

SDR/iSC: IAR/02/09 **R**

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
INTERIM SCIENCE COUNCIL

**Lessons learned in the Implementation of Systemwide Programmes
iSC Perspectives**

iSC SECRETARIAT
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
March 2002

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LESSONS LEARNED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SYSTEMWIDE PROGRAMMES – iSC PERSPECTIVE

1. Background

At TAC61 (Colombo), June 1993, the Committee reviewed CGIAR system priorities and how they relate to each centre's plan and new set of priorities that were emerging. As a result of its deliberations, TAC recommended that a number of Centres convene systemwide programmes to focus on commodities or subject matter areas. It also recommended that a number of CGIAR Centres convene Ecoregional Programmes to focus principally on natural resources management research. Eight Ecoregional Programmes and four thematic/subject matter systemwide programmes were selected for implementation in 1994. TAC suggested as targets \$10 million to be made available by 1998 for this new systemwide initiatives. The distribution of the resources earmarked for each programme to cover: ecoregional programmes - \$4 million; inter-centre genetic resources programme - \$1 million; water management programme - \$1 million; livestock programme - \$4 million. The amount for fisheries programme was not specified at this stage.

The goal of ecoregional research was to investigate and promote sustainable production systems in a given ecoregion through both strategic and applied research. This would require analyses of the physical and biological processes critical to sustainability in the area, as well as of the social and policy decisions that influence the management of these processes. Research would require close collaboration among CGIAR centres, national research systems, national policy agencies, NGOs, and farmers' associations to address the challenge of developing sustainable production systems.

The mechanism preferred by centres in implementing these new initiatives was the consortium, which is a partnership of diverse institutions that jointly plan and conduct an integrated research programme. TAC recognized the need for a catalyst and developed the concept of a "convening" centre to take the initiative in starting a programme. A convening centre would be expected to channel seed money to stimulate planning activities and would provide financial accountability to the donors. It need not necessarily provide research leadership. TAC further envisaged that within each consortium, a steering committee would be established to set priorities, raise additional funds, and allocate research tasks based on the comparative strengths of each partner in the consortium.

Under ecoregional programs, TAC further identified eight specific projects for the following ecoregions:

- Warm humid and sub-humid tropics of sub-Saharan Africa, including the inland valleys of West Africa, Convening centre - IITA.

- Semi-arid tropics in sub-Saharan Africa. Convening centre - ICRISAT.
- East and Central African highlands. Convening centre - ICRAF.
- Subtropics of West Asia and North Africa with winter rainfall. Convening centre - ICARDA.
- Warm arid and semi-arid tropics and subtropics of Asia. Convening centre - ICRISAT.
- Warm sub-humid and humid tropics and subtropics of Asia. Convening centre - IRRI.
- Sub-humid and humid tropics and subtropics of Latin America and the Caribbean. Convening centre - CIAT.
- A project on Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn, which is relevant to similar ecoregions on several continents. Convening centre - ICRAF.

In the course of implementation of these initiatives, some of the titles changed and the current situation is reflected in the Ted Henzell Report.

At Mid Term Meeting in 1996 the Group discussed the progress in the implementation of the programmes. Among the broad points emphasized during the discussion were:

- reaffirmation of the desired emphasis on the environment, the rural poor, and on women, and the need to find ways to ensure this is carried out;
- the need for greater urgency and visibility for research on the soil and water aspects of natural resources management, given the fundamental importance of soil and water to sustainable production systems;
- the need to increase both collaboration among Centres as well as linkages with other actors in the global agricultural research system, including NARS, NGOs, the private sector, ARIs, and non-CGIAR Centers;
- the need to find ways to collaborate with NARS as equal partners, through research networks, training, and outsourcing of Centre work to strong NARS;
- the need for greater attention to postharvest technology development, particularly given its relevance for women;
- recognition of the limitations of the then available data on poverty and the environment, which made aggregate modelling difficult, and the need for a simultaneous bottom-up approach;
- recognition of the importance of an integrated approach to agricultural production and environmental conservation;
- the need for a review of systemwide programs, although this should not limit the consideration of new initiatives; and

- the importance of obtaining an overall balance in the way resources is deployed in order to protect the key elements of the Research Agenda.

2. Criteria and Facts about Systemwide Programmes

Two types of Systemwide programmes were conceived. Global Programmes which would concentrate on strategic research on an agreed slate of commodities or and or subjects. Global research would be conducted with close attention to regional requirements and programmes. Ecoregional activities would carry out strategic and applied research on natural resource conservation and management production system and location specific aspects of commodity improvement. The primary test for a SWP must be that it improves the work of the system. The aim was to provide centres with an incentive to undertake activities which are priority for the system as a whole but which would not normally be undertaken, or would not be undertaken sufficiently in the absence of such an incentive. TAC proposed the establishment of six ecoregional programmes – two in sub-Saharan Africa, one in the West Asia/North Africa region, two in Asia and one in Latin America.

TAC offered preliminary ideas on the institutional and structural options for carrying out these activities; the capacities available and those required for the future. TAC stressed that the relationship between global and ecoregional mechanisms would be entirely “complementary”. TAC also distinguished between initiative as start-up or design phases in contrast with programme - as fully developed phase in implementation. TAC envisaged that Systemwide initiatives would have the following characteristics:

- Involve conscious effort to standardise methodologies used in local studies to insure comparability of results within ecoregions, and of specific themes or problems within given ecosystems.
- Involve locally relevant and responsive research within ecoregions, but with a global perspective in terms of comparability of research and approaches to research, in order to: a) take advantage of economies of scale in research; b) maximize use of spillovers; c) reduce the transaction costs of research; and d) facilitate advances in knowledge.
- Be multisectoral and multidisciplinary in nature and scope, recognizing the different sectors and disciplines across the system. Thus, a systemwide livestock initiative should be explicitly linked to ecoregional activities, to activities of crop centres, and to various policy issues researched by centres such as IFPRI, e.g. in the area of common property resource management.
- Consist of collaborative efforts involving two or more centres, and other parties as appropriate that would address issues of high priority to the CGIAR system.

TAC also considered the use of seed money recommended for initiatives and advised that it could be applied in three ways:

- to develop proposals;
- to help cover transaction costs of implementing approved proposals; and
- to fill gaps identified in either the ecoregional paradigm being implemented or in the collaborative mechanism used for its implementation.

TAC noted that a major outstanding issue that had not been resolved at the time was that of accountability. There were differences in deciding which costs of SWAs should be recommended for separate funding and which should be met from centre budgets. In some cases, separate funding was recommended in order to facilitate the design phase; in other cases, funding also included seed money for new research and research-related functions, such as the setting up of databases. TAC then developed guidelines for funding, which are found in the CGIAR Priorities and Strategies 1998-2000.

The terminology of “Systemwide” was defined as referring to inter-centre research or research-related activities on a regional or global basis, or some combination thereof. TAC recognized that such activities would generally involve organizations outside the CGIAR, for example partnership with NARS for the implementation of the ecoregional approach.

2.1 Evaluation of Systemwide Programmes

As centres responded enthusiastically and creatively to the introduction of systemwide programmes, it became obvious that it was necessary to have a review mechanism in place for these new initiatives. Different forms of evaluation for the two groups of SWA were proposed in the 1998-2000 period. It was important to monitor progress and document lessons as the programmes were being implemented. Hitherto, centres had encountered difficulty in organizing large multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional agricultural research programmes such as the farming system research. Accordingly, a stepwise and cautious approach was taken. TAC proposed that ecoregional programmes be reviewed together but separately in order to develop guidelines to specify the criteria for recommending support to the initiative and programme phases of such initiatives. Another treatment was proposed for the non-ecoregional SWPs during the period 1998-2000 because of their wide diversity. TAC proposed that each External Programme and Management Review (EPMR) should examine the centre’s convening role, where applicable. In addition, a stripe review of each programme would be conducted starting with genetic resources programme.

In all such reviews, two major questions need to be answered when reviewing SWP from either group.

- Has the value added by making the activity systemwide, rather than leaving it as a series of centre-based components, outweighed the additional transaction and management costs?
- Has the SWP reached the point where its separate existence is no longer warranted? It may have done its job and no further special action is needed, or it

may be possible to provide the collective action still needed through a centre. Alternatively, the SWP may have failed, or be very likely to fail, and should be abandoned or substantially restructured.

- The review should also give particular attention to the effectiveness of their operational modes.
- In addition, the seven criteria proposed in the evaluating the operating modes stated in the study of Priorities and Strategies for Soil and Water Aspects of Natural Resources Management in the CGIAR should be tested in practice.

The former TAC had conducted external reviews of eleven systemwide programmes: genetic resources in 1998; eight with an ecoregional approach 1999; livestock jointly with ILRI, 2000; Integrated Pest Management, 2001 and Common Action and Property Rights has been commissioned in 2001 and is due for completion in 2002 by iSC. Unlike the EPMRs, such reviews are paid for directly by TAC from its own resources. This arrangement reduces the burden to the centre but also ensures the independence of the review.

3. Experience in the Initiation and Implementation Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes

In the course preparing the CGIAR Priorities and Strategies for 1998–2000, TAC took an overview of its experience with the initiation and implementation of systemwide programmes and the ecoregional approach. It noted that the concept SWP was concerned primarily with the implementation of change in the CGIAR in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. It further observed that the adoption of systemwide programmes, as part of the agreed agenda was a major achievement. The 1997 CGIAR Research Agenda provided for ten SWPs: genetic resources, livestock, rice/wheat, tropical Latin America ecoregion, alternative to slash and burn, mountain agriculture, on farm water husbandry in west Asia and north Africa, soil and water nutrient management, the warm humid and sub-humid tropics of sub-Saharan Africa, and the humid and sub-humid tropics of Asia. In addition funds were also endorsed for the design phases of a global water management programme; an inter-centre initiative on coastal zone management; an ecoregional initiative on desert margins; initiative on research indicators; property rights/collective action; an initiative on integrated pest management; and on participatory research and gender analysis.

By 1997, all programmes were under way except for the desert margin, global water management, and coastal environments, which were still in the design phase. Further initiatives had been added: a cross ecoregional SWP for sustainable mountain agricultural development incorporating the east and central African highlands and the Andean programme.

TAC 72 reviewed the situation in Systemwide Programs. Discussion with the Group at MTM96 affirmed the work was going on in this arena, noted that two classes of such programmes were operating, and detailed TAC's sense that a steady course should be followed until 1998 or 1999, when a review of the format's utility should be undertaken.

Discussion at TAC 72 suggested no reasons for changing that plan. However, the financial information available then showed that Systemwide work in two ways, within centre budgets and in a special table estimating centre investments in each Systemwide programme.

Further details on the status of systemwide programmes can be found in TAC's paper on the 1997 research agenda and in the 1998-2000 Centre MTPs. In its commentary on 2002 Centre Financing Plans TAC's overall resource allocation was summarised for a number involved in systemwide programmes as shown below:

3.1. TAC's Overall Resource Allocation - Centre Financing Plans 2002

CIAT

CIAT provides leadership to three Systemwide programmes which are integrated within the Centre programme. TAC was pleased to note CIAT's strong focus on NRM and on participatory research, and commended the Centre for promoting effective research partnership within and outside the CGIAR.

CIMMYT

CIMMYT provides leadership in the Systemwide programme that deals with sustaining wheat production in South Asia, including rice-wheat systems in the Indo-Gangetic Plains, which is an integral part of the centre's project portfolio.

ICRAF

ICRAF leads the Systemwide Slash and Burn Programme as well as the African Highlands Initiative, both of which are included in the centre programme. TAC noted ICRAF's convening role in the inter-centre discussions on climate change. TAC commended the Centre for working with NARS to develop educational opportunities for the next generation of African farmers.

ICRISAT

ICRISAT leads the Systemwide Desert Margins Programme, which is included in its project portfolio and will be further integrated.

IFPRI

IFPRI leads the Systemwide Programme on Collective Action and Property Rights Initiative (CAPRI) which is included in its project portfolio. The external review of CAPRI commissioned by TAC will provide an opportunity to assess the outputs of this programme, which has enjoyed an extensive and active inter-centre participation focusing on NRM issues.

IITA

IITA leads the Ecoregional Programme for the Humid and Sub-humid Tropics in SSA and the Systemwide Programme for IPM, both of which are integrated in the Centre project portfolio. Actual resources directed to each of these Programmes were still much lower than originally envisioned. IITA has secured modest multi-year support for the SP-IPM but the ecoregional activities in the benchmark areas are being continued under the Centre's core agenda.

ILRI

ILRI leads the Systemwide Livestock Programme (SLP) which is included in its project portfolio. SLP has not attracted the level of resources recommended by TAC in 1995, and the shortfall in overall financing will specifically limit SLP. ILRI has shared with TAC its comments on the recently completed CCER of SLP. This will provide the Committee with an opportunity to examine the nature of the apparent mismatch in funding for this Systemwide programme, which TAC recommended to strengthen linkages with plant-oriented centres.

ILRI has indicated that it has been encouraged by the inter-centre initiative for Central Asia and Caucasus (CAC) to expand its research in the region, however, expansion will require new funding earmarked for this region.

IPGRI

IPGRI leads the CGIAR Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme, which is integrated within its project portfolio. It is proceeding, within this Programme, with the initiative of the Global Conservation Trust for developing a rational global genebank system, which includes a fund-raising campaign. TAC notes that the Trust initiative is supportive of, and complementary to, the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. TAC reiterates its support to the global genebank initiative to ensure that the in-trust germplasm collections are properly maintained and managed. TAC is pleased to learn that sufficient resources have been identified to allow the initial stages of the campaign to get underway, and commends IPGRI and SGRP for their innovative attempt to tap non-traditional resources for the Trust initiative.

IRRI

IRRI leads the Ecoregional Programme for the Humid and sub-humid Asia, and is involved in the Rice-Wheat Ecoregional Programme for the Indo-Gangetic Plains. These activities are an integral part of IRRI's project portfolio.

IWMI

In the aftermath of the 11th Stockholm Water Symposium, IWMI launched its major global initiative "Dialogue on Water, Food, and Environment". The Centre hosts the Dialogue Secretariat. The Centre has indicated that the second phase of the Systemwide

Water Management Initiative (SWIMII) is being developed in parallel with the Dialogue and is a major component of the Dialogue Knowledge Base. TAC is unable to comment on the Dialogue initiative or on the SWIMII in absence of full proposals. Similarly, TAC remains unable to comment on the new Systemwide initiative on Malaria and Agriculture proposed in the IWMI MTP March 2001, as the Centre has not submitted a full proposal.

3.2 Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP)

The Panel, which reviewed SGRP's in 1997, covered a broad range of topics including the policy environment for global genetic resources; the mission, strategy, governance, research, and accomplishments of SGRP; and options for enhancing and strengthening the role of the Programme in the future. In considering this Report, TAC focused on what it judged to be the most critical issues facing SGRP, mindful that the outcome of the System Review in 1998 may affect future governance of genetic resources in the CGIAR. TAC's commentary, therefore, addressed recommendations aimed at improving the performance of SGRP but not matters of structure and governance. Specifically, TAC endorsed the Panel's recommendations on monitoring and analysing policy decisions at national, regional and global levels; preparing a strategic plan with prioritised objectives and areas of research/activity; and making SINGER more user-friendly and user-responsive to a wider range of stakeholders. TAC also acknowledged that a new structure might be needed for SGRP, but decided to revisit this issue in the light of the outcome of the System Review.

The review Panel also addressed gender as a special issue, recognizing its importance to policies and practices related to biodiversity. The Panel saw opportunities for the Centres to better reach farmers in the more marginal areas, which have provided important genetic resources to the Centres, but so far have had little benefit in return, because of poor adaptation of modern varieties to their needs. This calls for a more active role in new on-farm developments in crop improvement and the Panel recommends that the SGRP programme should include support to research and methodology development in on-farm crop improvement and participatory breeding and gender.

3.3 Cross Cutting Issues

One major policy issue which emerged from this review was the changing concepts on ownership and economic value with attendant transfer of biological diversity from a free resource to a contested property argued over by policy makers from governments, non-government organizations (NGOs) and private industry.

The relevance of incorporating gender issues into practices and policies relating to biodiversity conservation and use was recognised, a fact which was brought to the attention of CAPRI. Gender provides a useful analytical framework to gauge the respective roles and activities of men and women, women playing an important role in agriculture and the local management of natural resources. All CGIAR projects are required to indicate explicitly their possible role and impact on women. CIAT is coordinating the Systemwide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation. One of its activities is an E-mail Network on Participatory Breeding which has shown that participatory plant breeding involves a range of approaches that bring users closer in crop development, seed supply

and conservation. CIP, in a collaborative network (UPWARD) with the Wageningen Agricultural University (WAU) incorporates gender analysis in a more general user/use perspective. Several of the UPWARD projects deal with aspects of biodiversity conservation and use. IPGRI's programme on *in situ* conservation with projects in a number of countries involves a gender component. The SGRP did not have a specific collaborative research activity in the field of gender and biodiversity at the time of the review but since then related gender, programmes have been developed. As noted above, within the SGRP there are Centre-specific activities in this area. Furthermore, these activities are undertaken in collaboration with Centres' improvement programmes and in the context of the Systemwide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis.

3.4 Systemwide Programmes with an Ecoregional Approach

When TAC discussed the report of the Review of Systemwide Programmes with an Ecoregional Approach, it observed that the findings were useful in their overview of the diversity of approaches used, as well as of the strengths and the areas requiring change. Nevertheless, the review did not cover all the ecoregional work done in the centres. The review did not, therefore, cover every variation in approach and was not all-inclusive. TAC's perceptions of the major lessons to be drawn from the review are summarised below.

- The “approach” remains valid for the CGIAR and for many of its partners. TAC emphasised that, for CGIAR Centres, the “approach” must explicitly take into account poverty and the human dimensions of problems.
- Such research must be focused on major problems related to the sustainable improvement of productivity, which are of international (but not necessarily global) relevance. Too, but sometimes overlooked, in problem identification, CGIAR research must offer promising solutions.
- Procedures for monitoring progress and performance indicators were found to be lacking in many programmes. Timetables and “sunset” clauses were also missing. These are deemed to be essential and should be determined at the start of every programme.
- Programme governance was not well defined in most programmes. The difficulties observed by the Panel in the operation, management and governance of the programmes are partly associated with the size and diversity of the collaborative research activities. There was a need for clear delineation of partner responsibility, for programme leadership and for resource contributions. Procedures for programme review should be put in place from the start. Accountability through centre management to the appropriate centre Boards and to the CGIAR through TAC should be made clear for both funding and for programme output.

All such programmes have been successful in the development of strong alliances with a wide variety of partners. TAC noted, however, that the principle of subsidiarity should apply to these programmes. Moreover, TAC added that while complementarities among

Centres make the System more efficient, the added benefits seem to decline as the number of centres increase beyond a few.

- Several programmes were thought to place excessive emphasis on methodologies as compared with research results that would themselves lead to impact. The balance should be carefully outlined in setting out desired results at the start of the projects. Some would claim, however, that the proper test of a methodology includes its promise for impact, so that even efforts to develop methodologies must include attention to impact.
- The original TAC characterization of ecoregions, based on zones of similar climate and natural vegetation has proven, in most cases, to be not useful in operation. Many programmes successfully use socioeconomic and agroecological information as suggested by the identified problem set; all have a defined geographical region. The term “region” or “regional” was a more descriptive term for some programmes and should be used, where appropriate, to reduce confusion in terminology. Given the various ways in which “ecoregional” was used, the Panel recommended that it be dropped as a technical term. The Panel noted confusions emerging from the characterization of the “approach” and from related terms applicable to research on natural resources.
- TAC opined that perhaps the major consequence of the evident lack of precision and clarity has been a reluctance to fund such work, possibly because of uncertainty arising from the vocabularies being used.
- TAC suggested idiomatic changes that “ecoregional research” and “ecoregional approaches” be dropped as technical terms, that INRM be applied to circumstances in which both biophysical and social/economic dimensions are combined (TAC noted that CGIAR usage included both in NRM but this seemed not to be generally true), and that multi-centre rather than Systemwide be applied when two or more centres combine in INRM research.

3.5 Centre Specific Issues on Programme Funding

From the launching of systemwide programmes, TAC has in its analysis of MTPs and Centre Financing Plans discussed the status of on going SWPs. What follows is a sample of TAC Commentary on some centre MTPs to illustrate the funding issues with respect specific programmes.

IPGRI's MTP in 2000 envisaged no significant changes in the Centre's project portfolio from the previous plan. Implementation of the recommendations of the External Review of the Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme was accelerating in 2000. Additional funds need to be identified for the upgrading of the CGIAR Centres' genebanks and other priority areas of the SGRP agenda including animal genetic resources, capacity building, information systems, and management of genetic resources in ecosystems. Adjustments in resource allocations reflected an increased share of activities devoted to strengthening NARS. There would be somewhat greater allocation of resources for Sub-Saharan Africa in accordance with the CGIAR's strategy for that region and for South Asia. IPGRI would continue work on both *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation strategies and technologies for crop

and forest genetic resources, through a modus operandi based on facilitation and partnership. There will be some changes in emphasis, reflecting IPGRI's new strategy "Diversity for Development". In areas identified for reduced direct involvement, the institute will channel its efforts through training and capacity building among its NARS partners.

In its commentary, TAC commended IPGRI for the Centre's Systemwide review of investment needs for bringing Centre germplasm collections to an acceptable standard. Centre responsibilities for meeting those standards are now clear and visible across the System. TAC supported the shift in IPGRI priority toward building capacity among NARS partners.

In the 2001 Centre Financing plan, TAC finally noted that planned financing of Systemwide programmes appeared to be congruent with approved levels, except for Alternatives to Slash and Burn and the Systemwide Livestock Programme which show both significant financing gaps. TAC notes, however, that both the Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme and the Systemwide Programme for Integrated Pest Management, while budgeted at the approved levels, also face significant financing shortfalls.

CIFOR envisaged no change in its project portfolio from the MTM'OO-endorsed Plan. However, greater emphasis than originally proposed would be given to systemwide work to advance INRM, particularly to the development of research approaches and methodologies. CIFOR continues to provide significant technical and policy support to the international conventions/for on forests, biodiversity, and climate change. As well, the Centre's INRM activities are responsive to the findings of TAC's review of ecoregional programmes.

IITA had consolidated its research portfolio compared to its MTM'OO-endorsed Plan. While the changes were unlikely to affect the overall content and direction of the research agenda, TAC noted that the revised Plan reflects significantly reduced 2001 allocations for IPM-related work, with most of the reduction affecting the Systemwide Programme for Integrated Pest Management. Allocations for postharvest technology research and molecular and cellular biotechnology for crop improvement are also substantially lower. These reductions result from anticipated shortfalls in restricted core financing which the Centre was working to redress. TAC expressed its continuing concern over the funding shortfall in IPM research. The decentralisation of IITA's programmes warranted attention as a potential model of future Centre programme structure in addressing INRM and poverty issues on a regional scale.

IPGRI forecasted no significant deviations in 2001 from its MTM'OO-endorsed Plan, provided the 2001 funding expectations were met. However, the Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP) convened by IPGRI was faced with significantly lower unrestricted funding. A substantial financing gap in 2001 need be closed for the Programme to be fully operational. IPGRI drew the attention of the Finance Committee and Members to the seriousness of SGRP's situation in the short and long term. TAC commended IPGRI and the SGRP for the Systemwide review of investment needs for bringing Centre germplasm collections to an acceptable standard. The Committee recommend that, pending decision-making on CGIAR structure at ICW'OO, the

investments called for in the Genebank Investment Plan be revisited in terms of the Systemwide and Centre level funding mechanisms for the in-trust collections.

Finally, TAC drew the Members' attention to the shortfalls in Systemwide programmes noted above. Given the heightened emphasis which the CGIAR is placing on inter-centre co-operation in the context of its 2010 Vision and Strategy, the Committee believed that these programmes warrant stronger Member support.

At MTM99 when TAC drew the attention of the Group to the funding shortfall in Systemwide programme on livestock, alternative to slash and burn, genetic resources, rice/wheat, the Finance committee responded by providing allocation to these programmes. This time such a response was not possible.

Finally, TAC observed that planned financing of Systemwide activities, taken together, is 94% of approved level. Most of the difference is accounted for by the financing shortfall faced by the Systemwide Livestock Programme.

3.6 General Observations on Funding

In general most of the programmes experienced funding problems, inspite of TAC allocation to the approved programmes in accordance with the agreed agenda. For example TAC recommended US \$ 4 million for SLP but the funds did not materialise. After three years, ILRI was advised to change the funding strategy. However, even in 2002, the programme had not received sufficient funding albeit occasional boost from the Finance Committee. Centres saw these initiatives as bringing in extra and new money. Few centres committed their own resources to the research component as such funds would go other non centre parties. Besides, the centres were already contributing to the facilitation units and staff resources assigned to the SWP. The funding scenario was exacerbated by the expansion of the system to 18 centres in the early 1990 when the SWAs were launched. However, during the same period the overall system funding declined and eventually the centres contracted to the current 16. Further, the unrestricted core also started to decline even where the total centres funding remained constant. It has been stated the transaction cost of these programmes remained high although the actual costs are hard to come by. Finally, the donors with a few exceptions did not come through with the money despite the fact that the Group overwhelmingly approved the SWPs.

In 1994, TAC approved that \$10 million be allocated to SWPs in the 1998-2000. By 2000, it was estimated that approximately \$26 million was being spent on SWPs. Such estimates are contestable, as some programmes have become part of centre activities while others still operate as distinct entities. Moreover, these calculations hardly take into account the counterpart contribution by NARS partners and others.

3.7 Cross Cutting Programmatic and Organizational Matters

Across the programmes reviewed, by TAC, there is evidence that inter-centre collaboration is taking place and is getting better. Partnership with NARS has improved and non-CGIAR organizations have been attracted. Since all programmes are managed as consortia, the facilitation units play a major role in the management of SWPs. Individuals in charge of the facilitation units are crucial for the performance of the programme. Age of

the programme has an effect on the output as the older programmes which under way when the CGIAR launched SWPs such as the Rice/wheat, inland valley have an advantage over the younger ones. Some programmes had a slow start despite the availability of seed money. For instance the Coastal environment was allocated \$50,000 but was not able to take off. However, after retooling the convening centre has now proposed a challenge programme on coastal environment centre. Similarly, the desert margins, which experienced a slow start has now won a GEF support and has also been proposed as a challenge programme. These two examples serve to illustrate how time is important in the design of SWPs.

The panel, which reviewed the ecoregional programmes, examined certain criteria, which contributed to successful programmes. The panel found out that success depends on strong scientific leadership, clear articulation of the problem with capacity to attract active appropriate partners, convening centre takes keen interest in the programme, and has already mentioned lead time is advantageous.

Checking the list of eight topics proposed at MTM94 by the CGIAR Task Force, as a follow-up to UNCED/Agenda 21, six had been addressed specifically by SWPs and initiatives, the seventh, a global long-term forestry research network, was considered to be a central part of CIFOR's core programme, and the eighth, global digital data sets for use in GIS not yet been covered, though there is considerable use of GIS by the ecoregional and systemwide programmes, with CIAT being a lead centre in this area. Specifically the SWPs have enabled the CGIAR to respond to the three conventions: ASB on climate change, Desert margins to Desertification convention and SGRP to Biodiversity.

TAC has worked with CDC in some areas of SWPs particularly the ecoregional programmes. In 1996, ISNAR convened a workshop for the lead scientist of systemwide programmes with an ecoregional approach. Mike Collinson facilitated the workshop and the report summarised by the CDC was useful in the implementation phase of these programmes. It was reported that there is very little sharing of experience among the Ecoregional programmes, a fact, which also applies to other SWPs. Ecoregional Fund established by the Netherlands and managed by ISNAR has been instrumental in supporting methodological issues in ecoregional approach. Grantees of the Ecoregional Fund are collaborators in the ecoregional programme. It has therefore been observed that methodological issues have been addressed but concern for scaling up remains. In certain programmes benchmark sites have been identified and characterised. Although good site characterisation has been reported, research objective ought to go beyond site characterisation. On competitive grant, TAC has had mixed experience. It did not succeed with SLP since the funding was not in place at the beginning. On the other hand CAPRI seem to have a good experience with competitive grants but verification awaits the report of the review panel. The review of SLP revealed that better use should be made of peer review in the course of implementation of such programmes. The review of SP-IPM has recommended that facilitation units ought to be paid for by the system funds and not by centres. iSC will be deliberating some of these issues shortly with a view to make appropriate recommendations.

4. Implications for the future

The following are some of the unanswered questions with implications for the future:

- SWPs did not have Sunset clause. Is it now opportune to propose a time frame for some of these programmes? If so what criteria ought to be followed.
- TAC put a hold in 1996 that no new SWPs be accepted until lessons learnt from the programmes initiated in 1996 have been documented. Eleven of these programmes have now been reviewed and others are already five years old. There are already new candidates for SWP. What criteria will iSC apply in processing such proposals. E.g. SWIM11, SIMA or others to come.
- The level of funding recommended by TAC in 1994 was \$10 million for over 12 SWAs. What should be the ideal level of funding of SWPs?
- How should the SWPs be evaluated? Reconciliation with Challenge Programmes.
- If they become Challenge Programmes, what next.
- Sharing credit with NARS ought to be clarified.
- Global versus regional roles of SWPs is likely to change as the CGIAR implement the new Vision and Strategy, which identifies a regional approach.
- Why did the donors show reluctance to support a novel concept endorsed by the Group?
- TAC was to institute criteria for selecting the SWPs (Report of the Ecoregional programmes stipulates) to be continued or terminated- unfinished business.

4.1 SWP as Challenge Programmes

With respect to challenge programmes, iSC has noted that some SWPs have been proposed as challenge programmes. In looking at the criteria of challenge vs SWPs there overlaps. For example the rationale for setting up CP are very similar to those SWP, Questions have been raised as to what will happen to the SWP once the CPs are on board. Alternatively the relationship among the CPs, SWPs and centre Core programmes is an issues which now need to be addressed. Certainly the lessons from SWPs can contribute to better implementation of CPs, avoiding the pitfalls and achieving efficiencies of CGIAR operations.

5. Conclusions and iSC Recommendations

Members of the CGIAR approved the new Vision and Strategy which behoves the SC to provide advise on regional approach to research for their coherence in a systemwide context, and to ensure balance between regional, core, and CP activities. After a decade of articulating and implementing Systemwide programmes, the SC can now draw on its

institutional memory first by distilling what has worked and some reflection on what failed. It is noted that one of the systemwide programmes was conceived before the reorganization, which led to the merger of ILRAD and ILCAA to form ILRI, hence the original objective to integrate livestock policy and NRM, may have changed. With the introduction of CPs, a further look at the SLP so that it revolves around poverty focus, clarifies role of ILRI, as the global livestock centre may be considered worthwhile. Similarly the On Farm Water Husbandry convened by ICARDA and SWIMII convened by IWMI could be re-examined in the light of progression of the CP on water. The convening role of centres as originally defined for SWP has been reported each time an EPMR of a centre is discussed. However, the extent to which centres may continue to shoulder a convening role against declining unrestricted funding should be revisited.

The issue of criteria for processing new SWPs has aroused interest because of the introduction of the Challenge Programmes. Linked to the criteria is the use of terminology which are either confusing or overlap with the on going systemwide programmes. In its commentary on the Ecoregional Programmes TAC promised to revisit this area. An overall assessment drawing on all the reviews so far conducted for SWPs as well as other lessons learnt from centres, stakeholders and investors would enrich the lessons learnt in implementing these programmes. Such analysis could inform on the optimal number of centres, partners, level of resources, right governance structures, indicators for added value by doing business together, mechanisms for forging links with the world beyond the CGIAR and guidelines for internal as well as external science quality assurance. Finally, SC in close consultation with CDC should propose measures to facilitate interaction and sharing experience among SWPs, raising visibility of these activities in the system, securing consistent reporting not only to the CGIAR but also to non-CGIAR partners.