21ST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

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GFAR and the CGIAR Change Management Process
Regional fora and stakeholder discussion of system change
Complementarities in ARD: linking the roles of GFAR and the new CGIAR
Dear colleagues,

**Update on the CGIAR Change management process**

I am writing to update you all on the current status of the CGIAR change management process and its implications for other partners in the Global Forum on Agricultural Research. After an initial period of discussion and preparation of drafts in working groups, the process is now opening out for all of you to provide your own direct input into shaping the future of the CGIAR.

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research is a key constituent organization of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and of course was one of the bodies instrumental in its foundation as a platform bringing together those concerned about agricultural research for development.

However, in recent years, there has been growing concern that the CGIAR system has lost clarity of purpose and has not adapted to take account of the new research for development landscape in which many other partners, including the national systems of emerging economies, are now involved. The CGIAR Change Management Process, established among the CGIAR and its stakeholders thus sets out to achieve reform of the international agricultural research system to create a system that all can support as playing a valuable role.

This is being tackled through a series of working groups, addressing the vision, partnerships, governance and finance of the CGIAR and coordinated through a Central Steering Team. Within this process, I sit on the Central Steering Team (and represent GFAR on the Executive Council of the CGIAR) and GFAR Executive Secretary Dr Mark Holderness co-chairs the Partnerships Working Group. This process involves drafting of documents and extensive discussion within and between the working groups to try to find coherent proposals for change that provide clear ways forward, are aligned with each other and acceptable to all.

The way in which the CGIAR operates depends very much on its purpose and thus the ‘Vision’ working group has of necessity been the first to report. Their report is now available on the website [http://www.cgiar.org/changemanagement/index.html](http://www.cgiar.org/changemanagement/index.html) (This site also describes the change management process in more detail). World Bank Vice-President & CG Chair Kathy Sierra has now written to stakeholders to encourage participation in an e-discussion (‘Virtual Forum’). We would encourage you all, as the stakeholders in agricultural research for development, to input your thoughts and opinions directly via this mechanism:

Dear all,

I would like to invite you to join a series of virtual discussions on the CGIAR Change Management Initiative. Our first engagement is through a blog, where I present some of my initial thoughts, and ideas on the Change Initiative, describe some of the current debates, and invite your comments. Please join the conversation at [http://changemanagement.cgiar.org](http://changemanagement.cgiar.org)

The blog is part of a series of e-conversations that will be held over the next six months in order to gather ideas and reactions as our thinking develops.

A series of e-discussions on the papers produced by the Change Management working groups will also be launched. “Visioning the Future of the CGIAR”, a paper produced by the Visioning working group is already available in the Virtual Forums for your consideration and discussion. Working groups on Partnerships, Governance and Funding will each present their papers to the broader CGIAR community later in the northern summer and seek your comment.

I look forward to a productive exchange of information, viewpoints and vision.

Katherine Sierra
Chair

Once the other working groups have reported, these will also be put to wider discussion through an electronic consultation, managed by the CGIAR Secretariat and through face-to-face discussions around the world.
GFAR and FORAGRO have arranged for the first of these to take place during the FORAGRO conference and GFAR Steering Committee meeting, both to be held in Montevideo at the end of July. The FORAGRO event will include a position paper from the CG Centres in Latin America and responses from the region. Senior figures from the CGIAR and the Change Management Chair Rodney Cooke (IFAD) will be present to discuss the process and its implications. During the GFAR Steering Committee meeting, the wider implications of the CGIAR change process will be discussed with GFAR’s stakeholder representatives, as will the possible roles of the regional fora in facilitating and organizing subsequent discussion of the proposed changes and their implications in other regions of the world (the assumption being that this would be supported by CGIAR funds).

Constructive partnership with the CGIAR as a key constituency of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research is crucial for GFAR to play its designated role in working to ensure that agricultural research is driven by the needs of the poor and delivers against the global challenges now facing us all. New mechanisms now being discussed for the CGIAR include a possible central international fund for agricultural research. The Alliance of CGIAR centres has recently proposed that a vigorous GFAR could form the mechanism by which research priorities are discussed and agreed and working partnerships formed for subsequent research to be implemented via the CGIAR system, in true partnership with others.

GFAR encompasses all those concerned about agricultural research for development. As GFAR Chair, I would urge and encourage you to take an active part in these processes as they develop so that we create an international agricultural research system that adds value in the best possible ways to national and regional processes, to help meet the future needs of this world.

Prof Dr Adel El-Beltagy,
GFAR Chair
27 June 2008

Update from Brussels July Workshop

The Change Steering Team and Working Groups on Governance and Finance met in Tervuren, Brussels from 14-16 July. First drafts of the working group papers were discussed within the groups and discussed with the Change Steering Team. Both finance and governance Working Groups placed considerable emphasis on the way in which a new international fund for agricultural research might operate, how it might be governed, what it might support and how the structures of the CGIAR might be simplified through such an approach.

The Co-Chairs of the Partnerships Working Group were also present and reported on progress so far. The Partnerships Group are taking a perspective of the CGIAR within the wider Agricultural Research for Development system, rather than as a focus in itself. The Partnerships Group will meet on 25-26 July to discuss the draft paper for that area.

The role of GFAR is not yet clearly established within the proposals. The process will require more engagement and input from other GFAR stakeholders to establish the specific niches that global and regional fora should play and the inter-relationships of the CGIAR to others in the global ARD system. Discussion with Dr Ren Wang confirmed that the CGIAR Secretariat wishes to link with GFAR in organizing the change forum discussion in Maputo.

Dr Mark Holderness
GFAR Executive Secretary
The CGIAR and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research

Summary:

This paper describes the partnership basis between the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the CGIAR. It outlines the ways in which GFAR enables the diverse stakeholders involved in, and benefiting from, agricultural research for development to become true partners in its formulation and delivery, linking agricultural science with the societies it serves.

These processes can bring considerable value to the international agricultural research system in ensuring the relevance of its work and sustainability of its products. Specific mechanisms are outlined here by which this can take place at both global and regional levels. The change management process offers a real opportunity for these principles of demand-driven research and equitable partnership to become directly established into an effective and valued international research system with GFAR and the CGIAR working together to each play their part in these new relationships.

To do so requires a greater and more coherent investment of time, energy and financial resources towards these ends and a willingness among all institutions to reshape their processes to meet the global development challenges addressed by agricultural research.

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Introduction to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research was first created in 1996 among the various constituencies engaged in agricultural research. This was a direct response to the recognized need to mobilize the world’s scientific community and all partners in agricultural research for development (ARD) in their efforts to alleviate poverty, increase food security and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. Founders included its sponsors IFAD and FAO, the CGIAR, regional and national agricultural research forums, farmers organizations, advanced research institutions, the private sector and the development assistance/donor community.

This Global Forum has been owned by all from the outset and has brought a particular focus on poverty alleviation and increasing productivity, while sustainably managing the natural resource base. It has set out a farmer-centred agenda, focused on effective partnership and collaboration as mechanisms, driven by principles of subsidiarity (programmes planned from the ‘bottom up’), complementarity (developing a global agricultural research system that draws on the complementary strengths of different stakeholders), additionality (supporting programmes and operations that specifically add value to what each stakeholder can do on its own), involvement of all stakeholders in planning and executing activities (building on the development of national agricultural research systems that themselves involve all partners) and equitable partnerships, in which the development-aid concept evolves towards a full partnership, rather than a one-sided relationship depending on who holds the financial power.

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research is not a separate or stand-alone institution, quite the opposite: it is a forum, an open space for dialogue and the development of partnership, an institution without walls, working as a movement bringing together the perspectives of multiple partners. Actions towards its aims are coordinated through a Steering Committee comprising representatives of each constituency involved: farmers, regional interests among national agricultural research systems, the CGIAR as international research centres, ‘advanced’ research institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and donor/development assistance agencies.

These principles hold true today and their value was reaffirmed by an independent external review of GFAR in 2007. Nonetheless, it must also be recognized that, for a number of reasons, these ideals have so far not always been met among the partners involved and there is need for a renaissance of GFAR’s processes alongside and contributing to those of the CGIAR change management process.

Purpose of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research

The core problematique is that the generation and application of knowledge is critical to meeting the huge global challenges facing agriculture, yet there is much evidence that past research has not necessarily benefited the poor and that many technologies have not been adopted by those they were intended to serve. Furthermore, wider society has often lost connection with, and lost trust in, agricultural science as the mechanism to meet these challenges. The challenge for us all is one of connecting research and ‘extension’ institutions with those they are intended to benefit, especially smallholders and rural communities, so that knowledge enables sustainable change and food needs are met.

Comment:

1 Declaration for Global Partnership in Agricultural Research, October 1996.
2 National systems of agricultural research and extension (NARS), comprising the various public, civil and private actors involved in demand for, and delivery of, such processes at national level.
4 International Assessment of the Role of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology in Development, 2008
It is our contention that this situation has arisen because we are essentially dealing with two contrasting knowledge and trust systems: Knowledge from agricultural science is reductionist and trusted and validated by its method and the ability to reproduce a finding under controlled conditions. Local knowledge, on the other hand, is holistic and trusted and validated by experience and culture, a basis trusted by similar effects being reproduced year after year in very complex environments. The challenge is to link and reconcile these different knowledge and trust bases. Sustainable development relies on valuing and capitalizing on both.

The role of GFAR is thus to link science and society to address critical issues determining our future ability to feed humanity. Within this, it has a prime aim of creating effective research and innovation systems that meet the complex economic, social and environmental needs of sustainable agricultural development.

GFAR was established between all stakeholders as the platform in which all concerned with agricultural research can openly interact and together shape the future of agriculture in development. It aims to value different perspectives and strengths, learning from each other in the process. It takes the view that true innovation derives from the knowledge and interaction of different partners and actors, each drawing on their own knowledge, which is in turn shaped by their experiences, actions and interactions. The principle becomes one of empowering communities to innovate and generate their own solutions, drawing on the best knowledge available and recognizing that agricultural development is highly context- and time-specific.

Each of the constituencies within the GFAR frame can gain through these processes:

- farmers and consumers have communities put at the centre (rather than as recipients) of research processes;
- civil society organizations can provide a voice for the needs of the disadvantaged and explore new ways by which these can be serviced;
- capable national agricultural research and extension systems can be developed that meet the needs of the poor and are recognized in their countries as a valuable investment;
- international research centers can become more effectively connected to their intended beneficiaries;
- ‘upstream’ research centers can shape their fundamental research to ensure it is driven by real underlying needs and
- donor organizations can fulfil their development aims through explicitly demand-driven and impact-oriented processes.

In this frame, global issues are subsidiary to local, national and regional issues and the global agenda becomes that which is of common importance across regions. Hence each region also has, or is developing, a regional forum addressing the needs of that specific region: FARA (Africa), FORAGRO (Latin America), APAARI (Asia-Pacific), AARINENA (Near East/North Africa, CACAARI (Central Asia/Caucuses) and EFARD (Europe).

In summary, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research is:

- The basis for advocacy for agricultural research to meet the current and future needs of humanity
- A key link between agricultural science and society
- A voice for the poor
- A partnership for change
- A catalyst for action
- A platform for sharing and learning

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5 A differentiation of science from society was described as ‘the two cultures’ by CP Snow in 1959
Shifting the paradigm

GFAR thus functions as i) a forum for dialogue and debate, ii) a platform for advocacy, iii) a facilitator of partnerships and iv) a sphere for turning networks into action. The principles established via the development of GFAR have succeeded well as a catalyst for change in establishing new thinking and new modus operandi among many of its constituent institutions. This is seen for example in the strength and purpose of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). FARA has successfully linked agricultural research investment to political processes of the new Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), which now gives it a strong constituency and political commitment for Africa to shape its own future.

The active engagement of civil society with research processes is a key area in which the Global Forum and Regional Fora add specific value. The concepts and processes of GFAR have helped establish linkage between FARA and CSOs of the region and FARA now reflects the different constituencies required for agricultural research to impact in African development. GFAR is fostering processes of change across all regions, most recently by supporting the engagement of APAARI (formed as an association of NARIs6) with civil society organizations (NGOs), to enable the development of an Asian Regional Forum that can itself engage with the wider political-economic drivers of development in that region.

GFAR has a unique role as a global platform for advocacy and dialogue on agricultural research for development. Mechanisms of demand identification have been generated that enable regional identification of needs, and from these, identify common issues of global concern. Inter-regional activity has been actively fostered, enhancing both ‘South-South’ and ‘North-South’ learning and the rapid spread of new ideas and knowledge.

The GFAR mechanism has also fostered and championed new thinking on relationships between research and wider society, as seen in its fostering of innovation systems thinking. It has also created new forms of partnership that build from innovative and committed partnerships outwards, such as the Prolinnova programme that evaluates and disseminates indigenous innovation into wider usage, the DURAS programme that explores innovative partnership arrangements between science and civil society in a variety of diverse contexts and Linking farmers to markets, that involves multiple actors and enables rapid learning between regions.

The Challenges

In some respects, the global agricultural research system fostered via GFAR has not yet lived up to its potential and the need for new forms of partnership remains strong today. Why is this?

Any system of research partnership relies on effective commitment. Engaging with multiple stakeholders from the outset carries a transaction cost that many are happy to avoid for short term expediency and particularly in a research system that has often judged itself on research outputs rather than by development impacts. Similarly, openness to partnership implies a commitment of time and resources towards these ends, which can be perceived as being at odds with institutional self-interest. This institutional defensiveness is a major barrier to progress and requires considerable practical engagement to show that there is added long-term value in working with others, rather than short-term immediacy and self-focus. Furthermore, the urge in many institutions to “follow the money” and stretch roles into areas where others may be better placed is often driven by the funding mechanisms themselves and can cause real problems in sustainability and relevance of outcomes to local needs.

6 National Agricultural Research Institutions
How do we achieve change? The mobilization of central funds to determine research needs and establish innovative partnerships is essential and the commitment expressed by all GFAR’s diverse stakeholders towards this open platform approach also needs to be made tangible through their own mobilization of inputs of time, energy and basic funding equity to foster these processes.

Creating a new global agricultural research system absolutely requires i. a more rational and coherent use of existing funds, ii. new financial resources to enable change and iii. a broader view of the system than that bounded by present institutional walls. Breaking through these barriers is difficult and challenging for all, but essential if agricultural research is to truly deliver the development impacts required now and into the future.

Conceptual relationship between GFAR and the CGIAR

Some have in the past confused the role of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research with that of research implementing institutions, including that of the CGIAR. GFAR is not an implementing agency, a stand-alone institution, a funding agency or a research implementer and does not unduly reflect the perspectives of any one of its constituents above those of the others. Stripped back to its core functions it has a fundamental value and role, precisely because its operation does not reflect any one institutional perspective.

Similarly, the mechanisms of this Global Forum have no role in programme implementation; this would conflict with its mandate and create the risk of competition with research institutions themselves. Instead it has a clear role in establishing needs and demands, coordinating responses and promoting advocacy for change, fostering innovative partnerships and enabling the conceptualization of new ideas. In this regard it should have a very good fit with the CGIAR, which is focused on the subsequent delivery of such programmes on an international scale (international public goods). The Forum function also complements that of the CGIAR in continuing to mentor the interactions between partners (but not manage the specific programmes themselves) over the programme cycle and then to evaluate and learn from the outcome of these innovative partnerships, so that these experiences can be scaled out for others to learn from and so quickly improve their own processes.

Conceptually, GFAR has a very valuable role to play, as a mechanism within which the CGIAR-supported international agricultural research centres can develop real partnership with other constituencies of GFAR (especially with national agricultural research systems as these develop), in a constructive and mutually beneficial way. The challenge for all constituencies now is to turn this into practice.

Who sets the international research agenda?

Philosophically, if an international system for agricultural research for development is truly valued by national systems, the ultimate expression of partnership is when the deployment of resources is in the hands of national partners and they choose to invest in international centres. This principle of subsidiarity, enabling the specific value of international work to be championed by its users, is the goal.

The centres of the CGIAR unquestionably undertake good research that has a specific development value. However, this does not in itself guarantee good partnership, or ensure that processes and technologies developed through the CGIAR will have a sustainable uptake pathway or become effectively embedded into the work of others.

The assumption that the CGIAR is the key centre of origin of new technologies requires revision as it nowadays accounts for less than 2% of agricultural research expenditure. An alternative perspective
is that the CGIAR-supported centres have, and need to work to, a specific international niche and value within a much broader system of players in agricultural research for development. One of the strongest needs remains that of enabling the most disadvantaged to benefit from agricultural science. For the international system to achieve its aims it requires effective linkage with regional and national systems (including public, civil and private actors) that are much better placed for local innovation and development implementation and must also engage with the public and private research institutions that are better placed for advanced research.

The CGIAR has value in maintaining areas of activity that are less efficient to do at national level. This (two-way) conduit function, together with the capacity to address issues of common international importance such as the conservation of germplasm and international economic policy consideration, are roles of an international agricultural research system that should be strengthened.

Others are less rational and there is no prima facie reason why an international system should effectively be subsidized to do and perhaps compete with, work that should operate within each country. It is important that the CGIAR should play to the strengths and advantages of an international focus, not get drawn by the lure of funding or weakness in local systems to take research outputs through to farmers, in competition with local players. Far more important is that gaps and blockages in the flow of knowledge should be recognized and addressed as a coherent part of the process, with local institutions being strengthened to fulfil the roles required, as local ownership is the path to true sustainability of programmes. The CG centres have much to offer here.

It is also important that the CG Centres should themselves evolve to do what is now required of them, moving beyond their previous activities as others take on these roles. This will require new and effective partnerships with national and local institutions, following subsidiarity principles with common needs driving international efforts. There are significant challenges associated with creating true partnership in regard to the CGIAR. This will not be created unless others are engaged with the development of work programmes from the outset and there is transparency in the funding arrangements. There are too many examples of pre-arranged programmes being ‘delivered’ to national partners along with the promise of small scale funding to try and bring them in after the event. These are not just issues for the CGIAR; the problem also rests in the lack of commitment of national resources (whether self-generated or provided by development assistance agencies) to agricultural research and the disconnection between multilateral donor funds for research and bilateral support for development processes. Taken together, these issues require a new approach to the resourcing of agricultural research for development, with effective integrated planning and delivery of activities from the farmer (or consumer) through to the international research system.

The new aid architecture demands change

There are significant disconnects with other processes of priority setting, linked to a lack of clarity on the CGIAR’s specific role and focus in development.

Needs identified via poverty reduction strategy plans (PRSPs), with expenditure determined by the intended beneficiaries themselves, create a different model. At national level, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans are intended to be the basis for prioritization of funding. Yet at the policy level how much engagement has the CGIAR had with supporting and providing new thinking to aid Ministries as they develop and assign these priorities? Further, has the system taken any real account of these articulated needs in setting targets and research focus? There is a general feeling among national partners that the CGIAR has often gone its own way, referring to Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans only as a background justification, rather than a strategically integrated focus.

At present, Centre Directors, Centre Boards, scientists and the Science Council are all setting priorities at a system level. However, these mechanisms do not provide strong means by which the needs of the
poor can be directly articulated into research programmes, nor do they provide a multiple perspective on key issues. International Centres cannot self-define their own comparative advantage and specific purpose in addressing common agendas, particularly where there is a lack of clarity in the real mission of the CGIAR system. True partnership requires that systems of demand generation, needs identification and partnership formation are transparent and equitable, so that the international system can play its most effective role.

Many actors are now recognized as being involved in the reach of technologies through to farmers and consumers, and conversely in bringing the value of local knowledge and innovation into research processes. The comparative advantage of international operation (and thus the CG focus) should thus be recognized in the context of what other providers can and cannot do most effectively in the overall ARD frame.

This requires the direct and active engagement of civil society organizations (farmers, community-based organizations, NGOs, women’s groups, consumers etc) in processes of demand identification, partnership formation and programme conceptualization from the outset. These civil society actors should not be seen just as representatives in the governance of individual institutions but as having an equal voice to that of other constituencies (such as researchers) in determining and engaging with the new agendas and processes of research. Token representation in governance is little better than none and there is a need for a paradigm shift so that the needs of the poorest (who are the least able to benefit from new technologies) are taken into account from the outset.

Starting from the development outcome (rather than research output) desired, the roles of different players in generating and making use of agricultural knowledge thus need to be optimally aligned and integrated to ensure delivery against these needs. This can provide real opportunity for research supported through the CGIAR system to become truly valued, within a wider system that itself needs to become more effective. The fit between GFAR (and constituent regional fora) as a key mechanism for outcome-based mapping of programmes and the CGIAR as a key implementer within the global agricultural research for development system is extremely strong and now needs to be turned into solid practice.

The new context for international agricultural research

The CGIAR can do much to help support NARS and others at the regional and national level through policy advocacy, bringing together interregional developments and perspectives. The role of IFPRI in understanding the global agricultural economy is one such example here. Providing analysis of global agricultural and food issues alongside organizations such as the WTO and FAO is also important. GFAR here provides a multistakeholder frame at the international level for legitimizing and advocating these processes and their outcomes.

Agriculture is context-specific and at present national systems often focus on finding solutions to local problems in situ in the very same location or in the very same nation. This may be difficult or even impossible given the finite agricultural resources available at local level. However, there may be ready solutions available in other regions, for which the CGIAR, working with GFAR and via close and true partnership with regional and national systems, can provide a rapid bridge.

At the global/interregional level, the linkage between the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and the CGIAR has been nowhere near as strong or effective as it needs to be. GFAR should be providing the open partnership development and programme conceptualization opportunities required for the CGIAR to be truly effective. Instead various reasons, including: inconsistent commitment; vested interests; challenges in developing truly open platforms; funding bodies continuing to drive their own agendas and resistance to new ways of working have led previously to a drift into programme implementation instead of playing a true forum role and to a perception of a separately funded system
in parallel, or even in competition with the CGIAR. A clear and complementary relationship is required between the two and is now being actively developed. The visioning exercise of the CGIAR provides a very real opportunity for constructive change.

Specific perspectives from the constituent Regional Fora

The Regional Fora undertake regular cycles of needs identification with their partner institutions from research, civil society, private sector and CG centres in determining regional priorities for action in relation to specific disciplines. These emphasize not only meeting basic development goals, but also supporting processes of growth to enable the poor to escape poverty and with a proactive and anticipatory R&D agenda addressing new challenges such as climate change and adaptation, emerging pests and diseases etc. These reflect national priorities as reflected in national policies, yet are again seldom used as an integral part of the CGIAR’s planning processes.

Heads of national agricultural research institutions consulted during the preparation of this document have commented that they feel very little ownership of research priority setting processes of the CGIAR centres. Instead, the pattern is one of CG scientists identifying an area of interest and having their own ideas of what should be done, then bringing together partners to become engaged in development of the detail and to get ‘local buy-in’. This is a fundamental challenge. If the power relationship (through technical capacity and access to donor funding) sits continuously with international scientists then the national systems will always feel, and in many cases be, subservient to these aims.

Some centres, such as ICARDA and WARDA, have strong and institutionalized linkage to national systems. However, the evidence for the CGIAR having actively worked to create technical capacity at national levels to replace roles initiated by the CGIAR is often weak. This problem is compounded by centres being judged on criteria such as the number of farmers they reach directly, rather than by how effectively they have strengthened local partners to play that role.

There is a real and significant transaction cost involved in developing programmes in a participatory and engaging way. This requires the recognition among the donor agencies that this cost is more than offset by the subsequent value and sustainability of the research outcomes as they impact in development. Conversely, if these relationships are not properly attended to, then the outcome is that programmes lack sustainability, lack ownership and local advocacy among those who are intended to take up their outcomes and lack connection with the real needs of the intended beneficiaries, as they themselves perceive them.

With disconnects from national and regional priority setting processes and the overall lack of attention paid to developing local capacities to replace international involvement in specific areas, the image persists, however unfairly, of an introspective CGIAR system, rather than one that is fulfilling its optimal role alongside other partners. For this to be achieved, the neutral space provided by the Global Forum is required more than ever.

Without significant change, the trend of recent years will only continue: international research centres going further and further ‘downstream’ in their work as they follow development implementation funds, becoming substitutes for national or local players that would otherwise have been better connected with the communities they serve and creating an unhealthy dependency on an outside agency for delivery of local public goods. In so doing, they also risk losing clarity of their role as international partners to national systems and as conduits for agricultural innovation to and from developing countries. Important principles of subsidiarity, sovereignty and long-term sustainability require instead that locally-owned and driven processes determine the delivery mechanism.

Changing practices requires investment. This does not necessarily require a massive increase in new resources. The greater coordination and alignment of existing expenditure into more coherent and participatory processes would already ensure much of the potential benefit. The CGIAR would also
directly gain value by contributing to, and using its own skill resources, through the processes fostered under GFAR.

The CGIAR and its relationship to advanced research partners

The vision of the CGIAR is fundamental to the nature of partnerships the system seeks to foster. However this cannot be set in isolation from the external realities. The private sector is now the dominant research force among the advanced research institutions, with massive investment in molecular-based technologies in particular, although these bring their own issues of IPR and equity. European and American institutions have invested heavily in areas such as molecular biology, skills that can bring real value in development applications, but which require appropriate channels by which they can be introduced in order to ensure equitable application and avoid post-colonial attitudes of dictating development pathways in other sovereign countries.

Other parties have also strengthened considerably in recent years. The NARS of emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India, have established their own capabilities and are already beginning to establish linkage into Sub-Saharan Africa, sharing their own knowledge and research processes into the sub-continent alongside the development of new trading patterns. These countries are delivering in mainstream research previously regarded as the comparative advantage of the CGIAR institutes.

The advanced research institutions have a different requirement in partnership. Now the frame has moved beyond a post-colonial era and under the new aid architecture, they have challenges in linking their own activities into other regions. The CGIAR should be playing a valuable connection role here. It has (at least in theory) connection to a wide range of partners in developing countries and physical research bases within these regions. Equally important is that the CGIAR should act as a first focus for new technologies and bring their use rapidly across the regions of the world so that they are swiftly assessed and made available.

The CGIAR has a valuable role to play in bridging ‘upstream’ and applied science, but it needs to be able to develop these links in processes in which all are engaged from the outset, not as a receiver of upstream skills that it then seeks to pass onto others. This is where the strength of GFAR and the CGIAR working together should be so apparent.

Partnerships in Centre Governance

The governance of centres requires a range of skills, professional, financial, technical and administrative as well as including a clear voice from the intended beneficiaries of the centres work. This is not an easy mixture, but too often the voices of other stakeholders are represented as token nominees to committees, rather than as true participants at the programmatic level. Key themes are generally set from within, rather than by real engagement with national systems. This is not to say that centres are insensitive to national bodies and there are notable exceptions that have enshrined these relationships in their governance and ownership e.g. WARDA and ICARDA both have strong institutional backing from their respective regions.

A sense of ownership by national and regional stakeholders is absolutely crucial: without it the CGIAR-supported centres can all too easily become competitors to national systems themselves. Without it also the power imbalance of funding is easily distorted. For example the financial scale of some international centres in specific areas may dwarf that of a region and without appropriate checks and balances, the centres will be perceived as running the agenda rather than responding to explicit needs. How many centres have actually engaged in completely open processes of priority setting in recent years, in which their activities are directly determined by the demands of the regions or national
systems they seek to serve? Without this ‘ownership’ it is difficult to see how there can be real buy-in to the subsequent programmes of the centres.

**Challenge Programmes**

While initiated with the intent of opening out the management of the CGIAR’s programmes to a wider range of partners, there was much initial scepticism noted among Centre directorates as to whether this would reduce “their” core funding, without bringing new resources. As a result, the Challenge programmes have always, in their start-up, had an unfortunate flavour of centres competing for an offered ‘pot’ of money, creating a feeding frenzy that does not create a good basis for innovative partnership. This led initially to conglomerates of centres and advanced NARIs working together to establish an agenda and claim the lion’s share of resources, rather than truly opening out to others from the outset.

Stakeholder involvement at the outset has been weak. While these consortia themselves do contain active partners from the NARS (and in particular from the more advanced NARS), the wider engagement of the intended beneficiaries in the governance of the programmes and in the specific work entailed was initially nowhere near the level it needed to be. As a result, the agendas set became driven by scientific criteria, which may be technically excellent and may fit well with the needs of the research institutions creating and using the programmes research outputs, but can be completely disengaged from the intended beneficiaries of the programmes development impacts.

However, there are now very encouraging signs of real change as these programmes have moved into practice. Both the Challenge Programme on Water and Food and the Generation Challenge Programme have learned rapidly as they have evolved into implementation and now clearly recognize the absolute need for effective stakeholder involvement if they are to achieve their development aims. With this has come a shift away from a formal but external advisory committee basis towards active involvement of more stakeholders in the programmes themselves. GFAR is now coming to play an active role in fostering and mentoring the engagement of diverse partners with the Challenge Programmes.

A contrasting case is the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge programme, run by the regional forum FARA, which has focused from the outset on the processes of multistakeholder research, engaging multiple stakeholders at regional level. This programme has suffered the opposite criticism, that of a lack of specific scientific focus, but this is also diminishing as programmes become bedded into addressing specific issues. This Programme is now being recognized and promoted as making good progress in turning innovation systems into practice across a range of pilot sites.

By contrast to the mechanisms for initiating Challenge Programmes, GFAR has for a number of years been fostering the development of Global Partnership Programmes. These take a different line from the Challenge Programmes. There is no pre-assigned fund, rather the development of innovative partnership is fostered and new ways of addressing key issues conceptualized by multistakeholder interaction that opens out the partnership frame to civil society, private sector partners and others.

Through this approach, innovative partnerships have been developed in areas such as: ICM4ARD: Information and Communication Management in Agricultural Research for Development, which has established regional information and learning systems that draw from the multi-stakeholder knowledge held in national agricultural research systems, Prolinnova: Promoting local innovation in agriculture and rural development, an NGO-initiated mechanism which has brought together diverse organizations in a community of practice working from the bottom-up to build on and scale-out farmer innovations. DURAS: Here new partnerships have been formed and supported through competitive grant processes that have explored the mechanisms required for effective partnership formation between widely diverse actors.
This approach to the establishment of global learning networks has established and evolved strong partnerships with all required parties from the outset and offers an active and equitable way of working to address real context-specific needs and while achieving global resonance. However, the weakness of this approach has been that it has lacked connection to established funding pathways to scale out from the strength of commitment among the diverse partners involved.

Discussion between the GFAR Secretariat and the CGIAR Science Council has suggested a very constructive way forward here. GFAR is a neutral mechanism to i) identify needs and build partnerships, then ii) foster the initial conceptualization of themes and ideas and the development of strong working partnerships among diverse partners who want to work together. From these, the mechanisms supported by the Science Council and CGIAR donors can take forward those prioritized and scale up the funding and partnerships entailed. At the international scale that implementation remit sits with the CGIAR and its partners.

The complementarity here is strong and this linkage, developing cycles of learning that feed back between GFAR and the CGIAR, could really change the way such programmes operate and ensure that they become much more open to real partnership and to the engagement of a diverse range of actors, ensuring that high quality scientific outputs themselves have a clear development context and post-programme sustainability.

Making better use of the CGIAR Annual General Meeting

At present, the CGIAR AGM provides a venue that pulls in a range of organizations involved in agricultural research. This effectively becomes a market place for various partners seeking to engage with development assistance funding. However, recent discussion between the Secretariats of GFAR and the CGIAR has opened the prospect of an altogether more constructive forum opportunity, separated from the business meeting of the CGIAR and acting as a true ARD forum to map the agenda for the future. Use of the platform provided by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research to develop such dialogue is seen as a very constructive and practical way forward for all partners.

Recommendations

There is a need to externalize processes of demand and identification of needs and recognize the CGIAR as one important player within a much wider system of agricultural research for development. Effective engagement via the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, involving commitment and engagement from, and with, all constituencies, provides a valuable pathway to this end. A number of specific mechanisms can now strengthen this:

1. Make use of the neutral platform of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research to explore new themes and build ownership of agendas by others in advance of programmatic funding, to avoid financial power relationships distorting the frame. These mechanisms also directly engage a wide spread of stakeholders in discussion to ensure that key needs take account of the explicit needs of the poorest.
2. Interactions and partnerships need to be developed at national, regional and global levels.
3. The CGIAR centres playing active roles as key constituents within the wider regional and global forum processes to identify needs and demands and explore where the CGIAR centres might best add value to regional and national capabilities.
4. Work back from desired development outcomes, with clear rules of engagement between the CGIAR centres and other partners. The programmes of the CGIAR centres and their development partners need to be aligned against development demands, with both multilateral and bilateral funding mechanisms engaged in advance of activities.
5. Use of GFAR processes of needs identification and partnership formulation into subsequent Challenge Programmes fostered through the funding mechanisms of the CGIAR (linking scientific and development values).

6. Explicit engagement of the CGIAR centres in developing national and regional capacities to replace functions previously assigned to international roles due to the absence of local capacities.

7. Specific linkage of monitoring and evaluation processes to determine development impact of research beyond agricultural productivity criteria alone.

8. Use of the annual gathering around the CGIAR business meeting as a basis for direct discussion of key issues via a multistakeholder forum co-hosted with GFAR (rather than the CGIAR engaging separately with each stakeholder group).

9. Mobilization of new and existing resources to ensure these processes are effectively delivered in the context of a global agricultural research system.

10. Reduce transaction costs by more coordinated and strategic prioritization of global, regional and national research activities.