

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME)**

**4 April 2005 – IWMI, Sri Lanka**

**9:00 – 17:00**

Present:

Ken Fischer (Chair)

Betty del Rosario

Sirkka Immonen (Secretary)

Manny Lantin (Observer)

Items 4 and 5 only:

Hans Gregersen

Jim Ryan

Ruben Echeverria

Tim Kelley

### **Item 1: Chair's Opening Remarks**

Ken Fisher opened the meeting. There were apologies from SPME members Leslie Cooksy and Vir Chopra.

### **Item 2: Review and Adoption of the Agenda**

Agenda was adopted. For Items to be discussed together with SPIA and SPME, Items 4, 5 and 8, time had been set for joint meeting at the end of the day.

Manny Lantin emphasised that the New M&E document has not yet been endorsed by the Group, which should be taken into account when discussing Item 6.

SPME Chair summarised expectations from this meeting regarding reporting to the SC. Item 3, 6 and 8 would be brought to the SC for discussion. The remaining agenda Items would be reported for information.

### **Item 3: External Programme and Management Reviews**

Sirkka Immonen briefed SPME on the progress in planning the forthcoming EPMRs of CIFOR, ICRAF and WorldFish Centre. The first ranked CIFOR Panel Chair candidate had been approached and the appointment was pending on final confirmation. Selection of ICRAF and WorldFish Panel Chair was also near completion.

It had already been decided in SPME2 that one joint Panel member in a programmatic slot would be sought for CIFOR and ICRAF reviews. Manny Lantin suggested that a joint member could be also included in governance and management.

The SPME discussed the process whereby strategic issues would be identified for these EPMRs. The list of strategic issues will be shared with the Panel and Centre and the EPMR Panel is expected to address these issues in its report. The Panel also briefly discussed possible issues to be included.

Manny Lantin pointed out that the sub-Saharan Africa Task Force report recommendations are likely to have implications to the ICRAF review. The SSA-TF report is discussed by ExCo in May and by the Group at AGM05. The report and ExCo decisions will be an input to the Panel.

The EPMPR Panels need to be guided to consider the new System Priorities, which will have implications to research planning. It can be expected that CIFOR and ICRAF will be implementing SPs jointly in many areas.

The Panel agreed on the following systematic way of preparing the implementation of EPMPRs. An *ad hoc* team consisting of the SPME Chair, and 1-2 SC/SP members, the Executive Secretary and SC Secretariat Panel Secretary and collaborating closely with the CGIAR Secretariat on management and governance issues, will be responsible for the following:

- assess Chair nominations and draw a ranked long list for SC
- assess existing information of Centre, CCERs etc. to define Panel profile
- compile the strategic issues for the Panel to address
- assess Panel member nominations and draw ranked long lists for SC
- read EPMPR report and identify the most important issues to be discussed at the SC meeting
- one SC member to lead the discussion during plenary and working group session and lead drafting of commentary.

The Panel decided that strategic issues would be requested from the SC members, CGIAR Secretariat, CGIAR members and most important research collaborators. The following documents would also be reviewed for identification of issues:

- the Executive Summary and recommendations of the previous EPMPR
- recent MTP commentaries
- CCER Summaries and recommendations.

To get donors and members views, an initial letter routine sent will be followed up through phone call or other means.

The Panel Secretary briefed SPME on progress in planning for three EPMPRs to be started in 2006, namely 5<sup>th</sup> ICARDA, 2<sup>nd</sup> ILRI and 3<sup>rd</sup> IWMI EPMPR. The Panel agreed to prepare a plan for the subsequent three years for conducting EPMPRs of Centres and Challenge Programmes (CP), which are to be reviewed after five years from start. SPME will investigate what kind of internal performance processes and self-assessments CPs are conducting. With regard to the Sub-Saharan CP, after 12 months from the inception of the CP, the SC will receive a detailed report on the pilot sites work plan and priorities and commission a review to assess the programme.

#### **Action from SPME**

- The SPME will report to the SC the suggested process for identifying strategic issues for EPMPRs and coordinate the process
- The SPME will propose a 3-year plan for EPMPRs of Centres and CPs

#### **Item 4: Systemwide Programme Reviews**

This Item was discussed in a joint session with SPME and SPIA. The Panel Secretary Tim Kelley briefed the Panels about progress in the systemwide programme review. The implementation of the review is on schedule, but the resource requirements will need to be reconsidered against the magnitude and needs of the review.

#### **Item 5: Stripe Reviews**

This Item was discussed in a joint session with SPME and SPIA. The Panel Secretary Sirkka Immonen briefed the Panels about progress in this study. Four questionnaire surveys were started in 2004 and two of them targeting Centre researchers and training officers have been completed. Surveys of Ex-trainees and Centres' research partners are still going on. The Panel members are about to start the field visits to 7 countries in Asia (Thailand and Vietnam), Africa (Kenya, Malawi and Cameroon) and Latin-America (Ecuador and Bolivia), and each Panel member will have responsibility for one region. Centres to be visited in the regions include: ILRI, ICRAF and IITA in Africa, IRRI in Asia, and CIAT and CIP in Latin-America. The study is considerably late from its original schedule and there have been some unexpected difficulties in gathering data and conducting questionnaire surveys among individuals who are difficult to trace. The delay is also due to heavy work load at the Secretariat, and the general lack of suitable methodologies for assessing outcome and impact of training. The study currently employs two research assistants, one assisting in the questionnaire surveys and one assisting in compiling and processing relevant project information and training data.

#### **Action from SPME**

- SPME decided to draft a letter to be sent to the Training Study Panel Chair Elliot Stern from the SC Chair requesting for a specific plan for completing the review within the approved budget and the timeline currently expected, i.e. by SC4 in September.

#### **Item 6: Implementing the New Monitoring and Evaluation System**

The Standing Panel discussed the draft document *Guidelines for External Programme and Management Reviews (EPMR) of the CGIAR Centres*. The Panel considered it essential that the EPMR would be adjusted according to CCERs. If sufficient CCERs are available, the time, Panel size, profile and EPMR focus need to be adjusted. The EPMR must reflect the enhanced role of CCERs when they are satisfactorily used by the Boards as a self-assessment tool. SPME saw need to revise the draft EPMR Guidelines to reflect the new process more explicitly by offering a better menu of options depending on the quality and coverage of CCERs.

Panel Chairs should be involved in reviewing CCERs, checking their Terms of Reference, Report content, Panel composition and quality, and this analysis would affect the number of EPMR Panel members and instruction to the Panel on coverage of different topics.

It was suggested in the new policy document, *New Monitoring and Evaluation System for the CGIAR Centres*, that SC Secretariat and CGIAR Secretariat would produce guidelines for conducting CCERs in consultation with the CBC. SPME decided that these guidelines would be called principles, and the draft document *Principles for conducting Centre Commissioned*

*External Reviews (CCERS)*, with comments received from the CGIAR Secretariat would be shared with the CBC soonest.

SPME discussed the reporting of very sensitive issues by the Panel in a confidential note only to the SC Chair and the CGIAR Director. SPME suggested that all reporting should be open and transparent and confidential reporting should be an exceptional option under the discretion of the Panel Chair.

SPME decided to develop an exit questionnaire for EPMPR Panels and other closely involved in the process. The SC and CGIAR Secretariats will develop the questionnaire to be shared with SPME, which will approve it for implementation.

SPME concluded that the EPMPR Guidelines could be broadly applied to external reviews of CPs but that there were specific aspects to CPs that required specific guidelines to be developed.

**Action from SPME:**

- SPME decided to suggest to the SC that the EPMPR Guidelines need to reflect better the availability of satisfactory CCERs and their coverage of the Centre programmes. The Panel Chair's role in assessing the quality and suitability of CCERs and subsequently in deciding the size, profile and focus of the EPMPR Panel need to be strengthened.
- The SC Chair should share the draft guidelines for conducting CCERs, to be called *Principles*, with the CBC.
- A flowchart will be developed to supplement the EPMPR Guidelines to make the process clear to all involved.
- An exit survey will be conducted among EPMPR Panel and other relevant individuals involved in the implementation. The SC and CGIAR Secretariats will develop a draft questionnaire for SPME's consideration and approval.

**Item 7: Science Tracking and Medium-Term Plans**

The Standing Panel discussed a draft framework for MTP assessment, which introduced a template for rating Centre MTPs according to eight principles.

SPME agreed to suggest the following process:

Each SC member will read all MTPs. SP members will be asked to assist in the assessment of specific MTPs. Consultants will be engaged to review IWMI, Water&Food CP and WorldFish Centre MTPs. Each Centre/CP MTP will be reviewed by three SC/SP members/consultants. Each MTP will have a team leader among the three, who will compile the MTP assessment maintaining the template format. Individual Centre/CP MTP assessment will be pulled together in text format commentary by a drafting team consisting of 3-4 SC members and assisted by the SC Secretariat. The drafting team will correct scale differences among the different Centre commentaries but strong differences in views need to be discussed at the SC meeting.

SPME will be developing the framework and template virtually by end of April and the draft plan will be shared with the SC.

The following timeline will be suggested to the SC:

15<sup>th</sup> June – MTP submissions and distribution to SC and SP members

15<sup>th</sup> July – component commentaries from SC/SP members to the Centre MTP team leaders  
20<sup>th</sup> July – MTP team leaders submit the 1<sup>st</sup> draft MTP commentary to a Drafting team.  
26<sup>th</sup> August - Draft MTP commentary is sent to SC.  
5-9 September – SC meeting

The commentaries need to be frank and straight and Centres are invited to respond. The SC commentary and Centre response will be submitted to ExCo. As the MTPs will be the basis of Performance measurement, SC will judge the adequacy of the annual Output targets. SPME will suggest to the SC a mechanism for reaching agreement (endorsement) of Output targets that Centres are accountable for.

**Action from SPME:**

- SPME will review the MTP assessment framework and propose the process and time frame to the SC to be finalised virtually.
- SPME will suggest to the SC a mechanism for assessing Output targets.

**Item 8: Performance Measurement**

Due to time limitations performance measurement was not discussed in SPME3. SC has the responsibility to review the pilot year performance indicators and Centre submissions and contribute to drawing conclusions from the Pilot year for improving the indicators.

**Item 9: Other Business**

No issues were brought to discussion under Item 9.