

5th Meeting of the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME) **(Virtual: 28 March – 5th April)**

Proceedings

The SPME meeting was held virtually through e-mail on 28 March – 5 April, 2006. This process was chosen because SPME would not have had a quorum in Benin where the Science Council 5 meeting was held. The agenda was agreed virtually at the start of the meeting.

Item 1: Minutes and Follow up Action from last SPME Meeting

SPME has listed the follow up actions for past decision of SPME and SC. Because of the infrequent meetings of SPME it is too easy to forget decisions made earlier and their follow up and implementation. This agenda item aimed to ensure implementation/action of past deliberations.

External Programme and Management Reviews

Actions fully completed since SPME 4:

- SPME recommended to the SC to commission the EPMR of CIAT and that the review be started at the end of 2006.
- SPME proposed to SC (for endorsement) a list of strategic issues, prepared by the ad hoc teams, for the EPMRs of CIFOR, ICRAF and WorldFish.
- The EPMR calendar has been placed in the Web.

Actions partially or not completed and deferred to the main agenda Item 3 of this meeting:

- SPME will recommend to the SC to commission the EPMRs of IITA and WARDA to be started in 2007.
- 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 reviews. *Work in progress.*
- Leslie Cooksy will work with the Secretariat to develop surveys for improving the EPMR process. *Not done.*
- The SPME will develop and adhere to a Plan to implement the new Policy on EPMRs by 2007. *Work in progress.*

Systemwide Programme Reviews

Actions partially completed since SPME 4 and deferred to the main agenda Item 4 of this meeting:

- SPME recommended that the SC will commission an external review of the PRGA SWEP; SPME is in the process of developing the TOR for the study in consultation with SPIA (which is planning a broader impact study on participatory research. *The external review of PRGA was commissioned by the SC and draft TOR were developed. The option of conducting the PRGA review jointly with an impact assessment of participatory research in general had been considered.*

- SPME is working with the Alliance and with the CG Secretariat to develop Terms of Reference for a consultant to conduct a meta-evaluation of the SWEPs; and develop a short list of potential consultants. *Draft TOR have been developed.*
- SPME has incorporated clearer instruction about SWEPs into the MTP guidelines. *SWEPs have not been included in the EPMR guidelines.*

Science Tracking and Medium-Term Plans

Actions fully completed since SPME 4:

- SPME has included instructions for 1) the alignment of MTPs with SPs; 2) the monitoring of resource allocation to SPs in the Guidelines for MTP 2007-9.

Actions partially completed since SPME 4 and deferred to the main agenda Item 5 of this meeting.

- SPME will prepare contributions for on-line reporting of MTPs. *Not done.*
- 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. *Drafted by the CGIAR Secretariat.*

Performance Measurement

Actions fully completed since SPME 4:

- SPME developed 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 are now briefed on the application and purpose of the PM evaluation for program quality.
- SPME and SPIA made recommendation to the SC on the finalisation of all PM indicators within the programmatic elements of the PM system.
- SPME and SPIA finalised a report on SC recommendations for the PM system in 2006.

Actions partially completed since SPME 4 and deferred to the main agenda Item 6 of this meeting:

- The SPME yet to develop and 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. *In progress.*

SC Commentary on MTPs

Actions fully completed since SPME 4:

- SPME Chair provided a report for the MTP commentary overview to the SC.
- SPME conducted a workshop on MTP logframes with Center staff at the AGM – Leslie Cooksy developed the draft agenda.
- SPME improved the guidelines for the MTP for 2006 based on the current analysis and on feedback from the workshop.
- SPME recommended to SC to develop a “think piece” on the definition of IPGs.
- Once new system priorities were approved, SPME made appropriate changes to the MTP guidelines for the alignment of MTP with the System priorities.

Item 2: Implementing the new M&E process

SPME discussed the progress made in implementing the new Monitoring and Evaluation policy for CGIAR Centers and making real changes to the EPMR process. The new policy was endorsed by the AGM in Morocco in 2005. It is to be phased in for EPMRs to be conducted from 2007 onwards (as shown in the flowchart in the Policy). The goal is a more streamlined EPMR process which “audits” the M&E processes of the Center. Its implementation therefore requires a marked change from the current EPMR process.

The SPME reviewed the draft EPMR Guidelines and suggested final changes to the document. In general SPME was concerned about the slow pace of change toward the implementation of the new M&E and therefore it decided to propose a *pre-implementation phase* to be included in the Guidelines for endorsement by the SC.

An important driver for the change is the quality of the CCERs (Center commissioned external reviews). The experience from the current EPMRs suggests that there is considerable variation in the purpose and manner in which CCERs are conducted at the Center and used by the EPMR Panel. SPME felt that the set of *principles* for conducting CCERs annexed to the EPMR Guidelines need to be endorsed for improved quality and uniformity of the CCERs. SPME accepted the suggestion from the Center Boards Committee (now the Alliance Board), to relax, under specific circumstances, the recommendations of having more than one person in each CCER team.

SPME noted that the level of ownership by all Center Boards in the process of EPMR implementation is critical to the success on the new system. For implementing the new M&E on the timetable given to the Group, it is critical that all Boards begin an implementation of the CCERs using the above *Principles*. SPME decided to recommend that Boards be engaged in the implementation of the M&E policy through dialogue with the SC Chair.

Action from SPME:

- SPME will recommend to the SC a) to endorse the final draft Guidelines for conducting EPMRs, including the pre-implementation plan and the set of principles for conducting CCERs, and b) to submit the Guidelines to ExCo for information.
- SPME will recommend that the SC Chair meet with all Board Chairs at their next meeting to explain the overall M&E process and their role in the improvement to that process.
- SPME will recommend that SC convenes a Workshop with representatives of all parties in the EPMR process to finalise the Guidelines for implementing the new M& E Policy.

Item 3: External Programme and Management Reviews

SPME has implemented the concept of *ad hoc* teams within the SC and Panel members to provide focus in the EPMR process. The ad hoc teams are involved in i) providing inputs into the designing the Panel profile; ii) nominating both Chair and Member candidates to the Panel from a diverse pool; iii) reviewing a list of strategic issues to be endorsed by the SC; iv) identifying the most important issues in the EPMR report for discussion by the SC; and v) providing inputs into preparing the SC commentary. One member of the *ad hoc* team will lead the discussion at the SC meeting and coordinate preparing the SC commentary. SPME feels that although the effectiveness of the *ad hoc* teams has been variable, it seems that a small

group can help improve quality of the preparation of EPMRs and of the way it is processed by the SC. It should not replace the inputs of ALL SC members but help coordinate and focus their work related to EPMR.

In 2006 the following EPMRs are being conducted: ICARDA 5th EPMR, ILRI 2nd EPMR and IWMI 3rd EPMR. The teams have been identified and the respective *ad hoc* teams are in the process of finalising the strategic issues to be addressed. SPME considered a rolling plan for the coming five years for EPMRs of Centers and CPs to recommend to the SC to undertake in 2007 and beyond.

SPME drew notice of the internal guidelines for planning EPMRs, including Panel selection. SPME has worked 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 reviews. This has been only partially successful and the Panel considered ways of increasing the pool of well-qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds. SPME agreed that there are several scientific and professional associations, including academies of science whose databases provide good source of experts. But in addition to identifying names from these bases, the SC needs additional “intelligence gathering” on the experts’ ability to undertake reviews. Also pools of former Board Chairs and members and CCER Panel members can be drawn from.

Action from SPME:

- SPME will recommend that the SC continue with the practice of *ad hoc* teams as a means for improving the quality of the SC engagement in the EPMR.
- SPME will recommend for the SC’s endorsement a list of strategic issues for the EPMRs of ICARDA, ILRI and IWMI, prepared by the *ad hoc* teams.
- SPME will recommend that the SC commission IITA, WARDA and CIP EPMRs to be started in 2007. SPME notes that the CIAT EPMR also to start in 2007 has already been commissioned.
- SPME will, by SC6, recommend the EPMRs of some CPs. SPME will report to SC6 on the process for the CP reviews, including preparation of Guidelines and Terms of Reference for CP EPMRs.
- SPME plans to conduct a more formal survey of the current EPMR process in order to improve efficiency and move to the implementation of the new M&E. SPME will report progress at SC6.
- SPME continually seeks experienced, world-class members of diverse background for the EPMRs. The experience suggests that EPMR and the SC need to be more active and proactive in order to build a good quality pool of experts. SPME suggests that SC consider, as a standing agenda item in SC meeting, a report from all members of the SC and Standing Panels to SPME suggesting new additions to the SC expert roster. Each SC and SP member should recommend two new experts - one of which is a different nationality than the SC member.

Item 4: Systemwide Programme Reviews including the Meta review of the System wide programs (SWEP)

- a) **External Review of the Systemwide Program: Participatory Research and Gender Analysis**

The SC has conducted an external review of most of the Ecoregional and Systemwide Programs that the TAC was involved in approving.¹ The PRGA program remains to be reviewed although it has been pending for some time. At SC4, the Council decided to conduct the review so in a “separate but linked” study with SPIA that would focus on the broader analysis of the impact of participatory approaches.

SPME Decided to recommend a 3 person team for the PRGA study with expertise in a) research approaches and impact assessment, including participatory research, b) gender analysis and c) plant breeding. The later is on the assumption that the PRGA has made tangible changes to plant breeding and thus is a useful “case study” of the PRGA. SPME also reviewed the draft Terms of Reference for this review.

Action from SPME:

- SPME will collaborate with SPIA for considering synergies and common points in the two planned studies on participatory research.
- SPME will submit the draft TOR and the short list of Panel candidates within the suggested profile to the SC for endorsement after the SC meeting.

b) Meta study of the Systemwide Programs

The Systemwide Programs, including the Ecoregional Programs, are one of a number of other CGIAR instruments used to implement programs that require multiple partners. The systematic review of the SWEPs as well as CCERs conducted by Centers provides a wealth of information on program performance and outcome and on governance and management. Such information is now needed to assist in the implementation of the new system wide priorities. However, in order to use these programs as an effective tool for implementing the new System Priorities, some further analysis and decision is needed on: i) What is the unique profile of a SWEP and how does it differ from CP; ii) How many SWEPs are needed to implement the priorities – which ones to phase out, which ones to continue and which ones to evolve; What are the lessons learnt on best practice for SWEP?

The SPME plans to conduct the study in consultation with the Alliance who provides inputs on the lessons learnt in system wide management. SPME will forward the “approved in principle TOR” to the Alliance for information.

Action from SPME:

- SPME will share the draft TOR with the Alliance prior to submitting them to the SC for endorsement.
- SPME will submit a short list for a two-member Panel for the SC to endorse.

Item 5: Medium-Term Plans assessment for 2006

SPME discussed the MTP assessment process planned for 2006, which builds on the experience in 2005. The main tasks to be reported to the SC were to i) define the main criteria in a template form for assessing the MTP consistent with the instructions to the Centers/CP for developing the MTPs and with our ability to monitor the quality and relevance

¹ Paper prepared for SPME 4 in 2005:

<http://www.sciencecouncil.cgiar.org/publications/pdf/SC%20Draft%20Status%20of%20M&E%20of%20CGIA%20SWEPs.pdf>

of the science; ii) decide on task allocation among SC and SP members (three persons to review each MTP); and iii) agree on a schedule for reviewing the MTPs. SPME decided to suggest changes from 2005 in the process of preparing the SC commentary on the basis of the individual assessments provided in a template form.

Action by SPME:

- SPME will suggest two options for managing the MTP assessment in 2006 for the SC to decide:
 - Scheme A based on current SC and Panel Members – requiring each SC member to review at least 7 MTPs; or
 - Scheme B with the addition of one consultant to most of the three person teams – limiting the assessment task to 5 MTPs for SC members and 1-2 MTPs for SP member to review.
- SPME will revise the MTP assessment template to include all the relevant elements in the 2006 MTP Guidelines, develop an implementing schedule for the assessment of the MTPs, and suggest allocation of tasks among SC and SP members. SPME will submit the draft assessment template, schedule and task allocation to the SC for endorsement.

Item 6: Performance Measurement

SPME discussed a draft prepared by Leslie Cooksy on the plans to review the PM indicators for Outputs and Outcomes. For Outputs, SC is expected to submit a commentary on the self-assessment indicator submitted by the Centers. For Outcomes the SC is expected to submit scores based on 3-step rating. In addition, SC has been asked to provide an indicator based on the EP MR assessment of Center research quality under the PM element: Quality and relevance of current research. SPME also discussed the procedures to use for the SC to endorse the commentaries and ranking of all indicators under the SC's responsibility, including Impact indicators that are the primary responsibility of SPIA.

Action by SPME:

- SPME will provide a plan to the SC for completing the assessment of Output and rating of Outcome indicators.
- SPME together with SPIA will make recommendation to the SC on the approval process of PM indicators and comments on indicators that are SC's responsibility.
- SPME will recommend to SC a mechanism for testing EP MRs as source of one quality indicator.

Item 7: Other Business

SPME did not have any other business to include under this Item.