

**Report of the First Meeting of the
Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation
12 May 2004 Aleppo, Syria**

Attending:

Richard Harwood, Chair, SPME
Vir Chopra, SPME
Ken Fischer, SPME
Hans Gregersen, SPIA
Ruben Echeverria, SPIA
Onesmo ole-MoiYoi, SPPS
Sirrka Immonen, Secretary, SC Secretariat
Tim Kelley, SC Secretariat

Observers (open session):

John Vercoe, ILRI Board Chair
Carlos Sere, ILRI DG
Luc Sas, Belgium
Meredith Soule, USA

Item 1: Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the Standing Panel Meeting and welcomed the members who introduced themselves. The Chair also briefed the meeting about the appointment of the new SPME members who will be joining the Standing Panel from July 1st.

Item 2: Review and Adoption of the Agenda

The SPME meeting agenda was approved and it was decided to discuss the Items in a revised order handling the items involving SPME and SPIA first, and the items requiring confidentiality on review panel selections last.

Item 3: External Programme and Management Reviews

4th IFPRI EPMR

The Chair briefed the meeting on the procedures set in place to keep a distance between the IFPRI EPMR and the Science Council Chair who had been IFPRI DG during the period currently under review. The SPME Chair was representing the SC Chair in all matters that required SC Chair involvement and the SC Chair was kept informed.

The Panel Secretary Tim Kelley gave an update on the EPMR process. Bruce Gardner, Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Maryland, had been appointed as Chair. He had attended the 2003 IFPRI Board meeting from 1-3 March, 2004. In

consultation with the Panel Chair and IFPRI, five panel slots had been confirmed covering the following broad areas:

- 1) agricultural production and environment related issues;
- 2) food, consumption and nutrition;
- 3) markets, trade and institutions and development strategy and governance;
- 4) ISNAR programme, capacity strengthening, communication, IFPRI 2020 Vision, impact and DG's office;
- 5) IFPRI governance and management.

Drawing from a SC-approved shortlist of candidates for each of the first four slots (the fifth was being handled by the CGIAR Secretariat), and after consultation with the Panel Chair, SC Secretariat had begun approaching preferred candidates to ascertain interest and availability to serve on the panel. Dunstan Spencer from Sierra Leone had been already appointed for Slot 4 and he had attended the IFPRI 2020 Food and Nutrition Security Conference, held in Uganda 1-3 April, 2004.

The Initial Phase of the EPMR will take place from 1-7 October 2004, at the IFPRI HQs in Washington D.C. This will allow some interaction between the Panel and the IFPRI Board who will be holding a special meeting from 7-8 October. The dates for the Main Phase Visit have been tentatively set as 1-12 February 2005 prior to IFPRI's regular Board meeting to be held during the first week of March in Delhi. It is expected that some field visits will be undertaken between October and December. The Panel Report will be submitted to the SC in February 2005 and to the Group at AGM'05.

The SPME discussed issues important for this EPMR, which would be submitted to the Panel. Issues would also be requested from the Centre, from members and stakeholders and from the SC during the plenary session. A tentative list of such issues included:

- IFPRI's strategic planning and how it reflects the new CGIAR Vision and Strategy
- IFPRI's leadership of one and involvement in two other CGIAR Challenge Programmes – implications for its core programmes.
- Strategy for absorbing the ISNAR mandate and function into its own
- New DG and new organizational structure (new division)
- More decentralized operations (more staff in the field)

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- CBC observer emphasised the need for the Science Council to assume responsibility over the entire EPME where the programmatic and management aspects are integrated, including ultimate responsibility for the entire review Panel.
- Although the CGIAR Secretariat has responsibility over the management and governance aspects of the review, the Science Council approves the member short lists and the Panel Chair is involved in the selection of the entire panel.
- EPMRs are becoming more streamlined and forward looking. Centres are asked to provide documents and material prepared specifically for the EPMR to facilitate its assessment of quality, productivity and strategic issues. Careful Medium-Term planning will also help to structure the EPMR.

- Centre Boards could learn more about the use of CCERs which could become a very powerful tool for the EPMRs.

5th CIMMYT EPMR

The CIMMYT EPMR was discussed during a closed session. The Panel Secretary, Sirkka Immonen, briefed the meeting on progress in planning the review. CIMMYT will hold joint Board meeting with IRRI in 8-12 November probably in China. The Panel Chair and member responsible for governance and management will attend the Board meeting. CIMMYT has suggested that the Initial Phase be held in early December, 2004, and that the Main Phase would take place during the second half of February, 2005. CIMMYT will hold a Board meeting 14-18 March in Mexico. The CIMMYT EPMR report will be submitted to the Science Council in March 2005 and to the Group at AGM'05.

The Secretariat had prepared a candidate list of potential Panel Chairs drawing names from the SC members and from the Centre. SPME came up with a short list of five names to be presented to the SC during the SC closed session. The Standing Panel also discussed a preliminary list of Panel members within the broad slots of plant breeding, biotechnology, social sciences and natural resources management. The Panel member short list will be compiled along with defining the Panel slots in more detail at the Secretariat and in consultation with the Panel Chair when appointed.

The SPME discussed the main issues that should be addressed during the EPM, in addition to the standard Terms of Reference. The following issues were identified:

- The future of maize and wheat breeding in the developing country context and CIMMYT's role
- CIMMYT's role in Africa
- ICARDA-CIMMYT relations; CIMMYT's role in CWANA
- CIMMYT's presence in Asia
- IRRI-CIMMYT alliance
- State of social science and economics at CIMMYT
- Production systems and agronomy research in CIMMYT
- CIMMYT's new strategic plan and its programme orientation and synergy in maize and wheat research.

The Centre will also be requested to provide a list of issues of particular importance for the EPMR and the CGIAR members will be approached for identifying issues.

EPMRs of CIFOR, ICRAF, WorldFish Centre and IWMI

The EPMRs of CIFOR (1st) and ICRAF (2nd) took place in 1998 and the WorldFish Centre EPMR (2nd) in 1999. The next EPMRs of these three Centres are tentatively scheduled for 2005.

Future EPMRs

The EPMRs of ICARDA, ILRI and IWMI are tentatively scheduled for 2006. The DG of IWMI has asked the 3rd EPMR to be implemented earlier rather than later. The SPME decided not to bring the IWMI EPMR forward but to recommend to the SC it be commissioned for 2006 as earlier scheduled.

Item 4: Systemwide Programme Reviews

Systemwide Programme on Alternative to Slash and Burn (ASB)

The Panel Secretary Tim Kelley briefed the meeting on progress in implementing the external review of the ASB. The review is jointly organised by SPME and SPIA following the iSc approved Terms of Reference. ASB is one of the oldest Systemwide programmes and the review has particular emphasis on impact. The review is planned to be conducted by a small panel including two members and the Chair. World Agroforestry Centre, the convenor of this SWP, has suggested three key areas of expertise:

- agricultural development economics or allied social science/farming systems
- forestry or conservation ecology
- organizational aspects of linking science and technology to sustainable development.

The Panel profile will be decided in consultation with the Panel Chair, Chairs of SPME and SPIA and the Panel secretary, taking the Centre suggestions into consideration. The complete panel will be identified by the end of June.

The Panel's initial visit has been planned to coincide with the ASB's global steering group meeting in Bogor early December, to be followed by field visits in Indonesia and nearby countries where ASB field projects are underway. The review is expected to be completed by mid 2005.

The ASB commissioned its own desk study in 2003. This CCER (*Tracing Strategic Typology of Natural Resource Management Impact Pathways: A case study of the Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn Program* by Sissi Liu) was conducted to prepare relevant material, aid the panel in understanding the unique nature and structure of the program and identify the impact channels of the ASB.

In the discussion following points were raised:

- The ASB has been conducting cutting-edge science in INRM. The Panel needs to have systems and ecosystems perspective for assessing the very integrated themes.
- The review will require a lot of field work and attendance to Steering Committee meeting. This has been taken into account in the budget.
- The ASB was involved in the proposed Challenge Programme for Rainforest, together with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature. The work of ASB is similar to that of the two other organisations in that it studies livelihood options with a conservation aim. The complementarity comes from ASB's work in the forest margins interphase.

- Another important area of ASB research is associated to global climate change and involves work on carbon credits conducted in Peru. ASB was a potential partner in the proposed Challenge Programmes on Climate Change.
- Systemwide programmes can be a useful intermediate organisational form the proof of which is in their added value to Centre programme form. In general they have marginal extra costs and are modest in scale. Their governance is clear within the responsibility of the convening Centre Board.

Systemwide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis

The PRGA is the last Systemwide programme in the TAC established list that has not been reviewed. The plans to conduct this SWP review coincide with SPIAs planned impact study on participatory research. The SPIA Chair briefed the meeting on SPIA's plans. In the initial phase in 2004 SPIA will define typology for participatory research and conduct an inventory of past and current research activities with a participatory approach within the CGIAR. It will also conduct synthesis on impact research methodologies and Centre impact work in this area.

General points were raised regarding SWPs:

- The different kinds of Systemwide initiative across research theme in the CGIAR System should be revisited.
- This could link with the Priorities and Strategies exercise to establish which are the best operational modes for addressing different research themes, and ultimately lead to realignment within the CGIAR in the longer term.
- The lessons learnt could lead to strategies for implementing different research themes. The latest such study assessing strategy for addressing a particular theme was the review chaired by Ted Henzell of the Systemwide Programmes with an Ecoregional Approach.
- There is pressure to conduct such review for drawing the lessons learnt

In conclusion, SPME decided not to launch the review on the PRGA programme in 2004, but will reconsider this study once the initial phase of the SPIA impact study is completed. SPME will interact with SPIA on this activity. SPME budget will be adjusted accordingly. SPME will consider the need for a strategic study on the SWP/ERP programme format as related to addressing specific themes.

Item 5: Stripe Reviews

Training Evaluation and Impact Assessment

The Panel Secretary Sirkka Immonen briefed the meeting on progress in the implementation of the training study, which is jointly organised by SPIA and SPME. The Panel consists of Elliot Stern as Chair and Lucia de Vaccaro and John Lynam as members. The Panel, including Secretary, plans to conduct a pilot field visit to Kenya end of May-early June. During the visit, the Panel will plan the timetable and sequence of the subsequent field visits; finalise the workplan and the methodological instruments for

surveys and interviews; and define the role of resource persons. The Panel is planning to visit the two CGIAR Centres that have headquarters in Kenya: ICRAF and ILRI, meet with the staff of other Centres with offices in Nairobi: IPGRI, CIP, ICRISAT, CIAT's TBSF and CIMMYT, and visit ICIPE, an international institute similar to the CGIAR Centres. It will have meetings with relevant people from the main national agricultural research institutions in Kenya, including universities, and it will also visit ASARECA.

The Panel's inception report has been shared with Centres and their responses will be taken into consideration in further planning and reporting. The Panel's plans are to conduct subsequent field visits and collect further data during summer and autumn 2004, report on progress through the SC and SPIA at AGM, complete all data gathering by February 2005 and submit the report by summer 2005.

Social Science and Policy Stripe Review

Initially this study was planned as an integrated study covering aspects of strategy, evaluation and impact assessment and to be coordinated by SPME. The question was raised by SPIA whether the two themes, social sciences in the CGIAR and impact of policy research, were close enough to warrant a single study. Parallel to this, the SC is finalising a book, "*Researching Culture in AgriCulture*", which is a direct outcome of the CGIAR Social Research Conference organised by the iSC at CIAT in 2002 and reflects the original, very diverse, social science research in CGIAR Centres.

The following points were made in the discussion:

- The forthcoming book appears to focus on key areas of social science research and not on the on-going research.
- This book may present the baseline for departure from which the Terms of Reference could be raised for the potential stripe study.
- There could be need for a desk study to establish the status of social science activities in the CGIAR, including a) assessment and analysis of the perceived instability and inability to attract top level social scientists; and b) review of the balance between stand alone research and service oriented function of social sciences.
- SPPS would need to be involved in any possible study; the impetus should come from there.
- Economics should not be excluded from the study.
- Currently the arguments for a stripe study are not convincing and contractual issues do not apply exclusively to social sciences.
- Human resource issues should be kept separate from the social science research issues.
- There has been constant request from the Group to SPIA to conduct a policy research impact study; the relationship with a social science stripe study and the SPIA study is not clear.
- There are other complicated areas where exploratory activities are going on, such a political economy; social science has not been considered the highest priority in general.
- The SPME could explore donor and CDC interest in this topic for a study.

In conclusion, SPME decided to postpone decision on a Social Science stripe study until the book has been published after which it will reconsider the need for such a stripe study. SPME's action is independent from SPIA's policy related impact study, which also will be postponed by one year. The SC budget will be adjusted accordingly.

Item 6: Evaluation Processes in the CGIAR

The SPME Chair briefed the meeting on the long process that preceded the preparation of the draft paper "*Changing Monitoring and Evaluation in the CGIAR System*". The process was started nearly six years ago in response to the CGIAR System review, and it had been a joint effort of SCOER, SPIA and CGIAR Secretariat involving consultations with Centre Boards, DGs and many key stakeholders. The main message in the document, still relevant, is that the Centre Boards are the main body responsible for establishing processes for assuring quality and relevance of Centre activities through peer reviews, CCERs and other self-assessment means. The Science Council's role is to audit and assure the quality of the internal review processes.

In the discussion the following main points were made:

- Essentially this document has been accepted
- Its main messages should be kept but the document needs to provide the interphase for performance measurement and the revised Medium-Term planning process
- Performance measurement needs to fit with the monitoring framework
- Instructions on CCERs need strengthening
- Can the Boards be relied on when the System is becoming more cross-Centre oriented and there is a de-emphasis on Centre focus? CPs do not necessarily report to a Centre Board (e.g. Water and Food).

In conclusion the SPME decided to suggest to the SC that the document be revised by SC2 in September, including a change of name that more accurately reflects the contents and taking into account the process of developing performance indicators and the need for clear instruction for more effective use of the CCERs as a self-assessment tool.

Item 7: Performance Measurement process

The Standing Panel discussed the Performance measurement process in connection with development of the overall evaluation processes (Item 6) and development of the Medium-term plans (Item 8). The SC has been asked to be involved in the development of five performance indicator elements: Quality and relevance of staff; Quality and relevance of programmes; Outputs; Outcomes; Impacts.

The following points were raised:

- Indicators must measure what the CGIAR is supposed to be doing.
- It is important to define what kinds of outputs be included and what is their quality and relevance for reaching the goals?
- The indicators should not count what is countable; the system should not mechanistic.

- SPME should think of kinds of deliverables from Centre work that could be covered by output indicators
- EU evaluation uses scale: for instance for achieving the milestones: excellent, good, sufficient, not sufficient.
- There is need to capture the broader picture and involve Boards.
- Where does the authority come from to develop (WB) indicators for only the Centres; the CGIAR System with three independent parties: the independent Centres, the independent Science Council and the independent donors – all bound by common goals; accountability of all is needed.
- The process should be put to place by the responsible Centres.
- Publishing is part of following up on the findings – scientists' responsibility and right; their achievements must be recognised.

The SPME will work on some models for presenting to the CDC. Preparatory work for indicator development includes consideration of how to measure impact. Selected Standing Panel members could work in the core SC group.

Item 8: Science Tracking and Medium-Term Plans

SPME has worked together with the SC Secretariat in revising the MTP guidelines. Draft guidelines have been shared with the CGIAR Secretariat. The MTPs will be requested from Centres, Systemwide and Ecoregional programmes and Challenge Programmes. The SPME will engage in the analysis of programme and project flows, synergies and efficiencies. The MTPs, built on a logframe base, provide an excellent means for the SC to monitor the relevance of science across the system and subsequently inform the CGIAR members and stakeholders and advice the Centres of their forward planning. To monitor and report on MTPs in a systematic fashion requires establishment of a framework and a database for tracking outputs and assessing milestones in the logframe based plan. The MTP-based database will permit a more comprehensive analysis of the ways in which programme elements within Centres are leveraged through the instruments of Systemwide and Challenge Programmes to gain efficiency of research output.

The SC has requested MTPs to be submitted by the end of July 2004 to allow the SC members to prepare their assessment by SC2 in September. SPME will coordinate the MTP assessment and provide instructions to SC members for the MTP review.

Item 9: Challenge Programmes

The SPME Chair briefed the meeting on the process of reviewing the Challenge Programmes. Until now the SC has seen limited amount of science in the documentation. Three SPME members, Dick Harwood, Ken Fischer and Vir Chopra had provided initial comments based on the CP progress reports to the SC Chair. These reports were mostly focused on organisation and management. They did not allow assessment of quality and relevance or a scientific review in general. On the Web sites there is not detailed information either for such a review. The CPs leaders have been requested to provide a

detailed Medium-Term plan. The SC has been asked to take a more synergistic view of the CPs and the MTPs should allow this.

The following points were made during the discussion:

- Competitive bidding could lead into a collection of uncoordinated project. Competitive grants system will not address the problem of product development.
- Size of programme could help keep the transaction costs down.
- Contractual problems had been face due ti intellectual property issues.
- Should there be more CPs and in which areas should they be?
- The CPs cannot be evaluated without an assessment of the SWPs.
- What are all the alternative mechanisms for programmes?
- The middle ground in terms of operational modes is important. Only some real big themes could be handled through CPs, most other could be addressed through an alternative mode.
- Currently funding mechanisms are no favouring SWPs; seed money from Wb is minimal. However, SWPs should be encouraged. They should be endorsed by the SC and resourced. Programmatic analysis needs to be linked with funding decisions and solutions.
- Centre Boards are concerned of the high transaction costs, the fact that limited new funds have been introduced and that this creates problems for Boards that are responsible of fund delivery.
- In the long there is danger that funds move from Centres to CPs, and yet the CPs are not addressing different themes than Centres – they have the same kind of research, same crops and same partners. If Centre strategies and priorities meet the needs adequately there should not be need for additional programmes. It should be possible to carry out the CGIAR business through the CGIAR Centre research agenda.
- Other than scientific reasons draw the CPs.
- Science and mission should drive the strategy; politics should not drive the strategy
- CPs and SWPs should help pull Centres out of narrowly focused research; there are compelling reasons coming from stakeholders for larger complementarities.
- CPs should address issues of innovative high science – otherwise they are indistinguishable from SWPs. CPs’ major motivation is to provide new mechanisms for big funding.
- Need to define the CPs better, including leadership, mechanisms for selection, management, funding and product development.

In conclusion, the SPME decided to recommend that the SC should not try to do an assessment of science and quality, but instead it should review the MTPs carefully to assess how the programmes are nested in the overall CGIAR research agenda. The SC needs to look at all instruments.

Item 10: SPME operational mode and relation with the SC

The SPME did not discuss this Item.

Item 11: Other Business

There were no issues to be handled under other business.