

Global Panel – Final Summary.

Process: The deliberations of the Global Panel initially focused on the issues of poverty and the extent to which the CGIAR is ready to adopt a pro-poor research agenda. Leading on from this was a definition of what additional information would be required to add this dimension to the priority setting of the system. The panel then proceeded to examine more generally (i) the constraints to research, and (ii) where there are considered to be new opportunities in science, partnerships etc. that could be exploited to enhance the research agenda, and (iii) what the threats to these developments might be. The Global panel was aware that the concurrent regional panels were addressing the same issues (based on continental/or agro-ecological considerations) and therefore restricted its discussions to more general system priorities. The panel also benefited from a personal report (by Uma Lele) on the outcomes and likely recommendations of the OED meta-evaluation of the CGIAR. In the last week, a list of areas to be addressed by the CGIAR in its future considerations in priority setting were developed on the basis of panel contributions. Although it was not entirely possible, similar or related areas suggested by panelists were bundled under a restricted number of headings to reduce overlaps and conflicts in scoring (and because of the more specific considerations of the regional panels). Panelists were asked to express their personal priorities by scoring. The list of areas, and the scores are given below (as is a note on the scores received). A hypothetical description of how the key areas could be implemented in a simplified structural model of the CGIAR is also included. Some additional points arising from the panel's exchanges are given at the end of this summary for the consideration of the iSC.

List of priority areas of activity for the CGIAR suggested by the Global Panel (*with scores, but listed as originally numbered, not by ranking*):

1. Super goal: Poverty alleviation

Knowledge Gap: *Who and where are the poor and what are their circumstances?*

Rationale: The CGIAR Vision and Strategy continues to identify poverty reduction as a major goal of the system. But, there is need to further sharpen the description of the dimensions of poverty to identify how agricultural research (in its widest sense) can be used to alleviate poverty. A list of analytical activities under this heading will include: (i) a finer identification (i.e. below the national level) of where poor people in rural areas live, including contributions to international data sets and GIS, (ii) evaluation of their assets, and on- and off-farm livelihoods, (iii) characterization of the resource base and its trends, (iv) definition of appropriate technologies, (v) how technologies are best diffused and adopted for this sector of the rural population.

Score: 09 points (2/10 votes).

2. Super goal: Poverty alleviation

Opportunity: *To develop research priority setting based on poverty criteria.*

Rationale: Priority setting in the CGIAR should sequentially adjust on the basis of the information collected (above) to more expressly tackle pro-poor research projects. Requirements include the development of criteria based on a sustainable livelihoods approach; the agro-ecologies supporting poor people (e.g. hard and marginal environments), areas of research not undertaken by others, and quantitative decision-making and resource allocation based on economic or opportunity losses to the poor. Such estimations will require trade and market analyses at appropriate levels, which may be conducted with or by partners.
Score: 24 points (3/10 votes).

3. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Securing and enhancing access to productive assets

Opportunity: *CGIAR to continue to focus as a priority activity on the conservation and utilization of germplasm.*

Rationale: The CGIAR holds in trust large collections of germplasm on behalf of developing countries. There is a unique and essential role for the CGIAR in the collection, conservation, characterisation, and enhancement of germplasm, and for improving access to germplasm. The CGIAR may, as in the past, extend its gene-banking role to help accommodate natural or politically induced disasters affecting internationally significant germplasm collections. The system will develop agendas for materials conserved *ex situ* (genebanks) and *in situ* (on farm, forests, wetlands), and will undertake collaborative work on benefit sharing.

Score: 32 points (7/10 votes).

4. Super goal: Sustainability food security

CGIAR Purpose: Securing and enhancing access to productive assets

Opportunity: *Focus on new science for maintaining and improving natural resource efficiency supporting agriculture and harvested, wild resources.*

Rationale: Improved management of tropical soils has led in some cases to improved productivity. Water shortages loom as a major future constraint in some regions. There is the opportunity to focus biophysical and methodological research on soil fertility, including soil ecology, and water efficiencies in agriculture as a priority. Knowledge gaps include the (i) identification and quantification of wider ecological services in food production systems – this applies to both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems which are wild and human managed, and (ii) identification of connectivities and flows between eco/resource systems common to tropical developing countries. This implicitly recognizes the need to adopt an ecosystem approach.

Score: 23 points (5/10 votes).

5. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Securing and enhancing access to productive assets

Knowledge gap: *How to optimally manage common property resources?*

Rationale: Common property resources, such as forests, fisheries, livestock pastures, wetlands and irrigated water play key roles in the food security and livelihoods of the poor. These are threatened by over exploitation, resource degradation and limitation of opportunities and access rights. Equitable management and enforceable regimes are required but confusions exist in goals (local and national, and between uses) and means for management of numerous use functions. Research will include collaboration on models of best use practices at the landscape level, the development of governance mechanisms, access, tenure and new science influencing institutional development and multi-sectoral policy issues.

Score: 10 points (2/10 votes).

6. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Securing and enhancing access to productive assets

Knowledge gap: *How will agro-ecosystems and wild resource systems be affected by resource and climatic change in the next 25 years?*

Rationale: In planning research and in recommending appropriate methodologies for the future the CGIAR system will need to understand the type and extent of changes in natural resources that have occurred in the resource systems and agro-ecologies of interest over the past 25 years. This will include characterization of the soils, water, climate and pest ecologies (i.e. the agro-ecologies) in which poor people live, at a fine enough disaggregation to be useful for targeting agricultural technology transfer. It will also involve projection of the likely impact of climate change over the next 25 years across the agro-ecologies of interest, with special attention to the question of whether greater variability is likely. Impacts will depend upon the resiliency of currently used agricultural technology to the likely degrees and variability in climatic conditions over the next 25 years.

Score: 16 points (5/10 votes).

7. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Enhancing productivity of assets

Opportunity: *Application of new biotechnologies, and enhancing partnerships and international environment to improve products for the poor.*

Rationale: Germplasm research shows high rates of return and the opportunity to capitalize on new biotechnical techniques or combinations of new and traditional methodologies. There is heavy investment by the private sector in selected aspects and commodities for genetic improvement. The CGIAR has access to germplasm and agroecological expertise appropriate to developing countries, but increasingly relies on other providers of technology. The modus operandi with the private sector is not worked out. There are regional and natural resource issues in dissemination. System level approaches should be established to engage in such partnerships by focusing on the crops and activities for the poor (e.g. biological/genetic capabilities to resist drought, resist pests and produce under less-than-optimal soil or water conditions, available to be used by the public sector in poor people's interests).

Score: 29 points (7/10 votes).

8. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Enhancing productivity of assets

Knowledge gap: *How best to work effectively with partners in research and dissemination of improved germplasm in the evolving international environment.*

Rationale: Effective system-level methods for interacting with the private sector have yet to be developed. There have been few, or only piece-meal, approaches to dealing with the regulatory environment framed by IPRs, health regulations or the requirements of international conventions. The CGIAR should therefore work actively towards private sector partnerships; develop an IPR policy (and associated understandings on behalf of the system and its partners on issues such as SPS regulations and conventions which affect freedom to operate).

Score: 07 points (2/10 votes).

9. Super goal: Sustainable food security

CGIAR Purpose: Increasing market competitiveness

Opportunity: *To raise productivity and resilience of farming systems through technological improvement and diversification into non-traditional crops, methods and enterprises.*

Rationale: Overproduction of crop staples can lead to depressed market prices, whilst small holders tend to spread risk and seasonal activities over a number of enterprises. The CGIAR should be ready to expand its farming system approaches to diversify the number and types of products. This may include crops (for food or for cash) grown as mixed varieties, fruit and vegetables, fish from environmentally appropriate aquaculture, non-timber forest products (including for fibre, oils and medicinal compounds) etc.

Improvement of agricultural products (crops, livestock, fish, trees) should be not only for production traits but also for quality (market price). Choice should be governed by reference to market opportunities and the effects of international trade. Emphasis should also be given to the concepts of nutrition security, meeting urban market needs, and improvement in the resilience of food production (e.g. regions affected substantially by HIV/AIDS and labour shortages, or prone to natural disasters).

Score: 31 points (6/10 votes).

10. CGIAR logframe output: Human capacity enhanced

Opportunity: *To provide a bridging role to enhance knowledge management and the national capacities to conduct collaborative and innovative research.*

Rationale: The NARS are variable in capacity, by country, region and by sectoral expertise. If the CGIAR adopts upstream approaches it will preferentially benefit those countries having effective NARS or collaborative arrangements. The knowledge divide is still large, and the CGIAR has the opportunity to take advantage of standard and new IT to make available new scientific knowledge and best management practice. The CGIAR role would be to provide targeted information and indications on the suitability of new

science and methods for developing countries in different regions or states of development. Related activities may include promoting more NARS-led research (through south-south networks), or (ii) participating as a System in global discussions (summits, conventions) for the development of common knowledge and practice. Score: 19 points (5/10 votes).

Notes on the scoring: To get an idea of the overall preferences of a diverse group, panelists were asked to adopt a scoring procedure in which a total score of 20 points would be allocated over a maximum of five research areas. Reservations were expressed on the value of scoring the panel's outputs on the basis of a) the variability in outlook of panel members, b) the frame adopted for the scoring based on knowledge gaps and opportunities, c) differences in 'quality' of the activities (priority setting for a pro-poor agenda, new opportunities in "heartland" research areas, and methods for interaction with partners and capacity building). Ten of the 15 responding participants provided scores. The three areas receiving the highest scores; areas #3 (Conservation and utilization of germplasm), #9 (Enhancing farming systems through technological improvement and non-traditional crops), and #7 (Application of new biotechnologies) were included in the choices of six or more panelists. However, relatively little pattern emerged from the scoring. Three panelists scored completely non-overlapping areas (based on philosophical emphases described under c) above. Just two panelists chose the same five areas as each other, with only minor differences in ranking. Each of the ten areas was chosen by at least two panelists.

Accommodating the priority areas in a new structural paradigm for the CGIAR (after Herdt):

A structural analysis of the CGIAR was beyond the remit of the panel. However, structural issues are inherent in any new ways of looking at priorities for the future, and had been raised in passing by a number of interventions. What follows therefore are the views of one panel member (which the panel as a whole has not had time to discuss) but which assist our thinking about the way the above areas can be conceptualized and grouped. Herdt (in his e-mail to the panel of the 7th of May, 2003) recommends a fundamental change to the way the CGIAR does business. His idea is the sharing of the research load (and resources) between three Global research centers for strategic research and methodology development, and the NARES. An integral part of all activities would be capacity building for developing country researchers to conduct applied and strategic agricultural research in the low income countries that do not already have the capacity to do it. The three Global centers proposed would cover germplasm, natural resources and policy, and would work synergistically across the regions.

In this scenario, the priority areas would be grouped as follows (priority allocation and rankings as suggested by Herdt differ from those of the aggregate panel results: some titles are slightly modified).

40% to the Germplasm Center:

First: Conservation and utilization of germplasm (#3)

Second: Genomics and application of new biotechnologies (#7)

Third: IPR, health, biosafety and international conventions (#8)

40% to the Resources Center:

First: New science for resource efficiency supporting agriculture (#4)

Second: Farming systems through technological improvement and non-traditional crops (#9)

Third: How agro-ecosystems will be affected by resource and climate change (#6)

20% to the Policy Center:

First: Who and where are the poor and what are their circumstances (#1)

Second: How to optimally manage common property resources (#5)

Third: Trade and market analysis to increase opportunities for the poor (#2)

(However an important caveat is that the policy center could provide the information of this sort, but that developing and setting research priorities across the system should be carried out at the system level by the Science Council).

Additional outcomes:

The following issues have been drawn out of the interventions of the panelists for the information and consideration of the iSC :

- ?? Even amongst a small number of panelists, there are quite different concerns about the focus for the system and the way it should operate (not simply brought about by disciplinary differences). This also resulted in quite different frames of reference amongst panelists for judging the panel's final outputs.
- ?? The list of activities therefore reflects areas of high concern to the experienced panelists selected, but was not subject to stringent scientific analysis (of limits, opportunities etc.) to have confidence in the list being comprehensive. Similarly the scoring does not account for analyses of pay-offs from different opportunities or developing missing knowledge.
- ?? The frame adopted (with goals and purposes), is considered less important than the priority subject matter areas at this stage of discussion.
- ?? Several panelists felt that they had insufficient time to devote to full discussion of the matters at hand – and greater clarity may have resulted from face-to-face meetings.

- ?? Will the CGIAR make a concerted effort to elaborate a pro-poor agenda? Views were expressed that the CGIAR must do this to maintain its place and relevance in the overall “research for development” agenda, whilst others argued that resource limitations, and the dependence of effective poverty alleviation on many partners and variables, made poverty alleviation a desirable but less tangible goal to be met through agricultural research.
- ?? Nevertheless, areas #1 and #2 were put forward as requirements to help develop a pro-poor research agenda. The adoption of criteria and priority setting mechanisms for research with a poverty focus, similar to those from the field of human health, is supported.
- ?? The “heartland” areas of the CGIAR in genetic resources conservation and use, natural resources management, and commodity improvement (including a more specific focus on traits of importance to the poor and growth in harsh environments) were supported.
- ?? In concert with an emphasis on the importance of livelihoods and markets to the poor and small-scale households, and in research planning, came support for the diversification of the research on farming systems and component technologies.
- ?? A spectrum of views was expressed in relation to the conduct of up-stream research by the centers and the adoption of more obvious service functions for, and on behalf of, NARS (science policy, targeted knowledge management, research consortium building, capacity building). Many of these views are not mutually exclusive but there are great differences in emphasis between panel members in the placement of the system in these areas.
- ?? Clear resolution and statements of intent in the above areas (particularly poverty, and the up-stream nature of the CGIAR) will be required to avoid continuing fuzziness in the development of priorities and in CGIAR deliberations. Clarity in defining the role and research priorities should be used to lead the resolution of structural issues which also affect the CGIAR. The hypothetical structural example invites thought, for instance, on the role of policy and priority setting within the system, and the balance between the system and other agencies.
- ?? Overall scoring mechanisms for setting priorities should be informed by broader sets of analyses, and collaboration amongst sources of data and analysis in the CGIAR and the overall development community, under the leadership of the Science Council.

END. PRG 8th May 2003.

