

SPIA Activities Update

Prepared for SPIA 29 and SC5 Meetings in Cotonu, Benin, 8-12 April, 2006

This progress report provides a brief update on SPIA activities since SC 4. Conclusions emerging from the SPIA 29 meeting on 8 April 2006 will be reported verbally by the SPIA Chair at SC 5 on 12 April. For reference, a revised (October 2005) SPIA Workplan for 2006-2007 is provided as supplementary documentation.

I. Recurring SPIA Activities

1.1. SPIA's role in the CGIAR Performance Monitoring (PM) System

Both the 3A and 3B impact indicators and the respective criteria and performance indicator weightings behind them have been revised, based on preliminary feedback received from Centres (DDGs and Centre IA focal points) in late 2005 and drawing on the lessons learnt from the 2005 submissions. The revised guidelines and framework will serve as a basis for rating performance on impact in 2006.

SPIA members will assess each of the centres' submissions for the 3a impact indicator (epIA activities, outputs and outcomes in 2005) using transparent criteria and performance indicators and weightings. SPIA is drawing on a number of IA experts to assist with the evaluation of the 3b impact indicator rating (two Centre IA studies done in 2003-05) and has identified six who have agreed to participate. Scores will be submitted on line by 3 May.

1.2 CGIAR Impact Website

The CGIAR Impact Website (<http://impact.cgiar.org/>) is now fully functional, although there are still some sections that need to be further populated with material from the centres. As the website utilises forms for the management of frequently updated data, no technical knowledge of HTML is necessary to enter and update most content. Thus, the primary tasks for 2006 relate to data entry, rather than to site development. The array of centre studies and information included should be further expanded and refined. Centre staff need to be informed about how data can be entered and updated in the site, and appropriate incentives and modalities for data entry need to be established. A staff member in the SC Secretariat office (new P-3 to support SPIA activities currently under recruitment) will assist in liaising with CGIAR centre staff to foster data entry and to facilitate the production of impact 'briefs' — short synopses of IA findings that are easily understandable and attractive to external audiences.

Development of Impact Briefs

As part of the expanded communication program, SPIA intends to produce on a regular basis "Impact Briefs" and "Thought Pieces" on advancing impact assessment in the CGIAR. The impact briefs, short synopses of key IA findings, are concise (one or two pages in length) and attractive to external audiences and will be made accessible through the CGIAR Impact

website. Translations into French and Spanish will also be produced. SPIA has been working with the CGIAR Secretariat editorial team in producing briefs from two SPIA studies:

(a) *“Research Benefits Found to Heavily Outweigh Costs”*

<http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/activities/spia/pubs/SCBrief%20bfitcostan.pdf>

(b) *“How important are ex post impact assessment results for donor decisions?”*

<http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/activities/spia/pubs/SCBrief%20MemblnfNee.pdf>

SPIA thanks the CG Secretariat for providing editorial and publication support for this activity. SPIA is also considering acquiring professional assistance in editing and packaging its full length reports. Discussion is underway with Green Ink about this.

II. Completed or Soon-to-be Completed Initiatives

2.1 Impact of the CGIAR on Poverty Alleviation

Revisions are still on-going for completing a peer reviewed book that comprises the set of case studies and synthesis for the overall study. A revised version of the manuscript and a comprehensive response to the major issues identified by the SPIA commissioned referees was received by SPIA from the editors in September 2005. SPIA reviewed this submission and judged that in a number of cases the revisions and responses were not sufficient and informed IFPRI’s PRC accordingly. The PRC has asked the editors to respond again. SPIA has decided to let the matter rest with the PRC. The ex-Chair of SPIA is preparing a Foreword for the book.

2.2 NRM Research Ex-post IA Study

The study is nearing completion. A draft final report (white cover) of this three-year project was made available at AGM05 and was very positively received. A synthesis of the seven centre case studies and highlights of two case study results were also presented at AGM ’05 during a special luncheon session organized by SPIA and sponsored by USAID. With further inputs from SPIA members, particularly on the methodology chapter, the draft report has now been revised and is shortly to be published as a final ‘green cover’ report, once it has been professionally edited. One or more ‘Impact Briefs’ will also be produced with assistance from the CGIAR Secretariat (or drawing on GreenInk services).

SPIA and CABI have reached agreement on publishing in 2006 a book that will chronicle the full length case study reports, and various chapters including a synthesis of results, lessons learnt, methodological challenges and the way forward. Hermann Waibel and David Zilberman will be the book editors. Some ex-SPIA members are authoring some chapters.

2.3 Training Evaluation and Impact Assessment

The main findings and conclusions of the study were presented at AGM’05 in the Stakeholder meeting under Agenda Item 5: Strengthening Research for Development Capacities. A final report has been submitted by the review panel to the SC (March 2006) and will be tabled for discussion during the plenary session of the SC 5 meeting.

2.4 CGIAR and NARS Research in Africa: Evidence of Impact To-date

The first phase of this study entailed a comprehensive collection, synthesis and assessment of the available evidence on the impacts of new technologies and improved policies as a result of CGIAR and partner agricultural research in sub-Saharan Africa. Consultants Mywish

Maredia and David Raitzer have completed a meta-analysis of the literature (using the best evidence method) to evaluate adoption rates and costs and benefits of the research conducted by the NARS/CGIAR partnership in Africa. The authors produce a set of “substantially demonstrated benefits” based on only 9 studies which meet very rigorous evaluation criteria, and another set of “plausible benefits” based on 19 studies, which meet somewhat less rigorous evaluation criteria. They do not include a number of other studies which did poorly relative to the evaluation criteria. They produce three sets of “substantially demonstrated” and “plausible” benefits respectively, i.e. a total of six benefit estimates:

- “Ex-post” benefits include only benefits actually estimated by the authors until the year they completed the study.
- “Projected to 2004” includes benefits for each innovation projected to 2004
- “Projected to 2014” includes benefits projected to 2014, with real benefits held constant at the 2004 level, unless the study authors suggested declining benefits.

The draft study concludes that the discounted benefits of the evaluated productivity enhancing investments of the partnership exceed the present value of its cost under both ‘projected to’ scenarios but not for the scenario which only calculates the specific years for which the authors conducted the study—a rather restrictive limitation. A sensitivity analysis performed on the discount rate suggests that this conclusion is robust even with higher discount rates. The authors show that other innovations have been forthcoming, but not evaluated, and that therefore their estimates of benefits are very conservative ones.

The consultants’ report has now been externally peer reviewed and a final ‘green cover’ report is nearing completion. An ‘impact brief’ is also under preparation. Consideration is being given to undertaking a second phase to this study, which would probably focus on developing an explanatory typology for adoption and impact potential in the African context.

2.5 Donor Demands and Uses for Evidence of Research Impact: The Case of the CGIAR

The final green cover report of this study was completed in time for AGM ’05 is available on the Science Council website. A two page brief was also produced and is available at <http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/activities/spia/pubs/SCBrief%20MembrInfNee.pdf>

There are some key results from this study that SPIA will reflect and act upon over the course of the next several years, including seeking opportunities for closer interaction with donors to understand their changing demands. It is expected that some donors will be invited to attend and participate in the Centre IA Focal Point meeting planned for October 2006.

2.6. Scoping study on the impacts of CGIAR policy-oriented research.

Work on the scoping study began in earnest in August. TOR and a plan of action were prepared at that time and SPIA began interacting with two experts in this area, Dr. Ammar Siamwala (Thailand) and Dr. Carol Weiss (USA). Since then, a preliminary inventory of CGIAR impact assessments of policy-oriented research was compiled and circulated to Centres for additions. Nine Centres responded and augmented this bibliography. In addition, a preliminary typology for characterising the impact assessments identified was developed and applied to the identified studies. Complementing this typology, a preliminary classification of CGIAR policy-oriented research (POR) was used to analyze the current policy-oriented portfolio. The inventory identified relatively few *ex post* impact assessments that had been developed for POR in the CGIAR. Most of the studies do not go beyond measures of uptake or influence, and the few studies that do investigate social or economic benefits focus on country-specific research and technical assistance. In December 2005,

SPIA held a small workshop to discuss preliminary analysis and results of the scoping study and to explore opportunities for strengthening epIA of POR in the CGIAR by undertaking a second or main phase to this study (meeting agenda and summary of the meeting are appended).

A draft scoping study report has circulated and has now been revised. Following further discussions at SPIA 29, the report will be finalized and a decision will be taken regarding whether to proceed with a second phase. The second phase, if undertaken, would likely involve a series of case study impact assessments in cooperation with CGIAR centres and some focal group meetings with policy makers and other selected users of policy research, as well as some other means to document more rigorously the impact pathways and to the extent possible the impacts of POR in the CGIAR.

III. Initiatives in the Pipeline for Commencement in 2006 and 2007

At the last two SPIA and SC meetings, SPIA members deliberated at length on what new initiatives to consider from the growing list generated both internally and externally. As in the previous workplan and budget, SPIA plans to focus on one major assessment each year (the policy-oriented research impact study in 2006) in addition to several other smaller, desk-type studies, and one or two scoping papers to bring new major topics into the pipeline for future years. Thus, based on the outcomes of discussions from the last SPIA meeting and developments since then, SPIA plans to focus on the following studies in 2006 and 2007, subject to further deliberation at SPIA 29:

- First priority (in 2006) will be given to the ‘CGIAR policy-oriented research impact assessment’ study (main phase), if deemed appropriate based on the scoping study results.
- High priority to the IA Focal Point Meeting and Development of Strategic Guidelines (see description below)
- High priority also given to the ‘impact of CGIAR + NARS research in Africa’ study (Phase II) if considered advisable based on the Phase I study results.
- Priority to an exploratory study of the ‘CGIAR agricultural research benefit diffusion and impacts in South Asia’
- Priority to the ‘impact assessment of participatory research approaches – exploratory’. Initiated in 2007 if not in 2006; the full study, if deemed warranted would follow thereafter. (Note: SPIA recognizes the inherent difficulty in successfully documenting the success (or otherwise) of PR approaches in the absence of appropriate counterfactuals)
- The two study proposals ‘Developing improved understanding of perceived (but undocumented) impacts’ and ‘Towards a Demand-Led Ex-Post Evaluation Strategy for Meeting Internal Learning Needs in the CGIAR’ will be taken up in 2007.

3.1 CGIAR Policy-oriented Research Impacts/Influence (main study)

The scoping study described above under Section 2.6 will, depending on the outcome, lay out the broad scope of the proposed main study activity from which the study panel composition and draft TORs would be developed and presented within a revised budget for 2006 and 2007. This study would likely involve a series of case study impact assessments in cooperation with CGIAR Centres and some focal group meetings with policy makers and other selected users of policy research, as well as some other means to document more rigorously the impact pathways and to the extent possible the impacts of policy oriented research in the CGIAR. Details will emerge from the scoping study.

3.2 CGIAR & NARS Research in Africa: Development of an Explanatory Typology for Adoption and Impact Potential (Phase II)

The collated information from the Phase I of this study (see Section 2.4) is likely to reveal significant heterogeneity in documented impact efficacy for different types of research undertakings. To follow-up on revealed patterns, the second phase of this project, if undertaken, would attempt to derive a systematic typology that explains these patterns. This could be accomplished via content analysis of the extensive empirical body of literature which the agricultural research community has generated regarding factors affecting the adoption of agricultural innovations in different African settings. The prevalence of different observed constraints for different types of research outputs will be quantified and related to characteristics of the adoption environment, the research process, the research output, and the dissemination means. The result will be a systematic review and synthesis of the factors constraining adoption and impact of agricultural innovations in the African context.

3.3 Impacts of Participatory Research in the CGIAR (scoping study)

Participatory approaches are often asserted as effective means for fostering relevance in agricultural development efforts, including from research. Yet, the application of participatory methods may also impart costs, such as increased field presence, and identified preferences may be especially localized. As a result, the appropriate domains for the application of participatory approaches remain unclear in the context of international public goods oriented research. Yet, participatory research is widely used by the CGIAR and its partners. This scoping study will assess whether it would be worthwhile and justified for SPIA to conduct and in-depth assessment of the impacts of participatory research in the CGIAR. It will review the wealth of literature that has been produced in and outside the system on participatory research pros and cons and it will formulate a set of recommendations on whether SPIA should proceed with this activity. If the scoping study finds that further empirical assessment of PR impacts is justified, then the study will on a preliminary basis sort out a number of methodological issues to be resolved in order to be able to move ahead with such a study, either in 2007 or 2008, depending on availability of resources. This study was proposed in the previous SPIA Workplan but deferred due to time and budget constraints.

3.4 CGIAR Research Benefit Diffusion & Impacts in South Asia (Phase I desk study)

South Asia is the region of the world containing the greatest number of poor people. Despite status as the epicentre of the Green Revolution, it continues to be a region with high levels of malnutrition and hunger. Clearly agricultural research has had highly successful productivity effects in the region, but poverty persists to a degree uncharacteristic of any other region that benefited strongly from the Green Revolution. This study would analyse the poverty-alleviating impacts on different target groups of CGIAR technologies in this context, and would improve understanding of the opportunities for, and impediments to, agricultural technology enhancement as a strategy for poverty alleviation. There is a great deal of material on the impacts of the CGIAR and agricultural research in South Asia available through the centres and done by others. There is a widespread intuitive belief that the CGIAR has had a significant impact in some areas and for some types of agricultural activity. There is good justification for undertaking this study, since it would enhance understanding of who benefits, who loses, and under what conditions and what this may mean for CGIAR research design.

The results could feed into *ex ante* impact assessment used as a basis for selection of research thrusts in the CGIAR.

Phase I is exploratory and will be a desk study that would define the key knowledge gaps to be addressed in a more in-depth assessment. Both this study and one planned for a later date for Latin America and the Caribbean are similar in purpose to the Africa study described earlier and relate to accounting for CGIAR investments in particular regions, both to the donors who fund the research and to regional members and clients in the regions.

3.5. Impact Assessment Focal Point Meeting and Strategic Guidelines Development

The last SPIA sponsored IA focal point meeting (attended by all 16 centers, experts and key donor representatives) was held in Rome in 2000 and deemed highly successful in identifying System-level IA needs and opportunities. The meeting was an ideal forum for familiarizing all involved with current IA work of the centres and sharing experiences and expectations. Last year there were calls, particularly from the CGIAR IA Focal Points, to have another such meeting, and perhaps on a regular basis. Part of the purpose for the meeting is to move ahead on the IA Strategic Guidelines for the CGIAR, something which the group in 2000 recommended be developed over time, as more impact assessments were completed in the System. With the NRM IA initiative completed, it is an opportune time to move ahead to finalize the Guidelines, parts of which already have been developed. Also, many of the centre IA focal points are relatively new to the CGIAR and seek opportunities to share experiences and learn from one another. SPIA believes that having such a meeting in 2006 is opportune, particularly since the two SPIA members will be new to the System. SPIA has agreed to facilitate the planning and organization with one of the Centres sometime in early October. After canvassing the Centre IA focal points, three venue options have been identified: Bogor (CIFOR), Nairobi (ICRAF), and Rome (IPGRI). A specific programme agenda is being developed and will be discussed by SPIA members at SPIA 29.

Policy-oriented research impact assessment (PORIA) Scoping Study
12 December 2005 Meeting
DRAFT Programme Agenda

Participants: Jim Ryan (SPIA Chair), Ammar Siamwalla (Thailand Development Research Institute), Carol Weiss (Harvard Graduate School of Education), Prabhu Pingali (FAO), David Raitzer (SPIA Consultant) Tim Kelley (SPIA Secretary)

1. Background briefing
 - POR in the CGIAR (goals; expectations for impact);
 - the PORIA study
2. Objectives of the PORIA Scoping Study (and expected outcomes)
3. Meeting objectives
 - a. Assess CGIAR PORIA work produced to date
 - i. Methods
 - ii. Findings
 - b. Identify new methodological opportunities
 - c. Establish reasonable expectations for PORIA
 - d. Decide on the value and desirability of Phase II
4. Scoping study analysis and results
 - a. Overview of PORIA work to date
 - i. Trends in CG investment in POR
 - ii. Analysis of coverage
 - iii. Analysis of selected studies
 - iv. Further analysis required (determination of “viable PORIAs”)
 - b. Non-CGIAR PORIA initiatives (e.g., IDRC, ODI/GDN, ACIAR)
 - i. Methods
 - ii. Strengths, weaknesses
 - c. Presentation of generic IA methodology
 - i. Comments?
 - ii. Alternatives?
 - iii. Improvements
 - d. What are reasonable expectations for assessing the impact of research outputs via policy pathways?
 - e. Follow-up phase needed and worthwhile?
5. Next steps
 - Scoping Study completion
 - Activities / division of tasks
 - Timetable
 - Planning for Phase II
 - Process to identify good candidates for additional (case study) PORIAs
 - Possible consultants
 - Budget implications

Policy-oriented research impact assessment (PORIA) Scoping Study
12 December 2005 Meeting
SD Meeting Room (B-503), FAO

Participants: Jim Ryan (SPIA Chair), Ammar Siamwalla (Thailand Development Research Institute), Carol Weiss (Harvard Graduate School of Education) – via telephone, Prabhu Pingali (FAO), David Raitzer (SPIA Consultant) Tim Kelley (SPIA Secretary)

Summary of Outcomes

A brief overview of the background and motivation for the PORIA study (trends in CGIAR investment in POR, paucity of IAs for POR, etc.) and clarification of some issues (definition of POR) was provided by Jim Ryan. Four key challenges for operationalizing IAs for POR were highlighted: suitable (new) methods, counterfactuals, appropriate indicators, attribution.

Although the accountability imperative is the dominant motivation here, it is recognized that institutional learning and change and the need for more effective targeting is the dominant rationale for some assessments, e.g., as per Carol Weiss' work (indeed, it may not be possible in many cases to trace a linear pathway from research outputs to ultimate impacts.) It remains an open issue as to how much focus should be placed on learning-oriented, as compared with accountability-oriented PORIA studies.

David Raitzer provided an overview and characterization of the existing CGIAR's PORIAs to-date. Of the 25 studies that seek to trace the diffusion, influence and/or impact of CGIAR POR, 14 were produced by IFPRI, 3 by CIFOR, 2 each by IPGRI and WFC and ICARDA, and one each for IWMI and the ASB. In terms of their focus along the impact pathway, only 3 have attempted to quantify the benefits (impacts) from POR, 13 attempt to identify the 'influence' of POR on policies, and virtually all of the 25 studies assess diffusion to some degree.

Major Discussion Points (1-4):

1. 'Supply-led' vs. 'demand led' approaches to assessing impacts. To-date, virtually all CGIAR PORIAs have been supply-led, i.e., started with the output from Centre's research and examined to what extent this had an effect (influence) on a given policy. A demand-led approach would start with a policy change and investigate the (multiple) forces and pathways by which this change has occurred – to observe whether the Centre's work played any role. Both supply and demand led approaches would perhaps be relevant, if a second phase is deemed necessary, and it may be valuable for individual cases to include both.

Some examples (potential topics) for a demand-side approach include policies related to:

- Genetic engineering/genetically modified organisms
- Degradation/erosion (conservation tillage)
- Water use efficiency (irrigation management transfer/water users association)
- Fertilizer, pesticide and credit subsidies in the context of the green revolution
- Risk behaviour/ insurance
- Common property resources

- International Plant Genetics Treaty for Food and Agriculture (supply side approach by IPGRI completed)

Some examples of new supply-side approach -- topics might include:

- Quality improvement research in plant breeding (Pinstrup-Andersen; Ryan)
- Trade policy – tariff cascading effects influencing WTO (Valdes and Deats)
- Farm mechanization (Binswanger and Pingali)

2. Considerations for a second phase:

- combine discussion of the value and desirability of a second phase with IA focal point meeting late in 2006?
- focus group approach (for demand led studies); importance of selecting members at same level in order to avoid dominance of senior managers;
- more in-depth analysis of existing PORIAs, i.e., extend impact pathway (supply led) to go from outputs/outcomes/influences all the way to final impacts on CGIAR goals vs. extending coverage (new PORIA case studies) to other POR topics
- advisory panel in 2006
- quantitative vs. qualitative indicators; pushing the methodological frontier
- the degree to which the initiative should attempt to build up centre IA capacity
- There is no formula as to the optimal time lag from when the POR is conducted as to when PORIAs are undertaken; Maybe follow up studies should always be done after the initial PORIA is done?

3. The discussion frequently revolved around what might be considered ‘reasonable expectations’ for documenting impacts from POR. Is examining ‘diffusion/awareness’ alone sufficient? Is an assessment of only outcomes, or ‘influence’, adequate? In many cases, even this is very challenging to document, given the “subterranean, erratic, volatile influences” that exert themselves directly and indirectly, sometimes haphazardly, on policy makers and government officials. Finally, is there an expectation (from donors) that more assessments of ultimate ‘impacts’ should be attempted? Is that feasible given the often long and circuitous (not linear) route from research findings to changes in policy?

4. There have been several other recent attempts to document links between research and policy, e.g., IDRC and ODI studies. In particular, the IDRC studies were clearly focused on identifying the key factors (+ and -) that facilitate (or inhibit) the use of research information in influencing policy, with less emphasis on the accountability imperative. The IDRC case studies all relied on qualitative information – narratives supporting the claims based on many interviews. Inference in these cases was not based on quantitative analysis of the interview results, but rather was based on interpretation by case leaders. It was noted that this does not allow for the basis of conclusions to be clear. The IDRC study used a typology of influences:

- agenda setting
- broadening policy horizons
- expanding policy capacities
- affecting policy regimes
- developing new policy regimes
- impacts.

These were used as descriptions rather than prescriptions in the study. Carol did not think the IDRC outcome mapping concepts were very useful.

Conclusions (5-10):

5. The scoping study work done by Raitzer analysing the number, type and characteristics of the CGIAR PORIAs to-date provides a good assessment of what has been achieved by the Centres thus far. Some good studies have been identified that document impact (rice policy in Vietnam; two studies in Bangladesh) and influence (C&I for forest management, ASB, and policy research in Malawi). However, SPIA believes this is inadequate given strong donor interest in POR impacts and a desire for metrics that are further down along the impact pathway, i.e., closer to goals of poverty alleviation and sustainable systems of agricultural production (ref: Donor Demands study)

6. Given the investment to-date in POR by the CGIAR, conservatively estimated at over \$800 million, and if compared to CGI impact assessments, the range and number of POR impact assessments, particularly those that go beyond mere 'diffusion' and examine 'influence' and 'impact', seems inadequate. Having said this, SPIA recognizes the higher degree of difficulty (methodological challenges) in attempting to document impact from POR.

7. The results of the scoping study, building on the preliminary work by Raitzer, should be written up and produced as a SPIA/SC document, as a basis for embarking on a phase II study. Ryan, Kelley and Raitzer to complete the draft report by mid-late January.

8. Several options (or combinations) will be considered in undertaking a second phase to this study:

(a) selecting from the existing set of 25 studies several that document 'influence' and seek to extend those analyses to include 'impacts', i.e., quantify economic and non-economic benefits associated with the documented policy changes.

(b) new studies, suggested by IA focal points, SPIA or advisory panel., and using a demand-side perspective, seek to document the influence/impact of CGIAR work in those areas, e.g., pesticide policy, credit policy, fertilizer policy, intl plant genetic treaty, risk, marginal lands, influence of IRRI on national rice research institutions, role of IPGRI and centres in creation of IPGR trust fund.

(c) identifying CGI / IPM impact assessments for which success depended critically on a specific science policy or facilitation of a regulation (e.g., cassava mealy bug) and seek to attribute part of the overall benefits achieved to the supportive policy-oriented research that was required, i.e., splitting up the technological and policy attributable impacts of the successful research.

An optimal mix of these approaches has yet to be determined. One possibility would be approximately two cases from each category. However, there may also be more value to one of these approaches than the others.

9. One potential venue for interacting with the centre IA focal points may be the focal point meeting planned for 2006. If many focal points will attend the IAAE conference in the Gold Coast, it may be possible to "piggy-back" this onto the meeting.

10. Names of candidates were suggested who might be able to lead the next phase: Tom Walker, George Norton, Akin Adesina, and ... (an Indian national working on CRSP, Basics—forgot name ??). Might ask Bill Clark for suggestions as well (or consider him if available?). Others mentioned included Will Masters, Jim Oehmke, Wally Falcon, Alex McCalla, and Paul Heisey. Fred Carden of IDRC would be approached to ascertain his ideas and to see if a book on the IDRC study is to be published and Cary Fowler on the IPGR trust

fund. Carol thought that sociologists rather than historians and political scientists would be appropriate to become involved in PORIAs.

11. Carol would try and obtain documents on “Project Hindsight” of the Defence Department which tried to take a demand side approach to identify the technological innovations which were instrumental ingredients to the development of weapons capabilities using a historical narrative approach.

12. Carol and Ammar would be prepared to continue during 2006 on an ad hoc basis as advisory panel members.