

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

Guidelines for Preparing 2010-12 Medium-Term Plans (MTPs) and 2010 Financing Plans

Science Council Secretariat and CGIAR Secretariat - January 2009

The CGIAR follows a forward planning horizon of three years for the implementation of the research agenda. It does this through a rolling MTP where the research agenda is reviewed and adjusted in the context of the CGIAR's priorities and strategies, progress in science and funding opportunities. The annual Work Plan is the "first year" of the rolling MTP. Each Center is requested to submit an MTP for 2010-2012 and a financing plan for 2010 for the Center and for the Systemwide and Ecoregional Programs (SWEPs) it convenes. The SWEPs are presented as MTP Projects in the convening Center's MTP. Each Challenge Program (CP) is also requested to submit an MTP and financing plan.

The CGIAR research for development is output-focused using a logframe to establish the links from outputs through outcomes to impacts. The MTP, including the logframes, is a central element in the evaluation of research and program relevance to the CGIAR's goals and mission. The research agenda outlined in the MTPs should be consistent with the financial resources that the Center/CP considers likely to be available to implement the plan. Each Project is to be fully costed to assist management in policy decisions. The financial requirements of each Project in the Portfolio and the projected financial resources are to be submitted through the CGIAR financial on-line database.

A software application "EasyMTP", which is the local module of the broader, central System level database (CGMap), was developed to facilitate the online development and monitoring of the MTPs.¹ 2008 was a pilot year. In 2009, all Centers and CPs should use this new tool. These Guidelines are fully compatible with the MTP Overview and Project templates in EasyMTP. The submitted MTP data enters the CGMap, which is used for information retrieval and analysis. MTPs are to be submitted through Easy MTP by June 15, 2009. The MTP should be concise and should (in total) not exceed 100 pages. The MTP package comprises an Overview, including a 1-page summary of the changes from the previous MTP, the Project Portfolio (consisting of a Project narrative and Project logframe for each MTP Project), and the Financial Plan.

MTP Overview

This section of the MTP captures the highlights, in both research and finances, since the last submission. The Overview provides the context of the MTP and situates the operational plan and activities within the Center's and CP's strategic plan.²

Introduction

Provide a brief summary of the context for the MTP 2010-12 proposal. Reference should be made to the Center's/CP's strategic plan. Elucidate the Program rationale and structure and changes if any. Past research achievements should not be included unless they form the basis for changes in the Plan.

¹ With the decision to stop reporting output target achievement as a performance indicator, self-monitoring of output target achievement becomes a function of the MTP process to be recorded in the CGMap when this functionality has been developed in the database.

² *Note for EasyMTP users:* guidelines on the content of topics to be covered are provided for the mandatory sections of the MTP Overview. In EasyMTP, some mandatory sections of the MTP Overview (e.g. Highlights of Project Portfolio) can be broken down into optional sections by topic for guided writing and presentation purposes. Refer to EasyMTP user help for explanation of optional sections in the template.

Highlights of the Project Portfolio

Summarise briefly the main features of the 2010 Project Portfolio and explicitly describe changes in it since the last MTP submission. Changes in Project composition must be clearly noted in this section.

The following topics are also to be covered in this section:

- New and Terminated Research: summarise all significant strategic changes and reasons for them, including additions to or deletions from the agenda.
- Slower than Expected Progress in Previous MTP: provide an explanation for wherever progress has been slower than foreseen in the previous MTP.
- Changes in Collaborative Arrangements: describe major changes in collaborative arrangements, including changes in participation in CGIAR SWEPs and CPs, and other key collaborations with entities outside of the CGIAR System.
- Research within CGIAR Priorities: summarise research activities within the System Priorities.
- Non-System Priority Activities: summarise the activities falling outside the SPs (research that may lead to SP, free-standing training and development activities) and indicate which MTP Project(s) entirely or partly comprises of non-SP work. The SC does not require a Project logframe for non-SP activities.

Center/CP Financial Indicator:

Describe briefly the Center's/CP's financial status in this section. The CGIAR PM system recommends a set of financial health indicator benchmarks for Centers (covering operating results, as well as long-term ratios). The Financing Plans should aim to achieve or surpass these benchmarks. Any financial developments/assumptions that are expected to significantly change a Center's/CP's financial indicators should be discussed.

Implementation of EPMR/CPER Recommendations

Provide a progress report (see annex to this document) on the implementation of the CGIAR-endorsed EPMR/CPER recommendations until all recommendations have been implemented. Where relevant, reference must be made to specific parts of the MTP Project narratives and logframes.

MTP Project Portfolio

In the MTP, the Project is the basic operational unit where each Project has a set of expected time-bound outputs. The "logic" and the terminology of the MTP logframe across Centers and CPs is to be respected, regardless of the Center/CP specific terminology in their operational planning.³

Outputs are the key component of a project for alignment with higher order priorities⁴ and for monitoring purposes. Therefore, information on alignment with the SPs (to be continued for the time being), impact pathways and international public goods is expected at the output level.

Capacity building is a key part in ensuring outcomes towards CGIAR's priority goals. SP-associated capacity building needs to be integrated in the SP-related research outputs and shown in the outputs and output targets as appropriate.

³ *Note for EasyMTP users:* guidelines on the content of topics to be covered are provided for the mandatory sections of the Project template. In EasyMTP, some mandatory sections (e.g. Project Overview and Rationale) can be broken down into optional sections by topic for guided writing and presentation purposes. Some sections have an optional breakdown by output (e.g. International Public Goods, Elaboration of Partners' Roles). Refer to EasyMTP user help for any content section in EasyMTP Project template that are not covered explicitly in these guidelines.

⁴ Such as are to be targeted by mega-programs and established in the Strategy and Results Framework for contributing towards the CGIAR's Strategic Objectives

Where relevant, activities related to impact assessment should be included in the MTP projects addressing SPs. In the MTPs, Centers are encouraged to describe *ex post* impact assessments in relevant Output Descriptions. The *ex post* impact studies are not an output target in and of themselves (Note that completed *ex post* impact studies should be reported in the Performance Measurement System—PMS—under the Impact Culture indicator 4.) Knowledge and analysis from *ex ante* impact research and new *ex post* impact methods can be included as output targets and reported under Outputs in the logframe.

The SWEP Project narrative covers the entire program, which is also reflected in the logframe, including components that are done by partners other than the convening Center. The total resources estimated for the SWEP in the first year of financial plan and planned in the subsequent years of the rolling plan should be shown in the Project Overview explaining the main partners and respective allocation of resources.

Project narrative

Project Overview and Rationale

Provide the rationale for the Project research within the context of the CGIAR SPs and the Center's/CP's Strategic Plan. The rationale is derived from the logframe process, which starts with problem analyses leading to the identification of issues that potentially can be tackled with research focused on specific objectives.

Summarise the changes in outputs in this section including new and revised outputs designed to address priority research, and listing of outputs completed or terminated for other reasons.

Explain the changes in the MTP Project due to other reasons than alignment with SPs, such as response to an EPMR or a CCER, prior research that changes the probability of success, or to changed resources (financial, human, research assets). If there are changes in the Project portfolio, linkages of current Project components to previous Projects must be made explicit if Project content has changed.

Alignment to CGIAR Priorities

Centers/CPs are not requested to maintain or update this section.⁵

Outputs Description

Changes from previous MTP:

Indicate briefly whether there are changes in the Project outputs, other than minor editing, from the previous MTP. A detailed explanation of the changes should be provided in the Description of the relevant output.

Description

Provide the Output statement (same as in logframes) and a brief description of the following:

- research activities. Project outputs are linked to the CGIAR SPs both in terms of research content and resource allocation;
- the comparative and complementary advantage of the research;
- how priority goals are addressed;
- all contributing partners. Please note that a partner solely or mainly responsible for a specific output target should be identified with the output target in the logframe.

⁵ In EasyMTP the content of section can be removed or kept as in MTP 2009-2011

In CP and SWEP MTPs, indicate the partner principally responsible for each output in this section.

Alignment to CGIAR Priorities

Indicate preferably one priority area or non-priority activity. Note that individual outputs should be mostly focused on meeting a specific goal of an individual system priority (SP). Due to the multidisciplinary nature of much of the CGIAR research, the several research components contributing to a single priority need to be identified as part of that SP's allocation rather than allocating such research components across several different SPs.

Impact Pathways

Provide a succinct description of the plausible impact pathway from research output (reflecting problem identification), through outcomes to the ultimate impacts for achieving CGIAR's goals.

The impact pathway descriptions, provided at the output level, should be specific to the research identifying the particular conditioning factors (e.g. policy, capacity and institutional constraints) inhibiting outcome and limiting the range of impact. Generic assumptions applying to nearly all research should not be repeated.

In the context of the impact pathway, indicate how Center/CP partnerships and capacity strengthening activities are designed to enhance outcomes.

Specify the target ecoregion(s), the beneficiaries and end users, and describe the Center's/CP's potential role to help ensure outcomes and impact.

International Public Goods

International public goods (IPG) derive from research outputs of *knowledge* and *technology* that are public and applicable internationally to address generic issues and challenges consistent with the CGIAR goals. In the MTP the intent of generating IPGs needs to be described but also the international research and recommendation domain needs to be defined and the impact pathway to reach the domain explicitly articulated (in section Impact Pathways). When Centers/CPs play a catalytic, facilitating, enabling or advocacy role, explain how these roles complement the Center's/CP's research role and contribute to the production of IPGs. Describe in summary the IPG nature of the research results at the Project level. It is recommended that the IPG nature of research is described also at the output level.

Elaboration of Partners' Roles

List the major collaborators including other CGIAR Centers, SWEPs and CPs, NARS (including NGOs and the Private Sector) and ARIs, and specifically highlight their strategic roles and complementary advantages to each other. The list of partner organizations in the narrative should only include partnerships that involve a collaborative role in research and involve funding or other resource contributions to and by partners for participating in activities which are part of the CGIAR agenda. Other kinds of partners (such as recipients of research results, materials and training, partners in networks and partnerships established for future research collaboration) do not need to be listed in the MTP.

Project Logframes

The logframe structure is by definition only a simplified version of the impact pathway from outputs to outcomes to one level of intended impacts (see description below of the intended level). A more detailed elaboration of the plausible impact pathway is requested in the section Impact Pathways. The logframe shows the logical pathway that links the outputs through their use and uptake by

intermediaries to the intended benefit of end users.

The MTP guidelines restrict the number of elements in the logframe, and expect consistency in the use of the logframe across Centers, SWEF and CP.

The logframe has the following intended users and uses:

- **Center/CP Scientists** - Show the impact pathway by identifying the intended users of the outputs and the link between those users and beneficial changes towards impact on target groups.
- **Center Board of Trustees and Management** - Conduct self-assessment; Monitor contribution to Center/CP goals.
- **Science Council** – Reviews and assesses relevance regarding CGIAR SPs, coherence at CGIAR level and likelihood of impact on CGIAR goals; Evaluates progress toward outputs and output targets identified in the logframe.
- **Investors and Other Stakeholders** - Monitor role of investments in achieving development goals; Assess Center/CP capacity to deliver outcomes.

Outputs

Outputs are the product of research with a defined time line, contributing to reaching the Center/CP goals by offering solutions to problems identified during the planning process. MTP Project logframes are structured by outputs as the main unit. Centers/CPs are required to provide a time line for achieving the output. An MTP Project can have one or more outputs.

Output Targets

Output targets are the annual deliverables, defined by quantity and type, expected in a specific year and contributing to achieving the MTP Project outputs.

Output targets are deliverables associated with specific users and are classified by the following types: materials, policy strategies, practices, capacity and other kinds of knowledge.

For the purposes of the MTP logframe, output targets should be identified at significant enough level to contribute to the overall objective of the research. For an output target that takes more than one year to achieve, annual intermediary targets should not be defined.

The importance of the output target is that it is a) measurable, b) verifiable, and c) of sufficient magnitude to effect an outcome on the user. Define significant output targets clearly, specifying what is expected to be delivered.

Knowledge and analysis from *ex ante* impact research and new *ex post* impact methods can be included as output targets and reported under Outputs.

Output targets should not include process milestones (such as meetings, events, funding decisions, project proposals, facilitation, regular web site updates, and data management activities), prototypes and partial results. Output targets should also not include publications (means of delivery). Output targets should not include outcomes.

Due to the transition in 2009 and 2010 to implementing research within a new Strategy and Results Framework, in the MTP 2010-2012 output targets are not mandatory for 2011 and 2012. Centers/CPs can use the MTP 2009-2011 as the base for the new MTP⁶, leave the 2009 output targets for on-going research and update 2010 output targets as needed. Centers/CPs may provide output targets for 2011 and 2012 if they wish for their own planning purposes. Any output targets deferred from 2008

⁶ Centers/CPs need not rewrite sections of the MTP the content of which does not change from the previous MTP.

to 2009 or 2010 should be shown under the new target year: in this case, indicate in the text that they were carried over from 2008.

If the output target contributes to a collaborative program led by another Center or to a CP, indicate the program in brackets in the output target statement.

Intended Users of the Outputs

For the purposes of the MTP logframe, the intended users are people internal or external to the Center/CP, whose use or adoption of the output will lead to change directly related to Center/CP and CGIAR goals. The intended users should be the direct users of the targeted outputs specified by location if appropriate.

Intended users can be identified also at the output target level if appropriate.

Outcome

An outcome is the external use, adoption, or influence of a Center/CP output or outputs (e.g., by partners, stakeholders, clients) that leads to changes in knowledge, attitudes, policies, research capacities, agricultural practices, productivity, sustainability or other factors required in order to achieve the intended impact.

Outcomes are described in the logframe as a first intermediate step from outputs to impact. In order to define the outcome a Center/CP expects from its research, it needs to analyse plausible pathways of the uptake of the research outputs by target users and estimate the magnitude of adoption or use of the outputs. These relate to the complementary roles described earlier for the Centers/CPs and their partners and stakeholders in the Project narratives. Specifying outcomes in the logframe both characterizes and provides an estimate of magnitude of the use, adoption, or influence of research outputs in terms of the geographic area or user groups that are targeted.

Define outcomes for each output level, but in some cases it is meaningful to expect specific outcomes from a particular output target in a given year. In the PM system, Centers have been asked to describe the most significant outcomes documented. It is expected that Centers will over time document outcomes across their entire Project portfolio.

Impacts

Impacts are the ultimate social, environmental and economic benefits consistent with the Center's/CP's mission and objectives and the CGIAR Goals, e.g. increased agricultural productivity, reduced poverty, better nutrition, and sustainable resource management.

The MTP logframes should indicate the nature and likely extent of the expected impact of research outputs, through adoption, response to, influence of and use by beneficiaries, toward reaching the Center/CP goals aligned with the CGIAR goals. As the impact pathway moves from outputs to impact, Centers/CPs have less control over the achievement of each step.

Thus, while Centers/CPs are expected to identify output targets and have some role in assuring outcomes, they are not expected to be able to predict the precise timeframe and extent of impact. For example, typically productivity-related research results (e.g., tools and material for germplasm improvement) are used by other researchers and breeders for adaptation to local conditions and then disseminated to change agents who, in turn, work with early adopters who experiment with results, which, if successful, will lead finally to more widespread adoption and eventual impacts in terms of welfare of farmers and/or consumers.

In the case of environmental protection, policy research and other knowledge-focused research, the pathways typically are even less straightforward than with technology-focussed research, are determined by individual circumstances, and are more difficult to predict and articulate *a priori*. However, Centers are expected to continuously document components of their research for providing evidence of impact.

In the Impact column of the logframe, choose a point on the impact pathway where a “significant effect” at an intermediate target or at the ultimate beneficiary is expected. The entire pathway from output to impact on the ultimate beneficiaries needs to be outlined in the project narrative under Impact pathway.

Links between the MTP and the M&E System

The monitoring of the Output target achievement is the Centers’/CPs’ responsibility. Achievement will be recorded in the CGMap database where the results are publicly available and can be monitored and evaluated by, for example, the EPMR teams. There is an indirect linkage between the MTP Project logframe and CGIAR’s M&E system regarding Outcome monitoring. In the PMS Centers are asked to describe the most significant outcomes (number depends on Center size) from recent outputs which need to be identifiable in the MTPs. Furthermore, every year, Centers are asked to provide one impact study, as well as a description of how impact assessment is being institutionalized. Both outcomes and impact reports should reflect expectations set in earlier MTPs and should, over time, cover the entire Project portfolio.

MTP Financing Plan

The CGIAR Financing Plan is the detail of known financing indications, as estimated at the time of MTP submission. Once approved, Centers/CPs proceed to implement their part of the agenda.

Budgeting and Financing. The Project continues to be the most detailed costing unit of the research agenda. It is necessary to ensure full costing of Projects in the portfolio. In the 2010 Financing Plan resource allocation information is required by Project and by SP.

Resources allocated to activities that do not address the SPs must be shown separately as additional Projects or other components of the MTP indicating whether they are for research, free-standing training, or development activities. Aggregate Center and CP resource allocation should also be provided at the Regional level.

A Project’s costs must include an appropriate share of indirect costs. This is particularly relevant for activities which are financed with restricted and attributed funding. The preferred method of costing projects is to identify and allocate as many administrative components as possible as direct project costs, leaving a relatively small overhead percentage as a residual to be added in proportion to the project’s total direct cost, in the Center’s/CP’s overall budget. The indirect cost rate - that percentage which cannot be allocated as a direct cost - should be disclosed in the annual audited financial statement. Members should ensure that their targeted support covers the necessary indirect cost contribution.

Following the costing of the research agenda in the MTP as described above, a detailed Financing Plan covering the first year of the MTP cycle needs to be prepared. As full costing is the basis for arriving at the resources needs of the Project, Center, and CP, all contributing Members are expected and encouraged to provide resources to cover their fair share of the full cost of the research agenda. All financing sources should be identified to the extent possible, based on past experience and the prospects of ongoing discussions with Members.

CPs and SWEPs should provide a Financing Plan for the entire program, including components and the corresponding resources of other partners than the convening Center. Centers, however, should include only their share of the CP and SWEP in costing their MTP, highlighting the items in their budget contributing to CPs/SWEPs, and should coordinate with the lead and convening Centers and partners to ensure that program budgets and resources are explicitly allocated in the planning process. Project titles used should be exactly the same for both the FIS and Easy MTP.

Collaborative Projects. If project(s) involving researchers that are not directly employed by the Center/CP is part of the approved agenda, then financing which supports it, and which has been provided to the researchers in collaboration with the Center/CP, is considered agenda financing. Funding which is entirely counterpart support, including (for example) an ARI indirect cost, is not normally included in the project cost, for the purposes of CGIAR agenda support. The key criterion for inclusion, or not, of off-site activity, is whether Center/CP researchers are or have been involved in the design, implementation, and conduct of the work.

Funding provided by partners to collaborative activities, and non-financial contributions in the form of shared researchers, joint ventures with Centers/CPs, or other in-kind support from non-CGIAR organizations, to Center/CP Projects, should be noted explicitly in the Financing Plan. The main criteria for inclusion of in-kind staff support in the Financing Plan are: the donated staff must be fully engaged in the Center's/CP's agenda activity, the project must be full cost budgeted in the Center's/CP's work program, those costs are borne by the in-kind donor, and the donor approves of their inclusion and presentation, as revenue, in the Center's/CP's financial statements. If all the criteria are not met, the Center/CP should only footnote the in-kind support in its financial statements.

Costs of governance, management and services should be embedded in the Project budgets and these activities should not be presented as Research Projects. System Office units should not be presented as MTP Projects. In the case where a Center/CP is only a disbursing agent, with little or no responsibility for, or input into, the work being undertaken by a NARS, then neither the project in question nor its financing is considered integral to the Center's/CP's agenda activity. Such financing need not be reported in a Center's/CP's record of revenue and expenditure.

Funding from a Sister CGIAR Center. In addition to direct funding from donors, it is not uncommon for one Center to provide or allocate funding received from a donor to another Center for collaborative work. Normally, the first Center recognizes the entire contribution in its financial records and attributes it to the contributing donor because any recognition of the same funds (or a part thereof) by the second Center would constitute double counting within the System's total support. However, as there is a need to properly recognize in-flows and expenditures by the second Center, in-flows from the first Center (so called "inter-Center grants") are normally eliminated in the aggregation of the System's funding and expenditures

Unrestricted Net Assets in Financing. A Center's/CP's unrestricted - undesignated net assets (equivalent to the "retained earnings" in the private sector) is a reserve serving several purposes the primary one being to provide a financial cushion during periods of budgetary shocks. The undesignated net assets in this instance supplement revenue (Member contributions and Center/CP earned income) when there may be an unexpected revenue shortfall, or an unexpected expenditure is incurred (such as for staff separation). A second purpose is to provide working capital and liquidity for day-to-day operations. To avoid running into both liquidity and sustainability problems, however, a Center/CP should maintain undesignated net assets at an adequate level, which means that whenever it is depleted to supplement annual income, it should be built up again in a subsequent period. In short, it can be conceptualized as a stabilization fund at the institutional level.

Submitting the Financial Information. As in the previous years the financial data for the MTP are to be submitted through the Finance Information System (FIS).

MTP Review and Approval Process

In 2009, the Centers and CPs should submit their MTP through the EasyMTP as data to the CGMap central database. The SC will download the MTP for its review from the CGMap on the basis of the MTP data submitted (i.e. MTP Overview, Project narratives and Annexes), including the financial tables generated directly from FIS. There is no parallel submission of a separate document.

The SC will review Center and CP MTPs (including Financing Plans as related to programs) and prepare a commentary. In 2009, the SC will review in detail seven Center MTPs (Africa Rice Center, Bioversity International, CIAT, CIP, ICRISAT, IITA, World Agroforestry Center). The Centers/CPs are invited to provide their response to the commentary, which together with the SC commentary will be submitted to ExCo.⁷ ExCo will review the SC's commentary of the MTPs and the Center/CP responses, and the CGIAR Secretariat's assessment of the Center/CP and CGIAR Financing Plan and will make a recommendation to the CGIAR for approval of the CGIAR research agenda for 2010.

⁷ Centers and CPs will have an opportunity to check SC commentaries for factual accuracy before they are finalized.

Annex

Progress Report on Implementation of External Review Recommendations

Name of Center or CP:

Dates of External Evaluation Report Presentation and Discussion:

Science Council:

Executive Council:

CGIAR Annual General Meeting:

Recommendation As listed in the External Review report	Response Accepted or not accepted	Implementation		
		Milestones	Progress Achieved	Target Date of Completion