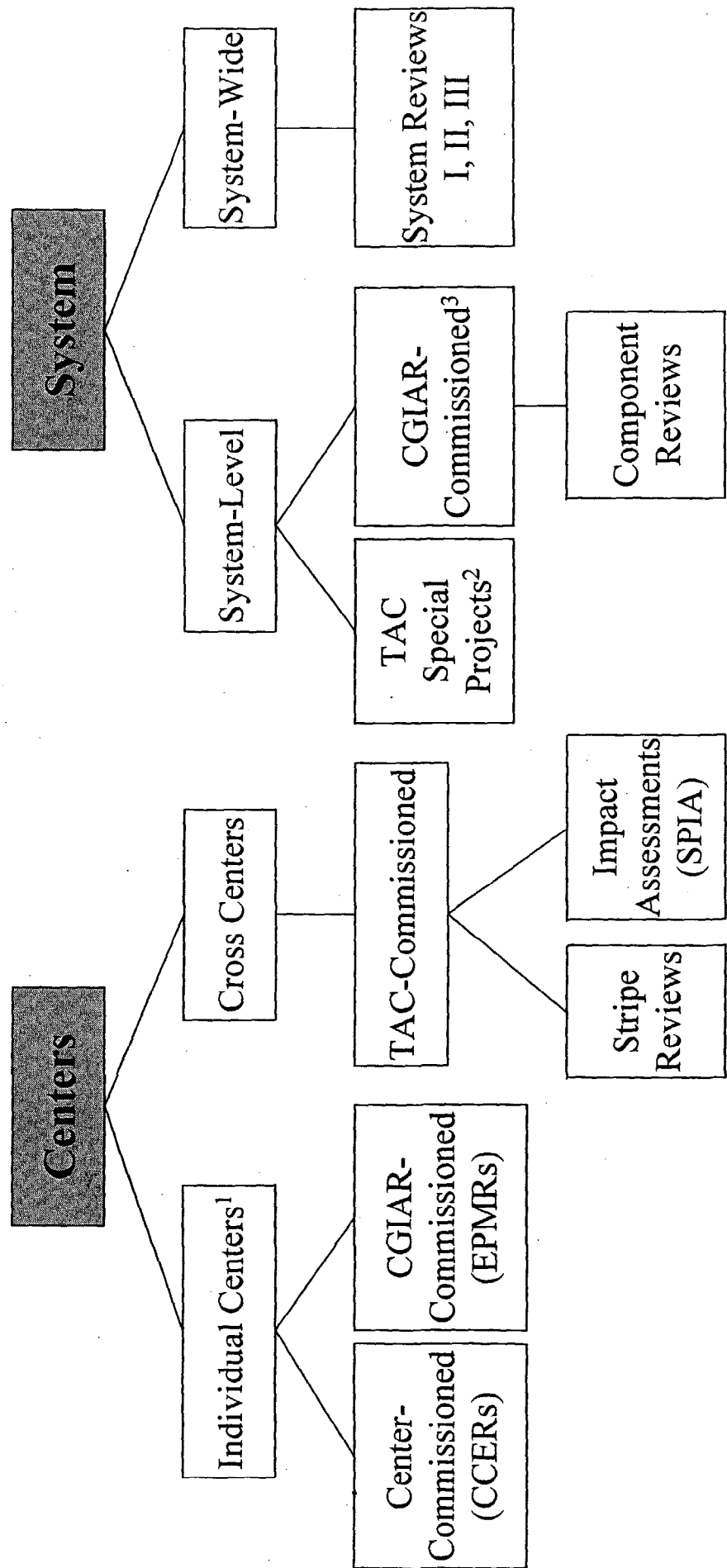
A. Background

The first attempt to establish a policy on reviews was undertaken by the CGIAR during its meeting in November 1972 (Baum, p. 220). Subsequently, a Subcommittee on Review Procedures was established under the leadership of David Bell. A draft committee report was discussed during the November 1973 meeting of the CGIAR. The report was then further revised and circulated on November 5 for further comments; no further changes were made and the report was declared "as having the general agreement of Group members" on January 23, 1974.

The report outlined a comprehensive review procedure. In the case of system reviews, it stated parenthetically (according to Baum, p. 99, it was thought outside of the terms of reference of the subcommittee):

(The sub-committee has noted the probability that in the future the CGIAR will need periodically— perhaps every five years — an overall assessment of the [1] usefulness, [2] accomplishments, and [3] deficiencies of the system of Centers in the context of the worldwide problems to which the Centers' work is addressed.)
(p. 7 of Bell report; numbering added)

Figure 1: CGIAR Review System



¹ Excludes donor-commissioned reviews of individual restricted funded projects (special projects).
² Projects in the governance area that fall to TAC because there is no comparable group to do them.
³ Commissioned in a variety of ways, but often by the CGIAR Chairman.

The report went on to suggest that "Such an overall assessment should presumably be prepared by, or commissioned by, the TAC." In view of the principal emphasis of the report, which lay elsewhere, the subcommittee stated that "...it seems best to defer for the time being consideration of this additional requirement." (p. 7)

B. First System Review

According to Baum (p. 99), "The need for such a full-dress review of the system as a whole became apparent sooner than the 'someday' that the subcommittee had envisaged." In 1975, the CGIAR Secretariat noted that for the first time "... a significant financial shortfall appeared to be in the offing" and there was concern about how far the system could continue to grow. Hence, the Secretariat integrative report for the CGIAR meeting "recommended that a review of the system be undertaken, and a paper presenting a specific proposal...was discussed and endorsed at the October 1975 meeting" (pp. 99-00).

The structure proposed had two main components: (1) an overall Review Committee that would make recommendations for the group, and (2) a Study Group. The Review Committee was headed by the Chairman of the CGIAR and composed of 14 members who represented a cross section of donors, TAC, and the centers. The Study Group was headed by Alex McCalla (later to serve as Chairman of TAC) and three other members. A rather broad Terms of Reference (TOR) was prepared.

The Study Team began its work in early 1976 and worked practically full time to the end of September (Ozgediz, p. 1). It conducted an intensive program of work involving travel to all parts of the system, numerous interviews, and preparation of a report. The Review Committee held three meetings. The final report of the Study Team appears to have been adopted at the October 1976 meeting, as written by the Review Committee. A brief summary of the CGIAR discussion, included at the beginning of the published report, indicated that "...the Report was generally cautious and conservative in its approach to the work of the Group over the next several years" and that some members "...felt the need for a longer-term perspective..." (p.1).

The report contained 22 recommendations, principally relating to governance and management. Of these, Recommendation 14 is of most relevant to this study:

We recommend that the CGIAR review its overall program and operation every three to five years. The CGIAR should appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct a review of [1] the substantive program of the CGIAR as well as review those [2] policies, procedures, and management mechanisms which require attention. TAC should provide a major input into this long term forward look at the substantive program. (p. xi, numbering added)

The text of the report went on to say that:

In addition to reviews undertaken by the TAC, there is a need for periodic review of [1] the overall CGIAR program and [2] of the mechanisms and management of the CGIAR by the CGIAR itself. The current approach of constituting a review

committee within the CGIAR has merit. A similar review should be conducted within three to five year intervals. The review committee should have the option of commissioning a study team or teams, if it saw the need. TAC's recommendations of future program priorities would be a major input into that review. (p. 98, numbering added)

C. Second System Review

During International Centers Weeks in the Fall of 1980 (ICW80) the group decided to undertake a second review of the system. This was also a period of financial stress for the centers. Baum notes that "...in considering the scope and purpose of the review, the Group placed heavy emphasis on matters of governance, resource management, organization, and accountability. Even though the terms of reference were written more broadly." (p. 145)

The second review, as Baum notes, "...was organized in much the same manner as the first. Once again there was a special Review Committee from within the CGIAR (though this time somewhat larger [18]), and as its staff, a study team recruited from the outside. Funding was provided by special contributions by donors". (p. 145).

The Review Committee was again chaired by the Chairman of the CGIAR. It met three times. "The first meeting settled the scope of the committee's task and the program of the study team; the second concentrated on the issues identified by the team; and the last addressed the draft report and recommendations prepared by the team and *instructed* the team on the revisions to be made in the final version of what then became the committee's report" (p. 146, italics added).

The Study Group was headed by Michael Arnold, subsequently a member of TAC. It began intensive work in mid-January 1981 and completed a draft for review in July 1981. "Members of the study team traveled widely, to consult with donors [22], the directors and staffs of the centers [10 of 13], and TAC" "Several donors volunteered to underwrite the cost of meetings or seminars with agricultural research administrators in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (Baum, p. 146; numbers in brackets from Ozgediz). Altogether, 280 persons were interviewed (Ozgediz).

The report provided 24 recommendations. Most focused on governance and management of the CGIAR and the centers. All but one were accepted by the group. The exception was a recommendation to establish a budget review committee. The committee "would make recommendations on budgetary procedures, the formulation of guidelines, and the allocation of resources." This was, in Baum's words, "... too radical a change for the group," "Recognizing that its refusal to adopt a committee mechanism meant that the group wished to continue to act as a 'committee of the whole' on all important matters..." (p. 149).

Recommendation 9 referred to reviews but only included mention of "Reviews of the System, commissioned by the CGIAR" in a list of five types of reviews (p. xv). The

text, however, provided a section on "Reviews of the System" (p. 82). Two portions of that section bear reproduction:

The terms of reference of these reviews have been very wide, raising the question of whether it is possible, in a sufficiently penetrating manner, to undertake all the work required in the time available. With more precise terms of reference, *it should not be necessary for future reviews to cover the same ground as that covered by other mechanisms for review.* Rather, the findings of other reviews should provide the basic information for the Review Committee and Study Team so that they can concentrate on the broad strategy of the System, its resources, organization, operational procedures, linkages with other institutions, relations with developing countries and the impact of its work. (p. 82, italics added)

The guiding principles of reviews should be to avoid duplication of effort, to waste as little of the staff's time as possible, to produce recommendations for maintaining or improving the efficiency of the System and its components; and thereby to give continued confidence to the donors in the effectiveness of the system in fulfilling the purpose of the CGIAR. (p. 82)

They then proposed some mechanisms for doing so, which were largely consistent with those in use but do include some changes such as building on financial and management audits and commodity and activity reviews (stripe reviews).

D. Summary Comments on First and Second Reviews

Baum summarizes the first and second reviews in these terms:

The procedure in both cases was the same. The group established a Special Committee of some 15 to 18 members (plus representatives of the cosponsors) drawn from among the donors, beneficiary countries, the centers, and TAC to undertake the review, assisted by a small Study Team drawn from outside the system. The Study Team acted as staff for the Review Committee. It made the necessary recommendations, collected data, identified and analyzed issues, and prepared a draft report for consideration by the Committee, and after the Committee's revisions, for submission to the Group in final form. The Chairman of the Group acted as chairman of the review committee. The terms of reference for both reviews, as approved by the Group, were broadly the same. (p. 224)

A few comments may be in order about this statement. First, the role of the Review Committee was not as evident in the accounts of the first review as it was in the second review. Secondly, Baum emphasizes the relatively subordinate role of the Study Team though it appears to have done virtually all of the work. Thirdly, the fact that while the report was prepared by the Study Team, but was officially the report of the Review Committee, created an awkward situation at times; as Farrar – a member of both Review Committees - later recalled, it was "not without its critics" (1984). Fourth, there was considerable criticism of Baum's role in chairing the Review Committee for both

reviews; it was thought by many at the time that he was too controlling and that a more independent chair might have been preferable.

Although it was expected that a third review would follow in roughly another five years, this did not happen. In anticipation of a third review, the CGIAR Secretariat prepared a brief discussion note on September 14, 1984, which discussed purpose, timing, and process. But the matter was not taken up then or for another decade. The major reasons, as recalled in 1996 (Ozgediz) were twofold: (1) the system was engaged in several major studies on other topics, and (2) "CGIAR Chairs Hopper and Rajagopalan preferred having internal, ad hoc examinations of aspects of the System in lieu of a comprehensive system review".

3. System-level reviews of Centers, programs, and impact

The CGIAR has a fairly thorough system of reviews for the Center and program side of its operations. Rather than describe it in detail here, we will attempt to outline its principal dimensions and highlight those components that are particularly relevant to System-Wide Reviews. We will focus on reviews commissioned by the CGIAR System and centers for the activities carried out under the unrestricted side of their funding. We will not examine the review process for special projects that are funded by individual donors. (A general review of the CGIAR planning, review and evaluation process is provided in Anderson and Dalrymple, 1999, chp. 4, pp. 35-47.)

A. Center Reviews

These are of two main types: (1) those set by, and carried out by, the CGIAR System and (2) those carried out on a voluntary basis by individual centers.

(1) CGIAR Reviews

The conduct of CGIAR reviews of individual centers may be divided into two main time periods. The first period extended from 1976 to 1983 and the reviews were arranged entirely by TAC. From 1983 to the present, responsibility for one new aspect of the reviews – management – has been shared with the CGIAR Secretariat.

(a) 1976-1983. The individual Center reviews grew out of the recommendations of the Bell Committee in 1973:

The CGIAR needs periodic independent external assessments of the overall scientific quality and effectiveness of each Center, and of the continuing need for its work, with special emphasis of the need to ensure that activities are not continued longer than necessary, and that activities of lower priority are replaced by those of higher priority. Such assessments are not appropriate on an annual basis, but should be scheduled no less frequently than every five years. Such assessments are equally needed by the centers themselves, and it is the practice of the centers to organize them...The CGIAR looks to TAC to assure that such periodic assessments are made...If the TAC

considers it necessary, it can lay on a special assessment process separate from that organized by the Center for its own purposes. (p. 4)

The first such review was of IRRI in 1976 and was followed by CIMMYT in 1976, CIAT in 1977, and IITA and ICRISAT in 1978. Through 1997, over 70 Center reviews had been conducted.

The *first* system review conducted in 1976 commented as follows (excerpts):

The quinquennial reviews initiated this past year show much promise...The reviews should be concerned with three principal tasks: (1) to evaluate the scientific quality of current programs, (2) to comment on the scope and balance of current programs, and (3) to evaluate future plans including the explicit review of center proposals to continue projects of long standing. Clearly, the onus should be on the centers to justify continuance.

The...reviews should be planned well in advance, giving the TAC time to establish a high quality review committee which can be briefed well in advance and allow centers time to carefully develop their long-range future plans. The reviews should be analytic and probing in their treatment of programs, particularly regarding the relative distribution of efforts within center programs. To date, reviews have tended to focus on current programs and generally have recommended more of everything. (p. 97)

Recommendation 15, not surprisingly, proposed "...continuation of the TAC quinquennial reviews for the evaluation of scientific quality, scope, and balance of current programs, and to evaluate future plans, including explicit review of center proposals to continue programs of long standing." (p. xi)

(b) 1983-Present. The *second* System Review in 1981, in commenting on the review process, stated:

According to some donors, the greatest deficiency in the review process is the need for more penetrating reviews of the administration and management of the institutions, particularly in relation to cost-effectiveness and accountability. The questions to be resolved are the extent to which management reviews should be combined with program reviews, and whether they should be the responsibility of TAC or some other component of the System.

The requirement to examine management effectiveness has already been built into the terms of reference drawn up by TAC for external review panels. The thoroughness of these management reviews has varied widely, however, and in only one instance has the panel penetrated deeply into administrative procedures. What many donors would like to have included in the review process would be a thorough audit of management, organization and operating procedures in order to give greater "transparency" to the operation of the Institutions. (p. 77)

The review, therefore, felt that "Additional mechanisms are...required" (p. 78). Two were proposed: (1) the appointment of a senior management specialist to offer assistance to the centers on administrative and management matters, and (2) that future external reviews "...should include a management audit to be commissioned by the CGIAR Secretariat and to be conducted sometimes by the proposed staff member, sometimes by an external consultant and, where necessary, by a combination of both." (p. 79).

Initially, these reviews were carried out somewhat separately, though generally at the same time, as the program review; they were also published separately. More recently, they became a more integral part of the overall review and the final report.

One problem with this package is that it places a five-year interval between reviews. Problems, especially of a management nature, may well flare up more frequently than this. Some kind of improved monitoring system may be needed between reviews. It is, however, difficult to conceive of a system that could do the job without being intrusive³.

(2) Center-Sponsored Reviews

As noted above, Center-commissioned external reviews (CCERs) have long been part of the center management process. Although initially program-oriented, they have also grown to include management matters. Some are prepared in advance of the TAC reviews, in some cases to tidy up the shop, and increasingly have been made available to the review teams as reference material. They vary widely in scope, depth, and coverage and are not necessarily public documents. A former TAC Chair has suggested that if certain criteria are met, they could become "...a principal source of information on relevance and quality of science in CGIAR-commissioned external reviews." (Memorandum by Winkelmann, 7/28/98).

B. Cross-Center or Stripe Reviews

The *first* System Review recommended "...that the TAC give greater [sic] emphasis to periodic, across center analysis of particular topics (stripe analysis)." (p. ix). The review's text comments on this issue were as follows:

TAC should continue [sic] periodic across-center analysis of particular internal program components such as training, documentation, cropping systems research, etc. These "stripe" analyses would be useful to TAC and the CGIAR in maintaining an overview of the system and also would provide a useful mechanism for centers to compare their different program components and learn from each other. They are termed analyses rather than reviews because we would not like to see them become mechanisms that encourage conformity. (p. 97)

³ This issue is discussed by Dana Dalrymple in "Improved Monitoring of CGIAR Center Operations", USAID/G/EGAD/AFS, April 1, 1997, 5 pp.

The term *sic* was added to the quote because no reviews, to our knowledge, had been completed at that time. One, however, may have been in the works: a review of farming systems research at four Centers which was completed in 1978. No others were carried out until about the time of the second review.

The *second* System Review stated that: "In our opinion, the concept of Stripe Analyses should be extended to include a review of the work of the system on a major commodity or activity. Accordingly, we suggest that the term 'Stripe Analysis' should be discontinued and replaced by 'Commodity Review' or 'Activity Review', as appropriate." (p. 77). They went on to say that:

Reviews that focus on a single commodity or activity could supplement external reviews of the Institutions in several ways. As we have seen...they would provide opportunities for reviewing, more completely, programs that have common elements in the work of two or more institutions. Moreover, they could examine the mechanisms for coordinating work in the same region, both administratively and scientifically...In addition, they could provide a better basis for planning the level of support to be accorded to a particular commodity or activity within the System as a whole. (p. 80).

In subsequent years, particularly in the mid to late 1990s, a number of stripe reviews were carried out: off-campus training (1986), rice (1994), CGIAR center operations in Africa (1995), root and tuber crops (1997), soil and water natural resource management (1997), harvest and post harvest problems, policy management and institutional training (1997), CGIAR center operations in Latin America (1999), and an ecoregional study (1999). In retrospect, they might be said to have fallen into three categories: program, region, and program/region.

While the stripe reviews to date have all been commissioned by TAC and have been oriented to programs, there is no reason why similar studies could not be commissioned in the governance and management area. This area, however, has been approached – as we will see in a subsequent section – in a somewhat different way by the CGIAR.

C. Impact Studies

This is a large and important area but will only get brief mention here (further details are provided in Anderson and Dalrymple, 1999, pp. 41-46). Suffice it to say that the CGIAR has gone through three basic phases: (1) The first was a massive impact study, originally proposed by Sweden and funded by CGIAR donors, in the mid-1980s. It was composed of about two dozen individual studies which were summarized in a general publication several years later (Anderson, Herdt, and Scobie, 1988). Some Centers conducted impact studies of various types in the following years. (2) In the mid-1990s there was a rebirth of interest in this topic on the part of the donors. In 1995, an Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) was established. It got off to a slow start but in time began to pick up steam. (3) As a result of a recommendation in the third System Review, IAEG became affiliated with TAC in 1999 and is now known as TAC's

Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA). A number of promising studies are underway, both in cooperation with the individual centers and utilizing outside consultants.

4. System-Level reviews of central components and functions

The anticipated third System Review, which might have been held during 1986, did not take place at that time. This was partly because the System was engaged in some other major reviews, and in part because the Chairmen of the time, as stated "...preferred having internal, ad hoc examinations of the System in lieu of a comprehensive review" (Ozgediz). The key activities during this period, which extended through the initiation of the third system review in the mid-1990s, will be briefly outlined in this section; they will be grouped by category and are not necessarily in chronological order. All, however, tended to focus on key Center components and relationships in the CGIAR System; these are depicted in Figure 2.

A. Reviews of Secretariats

Both the CGIAR and TAC Secretariats were reviewed in the late 1980s.

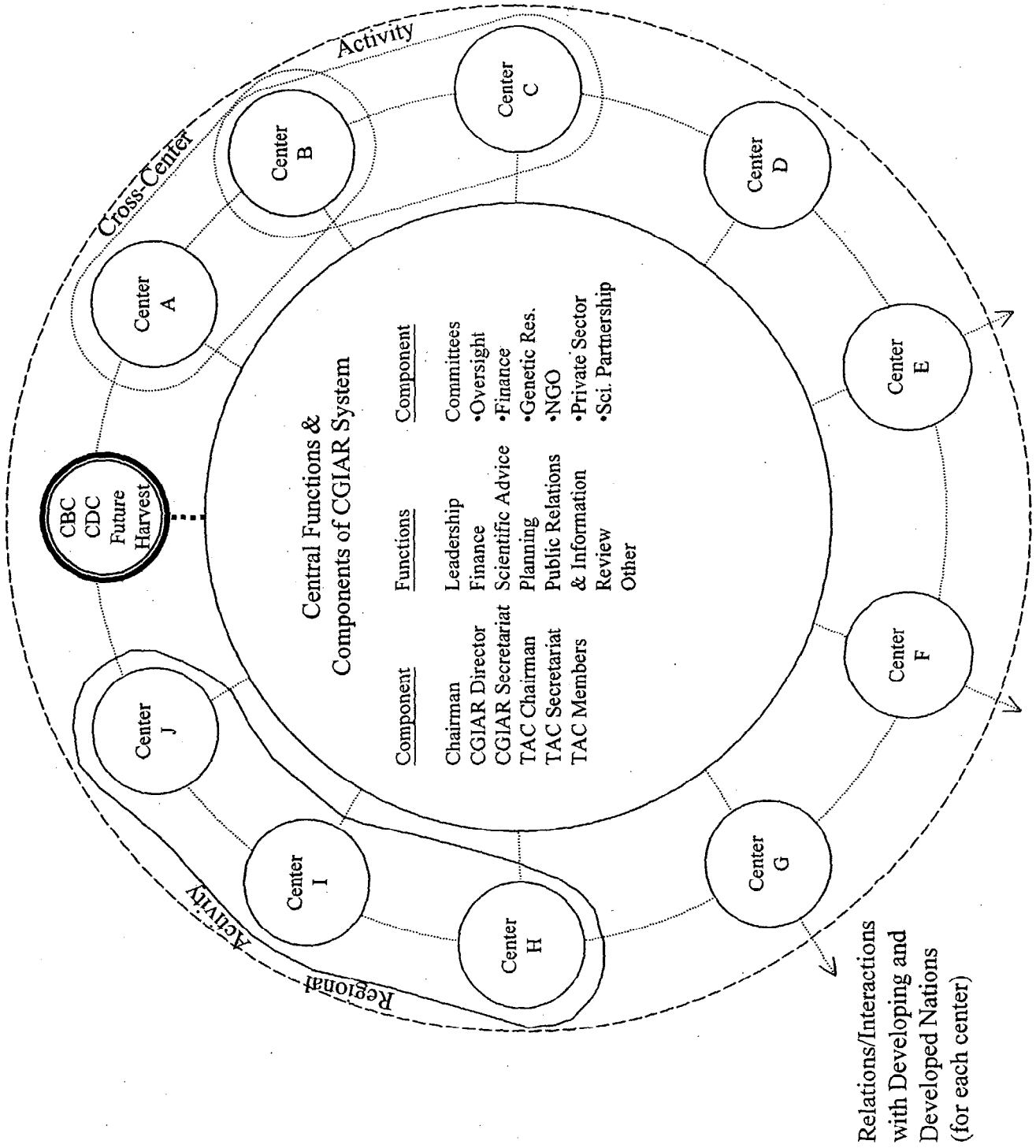
(1) CGIAR Secretariat

In November 1987, CGIAR Chairman Hopper appointed an "Oversight Committee" to "...advise him on the roles and performance of the CGIAR Secretariat." Robert Herdt was named Chairman of the Committee, which had had 15 other members drawn from what would now be considered "stakeholders". Two meetings were held, in March and July, and a report was submitted on September 15. Most of the recommendations were of a fine tuning nature, both within the CGIAR Secretariat and in terms of its relations with the TAC Secretariat. More contentious matters, which were not adopted, included suggestions for a Policy Council to advise the CGIAR Chairman, administratively combining the CGIAR and TAC Secretariats, and reducing the number of science advisors in the CGIAR Secretariat from two to one. One donor urged merger of the two secretariats and sharing their budgets among all donors.

(2) TAC Secretariat

The following year, a panel, headed by Emil Javier (currently The TAC Chair), to review the TAC Secretariat. Seven panel members were named, again from the "stakeholder" community (including Dana Dalrymple). The panel conducted its work in the winter and spring of 1998, with meetings in February and March. Key issues examined included: overall performance of the Secretariat (recommended that analytical capacity be strengthened); location of the Secretariat (recommended staying in FAO but alleviating constraints which limited the Secretariat's effectiveness and efficiency); selection of TAC members (suggestions for improving the process); and the need for a comprehensive review of TAC. Some changes were subsequently made that helped improve operations, but no comprehensive review of TAC was ever undertaken.

Figure 2: Key Central Components and Relationships in the CGIAR System



B. Reviews of Management and Structure

Two rather closely related reviews were conducted in the early 1990s.

(1) Deliberation and Decision-Making Processes

A Working Group to examine processes was appointed by CGIAR Chair Rajagopalan at the May 1992 meeting of the CGIAR. It was also headed by Robert Herdt and included four members. A report was presented the following May. It provided ten recommendations. Four related to CGIAR meetings. Four related to the establishment of new committees and structures: a standing committee on finance; a standing committee on System-Level evaluation [need to check text of document on this]; a single mechanism for public awareness; and "...a regional roundtable format...for reflecting views of developing country agricultural researchers within the CGIAR". These proposals were largely adopted.

(2) Long-Term Governance and Financing Structure

Two years later, in July 1994, CGIAR Chair Serageldin appointed a Study Panel to "...recommend a future governance, decision-making, and financing structure and mechanisms for the CGIAR." The Panel was headed by Klaus Winkel and included six members. It met twice, in August and September 1994. The Panel's recommendations fell into four areas: research agenda setting; governance, operating system, and funding. Perhaps the most visible results were the recommendations for the establishment of: (a) the Global Forum; and (b) "...the mounting of a system wide effort...to develop systematic and continuous processes for impact assessment, to supplement existing processes..."

C. Review Processes

Two efforts were undertaken in this category in 1997 and 1998.

(1) Study of External Review Processes

A study of review processes at the center level was undertaken by Prof. Vernon Ruttan at the joint request of TAC and the CGIAR Secretariat. It was intended to be a first step in the reconsideration of these policies. The report, completed in April 1987, had two rather distinct parts; a fairly concise general report containing ten recommendations, and a highly detailed annex. The report was considered at the May 1987 meeting of the CGIAR and four of the recommendations eventually became part of the CGIAR review procedure. They were: placing more emphasis on strategic issues; giving more attention to internal review processes by the center; making provision for interim reviews; and including an assessment of the Boards. TAC, however, thought that "...a satisfactory plan for changes in the approach to reviews would have to go beyond the areas covered by Ruttan in some respects, notably in relating the reviews to the resource allocation process."

(2) Study of Review Processes in the CGIAR

The Ruttan paper served as a backdrop for the preparation of a more comprehensive report by TAC and the CGIAR Secretariat. An early draft was distributed to the CGIAR for discussion at its fall 1987 meeting, subsequently revised, and circulated again at the fall 1998 meeting. It covered: center-specific reviews, inter-center reviews, and System-Level reviews. The latter section is of particular relevance to this study. The summary and text state as follows:

In the light of the more frequent System-Level studies...the distinctions between System-Level planning and reviews of the System are becoming more blurred. There is a need for both, but doing both frequently could lead to a system overload. (p. 2)

Any institution with the size, complexity and dynamism of the CGIAR would, on occasion, benefit from a comprehensive examination of its effectiveness and efficiency. The need for such reviews lessens when there are no apparent threats to the System (such as a drastic cut in funding), when the system is undergoing major change, or when there are indications that the system is operating properly. (p. 24).

The report also goes on to comment on the insider/outsider tradeoff in staffing reviews:

The experience, understanding and corporate memory within the CGIAR System can rarely be matched by individuals outside it. There are therefore greater costs associated with examination of intra-System concerns by outsiders than those in the System. However, outsiders often bring fresh perspectives and are often perceived as being more objective.

There is merit in relying heavily on talent within the System in conducting ad hoc reviews of the elements of the System because these individuals often represent the clients of the component being examined. Using this principle seems to have worked well in the examination of the CGIAR Secretariat and could work equally well in the examination of other elements of the System. (p. 24)

The Appendix of the report provides a matrix that distinguishes, at the System level, between (a) comprehensive System reviews, and (b) ad hoc examination of components of the System.

D. Donor-Sponsored Reviews

While many donors have conducted reviews of special projects they have funded at individual Centers, only a few have sponsored System-Wide studies in response to their own needs. Two will be briefly mentioned here⁴.

⁴ Several studies were also sponsored by the InterAmerican Development Bank fairly early on: the last one concerned funding of CGIAR activities. We do not, however, have these at hand.

The first study was by SAREC of Sweden, the agency that provides funding for international research activities. In 1977, it issued a report on *Past, Present, and Future Swedish Support to International Agricultural Research* (SAREC Report No. R:2). Several others followed on issues less closely related to the CGIAR. It, however, was specifically covered in a 1994 report titled *Swedish Support to the Consultative Group on International Research (CGIAR), A Quinquennial Review 1987-1992* (Evaluation 1994:1).

As part of a more general study of the Bank's Special Grant Program conducted by the Operations Evaluation Division in 1998, Anderson and Dalrymple prepared a comprehensive report on *The World Bank, the Grant Program, and the CGIAR; A Retrospective Review* (OED Working Paper Series No.1, March 1999). It provides fairly comprehensive coverage of the CGIAR, its contributions and the Bank's involvement. It also discusses CGIAR review and impact assessment processes.

E. Strategy and Vision

This category includes two rather different activities, the first on strategy and the second on vision.

(1) Strategy Consultation

During the fall meeting of the CGIAR in 1991, there was an interest in redefining a system-wide strategy. It was thought that a synthesizing exercise by a small group could move the process along. Consequently CGIAR Chairman Rajagopalan convened a consultation in London in February 1992. Walter Falcon served as moderator. Four main issues were discussed: role and priorities, structure and linkages, funding and resource allocation, and system management. A detailed summary report was prepared and distributed by the Chairman on February 24, 1992. Under the governance section, there is a one-line entry: "Maybe it is time for another review of the System." (p. 41) ; nothing further was found on this point. Falcon made a summary presentation revolving around ten points at the spring meeting of the CGIAR. As a component of one of these, he "...suggested that the CGIAR system badly needs a new crisp 15-page statement pointing to the future." (Summary of Proceedings, p. 3). He also commented that "some of the problems noted could be handled by the establishment of an executive committee." In the absence of such a group, "everything falls to TAC." (p. 4).

(2) Vision Report

In its fall 1993 meeting, the CGIAR decided to commission an expert panel to prepare a future of international agricultural research. The panel was headed by Gordon Conway and included three other members and several consultants. It was published, with the support of the Swedish government, in an attractive format in July 1994. It was very well received (though at 74 pages exceeded the 15-page suggestion of Falcon).

F. Summary Comments

Clearly the period from 1988 through 1994 demonstrated an alternative path to the System-Wide Reviews that had preceded it. Ad hoc reviews of components of the System, such as governance and management, were the order of the time. They appear to have been done at relatively little direct cost, and many of their recommendations were adopted. Whether these processes could be repeated at this time is uncertain. It also must be acknowledged that this approach would not work for every topic or meet every need. It might not work well where considerable research or travel is needed. It also does not produce a big splash type of product. Still, it demonstrates that an alternative path may be possible for some review activities.

5. Overlaps and gaps in the review system

As noted earlier, the CGIAR System has sometimes been accused of being over-planned and over-reviewed. One might, therefore, expect the System to have far more overlaps than gaps. That may be true at the *Center* level, where external program and management reviews are held about every five years and where donors of restricted funding (special projects) may require reviews more frequently. And the Centers may be caught up in various more general System-Level reviews. But at the *System* level, our perception is that despite the seemingly numerous component review activities discussed in the previous section and aside from the rather heavy demands imposed by the Third System Review (to be discussed in Annex 2), the situation is rather different. We see many more gaps than overlaps. This will become more apparent as we define the gaps more fully.

A. Overlaps

We should perhaps start by distinguishing between the science /technology side and the governance/management side. The former is the province of TAC and its activities seemed to be managed to reduce overlap. On the management/governance side, about the only apparent areas of overlap might be where the System-Level Review takes up some of the issues covered in the component reviews mentioned in the previous section. This, however, is more to be desired than dismissed. The review process should be cumulative and build on previous work. In our view the Third System Review, to be discussed in Annex 2, did not sufficiently do so.

B. Gaps

(1) Review Structures

The scientific and technical side of the CGIAR is well served by the TAC. And, as we have seen, provision has long been made for a governance dimension in the periodic external reviews of the centers. But there is no comparable mechanism for review of governance and management of the CGIAR system on a regular basis.

Two important pieces are in place – the OC and the Management Advisor (MA) in the CGIAR Secretariat – but they do not begin to have the level of resources available through TAC. The OC is composed of donor representatives who usually meet twice a year for a day or so. The Chairs of this group usually have many responsibilities in their home organization and are normally not in a good position to put in a lot of time on OC matters between meetings. The OC is served by the MA, but that person -no matter how capable- also has many other duties with respect to the Centers and in other areas. The OC, therefore, largely devotes its efforts to identifying and commenting on immediate issues of concern. It does not have the capacity or the financial resources (it has no regular budget) to initiate or carry out studies of the sort routinely handled by TAC.

As a result, as Falcon was quoted as saying in the previous section, “everything falls to TAC.” Recent examples include the study of the expansion of the CGIAR System in 1991 and currently the Vision statement and examination of the CGIAR structure and governance. While TAC has some very talented members, it cannot be said that they necessarily have a comparative advantage in these areas. The OC is involved to some degree, but the heavy lifting is left to TAC.

(2) Review of Central Components

While the System Reviews (including the third) have given some attention to central components, they have received more sporadic coverage in terms of component reviews. Some individual reviews of central components have, as noted in the previous section, been carried out in the past, but other components have been overlooked or not covered in some time. The overlooked components are, to start at the top, the Chairman, the co-sponsors, TAC as a whole, and the CGIAR Committees⁵. The CGIAR and TAC Secretariats have not been examined since the late 1980s. Some components may be more appropriately covered in a System-Wide Review (particularly higher-level components) and others may be more amenable to a component-type review.

(3) Temporal Dimension

The frequency of reviews is an important but often overlooked topic. While it was initially thought that the System-Wide Reviews would be conducted every five years, this was only true of the first two reviews; thereafter, there was a 17-year interval. The component reviews have been ad hoc in nature: they followed no particular pattern and are generally one of a kind. While many important matters have been covered, there has been no apparent master plan or sequence. With the advent of the OC, there has been an oversight function, but even this is somewhat tied to the cycle of CGIAR meetings. The Management Advisor can follow matters on a more regular basis, but is clearly inside the system. What may be needed is some means for maintaining a more external review of operations of the system.

⁵ The Third System Review did provide some descriptive material on the Committees in Annex I (pp. 98-101) and some analytical comments on effectiveness (based on a survey) in Annex II (pp. 102-105).

6. Costs and benefits of the review system

Clearly, the CGIAR System gives a great deal of attention to the review process. Portions of the review process, especially at the Center level, have been in place since the mid-1970s and appear to be well organized and developed. Other portions, especially at the System level, appear to be more ad hoc in nature and are subject to some gaps in coverage. Two models of the latter have evolved: the System-Wide Review and the System-Level or component review.

A. Costs

Reviews entail both direct (cash) and indirect costs (time of centers, secretariats, donors). At the *Center* level, direct costs, as noted previously, ran about \$300,000 in the late 1990s (excluding costs of center-commissioned reviews and reviews of restricted fund projects) and are paid for by the center; indirect costs may be about 75% of this figure (Anderson and Dalrymple, p. 47). The *System-Wide* Reviews had higher direct costs: about \$0.5 million for the second review (Ibid.) and about \$1.65 million for the third review and report. The direct costs of the first two reviews were paid by contributions from donor members, while the costs of the third review were taken out of the World Bank contribution to the CGIAR. Indirect costs are not known, but were probably fairly high for the third review (for reasons we shall see in Annex 2). The costs of the *System-Level* reviews noted in Section 4 are also not known, but are generally thought to be quite low; indirect costs, however, may have been relatively higher (the time involved, in many cases, was donated). The impact assessment studies and reviews are an additional cost, and no effort has been made to try to track them here.

B. Benefits

Benefits of the reviews might be classified into two types: internal and external. Internal benefits, briefly, relate to increased efficiency/effectiveness/productivity of the System or Center. External benefits, briefly, relate to meeting donors needs and improving public relations. The first two System-Wide Reviews fell principally into the internal category; the third review was more difficult to classify.

However internal and external goals are interrelated. Achievement of internal goals can increasingly be useful on the external front: donors and those they depend on for funding need to be assured that the System and the Centers are cost-efficient. And the need to better achieve external goals can be a useful prod in achieving internal goals.

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[Winkel, Klaus]. "Report of the Study Panel on the CGIAR's Long-Term Governance and Financing Structure", September 30, 1994. (Distributed to CGIAR membership, October 6, 1994.)

⁶ All of these materials are on file in the reference room of the CGIAR Secretariat.

- CGIAR Secretariat Staff Papers

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Second Review of the CGIAR, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, November 1981, 194 pp.

Third System Review of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, CGIAR System Review Secretariat, October 1999, 111 pp.

Annex 2. THE THIRD SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEW

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Annex 2. THE THIRD SYSTEM-WIDE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The Third System Review was, as we have shown, a long time coming. First contemplated in 1984, it was put on the back burner while other more specialized System-Level reviews were conducted. The idea of a System-Wide Review was mentioned from time to time, but did not begin to take root until a decade later under a new CGIAR Chair.

The story of the Third Review is a complicated one and we cannot claim to have explored it completely. Two of us experienced it personally, but in different ways—one as a donor representative and another as a Board Chair. We have also reviewed the written records and communicated with some participants. While this process, especially the personal interactions, was not as complete as it might have been, it gave us a reasonably good fix on the process aspects of the review

This Annex, therefore, attempts to focus on selected aspects of the review that may be most relevant to evaluation of process issues that could be important in the future. The first section outlines the principal steps in the process in chronological order and is descriptive. The following sections attempt to look at various aspects of the review from a more analytical, and then increasingly subjective, point of view.

2. Principal steps

This section provides a chronological reconstruction of the principal steps in setting up, conducting, and responding to the Third Review.

A. Prelude and Preparation

(1) 1995

In January 1995, the CGIAR held a Ministerial-Level Meeting on Renewal of the CGIAR in Lucerne, Switzerland. The idea of a System-Wide Review was not on the program nor was mentioned in the records of the meeting, but the representative of a Canadian-American NGO, RAFI, actively campaigned for such a review on the side⁷. Whatever the outcome in Lucerne, at the spring (MTM) meeting of the CGIAR in May 1995, the Oversight Committee briefly analyzed the need and opportunity for a System Review. The CGIAR Chairman suggested that a review be held after the renewal process was completed, possibly in 1996 or 1997. The Chairman again commented on the review at the fall meeting of the CGIAR (ICW) and placed it on the agenda for the OC in 1996. In neither case was there any discussion nor action by the CGIAR membership.

⁷ In a letter to Pat Mooney of RAFI on January 20, the CGIAR Secretariat said "As an innovative institution, the CGIAR does not tie itself down to one single form of review in perpetuity."

(2) 1996

The pace picked up in 1996. At the MTM in May, the idea was discussed by the OC and in plenary. The report of the OC meeting said that the group had interactions with "several CGIAR constituencies" and "they would welcome a review of the system" (p.3). The OC thought that the review should have a broad scope, be conducted by "a small team of independent, external individuals of strong credibility and stature," and that a committee of stakeholders "should appoint the panel and oversee the process" (p.4). In plenary, the concept of a review was endorsed by Germany and the Netherlands.

That summer, an OC working group prepared a preliminary prospectus that was sent to stakeholders on August 5. The cover note from the CGIAR Chair indicated that the OC "...does not wish to steer or coordinate the review process, as this is a role the Committee does not consider as being part of its mandate. Instead, the OC... would like to work with others towards mounting an independent, objective, transparent and interactive review." He went on to say "I am interested in hearing from you whether an ad hoc Stakeholder Committee or other ad hoc consultation mechanism should be involved in the preparation of the review, particularly in the selection of the review panel." The attached synopsis of OC views included: purpose ("To provide the CGIAR with an independent assessment of the role and relevance of the CGIAR system and to improve its effectiveness"), principles, scope, possible issues, modality, profile of the review panel, support mechanism, timing, budget ("under \$500,000"), appointment and coordination process, and role of the OC.

On October 16, the Chairman sent a letter to "Cosponsors and Stakeholders Group" outlining his proposals for the review. His note introduced two additional dimensions to the review: "First, the review should take the CGIAR's mission as a 'given' and examine how successful the System has been in carrying out this mission and what it needs to do to further strengthen its performance." "Second, as the main business of the CGIAR is science, the review team should outline for us the scientific challenges that the System will need to address in the 21st century as well as give us an opinion on the quality and relevance of the science practiced at the centers. In addition, the team should examine, at a minimum, the System's strategy, structure, governance, and finance." The attached note, prepared in the CGIAR Secretariat, laid out the "modality" of the review: "The Panel would be supported by three Working Groups, appointed to conduct detailed reviews of the three areas of the review [science, strategy and structure, governance, and finance]. Each Working Group would be chaired by a member of the Review Panel and made up of three to four experts, including the chair." Their work "would be facilitated by a small secretariat..." The cost was placed at "about \$750,000" and was expected to be "covered by CGIAR members"⁸.

During ICW later that month, further discussions were held with stakeholders, heads of delegations, and in plenary (comments were provided by four members). The

⁸ Dana Dalrymple subsequently wrote in an internal memo that "The price for this compromise is a rather large, probably overly comprehensive, and certainly expensive structure" (October 19). The cost of the review subsequently doubled.

TOR were discussed and names of prospective panel members and a task director were requested. Following the presentation of the Sir John Crawford lecture by Maurice Strong ("The CGIAR at Twenty Five; Looking Back and Looking Forward") on October 28, the CGIAR Chair asked him to serve as Chairman of the review; his name was mentioned in the plenary meeting on November 1.

(3) 1997

Preparations continued during the first half of 1997. The review was discussed by the OC in January. In February, the CGIAR Chair sent Strong a letter providing a revised TOR and a list of possible members of review team panels. In April, the CGIAR Chair met with stakeholders about the review and sent a letter to Mahendra Shah – who was selected by the Review Chair - acknowledging his acceptance of the Executive Secretary position⁹. In May, the CGIAR Chair sent a letter to heads of delegations, which contained a section on the review; he also announced composition of the Review Panels. About the same time, CGIAR committee chairs were asked to prepare briefing papers. A status report was prepared for MTM. At MTM later in the month, there was a discussion by the OC, and a video presentation by Strong.

The Terms of Reference were first drafted by the CGIAR Secretariat (in part drawing on comments made by the OC at its January meeting) early in the year and remained the same until the Review Team began its activities in August. As initially expressed in an attachment to a letter from the CGIAR Chair to the Review Chair (2/4), the general task was:

...to assess the CGIAR's effectiveness in fulfilling its overall mission of contributing, through its research, to promoting to sustainable agriculture for food security in developing countries, and to make recommendations for improvements. The Panel is asked to conduct its examination with a broad, forward-looking perspective, focusing, in particular, on the future role of the CGIAR system within the rapidly changing global scientific, communications, and institutional settings and arrangements. It should pay particular attention to the evolving capacities of national agricultural research systems in developing countries, NGOs, and the private sector; the comparative advantages of various actors; the organization and management of research; and the need for strengthening research partnerships.

The TOR went on to state that the Panel is expected to conduct detailed examinations of at least the following three subjects

1. Science. Key issues include: the role and positioning of the CGIAR within the global agricultural research system; the most important scientific challenges the CGIAR should aim to address in the future; and appropriateness of the type and quality of science practiced at the CGIAR centers.

⁹ The CGIAR Secretariat originally proposed that there be an open search for the Executive Secretary.

2. Priorities, Strategies, and Structure. Key issues include: important gaps or redundancies in the CGIAR's current coverage of scientific activities; appropriateness of CGIAR policies on key issues such as genetic resources and intellectual property rights; and structure of the Center system and efficiencies that could be achieved by better deploying existing resources, taking into account opportunities for new partnerships.
3. Governance and Finance. Key issues include: the CGIAR's own governance arrangements, including the systemwide committees and units and their roles; effectiveness of the CGIAR's internal decision processes for priority setting, resource allocation, and evaluation; and arrangements for financing the activities of the centers.

Curiously, the report of the OC meeting held on May 24 stated that:

There are three key issues the review should focus on: *Efficiency* of conducting business in the CGIAR, including the efficiency of governance, research processes and approaches and center administration; *Impact* of the CGIAR, including the focus, relevance, and quality of the CGIAR's work and the effectiveness of its impact assessment systems; and *Support* for the CGIAR, including its constituencies and partners, and how the CGIAR works with others, (p. 4).

This is a somewhat less visionary stance than they took in the report of their January meeting which emphasized "The future role and position of the CGIAR and the IARCs in the global agricultural research system..." (p. 2)

B. The Review Process

The review process itself might be said to have lasted, in a formal sense, from July 7, 1997, when the Secretariat office was opened, until November 15, 1998, when the Secretariat office was closed. Actually Shah began work before July 7 and continued long after November 15.

(1) 1997

The principal events during the remainder of 1997 were the first Working Group meeting in Washington (August 25-27) and the first Review Panel meeting in Washington (October 27-29). Revised TORs for the Main Panel and the three Subpanels, developed during the August meeting, were provided on September 4 and the review was discussed at ICW (October 27-31).

The revised general TOR contained three main categories: (1) "...to examine, with a broad forward-looking perspective, the role and positioning of the CGIAR system within the rapidly changing global scientific, communications and institutional settings and arrangements"; (2) "...assess the CGIAR's effectiveness in fulfilling its overall mission..."; (3) "...assess a number of generic issues, including... (i) CGIAR's strengths, past achievements and impact... (ii) CGIAR's potential future contributions...

- (iii)...partnerships, with other components of the global agricultural research system...
- (iv) global developments with respect to international conventions and agreements..."

The TORs for the three Specialist panels were more specific to their fields. These panels were later combined into two: Science and Strategy, and Governance, Structure, and Finance. In the process, Co-Chairs were named.

(2) 1998

The process moved into high gear in 1998. The most obvious outside manifestation was a series of six panel meetings outside of Washington:

- January 4-7. Science and Strategy Panel (the Hague)
- February 27-28. Governance, Structure, and Finance (CIMMYT)
- March 1-5. Joint Panels (CIMMYT)
- April 29-May 1. Main Panel (FAO, Rome)
- July 1-7. Science and Strategy (Nairobi)
- July 27-30. Small panel (Manila)

In addition, individual panel members held a few other smaller meetings at CGIAR Centers. Most of the larger meetings involved presentations by Centers and local groups in the area. One panel secretary indicated that these meetings sometimes took on the nature of debates and he found them very useful; the difficulty was in transmitting the essence of them in the report and to the CGIAR (e-mail from Griffon. 8/4/00).

The principal interactions with donors and stakeholders appear to have occurred: (1) in meetings of the Review Chairman and Executive Secretary with North American donors on April 4 in New York City and with European donors (EIARD) a little bit later and (2) in meetings of the Chairman, Executive Secretary and panel members during the MTM in Brasilia. The Chairman also made a presentation at MTM.

Another more literary sort of approach was undertaken early in the year. Two surveys of stakeholder reviews were initiated, one on Science and Technology (S&T) and the other on Governance. Questionnaires were prepared: it is not certain if the one on S&T was sent; the one on Governance was sent out in January, but there was only limited response. In addition, several dozen letters were sent to "wise" individuals on February 18; responses were not found and it is not apparent what use may have been made of them¹⁰. Lastly, the OC prepared a 17 page statement presenting its "Views on CGIAR's Governance" (2/25/98).

Early in June, the Executive Secretary sent guidelines to the two Subpanels outlining a proposed schedule for the preparation of their reports (first draft, submission 6/26, completion 8/20; second draft, 7/20, 7/28-31 Philippines; third draft, 8/10, 8/20). A schedule was also provided for the Main Panel report (finalize integrative report, submission 8/28, completion 9/1-7; draft panel report, 9/8, 9/25). The similarity of the

¹⁰ The Executive Secretary recently indicated that they were carefully read and proved very helpful (conversation with Mahendra Shah, August 21, 2000).

dates for the two panels is a bit puzzling in one way: the Governance Subpanel "...understood that there should be close interaction between the two panels and that the decisions on science should be made before the final discussions on governance" (e-mail from Bengtsson, 8/2/00)

The subsequent sequence of events is not well recorded in the files but has been reconstructed through correspondence. In the case of the Science and Strategy Subpanel, the two Secretaries and the Executive Secretary of the Review worked on a first draft in Washington in August, with the understanding that the final report would be prepared by the co-chairs of the panel (e-mail from Griffon and Shah, 8/4/00). It does not seem to have been provided to the Governance Subpanel¹¹. The Governance report was prepared on schedule. No copies of either report were found in the files.

The principal step in the preparation of the Main Report was a meeting of the Review Chair, the Executive Secretary, and the two co-chairs of the S&S Committee in London in early September. Some other Main Panel members were invited to participate, but did not do so. At this time, the contents of both Subpanel reports were extensively discussed and appear to have been revised to some extent. The Executive Summary and Chapters 1&2 were also prepared in London (e-mail from Shah, 8/4).

These materials were circulated to panel members for comment. The Secretary of the Science and Strategy panel wrote on September 9 that "...the draft that I have prepared in Washington and the version dated September 7 written by the co-chairmen of the...panel are somewhat different"¹². Similarly, the Governance report was, in the eyes of the Secretary of that Subpanel, redrafted (Bengtsson).

The final events were more formalized and more fully reported. The Main Panel met from September 22 -24: the first day involved a meeting with stakeholders, the second day was devoted to finalizing the report, and the third day to further work on the report, a meeting with the President of the World Bank, and a press conference. The report was issued on the 30th.

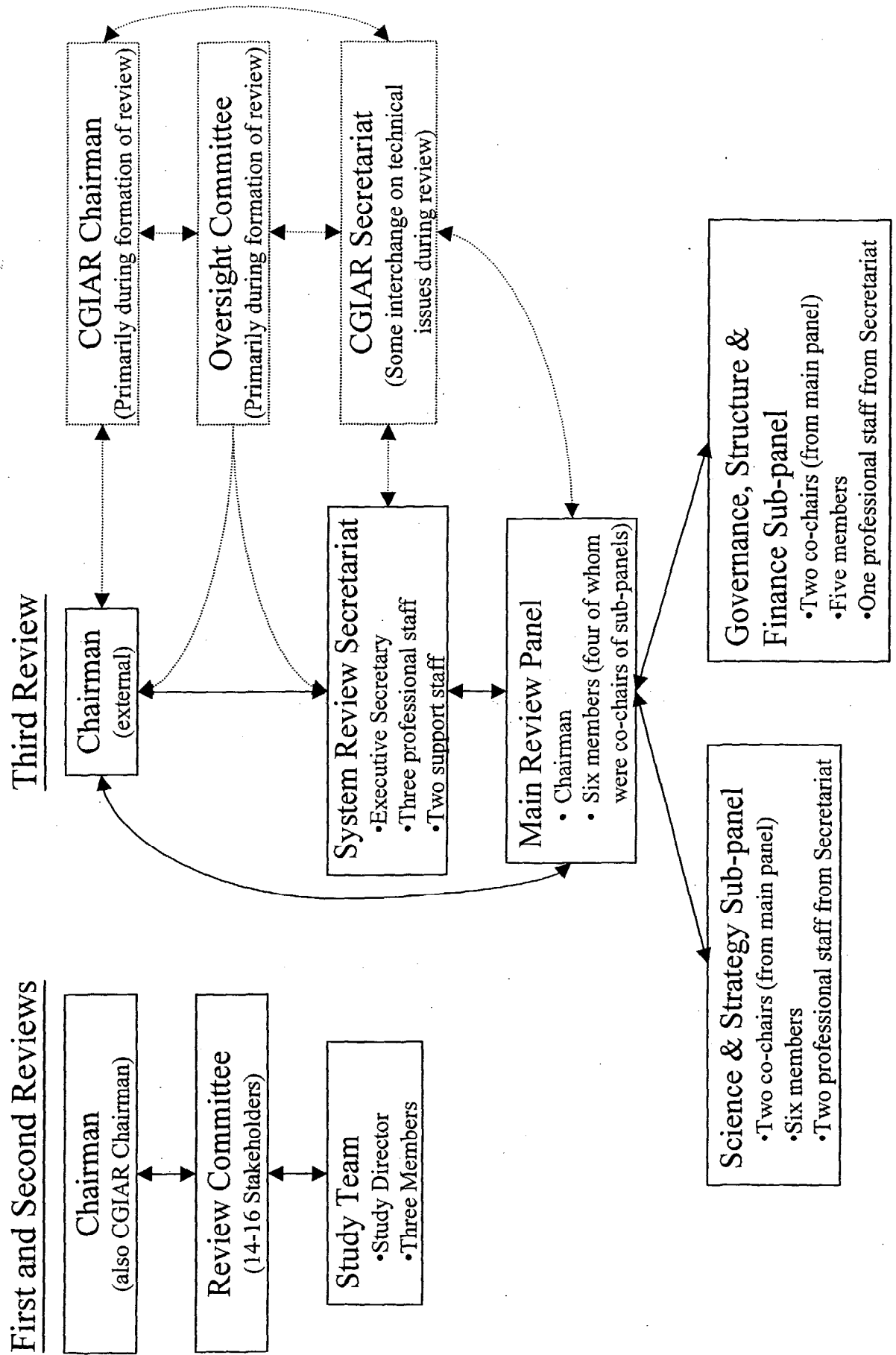
Final stages for this step of the process included a presentation by the Chairman during ICW on October 26 and extensive review and discussion in plenary for the remainder of the week. The Secretariat Office was closed on November 15.

A further step, which ran through much of 1999, involved the preparation of the popularized report "Food in the 21st Century: from Science to Sustainable Agriculture" (72pp.) by the Chairman and the Executive Secretary, assisted by others, and issued by the CGIAR Review Secretariat.

¹¹ Hence, according to Bengtsson, "...there was no discussion on future structure in the final report."

¹² A similar point of view was expressed by a member of the same Subpanel on the same date. He went on to note that "... you introduced new proposals that may be of interest but that we never had the opportunity to discuss in the Panel".

Figure 2: Organizational Structure of First Three CGIAR System-Wide Reviews



C. The Report and Follow-Up by the CGIAR

(1) The Report and the Outcome

The report was made available on September 30. It ran into 111 pages consisting of: an Executive Summary, 17 chapters, and five annexes¹³. The chapters fell into three categories: Introductory (3), Science and Strategy (8), and Governance and Finance (6). Altogether, the report provided 29 recommendations and 104 sub-recommendations. The actual number was slightly more than this because some entries in both categories had several components. The Executive Summary made a valiant attempt to bring everything together in a logical presentation, but otherwise the report and its recommendations were not tightly constructed. The OC observed that "...while there were many useful ideas in the System Review report, they were not presented in a way that facilitated analysis and discussion"(p. 3).

Hence, the report proved difficult for the Group to follow and to deal with on a systematic basis. The vast number of recommendations and sub-recommendations had some overlapping. And on the other hand, some did not seem to follow from the text; in the words of the OC, they "...would have welcomed a presentation of more economic and empirical evidence to support these conclusions" (p. 3).

Even so, some points were, or became, clear. In general, the recommendations in the Science and Strategy chapters proved relatively uncontroversial. Those in the Governance and Finance category, many of which tied back to the idea of a central body with legal status, proved to be more contentious. And when the central legal body idea was questioned, it had implications for many of the other Governance recommendations.

(2) The Follow-Up Process

The discussion of the Review at ICW98 went on for several days, but proved to be only part of the process, which in some respects is not yet complete. The three key additional steps were:

- (1) Follow-up consultations and reports by the OC, various committees and the secretariats which were distributed as a large packet on December 15;
- (2) Consideration at a special meeting of the Consultative Council in Brussels on January 27-28, 1999; and
- (3) Consideration at the MTM on May 24-28, including a report of the OC and discussion in four sessions: science, partnerships, governance, and finance.

In the end, relatively few recommendations of any significance were adopted. And late in 1999, at ICW, the CGIAR initiated a series of vision/strategy/restructuring exercises, largely led by TAC.

¹³ The report did not, curiously, contain a discussion of methodology. The first two sections of the Annex did, however, provide useful information and views (based in part on a survey) on CGIAR Committees and the two Secretariats (pp. 100-105).

3. Organization, cost, and outcome

Having outlined the principal stages and steps in the Third Review, we now will begin to fill in behind that framework. Three topics, which provide a bridge between the descriptive and analytical, will be noted here.

A. Organizational Structure and Operation

The major elements have been mentioned, but their structure should be outlined more clearly. This is done in the right side of Figure 3. It was, by comparison with earlier reviews, a fairly complex and quite different structure. The main points of similarity were in the existence of a Chairman (though one was quite internal and the other was external) and a Study Team/System Review Secretariat (though these roles turned out to be quite different). Otherwise they differed sharply: the first two reviews had a Review Committee positioned between the Chairman and the Study Team; the Third Review had no such Committee, though the Oversight Committee played parts of this role (to be discussed in a subsequent section). The other principal difference was the extensive panel structure utilized in the Third Review.

The Main Review Panel was chaired by the Chairman of the Review and was composed of six members, four of whom were co-chairs of Specialist Subpanels and two of whom were at large. The two Subpanels, in addition to the two co-chairs, contained five to six members and one to two professional members of the Review Secretariat. All of the Panel members as well as the professional staff of the Secretariat served on a part-time basis (only the Executive Secretary and his two support staff were full-time)¹⁴. The relationship between the Subpanels and the Main Panels, beyond the overlapping membership of the two sets of co-chairs, does not seem to have been spelled out. The operations of all the panels were evidently hampered by quite uneven attendance patterns of some panel members.

The Review Chairman was in frequent contact with the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary and his two support staff seem to have spent much of their time arranging for and summarizing the various meetings of the panels. The three part-time professional staff appear to have spent relatively little time at the Secretariat and were mainly involved with the Subpanels—a somewhat different arrangement from the first two reviews when the members of the Study Team worked full time and did virtually all the substantive work.

B. Budgetary Aspects

Both direct and indirect financial costs are involved.

¹⁴ Two of the professional members of the Secretariat served 100 days each; the third served 110 days (data provided by the CGIAR Secretariat, August 11, 2000).

(1) Direct Costs

The overall budgetary cost of the Third Review has been mentioned: \$1.5 million for the main review (1997-98). The preparation and production of the final popularized report (1999) was \$155,000, bringing the total budgetary cost up to \$1.655 million. The evolution of the expected cost, in terms of estimates reported at the time, was: July 25, 1997, under \$500,000; October 9, 1997, \$600,000; October 19, 1997, \$750,000; May 19, 1997, \$1.0 million; and 1998, \$1.5 million.

The first two reviews were paid for by contributions from a number of donors and, initially at least, it was anticipated that this practice would continue ("The costs of the review would be covered by CGIAR members through a special System Review account," Chairman's memo of October 16, 1996). No contributions were evidently forthcoming and ultimately the full cost of the main review (\$1.5 million) came out of Bank funds.

In terms of use of funds, the breakdown is reported in Table 1.

Altogether, salaries and honoraria accounted for \$925,000 (55.9%), travel \$550,000 (33.2%), office operations \$150,000 (9.1%), and publication \$30,000 (1.8%). The single largest category was salaries: \$705,000 (42.6%)¹⁵.

(2) Indirect Costs

The indirect costs of individual Center reviews have been estimated to range from 72% (Fuglie and Ruttan, 1989, p. 375) to 100% (Ozgediz, March 6, 1998, p. 5) of direct costs. Certainly the Third Review entailed substantial indirect costs in terms of time of the various components of the CGIAR system, both in preparing for the review, participating, and in the follow-up process (a large portion of the time of two CGIAR meetings). If a 75% indirect cost is assumed, the dollar figure would be \$1.241 million, bringing the total cost up to nearly \$2.9 million; a 100% figure would bring the figure up to \$3.3 million.

¹⁵ By comparison, the October 16, 1999 proposal, which was based on an expected total cost of \$750,000, placed salaries and honoraria at \$250,000 (33.2%), travel \$440,000 (58.7%) and other \$60,000 (8.0%). The largest individual difference was in the "fees for Secretariat staff", originally placed at \$150,000, which later grew to be 4.7 times as large.

G. Table 1. Allocation of Budget in Third System Review

Period and Category	Dollars	Proportion (percent)
1997-98		
Salaries and Honoraria		
Secretariat Salaries	600,000	36.25
Panel Members	160,000	9.67
Other Consultants	40,000	2.42
Travel		
Secretariat and Panel Members	550,000	33.23
Other		
Office Operations	150,000	9.06
Total	1,500,000	90.63
1999		
Salaries and Honoraria		
Salary	105,000	6.34
Consultants	20,000	1.21
Publication Cost	30,000	1.81
Total	155,000	9.37
Overall Total	1,655,000	100.00

Source: CGIAR Secretariat, March 21, 1999

There were other psychological costs, perhaps not uncommon in any major review, that are impossible to measure in financial terms, but which need to be considered in any larger assessment. These may arise in many ways, including unfulfilled expectations, and just weariness with the whole process. Both may have been evident in a report of the OC at the May 1999 MTM: "...it has been a lengthy, expensive and (very) difficult process, which has tested the cohesion and tolerance of the System." (p. 2).¹⁶

C. Weighing the Outcome

Clearly, as the previous two sections have revealed, the Third Review was a complex and expensive process. Indeed, one might wonder if there were diseconomies of scale: disproportionately larger costs associated with larger scale. System Reviews are not ventures to be embarked on lightly. Obviously the substantial costs must be offset by substantial benefits if the enterprise is to justify itself. Weighing the costs and benefits of the Third Review is well beyond our mandate and capability. Suffice it to say that as there are direct and indirect costs, there are also direct and indirect benefits. Some may have been anticipated at the outset; some may not. Some will be of an internal

¹⁶ Disappointment may be expressed in other ways. Pat Roy Mooney, who pushed for the review in January 1995 and who later became a member of the Science and Strategy Panel, turned out to be one of the most outspoken critics of the report. He expressed his views in a letter to the Review Chair (10/23), and went on in some detail in a RAFI news release (10/21) and newsletter (RAFI Translator, 10/98).

(management) nature; some will be of an external (donor and public relations) nature.¹⁷ None will be easily measured. Hence precise weighing of the outcome will be difficult.

4. Process issues

What are the principal process issues arising from the Third Review that should be considered in contemplating and designing future System-Wide Reviews? Different individuals would make different choices. The ones that occur to us might be divided into two categories: those that derive from the special nature or structure of the CGIAR, and those that are more general in nature.

A. In CGIAR Context

Comparison to Previous System Reviews. Obviously the Third Review was much more complex in its organization. But it was done at quite a different time and at a different stage in the development of the CGIAR.

The CGIAR Culture. The Third Review questioned some important elements of the CGIAR culture—how it operates as a body. This was in part a reflection of the fairly high proportion of external panel members who did not have much experience with the central operation of the CGIAR.

Relation to Other Components of the Review System. The Third Review seemed to pay insufficient attention to these (aside from TAC and the SPIA connection). For example no reference was made to the existence or contents of the first two System Reviews.

Oversight of the Review. There was no clear definition of where the responsibility for oversight of the review lay. In the first two reviews this process was a key function of the Review Committee of stakeholders. While the Oversight Committee was in place at the time of the Third Review, it was never formally charged by the CGIAR or the CGIAR Chair with responsibility of overseeing the review. Although the CGIAR Chair was clearly very active during the preparatory stages, there is little indication that he played any particular oversight role when the review was underway. Thus there appears to have been only a light CGIAR oversight during the main phase of the review.

Relations to Donors and Centers. There was not much interaction of these groups with the review team and panels. Few, if any, donors were interviewed as was the case in the first two reviews. And centers, even though they hosted some meetings and may have made presentations, had little follow-up dialogue¹⁸.

B. Of More General Nature

¹⁷ For example, participation in the review has sensitized some key individuals to the importance of the CGIAR system. One result was that a recent report issued by the National Academy of Science (U.S.) and six other national academies on *Transgenic Plants and World Agriculture* (July 2000) recognized the role of the CGIAR centers and recommended increased funding for them as well as other research groups.

¹⁸ The Executive Secretary of the review strongly disputes this contention (conversation with Mahendra Shah, August 21, 2000). This may reflect differing views of what constitutes "meaningful" interaction.

Purpose of Third Review. Despite the preparation of initial TOR, the real reason for and purpose of the review did not seem to be clear, to many stakeholders. Early references in the CGIAR meetings suggested to some that an external/public relations focus was paramount. Others felt that the purpose was to suggest changes in the system.

Differing Expectations. A closely related point is that many stakeholders had quite different expectations or hopes for the system review. Some may have been inflated or unrealistic. But in an effort to meet these expectations, more dimensions were added to the review.

Panel Selection and Structure. The desire to bring a strong external flavor and high-ranking individuals on, resulted in the selection of some that were unable to attend many meetings or needed time to learn about the organization. The relationships between and relative roles of the various panels do not seem to have been clearly spelled out.

Plan of Work. No detailed plan of work for the review seems to have been developed at the outset, beyond laying out some regional panel meetings. The process appears to have been quite ad hoc in nature, and probably resulted in a less than optimal balance in the use of time.

Synthesis of Findings and Preparation of Reports. Review of the reports of panel meetings suggests that -as is often the case- the time allocated for (or actually used for) synthesis of findings and preparation of reports was inadequate. The final report could have benefited from more time of work in terms of improving its structure and clarity of recommendations.

6. References

Annex 2, in contrast to Annex 1, was almost entirely based on unpublished information. Most of this was obtained from files: the archives (three boxes) of the Third System Review in the reference room at the CGIAR Secretariat; CGIAR Secretariat files; and the files of Dana Dalrymple at USAID. The file material was supplemented by some personal interviews and e-mail correspondence with former staff members of the review and with members of the CGIAR Secretariat. A set of the documents utilized, presently collected in six notebooks, will be deposited in the reference room of the CGIAR Secretariat.

Three types of written materials were particularly useful: (1) the published *Summary of Proceedings and Decisions* of the individual CGIAR meetings held from 1995 through 1999 issued by the CGIAR Secretariat; (2) the bound verbatim transcripts of these meetings on file in the reference room in the CGIAR Secretariat; and (3) the reports of the Oversight Committee during this period, also on file in the reference room (bound with the materials for individual meetings).

The three published reports mentioned in the Annex are:

Fuglie, Keith., and Vernon Ruttan. "Value of External Reviews of Research at International Agricultural Research Centers", *Agricultural Economics* 3(4), 1989, pp. 365-380.

Shah, Mahendra, and Maurice Strong. *Food in the 21st Century: from Science to Sustainable Agriculture*, CGIAR System Review Secretariat [October 1999], 72 pp.

Third System Review of the Consultative Group of International Research, CGIAR System Review Secretariat, October 1999, 111 pp.

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