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**Shaping the CGIAR's Future
Comments of the Impact Assessment and Evaluation
Group
On the CGIAR System Review Report**

Attached is the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) note on the CGIAR System Review. These comments follow the IAEG meeting held on October 24, 1998.

October 25, 1998

**IAEG and Evaluation Functions in the System Review Report:
Preliminary IAEG Comments**

1. The IAEG is pleased and encouraged that the Review recognizes the critical importance of evaluation functions within the CGIAR System and that a strong formal evaluation and impact assessment mechanism should be an integral component of the CGIAR System.
2. The IAEG agrees that the present structure and mode of its operation is not optimal and that evaluation and impact assessment functions could be improved through restructuring and reorienting within the System and the creation of a new modality.
3. The IAEG agrees that the restructuring and new modality needs to focus on closing *"...the gaps in the loops of the evaluation cycle so that the findings from monitoring, evaluation, and impact studies feed back into the processes for setting strategy, priorities and budgets."*
4. The IAEG further agrees with the Review that an appropriate approach would be to develop a mechanism or modality linked explicitly and directly to TAC. This would likely be the most appropriate way of achieving the desired integration of the full range of evaluation functions with planning, priority setting and decision making at the System level.
5. The IAEG believes that the evaluation modality linked to TAC should provide for: (a) evaluation input into accountability functions (mainly ex post evaluation); (b) evaluation input into planning, priority setting and management (mainly ex ante analysis and M&E); and (c) evaluation input for learning related to institutional evolution within the CGIAR System.
6. The IAEG emphasizes that the new modality should maintain objectivity, rigor, transparency, and credibility in its operations. The IAEG stresses that these prerequisites for evaluation work must underlie the Review recommendation that *"...the present IAEG be replaced with a more pragmatic unit..."*.
7. The IAEG considers that a newly created TAC linked modality provides an opportunity to strengthen evaluation functions across the System. An indicative listing of such opportunities is listed below:

EVALUATION FUNCTIONS	INPUTS INTO:		
	Planning and Priority Setting	Accountability to Members and Partners	Institutional Learning for System Evolution
Thematic evaluations and impact assessments across the System	> use in System level priority setting and strategy development: examples include IAEG adoption studies, Germplasm study, study on impacts on poverty	> understanding the impacts of investments on achieving CGIAR goals	understanding System level (as opposed to center level) weaknesses and strengths
Logframe links: System, Center, and project management levels	> incorporating monitoring and evaluation in planning and management	> improving accountability at project unit, center, and System levels, including technology transfer functions	> learning about what works, what does not work, where gaps are, what needs to be changed, and why
Evaluation of Center Programs	> center planning in light of System level gap analysis and priority setting	> support to external review process	> learning more about gaps in the System related to priority needs to meet System Goals
Work with Centers to build capacity for evaluation; and design of procedures for System level evaluations	> improving the linkages at center level between planning and evaluation; improving System level evaluations	> improving center level accountability mechanisms and funding prospects for productive activities	> building an evaluation and accountability awareness and culture in the CGIAR System