

4th Meeting of the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME)

5 September 2005 – WorldFish Center, Penang, Malaysia

8:30 – 18:00

Proceedings

Present:

Ken Fischer (Chair)
Beatriz del Rosario
Leslie Cooksy
Virendra Lal Chopra
Sirikka Immonen (Secretary)

Observers:

Manuel Lantin
Ann Germain (Items 6, 7 and 8)
Meredith Soule (Items 6, 7 and 8)

Item 7:

Hans Gregersen
Jim Ryan
Hermann Waibel
Prabhu Pingali
Ruben Echeverria
Tim Kelley

Item 1: Chair's Opening Remarks

Ken Fisher opened the meeting welcoming members and Manuel Lantin from the CGIAR Secretariat.

Item 2: Review and Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda was adopted. Item 7 on Performance Measurement to be discussed with SPIA was removed till 5 PM.

Manuel Lantin suggested that a draft template for reviewing Challenge Programs as requested by ExCo would be discussed in the section dealing with MTPs.

The external review of the Systemwide Program on Alternatives to Slash and Burn was not in the SPME agenda, but as the review has been organised jointly by SPIA and SPME, it was decided that Beatriz del Rosario and Leslie Cooksy would join a working group on ASB review.

Item 3: Minutes and Follow up Action from last SPME Meeting

The SPME Chair briefly reviewed the progress on action items decided in SPME 3.

Item 3: External Programme and Management Reviews

Action 1: The SPME will report to the SC the suggested process for identifying strategic issues for EPMRs and coordinate the process

Progress: The SPME is trialling a new system to engage all SC members in the oversight of conducting EPMRs. The system uses *ad hoc* teams consisting of SC and Standing Panel members knowledgeable on the research areas of the Center under review to assist in identifying panel members, identifying strategic issues and formulating the SC response to the final report. The strategic issues for World Fish, World Agroforestry and CIFOR have been assembled by the *ad hoc* teams for these Centers drawing from the issues provided by the Center itself, stakeholders and SC members, and relevant documentation. The SPME will propose that the SC review and endorse the list of strategic issues.

Action 2: The SPME will propose a 3-year plan for EPMRs of Centers and CPs.

Progress: Discussion on the follow up to this action item was deferred for the main agenda.

Item 5: Stripe Reviews

Action 1: 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.

Progress: The letter had been sent and the subsequently a new plan had been agreed with the Training Panel Chair including revised budget and timeline. Furthermore some members of SPME and SPIA had been interacting with the Panel Chair about the progress. The Panel had submitted an interim update report to SC4. SPME and SPIA would review alternatives for bringing the report to the AGM even if it wouldn't be fully completed by that time.

Item 6: Implementing the New Monitoring and Evaluation System

Action 1: SPME decided to suggest to the SC that the EPMR Guidelines need to reflect better the availability of satisfactory CCERs and their coverage of the Center 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 EPMR Panel need to be strengthened.

Progress: The new Monitoring & Evaluation document has been endorsed by the Group. The Guidelines agreed by the SC and the CGIAR Secretariat will be shared with ExCo for information in October. The SPME agreed that it is important to have a Plan to implement the new M&E policy.

The central point for the new Guidelines is the engagement of the Boards in the full oversight of conducting CCERs upon which the EPMR can then be focused. To assist the SC has drafted guidelines called *Principles*, for conducting CCERs. .

Action 2: The SC Chair should share the draft guidelines for conducting CCERs, to be called *Principles*, with the CBC.

Progress: The SC Chair had sent the Principles to the CBC but has not yet received any feedback. SPME Chair and the SC Secretariat will follow-up.

It was noted that the Center Boards are independent bodies to decide when and how to use CCERs, but it is vital that they own and adopt the steps of self-assessment that are crucial elements in the new M&E system.

Action 2: A flowchart will be developed to supplement the EPMR Guidelines to make the process clear to all involved.

Progress: SC Secretariat is in the process of drafting an EPMR flowchart and will share it with the SPME and the CGIAR Secretariat.

Action 3: An exit survey will be conducted among EPMR Panels and other relevant individuals involved in the implementation. The SC and CGIAR Secretariats will develop a draft questionnaire for SPME's consideration and approval.

Progress: The SC Secretariat had prepared a draft post-review questionnaire for EPMR Panels. It was decided that Leslie Cooksy would prepare a plan for conducting one or more surveys to help design better practices and to assess past reviews. It would be useful to also learn why approached Panel candidates were unable to accept the offer to join the review team and whether there was something in the process that made it impossible for them to join.

Item 7: Science Tracking and Medium-Term Plans

Action 1: SPME will review the MTP assessment framework and propose the process and time frame to the SC to be finalised virtually.

Progress: Completed for MTP 2006-2008 review.

Action 2: SPME will suggest to the SC a mechanism for assessing Output targets.

Progress: Postponed for discussion in this meeting under Item 7.

Item 4: External Programme and Management Reviews

Sirkka Immonen briefed the Standing Panel about the progress in implementation of the three EPMRs that were to start in the later part of 2005. The 3rd WorldFish Center, 3rd World Agroforestry Center and 2nd CIFOR EPMR are on schedule. Panel selection has been finalised for all the reviews. All three EPMRs will be completed in early 2006 and the reports will be submitted to the Science Council at its 5th meeting and to the Group at AGM 06.

The initial phase of the WorldFish Center EPMR will be 24-29th October and the main phase will be from 30 January to 10 February 2006. Benedict Satia from Cameroon, who will also cover aspects of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, chairs the EPMR. The members are: Bernard Chevassus-au-Louis (France) – Aquaculture and Genetics, Exequiel

González (Chile) – Socioeconomics, Institutions, Policy and Poverty, Steven Blaber (Australia) - Coastal and Marine Fisheries and Resources, and N. Balasubramanian (India) - Center Governance. A consultant to cover finance issues has not yet been identified. Timothy Kelley is the Panel Secretary.

The initial phase of the World Agroforestry Center EPMR will be 7-12th November and the main phase will be 13-24 February, 2006. The review is chaired by Jeff Burley from UK, who also covers areas of Forestry and Forest Genetics. The Panel members include: Kenneth Brooks (USA) - Agroforestry Productivity and Environmental Services, Natural Resource Management and Use; Simeon Ehui (Cote d'Ivoire) – Natural resource economics, Tree products marketing, Agroforestry in livelihoods, and John Strawhorn (USA) - Center Governance and Management. The Panel will have a Finance consultant, Getachew Engida (Ethiopia). Ruben Echeverria is the Panel Secretary.

The initial phase of the CIFOR EPMR will be 12-19th November and the main phase will be from 27th February to 10th March, 2006. The Panel Chair is Niels Elers Koch from Denmark with responsibilities on Forestry and Forest policy. Panel members are: John Parrotta (USA) – Environmental Services, Rashid Hassan (Sudan) - Forests and Livelihoods, Katherine Warner (USA) – Forest Resources Governance, and John Strawhorn (USA) Center Governance and Management. The Panel will have a Finance consultant, Getachew Engida (Ethiopia). Sirkka Immonen is the Panel Secretary.

It was noted that the final selected CIFOR team is geographically very narrow compared to the panel short listing. Some of the putative panel members were not available, which highlights the need to better understand how to attract panel members (see the follow up action item earlier). It was also noted that expertise and merit is the most important criteria for Panel members and where possible diversity balance should be reached without diluting expertise. Better lead-time to better capture people with busy schedules may help. SPME should also see how the review process could be changed so as to allow busy people to join. The short lists ought to be long enough to allow balanced combinations of highly qualified candidates. SPME will work with the SC Secretariat to improve the search process of EPMR Panel candidates to enhance the pool of putative panel members. Furthermore, the SC Secretariat is improving the SC roster.

The EPMRs of ICARDA (5th), ILRI (2nd) and IWMI (3rd) have been commissioned to start in 2006. The ICARDA review is planned to take place just before the departure of the current DG. The Chair selection is on going for these EPMRs.

One of the objectives of the new M&E Policy is to ensure timely (i.e. every 5 years) EPMRs of the Centers. Over the past few years the schedule of EPMRs has slipped. In order to begin a process of timely EPMRs, SPME developed a calendar for EPMRs for 2006-2010, including CPs, and decided to recommend to the SC that the 5th EPMR of CIAT be commissioned and that it should start at the end of 2006 if possible (with reporting in AGM 2007).

Ad hoc panels have been formed to oversee the planning and implementation of EPMR reviews (as reported above under Item 3). SPME will suggest that the following ad hoc panels will serve in the forthcoming EPMRs.

ICARDA: Ken, Vir, Maggie, Jim, Peter

ILRI: Ken, Onesmo, Maggie, Chris, Sirkka
 IWMI: Ken, Jim, Lisa, Tim
 CIAT: Ken, Betty, Mike, Ruben

The SPME considers it very important that the full intent of the new M&E policy will be implemented so that the EPMRs can be streamlined and made lighter in terms of Panel size, time required and subsequently costs involved. The SPME is committed to fully implement the new Policy in the EPMRs conducted in 2007 onwards.

Action from SPME

- SPME will recommend to the SC to commission the EPMR of CIAT and that the review be started at the end of 2006
- SPME will recommend to the SC to commission the EPMRs of IITA and WARDA to be started in 2007
- SPME will propose to SC for endorsement a list of strategic issues for CIFOR, ICRAF and WorldFish EPMRs prepared by the ad hoc teams
- SPME will work with the SC and Standing Panel members to increase the pool of highly qualified woman candidates and candidates from developing regions to serve in external the reviews
- The EPMR calendar will be placed in the Web
- Leslie Cooksy will work with the Secretariat to develop surveys for improving the EPMR process
- The SPME will develop and adhere to a Plan to implement the new Policy on EPMRs by 2007.

Item 5: Systemwide Programme Reviews

The SPME discussed a background document on Systemwide and Ecoregional Programs (SWEPS). The Panel addressed two issues: 1) What more needs to be done for reviewing the SWEPS and should any more reviews have an impact element and therefore SPIA involvement. 2) How to extract lessons learnt from the implementation of the SWEPS so that some could serve in the implementation of the new System Priorities.

Of all SWEPS listed, some have been more successful in getting funding and operating their programs¹. The SWEPS that were originally approved by the TAC and that have had time to mature have been systematically reviewed by the SC, and before that TAC. The SWEP on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis is the last one of the mature programs that has not been reviewed. The SPME considers that this review which has previously been postponed is timely and recommends that the SC will commission it for 2006.

This review would look at the added value the Program has brought to the area of participatory research. The review would need to assess the validity and explicitness of the Program's goals, and to what extent they have been reached. Both mainstreaming participatory research on one hand and mainstreaming gender analysis on the other hand have potential to influence the System. Is there a formal recognition and funding of PR and GA in

¹ The Executive Alliance is annually reviewing the SWEPS together with the CGIAR Secretariat in order to guide allocation of WorldBank funding.

the individual Centers, and to what extent is this integrated into the research in Centers. The review should address reasons for both success and lack of it.

The SPME decided that the SC should not commission external reviews for other SWEPS that have not been covered by external reviews so far. SPME considers that some of the SWEPS will have a particular role in implementing the System Priorities. For example some of them appear to address large global problems such that they may more appropriately be a CP in order to capture the maximum alternative suppliers; others provide more specific and more Center focused partnerships or the scope is more tight on a specific sectoral or ecoregional problem; some may have fulfilled their original objectives justifying a closure; some may have been relatively ineffective and would therefore better be closed.

The SPME notes that there is a wide range of functions and purposes among the SWEPS. This experience over the last 10 years or so will be valuable in the implementation of the new system priorities.

Thus SPME recommends that a meta-review be organised to assess the viability and functions of the SWEPS. This review should be conducted in consultation with the Alliance and with the CG Secretariat and it should draw from all of the past Systemwide program reviews and CCERS to determine:

- a) assess the status of the SWEPS to identify those that have met their objectives, those that are essential for the implementation of the System Priorities and those that are not productive and make recommendations for maintaining the SWEP status, being closed down or being elevated to a CP status.
- b) determine the profile of the function of the different SWEPS with the aim of defining a few typographies
- c) align the objectives of the SWEPS with the new system priorities;
- d) assess “best practice” management and governance for the different typologies
- e) assess investor interest in the SWEPS

The SPME proposed that a consultant working with the SC and in consultation with the CG Secretariat and the Executive Alliance should conduct the meta-review.

Once realigned, the SPME proposes a system for SWEPS M&E that is fully aligned with ongoing mainstream M&E processes such as:

- 1) the convening Center provides a SWEPS MTP for review by the SC
- 2) each participating Center clearly indicate those outputs that are part of the SWEP
- 3) convening Center Boards (or appropriate SWEPS governance) periodically commission CCERS of SWEPS as part of their oversight
- 4) EPMR are specifically tasked to review the M&E processes in place for the SWEP

Action from SPME

- SPME recommends that the SC will commission an external review of the PRGA SWEP; SPME will develop the TOR for the study in consultation with SPIA (which is planning a broader impact study on participatory research)
- SPME working with the Alliance and with the CG Secretariat will develop Terms of Reference for a consultant to conduct a meta-evaluation of the SWEPS; and develop a short list of potential consultants
- SPME will incorporate clearer instruction about SWEPS into the MTP guidelines and into the TOR for the EPMRs

Item 6: Science Tracking and Medium-Term Plans

The SPME discussed the need to further develop the MTP logframe for science tracking over time.

There is also a need to develop a framework that will help align the MTPs with the new System Priorities. The current practice is for Centers to report the proportion of funding in each MTP Project going to each of the CGIAR output categories. With the new System Priorities there is need to monitor both the research content alignment and resource allocations. SPME will work in consultation with SPPS and the CGIAR Secretariat in developing recommendations for adjusting the resource allocation reporting with the new System Priorities. There is also a need to develop an on-line system for MTP submissions.

In the discussion on the implementation of these tasks the SPME considered a stepwise approach.

1. The current focus is on the development of solid logframes around which a reliable PM and M&E process can be built. This is ongoing and SPME plans a workshop with the CDDC in order to continue to upgrade the quality of the logframes and the process. The CPs should be involved in this process.
2. The next step will be the alignment of the MTP with the new System Priorities, both in terms of logframe content alignment and resource allocation tracking. It is expected that the System Priorities will be endorsed by the Group. SPME will work with SPPS and the CGIAR Secretariat on the practices required for alignment.
3. At the same time as the alignment, SPEM and the CGIAR Secretariat will develop a framework that tracks the allocation of resources to the new priorities.
4. An on line system will be developed for the MTP designed to implement the new priorities. The SC secretariat will work together with the CGIAR Secretariat to develop an on line model for trialling in 2006 and application in 2007.

As a separate matter, Manuel Lantin briefed the Panel on a current request from ExCo for the Challenge Programs to report annually on governance, partnerships, results and finances. This special annual report would cover aspects about the CP that are now covered in the annual reports of the Centers and in the MTP. Observers noted that donors would like to receive harmonised reports from Centers and Programs and occasionally donors require special reporting; i.e. The Gates Foundation requires a biannual report from the HarvestPlus CP. It was also noted that the proposed annual report would be an added line of reporting for the CP.

In consideration of these issues SPME felt that the Challenge Programmes should be covered by the same general M&E policy applied to Centers and would use the same instruments i.e. MTP (as is already in place) and PM as annual means and CCER and EPMRs for the longer time frame. Thus SPME suggested that the MTP guidelines for the CPs would be expanded to include elements of specific interest for the ExCo, such as transaction costs and partnership arrangements. It also noted that if CP wishes to provide annual reports to their investors and stakeholders they are encouraged to do so (but not part of the M&E oversight of the SC).

Action from SPME

- SPME will prepare contributions in the three areas: 1) alignment of MTPs with SPs; 2) monitoring of resource allocation to SPs; 3) on-line reporting of MTPs. SPME and SPPS will interact in this task
- The CGIAR Secretariat will be asked to draft an additional component to be included in the MTP Guidelines for the CPs. The suitability of the suggested arrangements would be checked with ExCo.

Item 7: Performance Measurement

Quality and relevance of programs

One element of the proposed PM systems is the evaluation of the quality and relevance of programs. The SC has been asked to build this into the EPMR process. The SPME felt that an EPMR assessment, based on a thorough analysis of different aspects of Center processes and performance, formed the best basis for a PM indicator for quality of programs. However, SPIA felt that assessment of relevance in a PM system was better done through outcome and impact indicators rather than through the 5-year EPMRs.

The SPME noted that explicit criteria for the assessment of both relevance and quality were needed to set standards for all EPMRs. The SPME would develop such criteria and the Chair of the EPMR would be instructed in the implementation of the assessment based on these criteria. However the Panel also noted the need to allow each EPMR panel freedom to assess quality and relevance using their own ways and judgement around these parameters. EPMR panel would then be asked to rate the Centre for quality of programs specifically for the PM purpose. The indicator would be a SC endorsed rating.

One issue with the use of the EPMR for the PM purpose was how to maintain annually the rating of the EPMR conducted every five years. The SPME decided that:

- a positive rating would stay in effect between EPMRs (i.e. for 5 years)
- a negative rating could be changed (up graded) based on the SC assessment of the actual response by the Center as seen in the ongoing M&E process.

Action from SPME

- SPME will develop a broad set of criteria for program quality and relevance to guide the EPMR panels and decide on a quality rating scale.
- The Chairs of the EPMRs will be briefed on the application and purpose of the PM evaluation for program quality
- The SPME will recommend a suitable mechanism to be used in the PM system to upgrade the EPMR based quality rating within the 5-year period as necessary.

Outputs

SPME and SPIA discussed the use of the MTP Logframe output targets for the PM purpose. They acknowledged that there is a moral hazard that Centers would aim at very modest targets so as to be able to achieve them easily. However, it was felt that there is need to move forward with the PM system and the output indicator based on the MTPs is an improved one even with its weaknesses compared to the alternative PM indicators based on counts of items that may not relate to the real purpose of the CG research system. One problem is the lag

phase of adjusting the MTPs to suit the PM system. In the pilot year and in 2006 output targets will be used that were identified in the 2004-2006 and 2005-2007 MTPs, respectively, which were not developed for the purpose of monitoring achievement. Now that the MTPs are being carefully monitored and logframes assessed by the SC, the quality of the outputs and output targets will eventually flow into the PM system. Thus as the PM system evolves, the SC needs to guard against lack of ambition and risk taking in research planning through the MTP assessment.

The mechanism for deriving at an acceptable set of output targets for reporting, and assessing the PM reports was discussed. The SC will not be involved in decisions on individual targets. Rather SPME and SPIA decided that in addition to the SC commentary of MTPs covering logframe planning, SC should engage in interaction with the Centres for improving the outputs and the output targets (see Item 8). This would be the most productive means for reaching a common understanding in this area where there is a mutual need by Centers and their Boards and by the SC for enhancing the M&E process.

The SC will carefully review the output targets in the next set of PM. If necessary the SC will make a commentary on the magnitude of the overall output targets of the Center.

Outcome

SPME and SPIA recommend including one indicator for outcome. The suggested outcome indicator is the aggregate rating by the SC of 5 outcome statements from the Center based on outputs delivered over the preceding 3 years. The rating would be based on the SC's assessment of the clarity of the statement in describing the outcome and the existence of evidence and documentation to support the outcome statement.

Impact

SPIA had developed a detailed instruction and assessment design, which was not discussed.

Quality of staff

SPME and SPIA were in favour of maintaining one indicator for staff quality, namely peer reviewed publications per researcher. However, the set of acceptable journals should be defined, for instance following examples of other research institutes using a similar indicator. The need of weights for different disciplines could be considered.

Conclusions on Potential to perform indicators

Peer-reviewed publishing and the EPMR rating were considered suitable indicators for program quality. The indicator of joint publishing with developing country partners was seen as an important measure of partnerships and thus as a proxy for relevance, and together with citation analysis would be suitable indicator for program relevance. All these four indicators should fall under a single element. SPME and SPIA decided that EPMR rating should not be used as performance indicator for research relevance, but relevance should be covered through assessment of outcomes and impacts, and through the EPMR process.

Action from SPME/SPIA:

- SPME and SPIA will make recommendation to the SC on the finalisation of all PM indicators within the programmatic elements of the PM system.
- SPME and SPIA will finalise a report on SC recommendations for the PM system in 2006.

Item 8: SC Commentary on MTPs

The SPME discussed the quality of the MTP submissions and how the guidelines could be improved. The SPME noted the overall improvement of the quality of the MTP and the commitment of the Centers to this part of the M&E process. SPME is aware that in the next submissions more attention will be given to the alignment of the MTP to the new system priorities. Thus the focus of the commentary for the 2005 assessment has been on the logframe planning, system synergy and alignment to the PM process.

SPME feels that it is important to provide feed-back to the Centers as soon as possible so that the SPME can a) hear from the Centers about their requirements in the MTP process, b) improve the MTP Guidelines and have them submitted early in 2006 and c) help improve the output targets used for the PM reporting in 2006. SPME will explore possibilities to interact with Center focal points in a specific MTP workshop intended to create common understanding on what is required of the Logframe so that it can be used for the PM system, and for improving the MTP in general.

SPME discussed the general features of the MTP submissions for general feedback to Centers. The following items were raised:

- Compared to the previous year's MTP submissions, the clarity and consistency were greatly improved;
- Need to build impact studies into research projects; not report as separate projects;
- Centres often have process projects separate from research projects, when they could be integrated;
- Over-reporting of collaborations- need to define those that matter;
- Need clarity on what constitutes an IPG;
- Include key assumptions and rationale behind the research;
- Synergies between Centers are not clearly shown; in a significant collaboration both partners should indicate the output;
- Development type activities such as grass root level training is very common;
- The need to be responsive to increasing globalization is reflected in the plans in market related work becoming a common theme;
- Participatory research is becoming a very common approach in many Centers;
- There are some examples of environmental services without linkage to agricultural productivity;
- There was no reference made to the private sector;
- Center did not have any plans for devolving research to their national partners;
- Logframes reflect a wish list – Centers did not respond to the request to provide alternative scenarios depending on availability of funds.

SPME felt that the SC needed to sharpen its assessment of the appropriateness of the research plan in relation to the funding plan.

MTPs are now the main mechanism for monitoring Center implementation of the recommendations of the EPMRs following endorsement of the EPMR report (Panel report,

Center response and the SC commentary) by the Group. The SC is now commenting on the implementation of the programmatic recommendations by tracking the changes in the MTP while the CGIAR Secretariat monitors implementation of the management and governance related recommendations.

Action from SPME

- SPME Chair will report items relevant for the MTP commentary overview to the SC.
- SPME will recommend that the SC endorse a workshop on MTP logframes with Center staff at the AGM – Leslie Cooksly to develop a draft agenda.
- SPME will improve the guidelines for the MTP for 2006 based on the current analysis and on feedback from the workshop
- SPME will recommend to SC to develop a “think piece” on the definition of IPGs.
- Once new system priorities are approved, the SPME will make appropriate changes to the MTP guidelines for the alignment of MTP with the System priorities.