

Report on the

Establishment of the

Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)

by

The Independent Task Group (ITG)

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Summary of Recommendations on the Role, Responsibilities, Structure and Organization of the ISPC

A. Proposed Mission of the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)

“To enhance and promote the quality, relevance and impact of science in the CGIAR; to advise the Fund Council, the Consortium and the international science community on strategic scientific issues of importance to the common goals; and to mobilize and harness the best of international science and partnerships for addressing the strategic developmental objectives of the international agricultural research and development community”.

B. Roles and responsibilities of the ISPC

ISPC is viewed by the Independent Task Group (ITG) as a crucial body needed by the CGIAR System as source of sound advice on scientific issues and partnerships, to provide institutional memory, and maintain the credibility of both the science and the System. It is unique in the System in that it neither funds nor implements research programs, instead providing informed, dispassionate assessments and advice to both Funders and implementers of CGIAR research.

Its independence is critical to fulfil its mission and ultimately to its ability to influence and improve the quality and relevance of CGIAR programs and strategies, as well as to be able to attract highest calibre membership.

1. Actively contribute in defining strategic directions for the CGIAR System

- a. Conduct foresight studies and analyze emerging issues with the objective of quantifying the research challenge and the potential impact in response to opportunities and needs identified by ISPC and other stakeholders;
- b. Mobilize the science community on high priority issues to contribute to the scientific deliberations of the Consortium and its partners;
- c. Provide input to the development of the strategic results framework (SRF);

The ITG believes that the ISPC provides a unique vantage point for advancing system-wide strategic thinking due to its independence from fund allocation or program implementation, its system-wide overview and multidisciplinary expertise, and its mandate to mobilize the global science community even beyond the conventional agricultural science disciplines. These activities should be undertaken in an inclusive and participatory way.

2. Promote the quality and relevance of science programs in relation to goals and objectives of the new CGIAR

- a. Contribute to the development of ex-ante impact assessment methodology;
- b. Undertake ex-ante assessment of mega program proposals;
- c. Analyse M&E results from specific research programs;
- d. Commission/Organize independent science reviews of Mega and other System-wide Programs;

- e. Support innovative operational models for the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in evaluating programmatic and system-level impacts from the perspectives of farmers, private sector, civil society and national governments and developmental agencies.

The ITG does not see a role for the ISPC to be involved in monitoring program performance, other than to assure that monitoring methods conform with current standards and best practices. However, the ITG argues that a prominent and well-undertaken science review at the level of Mega Programs and System wide issues implemented by the ISPC will assure coherence through its roles in foresight and impact assessment. The co-location of the evaluation function for the Mega Programs, which in future will represent the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), with the leadership in foresight and impact assessment not only secures credibility and accountability but also separates the review function from the parts of the System involved in funding or implementing research thus assuring independence. The ISPC does not approve programs but only provides comments to the Fund Council. The lessons learned through review should feed directly into ex-ante strategic studies undertaken by the ISPC – a key aspect of the CGIAR as a “learning system”.

3. Mobilize science and promote effective partnerships

- a. Search for new advanced science opportunities, beyond the current scope, to address research problems related to the System objectives;
- b. Develop strategic thinking on effective partnerships in the R&D continuum to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and global impact of agricultural science to meet developmental goals;
- c. Collate, integrate, and share body of evidence on networking and partnership arrangements towards optimization of agricultural research for development;
- d. Evaluate the added value of current partnership arrangements and incentive modalities with emphasis on improving the utility and impact of research outputs.

The ITG strongly believes that the expansion and strengthening of the partnership concept in the new system is strategically important and in line with the three system objectives stressing the benefit for people.

The ITG is convinced that the ISPC has a strong comparative advantage to foster and advance science partnerships in relation to foresight studies and think-tank function. In addition, the ITG recognizes that the ISPC will not take on the role to forge research partnerships, but is strongly convinced that the ISPC should be engaged in science based analysis of more effective partnership opportunities for attaining wider impact of research results and for enhancing the institutional framework to better link research, extension and actual development. This could not only add to capacity building but also attract additional bilateral funds strengthening the application of research results in the field.

4. Ensure accountability on overall System impact

- a. Provide evidence on the effectiveness of research investments through *ex-post* impact assessment of system programs;
- b. Increase the rigor and the reach of impact assessment (IA) studies on program areas and system wide activities;

- c. Facilitate evaluation activities on crosscutting issues such as partnerships, capacity building, diversity, gender and any other relevant ones that may emerge;
- d. Improve feedback of IA results towards strategic program directions;
- e. Enhance the ability and rigor of ex-ante IA towards improved strategic decisions;
- f. Support, through appropriate collaborative mechanisms, Stakeholder Accountability Fora that will independently evaluate the effectiveness of the CGIAR in meeting developmental objectives.

The ITG strongly recommends that ISPC further strengthen all activities contributing to ex ante and ex post impact assessment, being a credible component of system accountability. We also see a new role for the ISPC in line with the new definition of its partnership function for contributing to a more comprehensive accountability relationship with stakeholder. The ISPC should not take the leading role but should be aware and engaged how the overall system ensures accountability to its stakeholder and target groups. In relation to this task, the ISPC can provide for a broader analytical discussion and more comprehensive concepts for accountability relationships involving all stakeholders in the system.

C. Structure and Organisation of ISPC

The ISPC is an independent standing body of the CGIAR that serves as the principal science adviser to the Fund Council and Summit and communicates to the Consortium as regards its mission of “enhancing and promoting the quality, relevance of science, partnership and impact of CGIAR science and programs.” The Council shall be appointed by the Funders Summit. Through this organizational mode the Council will be given the authority for implementing its mission. It obtains its credibility and accountability through review, evaluation and impact assessment function. ISPC is accountable to and obtains its authority from the Funders Summit, reports to both the Fund Council and the Funders Summit and has a communication obligation to the Consortium Board.

1. Structure

The ISPC is composed of a Chair, 6 members and two heads of independent panels to be identified through an independent selection process approved by the Fund Council.

2. Organization

The ISPC shall be supported by:

- a. two Standing Panels (SP) in the areas of:
 - (i) Strategy and Trends (SP- ST)
 - (ii) Effective Partnerships (SP-EP).

Each standing panel shall be headed by a member of the ISPC appointed by the Chair of the ISPC; and

- b. two independent Standing Panels, one each for:
 - (i) Program Evaluation (SP-PE)
 - (ii) Impact Assessment (SP-IA)

The head of each independent panel shall be appointed by the Fund Council Chair in consultation with the ISPC Chair. The independent panels select

members for evaluation or IA tasks based on principles of strategic and peer review, externality, and independence.

3. Location

The ISPC should continue to be located at FAO Headquarters and obtain synergies from all possible interactions with the host organisation and with GFAR Secretariat which is also located at FAO. This partnership with a CGIAR member has worked well before, and should be acknowledged and continued.

The ITG believes co-location and close cooperation of staff supporting foresight, evaluation and impact assessment will provide strategic benefits and increased programmatic effectiveness, as well as efficiencies and cost savings. This is also consistent with the move towards a more streamlined and efficient CGIAR system.

4. Meeting Frequency

The ISPC should meet at least twice a year of not more than 4 days per meeting. These meetings should also be used to facilitate the interaction among ISPC members, stakeholders, and partners.

5. Member Qualifications

The selection criteria listed in the CGIAR charter for the Science Council (SC) are very relevant to the ISPC and therefore should be adopted. The following additional criteria are also recommended:

- a. science management expertise;
- b. experience in mobilizing effective partnerships;
- c. scientific network experience;
- d. experience with and knowledge of smallholder agriculture and natural resource management issues in developing countries;
- e. effective communication ability.

ISPC members with a variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds should be sought, with diversity reflecting developing and developed countries, gender and skills that offer the body a range of perspective and insights. Preferably, one-half of the membership of the ISPC should come from developing countries.

It is recommended that the inaugural membership of the ISPC be drawn partly from the current membership of SC. Candidates would be those who have the expertise, skills, and characteristics that suit the requirements of the ISPC. Current SC members could continue to serve in accordance with the terms of their appointment and the ISPC shall carefully analyse the additional profiles for prospective members with particular emphasis on expertise and experience in evaluation and partnership/innovation research for development.

The independent search committee process currently used to select Science Council members has been successful in attracting world class talent. The ITG recommends that the independent process established for the SC be continued, taking into account the need to identify and nominate, in particular during a transition phase to ISPC, prospective members with experience in research for development partnerships. This

should be complemented by the evaluation expertise desired on the part of the independent Chair of the Standing Panel on Evaluation.

6. Guidance on the operation and budget of ISPC

The ITG recommends that the secretariat of the ISPC be composed of five scientific staff including the Director. In view of the ISPC's new mandates, the Council will need to reflect on the required staff profiles. The mode of operation will shift towards providing foresight for program development, science evaluation (relevance and quality), impact assessment, and innovations to optimize partnerships in relation to achieving the CGIAR objectives such as widespread adoption of research results and increasing partner investments in agriculture research.

The ISPC should have sufficient budget flexibility to organize its work effectively and retain the prerogative of conducting studies that it sees as being of highest strategic significance to the CGIAR System.

The ISPC's budget should be covered based on assessment derived from the entire funding (from the Fund and bilateral funding) contributing to achieving the System's SRF. Such an approach emphasizes the stake that all CGIAR funders have in the integrated System encompassing activities of the Mega-programs, and the Council's strategic, evaluative and partnership responsibilities that underpin them.

1. TOR of the Independent Task Group (ITG)

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Transition Management Team (TMT) has commissioned the Independent Task Group (ITG) to generate a proposal for the Terms of References (TOR) of the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) to address the following specific items:

1. A terms of reference which clearly defines the role and specific areas of responsibility of the ISPC, in the light of the body's basic role broadly defined by the CGIAR at AGM08.
2. Recommendations on: (a) structure and organization (size and composition/profile) and (b) criteria and process for the selection of ISPC Chair and members, recognizing the imperatives of scientific excellence and provision of knowledge on effective networking and partnerships with actors in the development and advanced research community.
3. Guidance on the operation of the ISPC and its working modalities.

2 Objectives of the ISPC as defined by the CGIAR at the AGM 08 in Maputo, Mozambique

At its Annual General Meeting (AGM08) held in Maputo, Mozambique, the CGIAR approved the report of the Change Steering Team for "A revitalized CGIAR-A New Way Forward – the integrated Reform Proposal" with its key features being:

- a. Results-oriented agendas directed toward significant and compelling challenges,
- b. Clarified accountabilities, with clear but distinct roles for "doers" (suppliers of research) and "funders",
- c. An open CGIAR System which values dynamic partnerships,
- d. An exciting research environment, which attracts, develops and supports the best scientists,
- e. A cost effective CGIAR.

The Integrated Reform Proposal includes a new legally-structured Consortium of CGIAR sponsored Centers, and a Fund Council made up of donors and partners. Programmatically, these two components are linked through a Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) and a scheme of Program Performance Contracts. This new model separates the governance and management roles of the System, establishes contractual relationship between the Fund Council and the Consortium, and provides for clear decision making and accountability. A Strategy and Results Framework, aligned with the three CGIAR Strategic Objectives, will be developed by the Consortium in close collaboration with funders and partners and with advice from the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC).

The CGIAR has agreed at its AGM 08 meeting that the role and the function of the **Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)** should include

- (i) Providing core scientific advice relating to System strategy, priorities and assessment of scientific quality and impacts of CGIAR-led research,
- (ii) Conducting foresight and other studies to enable the System to respond to emerging issues;
- (iii) Facilitating partnerships for greater research and development impact, and

- (iv) Championing agricultural science and technology in order to catalyze the mobilization of global science.

The ISPC will work in an inclusive partnership mode that involves a revitalized GFAR and other appropriate regional and sub-regional research and development organizations specially those organized by developing countries to fulfil these roles. Further, it will make use of the biennial Conference (GCARD) and other appropriate platforms for partner engagement and partnership cultivation.

3. Proposed Mission of the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)

“To enhance and promote the quality, relevance and impact of science in the CGIAR; to advise the Fund Council, the Consortium and the international science community on strategic scientific issues of importance to the common goals; and to mobilize and harness the best of international science and partnerships for addressing the strategic developmental objectives of the international agricultural research and development community.”

4. Role and specific areas of responsibility of the ISPC

ISPC is viewed by the Independent Task Group (ITG) as a crucial body needed by the CGIAR System as source of sound advice on scientific issues and partnerships, to provide institutional memory, and maintain the credibility of both the science and the System. It is unique in the System in that it neither funds nor implements research programs. Instead, it provides informed, objective assessments and advice to both funders/donors and implementers of CGIAR research.

Its independence is critical to fulfil its mission and ultimately to its ability to influence and improve the quality and relevance of CGIAR programs and strategies, as well as to be able to attract highest calibre membership.

4.1 Actively contribute in defining Strategic Direction for the CGIAR System

- Conduct foresight studies and analyze emerging issues with the objective of quantifying the research challenge and the potential impact in response to opportunities and needs identified by ISPC and other stakeholders;
- Mobilize the science community on high priority issues to contribute to the scientific deliberations of the Consortium and its partners; and
- Provide input to the development of the strategic results framework (SRF).

The ITG believes that the ISPC provides a unique vantage point for advancing system-wide strategic thinking due to its independence from funding and program implementation, its system-wide overview and multidisciplinary expertise, and its mandate to mobilize the global science community even beyond the conventional agricultural science disciplines. These activities should be undertaken in an inclusive and participatory way with the science and development stakeholders. The identification and quantification of emerging issues or new science approaches will

assist the Fund Council and the Consortium to capture opportunities through redirection of programs and/or the application of new scientific methods and approaches.

The ISPC should identify, embark on or commission foresight studies through a consultative mechanism involving the stakeholders and respective science communities and using opportunities to mobilize science groups beyond the conventional international agricultural research circles, supported by a sufficiently flexible budget arrangement.

The current SC has an excellent track record in contributing to system level strategic planning and priority setting, and of conducting foresight studies, based on wide consultation and peer input, and through this mode securing independence and externality. The results of commissioned EPMRs and ex-post Impact Studies are well respected examples of these tasks.

The new ISPC as an independent but integrated body of the new system should make the same contribution to defining strategic directions and emerging issues. Results of this task would benefit the formation of the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and the development of new Mega Programs (MP).

4.2 Promote the quality and relevance of science programs in relation to goals and objectives of the revitalized CGIAR

- Contribute to the development of ex-ante impact assessment methodology
- Undertake ex-ante assessment of mega program proposals
- Analyse M&E results from specific research programs
- Organize independent science reviews of Mega and System-wide Programs

The ITG does not see a role for the ISPC to be involved in monitoring program performance of Centers, other than to assure that monitoring methods conforms to current standards and best practices. However, the ITG argues that a prominent and well-undertaken science review at the level of Mega Programs and System wide issues implemented by the ISPC will assure coherence through its roles in foresight and impact assessment. The co-location of the evaluation function for the Mega Programs, which in future will represent the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), with the leadership in foresight and impact assessment not only secures credibility and accountability but also separates the review function from the parts of the System involved in funding or implementing research, thus assuring independence.

The ISPC does not approve programs but only provides comments to the Fund Council.

The lessons learned through reviews should feed directly into ex-ante strategic studies undertaken by the ISPC – a key aspect of the CGIAR as a “learning system”.

The SC established in 2004 defined the following characteristics as being essential for assuring relevance and quality of science with the aim of securing accountability to Funders: to facilitate learning by the “Doers”, to follow an integrated M&E system to minimise transaction costs, and to respect independence to ensure their credibility. The SC undertook to streamline the different processes into an integrated system to produce relevant information for multiple purposes at reasonable effort and cost.

However, the recent CGIAR review and also the subsequent deliberations in the Change Management Team have expressed concerns “about a potential conflict of

interest of the SC in its current dual role as adviser on quality and relevance of research (including the research planning process), while also being responsible for commissioning external reviews and assessing Centers' research performance. Potential or perceived conflict of interest should, therefore be avoided in the new CGIAR. Furthermore at AGM08 the CGIAR agreed that "an independent evaluation arrangement will periodically take place at the Program and System levels."

In monitoring and evaluation of Centers, we agree that the Consortium will have an important role in accordance with its performance agreements and its accountability to Funders. At the level of mega-program and system wide activities however, there is a clear need in our view for ISPC leadership in evaluation.

In view of the anticipated division of responsibilities between implementers and Funders of research the ISPC's role in science reviews and program evaluation shall focus on:

- The contribution to the development and application of ex-ante impact assessment methods and instruments for programs of the Consortium, Mega Programs and System wide activities
- The Evaluation of Mega Programs
- The evaluation of system wide programs and issues (stripe reviews)

The ISPC will be responsible for planning and commissioning the evaluation and for communicating the findings and the recommendations to the Fund Council/Funders Summit and to the Consortium. It is the responsibility of the Fund Council/Funders Summit to make use of the findings and recommendations.

The mega-programs are essentially the new system's means of implementing the SRF, integrating across both Fund resources and resources coming in via bilateral agreements. All of the pieces are vital to the strategic coherence of the system, and the ISPC is best positioned to assure this coherence via its roles in foresight, evaluation and impact assessment. Further, the ITG believes the ISPC should have an independent Evaluation Panel Chair appointed by the Fund Council Chair, in consultation with the ISPC Chair, much as is currently the case with the Chair of SPIA. We note, in addition, that the current SC member leading the M&E panel is finishing his term shortly, making for a seamless transition to the new ISPC mode.

Beyond the critical matter of independence, there are significant benefits to be gained by co-locating the evaluation function with the leadership on foresight and impact assessment. All of these capacities are interlinked and essential to achieving a "learning system" in the view of the ITG. Here again, the ITG strongly believes that an integrated independent approach is advantageous, not to mention far more likely to be efficient and cost-effective.

4.3 Mobilise science and promote effective partnerships

- a. Search for new advanced science opportunities, beyond the current scope, to address research problems related to the system objectives,
- b. Develop strategic thinking on effective partnerships in the R&D continuum to enhance global impact,
- c. Collate, integrate and share body of evidence on networking and partnership arrangements towards optimization of agriculture research for development,

- d. Evaluate added value of current partnership arrangements and incentive modalities with emphasize on improving the impact und utility of research outputs.

The ITG strongly believes that the expansion and strengthening of the partnership concept in the new system is strategically important and in line with the three system objectives of the New CGIAR stressing the benefit for people. ISPC should strive to develop an inclusive partnership; therefore, it needs to team up with other organizations and use other platforms as it sees appropriate.

This renewed emphasis on partnership and mobilizing science for development is at the heart of the new ISPC. The ISPC will not be instrumental in forging research partnerships; they are the purview of the MPs and Centers. But it will work to ensure that partnership is looked at strategically and analytically in its work guiding system priorities and research approaches, as well as in partnerships that help ensure impacts on the ground and deliver benefits to target groups, such as smallholder farmers.

The ITG is of the opinion that the ISPC has a strong comparative advantage to foster advance science partnerships in view of its foresight study function. Also, the ISPC has the required independence to implement science based evaluation of partnership opportunities towards enhancing partner capacities and towards effective institutions effectively linking research outputs with the end users.

The ITG proposes a new standing panel on partnerships, led by an ISPC member with research for development experience. The panel will consolidate scientific evidence on best practices in this sphere and provide evidence about partnership arrangements and their effectiveness through its evaluation function. That panel can help guide the rest of the ISPC, and the whole system, in advancing thinking and practices in both mobilizing science to carry out research and in ensuring that research will be effective and meet the expectations of beneficiaries.

The ITG sees a continuing need for the ISPC to consider frameworks and metrics for looking at partnership strategically. This goes beyond the previous mobilizing science role toward a new ISPC responsibility of helping guide the new system in being as analytical and rigorous in partnering for research impacts as it has been in setting its research agenda. This does not mean “doing partnership development,” but it does mean being strategic and using science based concepts in how to optimize partnerships across a wide spectrum. An upcoming vacancy opens the way to include expertise in R for D partnerships in the ISPC’s membership.

Capturing the Framework of Partnerships

Partnerships are forged for the purpose of using the comparative advantage of every stakeholder to benefit the whole. Partnerships cannot be taken for granted; they have to be nurtured and facilitated to achieve optimal benefits. Partnerships can take different forms but the ISPC shall focus in the following forms at three levels:

- (i) R&D policy,
- (ii) Advanced and applied science,
- (iii) Application and diffusion.

While the CGIAR has considerable experiences in implementing the research program in cooperation with respective partners, the *partnership in research application and diffusion* has been weak, with no clear framework to support a steady flow of CGIAR generated research findings to the end users and final appliers. This weakness should be of major concern in the transformed research set-up. New thinking provides clear

evidence that impact of research findings without consideration of the institutional and infrastructural environment of target locations will not be obtained easily. The past strong orientation along commodity oriented research directions has not always brought the anticipated results. Productivity improvement as a research paradigm has likewise shown limits in the development of systems, especially when the understanding of the resilience of target systems seems to be important to secure a more holistic approach for finding the right solutions. Therefore, the ITG is convinced that the ISPC needs to deal with past adoption/impact constraints through a science based evaluation concept to better understand opportunities and to optimise the research adoption and diffusion process.

In an open CGIAR System, which values dynamic partnerships, a re-invigorated Partnership culture supported by incentives and implementation processes should be developed. It will take on the best practices of today's CGIAR where partnership approaches have instilled new dynamism into the agenda. Partnerships will be built into the development of the research agendas and the performance contracts, which show how up-stream and down-stream partnerships will be used to achieve the results expected, including specific provisions for additional financing these as needed. Openness will be enhanced through provisions of a segment of program funding directed to open competition to actors outside of the CGIAR System. The complexity of scientific advances, socioeconomic developments, and environmental impacts, along with the higher costs associated with new lines of research, make partnerships essential for producing and delivering international public goods in agriculture. The Consortium's contribution to agricultural development through research and knowledge management must be integrated with the wider development goals and activities of other actors, notably countries, international and regional development organizations, multilateral organizations, advanced research institutes (ARIs), the private sector and international NGOs or CSOs.

In order to improve partnerships, the Consortium will have to promote a culture of working with others for innovation and lesson learning. Stakeholders will constitute part of the Fund Council membership and the common Strategy and Results Framework will be developed in close collaboration with a broad range of partners/stakeholders. Program Performance Contracts will explicitly include involvement of partners in research implementation and are evaluated on this basis. Partners will be able to receive funds through Program Performance Agreements. A significant proportion of resources flowing through the new Fund will go to partners. This is essential to establishing ownership of programs by others and as a catalyst for further development beyond the System's reach.

Partnerships with inter-governmental organizations of the UN are also of importance at both the policy awareness and the developmental end of the research-development continuum. Two avenues are of interest to the ISPC.

- a) Being at FAO in Rome provides opportunities to strengthen the affiliation with high level meetings of member states (biennial meeting of member Governments) with the possibility to elevate the discussion about the R&D objectives and needs, this would especially strengthen implementation partnerships and highlight institutional prerequisites for local improvements of system resilience. A regular appearance of ISPC, GFAR and the respective FAO partner in these high level meetings would be most effective.

- b) The CGIAR agrees with the Independent Review's suggestion on the role that the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) is envisaged to play in promoting and enabling effective partnerships and dialogue between the CGIAR and its partners/stakeholders. The CGIAR would like to see a revitalized GFAR as the most appropriate institutional mechanism to facilitate stakeholder engagement. GFAR is proposed to play the leading role in providing a platform for interaction between all categories of stakeholders, including the Consortium, through holding a biennial Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) in collaboration with the Consortium. The ISPC would be a most logical partner in this endeavour since it could effectively link to other venues such as the Science week, but also to results from the IPSC standing panel on Effective Partnership. The conference will provide a platform for interactions among funders, the Consortium, partners, and other stakeholders on important global and regional issues with implications on agriculture and agricultural research for development. It is a mechanism that will provide input for the System's strategy and results framework.

To ensure the roles for partners are fulfilled, appropriate mechanisms are needed for constructive and effective stakeholder engagement. A revitalized Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) has been proposed as the most appropriate institutional mechanism to facilitate this process. GFAR would enable the Consortium to optimize the linkages with CSOs, NGOs, private sector and other partners. Such partnerships will focus on the research agenda and the benefits for end users of research results.

There is a strong demand for CGIAR capacity building work with developing-country partners, and more engagement with Africa is encouraged. The importance of this new orientation is highlighted by the recent G8 summit statement:

“ We will promote agricultural research and development, and the training of a new generation of developing country scientists and experts focusing on the dissemination of improved, locally adapted and sustainable farming technologies, in particular via the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and through partnerships such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).”(para 7 c) “We will accelerate research and development and increase access to new agricultural technologies to boost agricultural production; we will promote science-based risk analysis including on the contribution of seed varieties developed through biotechnology (para 7 g).”

Additionally, the private sector is increasingly coming into focus as a main player in research and Diffusion especially when considering such issues as value addition, markets, empowering the poor by creating new job opportunities and so on. Clear rules of engagement need to be worked out to ensure fair play and good governance compliance by all involved and to promote transparency and remove any aspects of suspicion.

4.4 Ensure Accountability on Overall System Impact

Impact is the ultimate measure of accountability in the CGIAR system. No matter how effective other functions are, if they do not culminate in impact in terms of alleviation hunger, poverty reduction, or conservation of the environment then the entire enterprise comes up short. In this respect, the ITG notes that, in its view, inadequate funding has been provided for impact assessment activities in the current SC. The new ISPC should be better resourced to consolidate and expand the culture of impact assessment in the new Mega-Programs and the Centers. It should continue the collaborative effort with the Centers and further strengthen a community of practice that increasingly extends to partners. Solid impact assessment processes, data and reporting are vital to sustaining and increasing support to research, both within the CGIAR and beyond.

- a. Provide evidence on the effectiveness of research investments through *ex-post* impact assessment of system programs;
- b. Increase the rigor and the reach of impact assessment (IA) studies on program areas and system wide activities;
- c. Facilitate evaluation activities on crosscutting issues such as partnerships, capacity building, diversity, gender and any other relevant ones that may emerge;
- d. Improve feedback of IA results towards strategic program directions;
- e. Enhance the ability and rigor of *ex-ante* IA towards improved strategic decisions;
- f. Support, through appropriate collaborative mechanisms, Stakeholder Accountability Forums that will independently evaluate the effectiveness of the CGIAR in meeting developmental objectives.

The ITG strongly recommends that ISPC further strengthens all activities contributing to ex ante and ex post impact assessment, being a credible component of system accountability. We also see a new role for the ISPC in line with the new definition of its partnership function for contributing to a more comprehensive accountability relationship with stakeholder. The ISPC should not take the leading role but should be aware and engaged how the overall system ensures accountability to its stakeholder and target groups. In relation to this task, the ISPC can provide for a broader analytical discussion and more comprehensive concepts for accountability relationships involving all stakeholders in the system.

In connection with the new ISPC funding modality where all funding (Fund and bilateral) will help support the work of the ISPC, the ITG recommends that adequate (increased) funding be provided for the ISPC's leadership of the vital function of impact assessment, both ex-ante and especially ex-post.

The specific role and function of ISPC in ensuring accountability is first and foremost linked to science based ex-ante and ex-post Impact Assessment studies with a clear focus on goals and objectives and the need to expand the study areas to cover all program types such as INRM, Policy, Biodiversity and System Wide activities. The previous SC operated this function through a standing panel on Impact assessment (SPIA) responsible for system level impact evaluations, while Centers were held responsible for periodic impact assessments of Center programs, with operational and methodological guidance by SPIA.

The Independent Review of the CGIAR System does not specifically mention the role of the ISPC in ensuring accountability and impact assessment, and the decision of the

CG at AGM08 indicates that an independent evaluation arrangement will periodically take place at program and system level under the responsibility of the Consortium and Fund Council.

The ITG is convinced that at the level of program this role can best be performed by the ISPC, since it is independent, has the accumulated expertise and guarantees a high utility of results within the system. Moreover, the co-location of the evaluation function with the leadership on foresight and impact assessment allows interlinking and a “learning system” which will increase efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Accountability is a concept in ethics with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, answerability, enforcement, blameworthiness, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving. As an aspect of governance, it has been central to discussions related to problems in both the public and private (corporation) worlds. In leadership roles, accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences”

Accountability does not refer only to management of financial transactions. It also refers to execution and tracking of assigned functions and responsibilities in terms of effectiveness, expectations and delivery.

All partners of the CGIAR system have the responsibility to use appropriate instruments for measuring accountability. The Consortium through its Board is accountable to the Fund Council for delivery of the Program Performance Contracts. The Consortium Board takes fiduciary responsibility for the use of program funds, ensuring that acceptable systems are in place at Centers and partners with which it contracts. The Centers are responsible to the Consortium according to Center Performance Agreements. The Fund Council is accountable to the Fund Investors, which are in turn accountable to their Member States or Institutions (or in the case of private sector/foundations to their Boards). Performance Contracts and Agreements are monitored and evaluated regularly as described above, by the Consortium Board.

The ISPC being itself directly accountable to the Funders Summit has to report their findings on issues of system accountability to the Fund Council and the Funders Summit and should establish a working relationship for informing the Consortium.

The System has to ensure that also other stakeholder (NARS, NGOs, CSOs, Gender organisations, Farmer representatives) will be included in an accountability platform, which could well be the biennial GCARD meeting.

The criteria *Program accountability* is used to measure accountability are strongly linked to the performance contracts in relation to outputs and deliverables or to the quality and relevance of science and the contribution to the stated goals and objectives. Other criteria of accountability are related with the socio-ethical obligations of publicly funded Research for Development, such as Partnership Gender, Diversity, Capacity building and impact at the level of importance to the CGIAR, for example **people**.

There is considerable criticism from a number of quarters concerning the inability to create proper links between IARC and the NARS and in essence denying the NARS and the end users across the world the first class research findings that have been generated by the CGIAR over the decades. If there is any truth at all in this observation, then it is important to have it rectified in the new system arrangement.

One other aspect that will need greater attention is gender programming and other socio-ethical issues. Work has started on this but a lot more needs to be done. The CGIAR to date has not fully integrated these socio-ethical issues into its performance measurement system. Rather than approaching socio-ethical criteria on an *ad hoc* basis, as issues of behavior or perception, the need is for a broader systematic approach that focuses on integrating these aspects. The ITG is convinced that this role can best be performed by the ISPC, since it is independent, has professional strength and guarantees a high utility of results within the system.

5. Structure and Organisation

The ISPC Position in the System

The ISPC is an independent standing body of the CGIAR that reports as the principal science adviser to the Fund Council and Summit and communicates to the Consortium as regards its mission of “enhancing and promoting the quality, relevance of science, partnership and impact of CGIAR science and programs.” The Council shall be appointed by the Funders Summit. Through this organisational mode the Council will be given the authority for implementing its mission. It obtains its credibility and accountability through review, evaluation and impact assessment function.

5.1 Proposed Structure & Organization of the ISPC

5.1.1 Membership and Panels

The ISPC is composed of six (6) members and a chair, all identified through an international search by an independent selection committee of experts established for this purpose by the Fund Council. The selection committee’s recommendations are reviewed by the Fund Council, which nominates the ISPC chair and members for consideration and confirmation by the Funder Summit.

The ISPC shall be supported by

- (i) Two Standing Panels (SP) in the areas of:
 Strategy and Trends (Sp- ST), and
 Effective Partnerships (SP-P)

Each standing panel shall be headed by a member of the ISPC appointed by the Chair of the ISPC,

- (ii) Two independent panels for
 Program Evaluation (S-PE), and
 Impact Assessment (SP-IA)

The head of each independent panel shall be appointed by the Fund Council chair in consultation with the ISPC chair. The independent panels select members for

evaluation or IA tasks based on the peer review principle, externality and independence.

In addition the ISPC can appoint Ad-hoc panels according to the agreed working agenda, mainly to foster strategic directions in relation to the Strategic Framework and Mega Program development and to adequately address the pursuance of emerging issues in relation with the CGIAR mission,

5.1.2 Meeting frequency and location

The regular meeting frequency of the full panel should continue to be twice per year- of not more than 4 days. Main business items are linked to the core roles and responsibilities, to update on the work of standing panels and ad-hoc panels, and to address emerging issues and the preparation of major events such as Science Week, GCARD and others. These meetings should also be used to facilitate the interaction among ISPC members, stakeholders, and partners.

5.1.3 Location of the ISPC

The ISPC should continue to be located at FAO and obtain further utility from all possible interactions with the host organisation and with GFAR. This partnership has worked well before and should be acknowledged and continued. This location will afford synergies in areas of relevance to the Global Research and Development community, for expanding the “think tank function” of ISPC, and to enhance conceptual issues related to optimizing partnerships.

5.2 Criteria for selection of Members

The selection criteria for the Chair and members are listed in the CGIAR charter.

Additional criteria should consider

- a. science management expertise,
- b. experience in mobilizing effective partnerships
- c. communication ability,
- d. scientific network expertise.
- e. experience with and knowledge of smallholder agriculture and natural resource management issues in developing countries;

Preferably, one-half of the members of the ISPC shall come from Developing Countries.

The ITG was impressed with the current SC membership, and believes that with modification over time, it can evolve smoothly and without disruption to take on the roles of the new ISPC. Two current vacancies offer the opportunity to directly address, at the leadership level, key capacities for the new Council in evaluation and partnerships. Beyond that, the new panels offer the opportunity to engage additional expertise more flexibly.

The ITG suggests that the current SC members continue according to their duration of appointment and the SC shall carefully analyse the additional profiles for prospective members with particular emphasis on expertise in evaluation and partnership and innovation science.

6. Guidance on the operation of ISPC and its working modalities

The secretariat of the ISPC should continue to be composed of five scientific staff including the Director. In view of ISPC's new mandates, the Council may need to reflect on the required staff competencies.

The mode of operation will shift towards providing foresight for program development, science evaluation (relevance and quality), and innovations to optimize partnerships in relation to achieving the CGIAR objectives through wide spread adoption of research results and increasing partner investments in agriculture research.

The ISPC should have sufficient budget flexibility to organize its work effectively. The council's budget should come from the bilateral and non-bilateral sources. The current formula to allocate funds to the Council sets a ceiling at 1% on actual funding of the system.

The current budget level of the SC seems rather conservative in view of the importance of the ISPC functions (foresight studies, expanding ex-ante and ex-post IA studies) and the ISPC should have the possibility to arrange a program and the respective funding in consultation with the Fund Council which takes into consideration the number of studies to be performed and of ad-hoc panels and experts to be involved.

7. Comparison between SC and ISPC

A comparison of lead criteria between the Science Council and the new Independent Science and Partnership Council is provided in the attached table.

Comparison of SC and ISPC

A. Roles/Responsibilities	SC	ISPC
1. Actively contribute in defining strategic directions for the CGIAR System	a. Yes b. Leads the development and review of system priorities and strategies that has been the source of irritation between the Centers & the SC	a. Yes, through foresight studies and mobilization of science communities on high priority issues. Advises and contributes to the development of SRF.
2. Promote the quality and relevance of science programs in relation to goals and objectives of the new CGIAR Monitoring and Evaluation	a. Yes b. Yes, more extensive M&E through instruments like EPMRs, PM	a. Yes through enhancing ex-ante IA , analyzing M&E results of programs b. Evaluation of Mega and System wide Programs though a peer review process, commissioned by the independent Standing Panel on Program Evaluation, which helps to insure institutional memory of methods, procedure, & good practice and to link results to system's accountability.
3. Mobilize science and	Yes, through the Standing Panel	Yes (at System level)

promote effective partnerships	on Mobilizing Science	Through Standing Panel on Strategy and Trends (Foresight Studies) & Standing Panel on Effective Partnership (Science based Optimization of Impact Oriented Partnerships)
4. Ensure accountability on overall System impact	Yes, through the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment	Yes, through the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment & the Standing Panel on Partnership. Contributing to a more comprehensive accountability relationship with stakeholders
B. Size, Composition, and Process for Selecting Members	Chair + 6 members + 1 ex-officio member (SPIA Chair) External search and nomination committee	Chair + 6 members + 2 ex-officio members (SPIA and SPPE chairs) External search and nomination committee Ex-officio member nomination to be approved by FC
C. Organization	4 Standing Panels: a) priorities and strategies; b) M&E; c) mobilizing science; d) impact assessment	4 Standing Panels: a) strategy and trends; b) effective partnerships; c) independent program evaluation; d) independent impact assessment
D. Location of Secretariat	FAO HQ (Rome)	FAO HQ (Rome)
E. Frequency of Meeting	Twice a year (3 days)	Twice a year (max. 4 days)
F. Membership Qualifications	Qualifications as outlined in the CGIAR charter	The following are in addition to qualifications of SC members: f. science management expertise; g. experience in mobilizing effective partnerships; h. scientific network experience; i. experience with and knowledge of smallholder agriculture and natural resource management issues in developing countries; j. effective communication ability.
G. Support Unit	SC Secretariat – composed of Executive Director + 4 senior research officers + 2 junior research officers + 4 administrative staff	ISPC Secretariat – composed of Executive Director + 4 senior research officers + 2 administrative staff
H. Funding Support	World Bank, FAO and levy on Centers	Levy on all funding (via Fund or bilateral flows) supporting implementation of the SRF

8. Composition and Itinerary of the ITG

Chair: Kurt Peters (Germany) - Professor, Humboldt University (Berlin)

Members:

- Akin Adesina (Nigeria) - Vice President for Policy and Partnerships, Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- Robert Bertram (US) – Acting Director, Office of Environment and Science Policy;
Team Leader, International Research and Biotechnology, USAID/EGAT
- Ruth Oniang'o (Kenya) –Professor in Food Science and Nutrition, Editor-in-Chief, African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development, and Executive Director of Rural Outreach Program (Kenya)
- Eliseo Ponce (Philippines) – Former Director, Bureau of Agricultural Research, Department of Agriculture & former professor of Agriculture & Extension Management, Visayas State University

9. Work schedule

- June 15, 2009 - Background documents posted
- June 16-30 - Initial contacts and discussion by e-mail among ITG members
- July 2 Conference call among ITG members (9:00 – 10:30 am, Washington time)
- July 6 Conference call with SC Chair and Members (10:00 – 11:30 am Washington time)
- July 15-16 - Chair's visit to Rome for consultation with stakeholder agencies/ Institutions (IFAD, FAO, Alliance Office, SC-Chair and SC Secretariat, and GFAR Secretariat)
- July 17 Conference call among ITG members (9.30 – 10.45 am, Washington time)
- July 23-24 - Venue: Washington DC- ITG meeting: Discussion of draft report; resolution of remaining issues, conclusion on recommendations,
- July 27 Submission of first ITG summary draft on recommendations
- July 30 Conference call among ITG and TMT members
- July 31 Submission of final ITG report to System Secretariat

9. List of References

- (1) A Revitalized CGIAR—A New Way Forward: The Integrated Reform Proposal (Dec 2008) (http://www.cgiar.org/pdf/agm08/agm08_reform_proposal.pdf)
- (2) A Background Note on Scientific Advice in the CGIAR: From TAC to SC (CGIAR Secretariat, March 2009)
- (3) AGM08 Business Meeting Summary Record of Proceedings (Dec 2008) (http://www.cgiar.org/pdf/agm08/agm08_business_meeting_sop.pdf)
- (4) The Future of Partnerships in the CGIAR: Report of Working Group 2 (Partnerships) to the Change Steering Team of the CGIAR (http://www.cgiar.org/changemanagement/pdf/WG2_FutureofPartnerships_FINAL_Sept16_2008.pdf)
- (5) Defining the role of an Independent Science and Partnership Council: A discussion document contributing to the CGIAR Transition (Science Council, April 2009)
- (6) Monitoring and Evaluation: Processes and Experiences (Science Council, April 2009)
- (7) M&E options for input to the Accountability Framework, Systems Office
- (8) Monitoring and Evaluation: Processes and experiences, Science Council
- (9) **EIARD POSITION POINTS FOR ExCo16**
- (10) Monitoring and Evaluation in the new CGIAR, Science Council
- (11) Note from DG of CIAT
- (12) Note from M. Diekmann, BEAF
- (13) Discussion notes telephone contact with Alliance Office, Ann-Marie Izak
- (14) Discussion note from FAO, Ass.DG Alexander Müller
- (15) Discussion notes from FAO, Dir AGAP Sam Jutzi
- (16) Discussion notes from visit to Science Council, Chair and Secretariat staff
- (17) Discussion notes from teleconference with members of SC
- (18) Telephone contact with DG IFPRI, Joachim von Braun
- (19) Telephone contact with Director of GFAR, Mark Holderness
- (20) Interview with Director CGIAR Systems Office, Ren Wang
- (21) Telephone conference with members of the TMT