

THE New CGIAR

March 2010

Changing Times, Time to Change

Recent turmoil in food, energy and financial markets will likely persist in the years to come. Climate change is expected to constrain the productivity of crops, as altered temperature and rainfall patterns depress yields and intensify pest and disease pressures. More frequent and intense drought and tropical storms will further undermine the food security and well-being of smallholder farmers, fishers and foresters and their ability to supply markets.

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) must confront these challenges in keeping with its mission to reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high quality international agricultural research, partnership and leadership. To meet these challenges in a changing world, the CGIAR is also changing. In December 2009, the CGIAR opened a new chapter in its 39-year history by adopting a new business model based on two years of consultations within and beyond the partnership.

A Balanced Partnership

The new model for the CGIAR emphasizes clear lines of accountability and balances the partnership between those who conduct research, on the one hand, and those who fund it, on the other. It opens the system for stronger collaboration and partnership with other research and development actors. This more business-like structure and its clarified roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes promise to enable the CGIAR to do more in fulfillment of its mandate.

The core pillars of the new partnership are the CGIAR Fund and the Consortium of CGIAR Centers. The Consortium unites the international agricultural research Centers supported by the CGIAR and provides a single contact point for donors. The Consortium is currently being established as a legal entity. Donors will join together in the CGIAR Fund, with the aim of harmonizing their contributions to agricultural research for development, improving the quantity and quality of funding available, and engendering greater financial stability. Reinforcing this two-pillar management structure are various bridging mechanisms, including a Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), which guides the development of a results-oriented research agenda in line with the CGIAR's new vision and strategic objectives (see Box 1).

The Consortium Board takes the lead in formulating and refining the SRF, working in partnership with Fund donors, research partners, farmers and other stakeholders through direct consultations and the biennial Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD). As the CGIAR transitions to its new business model, the Alliance of the CGIAR Centers has formulated

a draft SRF for consideration at the first GCARD in March 2010 and for approval by the Consortium Board.

The SRF is endorsed by the Funders Forum, a biennial gathering of all contributors to the CGIAR. The decision-making body for the Fund is the Fund Council, which comprises eight representatives from developed countries, eight from developing countries and regional organizations, and six from multilateral and global organizations and foundations. The Fund Council meets face to face twice a year to make decisions on behalf of all Fund donors, who may participate in meetings as observers.

The Fund Council appoints the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC), a standing panel of world-class scientific experts, whose overarching purpose is to provide independent advice and expertise to CGIAR donors through the Fund Council, to which it reports. The ISPC serves as a second intellectual bridge between the Fund and the Consortium, helping to ensure, through its expert advice, the alignment of the research program with the SRF.

Results-Oriented Research

The research agenda set out by the SRF will be implemented through a portfolio of Mega Programs. As with the SRF, the Consortium Board takes the lead in selecting and defining Mega Programs, which are then submitted to the Fund Council for approval and funding. Fundamental to developing the SRF and its Mega Programs is their alignment with the perspectives and priorities of end users, as expressed through GCARD and other contacts (see Box 2). A first set of fast-tracked Mega Programs is expected to be approved in late 2010.

The Mega Programs will be implemented on the basis of performance agreements between the Fund Council

BOX 1: NEW VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

VISION

To reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership and leadership.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Food for People: Create and accelerate sustainable increases in the productivity and production of healthy food by and for the poor.

Environment for People: Conserve, enhance and sustainably use natural resources and biodiversity to improve the livelihoods of the poor in response to climate change and other factors.

Policies for People: Promote policy and institutional change that will stimulate agricultural growth and equity to benefit the poor, especially rural women and other disadvantaged groups.

and the Consortium, a third bridging mechanism. Similarly, funding and performance agreements will ensure mutual accountability between the Consortium and its member research Centers (to which the Consortium provides shared services in human resources, information technology, intellectual property management, and finance and procurement, thereby streamlining Center operations and reducing costs). The implementation of research through contractual relationships — both within the CGIAR and between the lead Centers of CGIAR Mega Programs and research partners outside the CGIAR — puts greater emphasis on results on the ground.

Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

Governing the Consortium is the Consortium Board, established in February 2010, with 10 voting members (including the Consortium chief executive officer) and two observers. With the support of the Consortium Office, the Consortium Board oversees the performance of Mega Programs and of member Centers as set forth in funding and performance agreements.

The World Bank serves as the trustee of the new CGIAR Fund. The trustee effectuates funding and performance agreements between the Fund and the Consortium and holds in trust Fund donor monies until their transfer to the Consortium and its members, as allocated by the Fund Council, to finance SRF implementation. Fund donors may designate their funds in one of three ways:

BOX 2: GCARD IS THE TICKET

The Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) convenes World Food Prize laureates and other international and national scientists, government leaders, development experts, and representatives of farm, fisher and forest communities every 2 years. Organized by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) to replace its triennial conference and the CGIAR annual general meeting, GCARD is the fulcrum of the CGIAR's program to better align research priorities and concrete donor commitments with the needs of poor farmers, fishers and foresters.

In preparation for the first GCARD, regional reviews, an electronic survey, open electronic consultations and face-to-face meetings in West Asia, the Asia-Pacific, Central Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean provided input to inform discussions and analyses at GCARD. The responsibility of GCARD participants is to use this input to outline the research priorities and actions that will most effectively contribute to sustainable rural development and global food security. The meeting will issue a document for consideration by the following Funders Forum, which indicates a way forward and actions on specific themes to begin implementing the plan.

Subsequent GCARDs will strengthen the public accountability of the CGIAR for progress and impact, as it strives to meet objectives.

unrestricted funding to the entire CGIAR program portfolio, programmatic funding for one or more Mega Programs, and institutional funding for one or more Centers. The Fund Office, the support unit of the Funders Forum and the Fund Council, is housed at the World Bank.

The fourth bridging mechanism joining the Fund and the Consortium is the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. The funders and implementers of CGIAR international agricultural research for development share mutual accountability to all users of that research and, along with research partners, have a shared responsibility for getting CGIAR research into use to achieve development outcomes. A primary objective of CGIAR reform was to streamline review processes, clarify core responsibilities and reduce duplication. The new M&E framework is designed to achieve these objectives while strengthening M&E outputs and meeting the fiduciary requirements of the Fund and the Consortium.

The Consortium Board commissions periodic external evaluations of Mega Program components and/or crosscutting issues and external evaluations of Centers. The Fund Council commissions independent evaluations of Mega Programs. Every 6 to 7 years, an independent evaluation of the entire CGIAR partnership is commissioned by a reference group constituted for the purpose. All evaluations are publicly disclosed.

What is Different?

Under the new business model, funding becomes more results oriented through Mega Programs, which are the organizing structure of the CGIAR research agenda as defined by the new SRF. Monitoring and evaluation come under a unified framework, streamlining review processes, clarifying core responsibilities and reducing duplication while ensuring the CGIAR's accountability to stakeholders and meeting the fiduciary requirements of the Fund and the Consortium.

Performance and funding agreements enhance an institutional and partnership culture oriented toward results. These binding contracts — between the Consortium and the Fund Council, the Consortium and Mega Programs' lead Centers, and lead Centers and their research partners — provide strong incentives to deliver results.

Finally, the strengthened management structure prepares the CGIAR to absorb vastly more program funding, with a target annual budget of US\$1 billion. The CGIAR is now better structured to effectively and efficiently implement a greatly expanded research program supported by increased funding. This makes the CGIAR a more attractive vehicle for donors' investments in food security, rural development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and environmental protection. And it makes the funders and implementers of CGIAR research more accountable to all users of that research — especially smallholder farm, fisher and forest communities — as they meet their mutual responsibility to get CGIAR research into use to achieve development outcomes.



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