

Science Council

Status of monitoring and evaluation of the CGIAR Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes

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Introduction

This briefing note is intended to provide the Standing Panel on Monitoring and Evaluation (SPME) with a review of the current status of the Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes (SWEPs) of the CGIAR to inform the discussion on effective monitoring and evaluation of these programmes. This paper outlines the history of the SWEPs, their current status and makes suggestions for their future as appropriate instruments for implementing the new CGIAR priorities with a focus on the monitoring and evaluation of research carried out through the Systemwide Programme approach.

1. Ecoregional programme timeline

The Ecoregional Programmes emerged in the 1990s following the report “A possible expansion of the CGIAR by TAC/CGIAR (1990) which introduced the concept and the subsequent report “An Ecoregional Approach to Research in the CGIAR the following year.” The criteria established at this time for ecoregional research programmes were that:

- research is conducted on technical and human dimensions of problems in the sustainable improvement of productivity;

- research addresses landscape units in the agroecosystem of a priority agroecological zone;
- there are effective and clearly identifiable partnership linkages with NARS and other research agencies of the region, with complementarity of functions across the partners
- close links are fostered with global strategic commodity/subject matter research activities.

A set of SWEPs was originally approved by TAC but since then several have been formed that may fulfil a number of other criteria.

1992 Alternatives to Slash and Burn (ASB) began in 1992 and is now a multi-level, global consortium of more than 50 institutions governed by a Global Steering Group. The programme is convened by ICRAF and other CGIAR participating centres include CIAT, CIFOR, IFPRI and IITA. ASB works at the margins of the world's remaining tropical rainforests, in landscape mosaics comprising both forests and farms. By bringing together local knowledge, policy perspectives, and science, ASB works to understand the tradeoffs among conservation and development goals and to identify and develop innovative policies and practices that work for both people and nature. ASB also strengthens the capacity of partners in developing countries to enable them to participate fully in the search for solutions. Projects and activities are undertaken on the following themes:

- Technology Assessment and innovative practices
- Policy and institutional innovations
- Training and capacity building
- Synthesis, translation and communication of knowledge.

The technology assessment focus is on biodiversity and germplasm, carbon storage, landscape level assessment of environmental services and integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices. ASB has conducted a crosscutting assessment entitled 'Forest and Agroecosystem Tradeoffs in the Humid Tropics' for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA, 2002-2004). This multi-scale assessment, which matches ASB's *ecoregional* focus, aims to synthesize results across ASB benchmark sites and place these results within the broader context of other scientific evidence. TAC (2000) Review Report stated that "ASB has satisfied all the criteria of ecoregional research except for that on addressing a priority agroecological zone. However, as its regional research activities have much in common with programmes based on the warm humid and sub-humid agroecological zones, it was accepted on that basis." ASB is currently being reviewed by a CCER.

Budget (2004): \$760,000

1993 The Inland Valley Consortium (IVC) is an *ecoregional* programme for Sub-Saharan Africa and provides a platform for regional cooperation to promote the sustainable development of inland valleys. It was set up in 1993 to explore the potential for intensification and diversification of the valley bottoms and their hydromorphic fringe. WARDA is the convening centre with other partners including IITA, ILRI, IWMI, FAO and West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research (WECARD/CORAF), Centre de cooperation en recherche agronomique pour le developement (CIRAD), Wageningen University and Research Center (WUR). Research and extension institutions are also members organized in National Coordination units in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo. This partnership of diverse organizations plans and implements an integrated research programme. Current activities are focused on achieving the following outputs:

- Improved partnerships to promote sustainable development and use of inland valleys
- Databases and decision support tools for inland valley intensification
- Improved methodology for participatory learning and action research for integrated crop management and integrated natural resource management in inland valleys.
- Improved integrated natural resource management technologies for increased inland valley productivity.

The programme has recently completed a centre commissioned external review (2004). The strong points identified by the review included increased knowledge and understanding on inland valleys and their productive potential and weak points included financial problems and lack of effectiveness of the RCU and the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system. The review noted that despite concerns over the strength of IVC “the consortium structure proves resilient.”

Budget (2004): \$897,000

1993 CONDESAN is a Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean *Ecoregion* started by CIP in 1993 with partners from Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru. The Consortium has a diverse group of partners in the form of international, national, regional, and local institutions working together in a wide variety of research and development projects in the Andes. Partners include CIAT, ICARDA, ICRAF, ILRI, and ICIMOD. Focusing mainly on natural resource management issues, but also addressing such diverse concerns as the conservation of biodiversity, economic diversification, conflict resolution, private investment, and public policy, members design and test models for sustainable integrated rural development. The Consortium sponsors a range of strategic research projects, and provides a variety of information services to participating organizations. A TAC review of CIAT and CIP Ecoregional Programs was conducted in 1999 which identified strong links between NRM research and that related to the improvement of productivity. Participation of NARS in the ERA was very strong in both Centres although inter-center collaboration could have been stronger. A progress review of CONDESAN was carried out in the same year. The TAC Review of all Systemwide programmes with an ecoregional approach (2000) noted that CONDESAN’s research generally met the ecoregional criteria but like most of the ecoregional programmes it had not fully used the “considerable powers of the ecoregional approach.” It was further noted that the consortium has a wider range of partners than most which has benefits in terms of sharing resources and expertise but can “create management and administrative difficulties.” The CIP EPMR (2002) stated that “Because of the unique opportunity offered by CONDESAN and its very diverse partners in providing an excellent mechanism with a large number of watershed sites for testing research hypotheses and products, the Panel recommends that all CIP scientists work together in the CONDESAN benchmark watersheds and to use the CONDESAN mechanism for the development, evaluation and dissemination of integrated technologies, and policy and management recommendations.” The programme is currently undergoing a participatory reflection process to assess stakeholder perceptions and a road map for the future activities of the programme is close to completion.

Budget (2004): \$1,104,000

1995 The African Highlands Initiative (AHI) was set up in 1995 as an *ecoregional* research programme hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) that focuses on improving livelihoods and reversing natural resource degradation in the intensively cultivated highlands of East and Central Africa. AHI also involves the sub-regional Association for Strengthening

Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA) and other partners include CIAT, CIP, CIMMYT, IFPRI, IITA, IPGRI. From 1995 to 2001, the AHI's purpose was to develop and disseminate sustainable INRM and farm intensification technologies. An internal review in 2000 showed that these were effective on farms across several countries but that more was needed. Consequently from 2002 to 2004, the AHI took this work to the landscape scale in larger watersheds. It is currently operating in 7 pilot districts in 4 countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. These sites will continue and the number is expected to expand in 2005-07. The programme was reviewed by a CCER in 1996.

Budget (2004): \$1,050,400

1995 The Rice-Wheat Consortium (RWC) began in 1995 emerging from an earlier collaborative programme focused on rice-wheat systems based on a 1989 agreement between IRRI and CIMMYT. This consortium is convened by CIMMYT, which took over this function in 1998 from ICRISAT. It is an *ecoregional* research programme focusing on the enhancement of productivity and sustainability of intensive rice-wheat cropping systems in the Indo-Gangetic plains. Main research thrusts include integrated nutrient management; integrated pest management; tillage and crop establishment; and water management through multidisciplinary collaborative research that involves social, biological, and physical scientists. These sub-activities are led by IRRI, ICRISAT, CIMMYT, and IWMI, respectively. The main findings of a recent review (CCER 2003) were that

- RWC has emerged as an innovative model for regional and international collaboration, which is now beginning to develop a credible record of achievements...
- The main source of strength of RWC is the commitment of its key stakeholders to the founding principles and ownership of its work program spanning strategic, applied, and adaptive research and knowledge dissemination activities.
- The effectiveness of partnerships between CGIAR Centers and their NARS partners as well as within and between the four national systems is one of the most important achievements of the RWC.

The review identified the key assets of the RWC as being its roles as:

- An innovator and supplier of new knowledge for rice-wheat systems (RWSs)
- A 'clearing house' for new approaches, methods etc for use by the NARSs in the region
- A facilitator and a catalyst of research for development among NARSs.

Budget (2004): \$604,000

1997 The Desert Margins Programme is an *ecoregional* programme focusing on reducing the degradation of drylands in Africa. DMP is an action-oriented dryland management programme that is participatory, multidisciplinary, NARS-driven, and that takes into account national and regional priorities in NRM as a means to combat desertification. The programme became operational in 1997 in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Botswana, Republic of South Africa and now also includes Senegal, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The Convening Centre of this Initiative is ICRISAT and a number of donors including GEF, EU, IDRC, GTZ, USAID, IFAD, the nine African country governments and UNEP are providing \$50m from 2002-2008. The goal of the DMP is to help the nine countries arrest land degradation through more sustainable practices and systems that improve livelihoods using partnership-based research for development activities, demonstration to farmers and capacity building.

1997 The Global Mountain Programme (GMP) was set up by the CGIAR in 1997. The goal of the GMP is to improve the management of natural resources on which the sustainable supplies of food, clean water, energy, minerals and forest products depend on the diverse and vulnerable high-mountain areas of the developing world. Research concentrates on the characterisation of ecosystems; intensifying land use and natural resource management; exploiting biological diversity in a sustainable manner for economic growth; stimulating productivity and enhancing resource conservation through policies and public sector investments. The GMP is convened by CIP and presently serves as an intellectual conceptual framework for the consortia independently developed and operating in the East African Highlands, the high Andes, and the Hindu Kush Himalayas. The latter is being co-ordinated by ICIMOD. The GMP is intended to exchange experiences between mountain systems in Africa, Asia (Hindu Kush and Himalaya) and Latin America (High Andes) including AHI and CONDESAN components. The programme was reviewed as part of the TAC 2000 review which concluded that “the principles underlying the ecoregional approach are valid and of continuing high priority for pursuing the sustainable improvement of agricultural productivity.”

Budget (2004): \$1,286,000

1998 The Central Asia and Caucasus (CAC) is an *ecoregional* programme that was established in 1998 to restore and build agricultural research capacity in the CAC region, through formal partnerships, research and NARS capacity strengthening. Five of the nine CG Centers involved (ICARDA, CIMMYT, IPGRI, IWMI, CIP) have strengthened their programmes in the region by posting their staff and have attracted additional donor funding for new projects to complement their core-resource input. Other Centers supporting the programme include ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI and IRRI together with eight NARS. The programme focuses on both institutional development and the development of policies and technology needed for the revival and future development of the agricultural sector. The programme has not been externally reviewed.

Budget (2004): \$3,123,404

2. Systemwide Programme timeline

Systemwide Programmes emerged at the same time as Ecoregional Programmes (1990s) and many adopt the ecoregional approach but the research is not confined to a specific ecoregion. For those Systemwide Programme undertaking research on Integrated Natural Resource Management similar to EPs the difference can be made between the intended recommendations emanating from the research which should have a broader cross-regional application.

1994 The Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP) was set up in 1994 following the recommendations of a TAC commissioned stripe review in 1993 with IPGRI as the convening center. The report expressed the need to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the CGIAR’s contribution to global genetic conservation, specifically in the context of the CBD, Agenda 21 and the FAO global genetic conservation system. An external review was undertaken in 1998 which identified the key issue for the CGIAR as being whether to focus on improved management and coordination of the Center’s genebank operations or to expand through regional networks to build a global system for the long term conservation of materials. CGIAR members agreed both courses of action were important and should be integrated into the ongoing work of SGRP. All CGIAR Centres currently participate in the SGRP, which aims to maximize collaboration in the management of genetic

resources and in the production of knowledge, technologies and information for enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural, forest and aquatic biodiversity. The ongoing focus of the programme outlined in the IPGRI MTP (2006-2008) is to ensure that the CG system effectively conserves, distributes and uses genetic resources within agreed policy, technical and institutional frameworks. The genetic resources and knowledge generated are intended to contribute to global conservation systems and strategies for biodiversity conservation.

Budget (2004): \$1,146,000

1995 The CGIAR Systemwide Livestock Programme (SLP) was established in 1995 and the first research projects were initiated in 1998. It is a multi-center initiative that supports the CGIAR and Millennium Development Goals of alleviating poverty, achieving sustainable food security and protecting natural resources in the developing world. The SLP provides a mechanism to create and exploit synergies within the CGIAR system to gain efficiency in the use of its resources. Eleven centers (CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRAF/WAC, ICRISAT, IFPRI, IITA, ILRI, IRRI and IWMI) and their local and international partners collaborate in the Programme to devise options that will enhance the livelihoods of poor farmers in small scale crop-livestock systems. The SLP has focused its agenda in the past two years on feed resources. The SLP seeks to ameliorate feed scarcity in these systems through developing: a) superior dual purpose (food-feed) crops, b) livestock feeding strategies based on the efficient use of land, water, soil nutrients, food-feed crops, forages and agro-forestry options and c) institutional innovations that make feed technologies available to the Programme's target beneficiaries. Beyond its research programme, the SLP serves as a system-wide platform for information and knowledge exchange on crop-livestock systems. Approximately 20% of the SLP budget is allocated to information and knowledge exchange through its website and through joint publications. The review in 2001 found that despite initial financial problems the SLP "has met with considerable success on several fronts." Recommendations for further strengthening of the programme included the continuing involvement of ILRI as a strong convenor providing scientific leadership, active oversight of the SLP, with further consolidation of governance including 'expanded review mechanisms'.

Budget (2004): \$1,113,000

1996 The Systemwide Programme on Integrated Pest Management (SP-IPM) was set up in 1996 and comprises representatives of CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRISAT, IITA, IPGRI-INIBAP, IRRI, WARDA, ICIPE, AVRDC, CABI Bioscience, FAO/Global IPM Facility, International Association for the Plant Protection Sciences (IAPPS); Pesticide Action Network (PAN), Crop Life International (representing private sector crop protection industry) and World Bank (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development). CIP took over as convening centre from IITA in 2004. While the principles of IPM are universal, the needs of farmers are individual and location specific. SP-IPM therefore implements its activities with a diverse range of NARS to bring the benefits of IPM to farmers. The collaborating NARS includes at least 13 national programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua), 15 in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) and 4 in Asia (Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam). There are currently five work programmes on promoting inter-institutional partnerships; effective communication, favourable policy environment, ecological approaches and awareness-raising. One of the main recommendations of the TAC commissioned review in 2002 was that 'the status of IPM be greatly elevated within the CGIAR and upgraded beyond the focus of the current systemwide

programme [which]..in future should be organised as a ‘virtual centre’ with minimal infrastructure but maximum linkages.’

Budget (2004):\$158,228

1996 Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI) became a Systemwide Programme with IFPRI as the convening centre in 1996 and by 1997 all 16 Future Harvest (CGIAR) centres were participating which has continued to date. CAPRI focuses on how collective action and property rights can be instruments for sustainable resource management and poverty reduction. CAPRI was subject to its First External Review in 2002, commissioned by the interim Science Council of the CGIAR. The Review commended CAPRI for excellence in quality of research and governance processes. The review concluded that CAPRI ‘has achieved a critical mass and momentum in CA and PR research, which is very relevant to NRM research... CAPRI should take advantage of its systemwide status by placing future emphasis on

- policies to promote genetic resources and NRM technologies requiring collective action that target poor communities
- developing effective tools for capacity building of weaker centres and NARS
- expanding the circle of collaborating centres and NARS.’

Budget (2004):\$1,224,000

1997 The Systemwide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA) was established in 1997 to raise the profile of participation and gender as key strategic issues. It is convened by CIAT with CIMMYT, ICARDA and IRRI acting as Co-convenors. The goal of the PRGA Program is to alleviate poverty, improve food security, and protect the environment with greater equity by improving the ability of the CGIAR centres and collaborating institutions to use participatory research and gender analysis as scientific tools. The programme objective is to assess, develop and promote methods and organizational innovations for gender-sensitive participatory research, and to mainstream their use in plant breeding and in crop and natural resource management. The major goal and focus for Phase 2 of the PRGA Program (2003-2007) is to mainstream gender analysis and equitable participatory research to promote learning and change in CG Centres and national agricultural research systems (NARS) so that they can better target the demands of beneficiary groups, particularly poor rural women. The PRGA's partnership strategy was developed in 1996 to promote decentralized partnerships among IARCs, NARIs, NGOs, and GOs. Other centres referred to as carrying out related research include CIFOR, CIP, ICLARM and ICRAF as well as Systemwide Initiatives such as AHI, CAPRI, and the system office unit Gender and Diversity is also a partner. CIAT's MTP 2006-2008 also refers to ongoing research on this topic in the context of Research for Development Challenge 111 Enabling Rural Innovation: Project (SN-3) Participatory Research Approaches.

Budget (2004):\$933,000

1999 Urban Harvest, the CGIAR System-wide Initiative on Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture was set up in 1999 and is convened by CIP with the following participating centres: AVRDC, CIAT, ICRAF, IITA, ILRI, IWMI, IPGRI. CGIAR launched the systemwide initiative to direct and coordinate the collective knowledge and technologies of the Future Harvest Centres towards strengthening urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA). The initiative, formerly known by its acronym SIUPA, and now renamed Urban Harvest aims to help Centres link together their own efforts and become partners with many national and international efforts. The goals of Urban Harvest are to:

- Contribute to enhanced food security, improved nutrition and higher incomes for poor urban and peri-urban families.
- Reduce the negative environmental impact of UPA and enhance its positive potential.
- Establish the perception of UPA as a productive, essential component of sustainable cities.

This programme is relatively recent and has not yet been externally reviewed.

Budget (2004):\$730,000

2000 - At the 2000 international Centres Week of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), it was decided that CGIAR research Centres should intervene in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security, nutrition and economic development through agricultural research and development. The Systemwide Initiative on HIV and Agriculture (SWIHA) aims to use the resources of the CGIAR Centres, in cooperation with institutions in developing countries and elsewhere, to contribute toward mitigating and preventing the spread and negative impact of HIV/AIDS on food security, the natural-resource base, poverty and human suffering. WARDA is the convening centre and other partners include UNAIDS and the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Programme. This programme is relatively recent and has not yet been externally reviewed.

Budget (2004):\$55,000

2001 The Systemwide Initiative on Water Management (SWIM) started in 2001. IWMI is the convening centre for SWIM which according to the MTP 2006-2008 is now called the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture (CA or SWIM -2). SWIM-2 will be completed in 2006 and the final assessment will be launched as a guide for future investment and management decisions in water management to enhance food and environmental security in support of the MDGs. The assessment draws on the research carried out during the 2001-2004 phase and considers the impact of current investment and management decisions over the next 50 years. The Assessment will have 15 chapters, including 8 thematic chapters on Rainfed Agriculture, Irrigation, Groundwater, Low Quality Water, Fish, Rice, Land, Basins and 4 cross cutting chapters addressing water productivity, policies and institutions, ecosystems, and poverty. In addition the Assessment will include a section on future scenarios and a summary for policy makers. The report will be formally launched in mid-2006 at the Stockholm Water Week and through a number of other forums followed by a host of broad dissemination and awareness raising activities. The Comprehensive Assessment works with a wide network of partners throughout the South as well as in the North. In total, the CA works with over 150 partners, consisting of approximately 45 universities, 50 international and national research institutes (including IRRI, CIMMYT, ILRI, WorldFish, ICARDA, ICRISAT, ICRAF and IFPRI), 40 government agencies, and 20 NGOs. IWMI is now involved with these and other partners in the Challenge Programme on Water and Food (CPWF) which started in 2004. This programme is relatively recent and has not yet been externally reviewed.

Budget (2004):\$2,487,000

2001 The Systemwide Initiative on Malaria and Agriculture (SIMA) was proposed in October 2000 during the CGIAR - AGM in Washington DC. The first year explored the feasibility of the initiative through consultation with a wide cross-section of stakeholders. By 2002 the following centres were participating in SIMA: ILRI, IWMI, CIAT, IITA, WARDA, and the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). A Secretariat was set up in 2002 and a website on malaria and agriculture has been developed. 10 research projects were set up (2003-4) in Asia and Africa and agroecosystem management interventions have been

integrated with other malaria control activities at SIMA benchmark sites. Research is being carried on the following themes:

- Impact on malaria of environment and livelihood changes related to agriculture
- Impact of malaria on agricultural productivity, livelihoods and economic growth
- Testing innovative anti-malaria intervention ideas for effectiveness and feasibility.

The convening institute of SIMA is IWMI. IWMI will also serve as the Host Institute of the SIMA Secretariat at the IWMI Africa Regional Office in Pretoria, South Africa. The responsibilities for IWMI as a Host Institute include financial administration, human resources management and publishing. This programme was reviewed as part of the IWMI CCER on Water, Health and Environment theme (2002).

Budget (2004):\$30,000

Other inter-centre initiatives

The CGIAR webpage <http://www.cgiar.org/impact/initiatives.html> groups systemwide programmes and some others under the heading “Inter-centre initiatives” with a separate heading for Ecoregional programmes. Some minor clarifications are required, for example, the ASB and GMP programmes are currently listed under Inter-centre initiatives rather than ecoregional programmes and DMP is currently listed under both the Inter-centre initiatives and Ecoregional Programme sections. Challenge programmes are listed separately on a different page. The other initiatives currently listed alongside the systemwide programmes are:

- Consortium on spatial information
- Gender and Diversity
- Systemwide information system for genetic resources (SINGER)
- The Global Open Agriculture and Food University (GOAFU)
- International Crop Information System (ICIS)
- IARC/NARS Training Group
- Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM)

Many of these are information sharing activities that form part of the networking activities of the SWEPs. As the number of information resources and communication activities increases it is likely that more Inter-centre initiatives of this type will emerge. Additional inter-centre initiatives not currently listed include:

- Institutional Learning and Change in the CGIAR (ILAC) is a new information and communication initiative hosted by IPGRI that aims to improve learning between Centres and partners and accelerate the sharing of the results from their research.

The initiatives that are closely related with SWEPs such as SINGER with SGRP will need to be considered as part of the review process. For other information and networking activities that take advantage of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) it will be important to establish whether there are lessons for existing and future SWEPs to take full advantage of the efficiencies offered especially for programme coordination.

3. Current review status

There are currently 17 Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes (SWEPs) down from 20 in 2002 due to the closure of the Ecoregional Programme for Humid and Sub-Humid Asia, the

Soil, Water and Nutrient Management Programme and the Tropical Land and Agriculture Programme. The 17 SWEPs and their review status are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes- Review process to date

Systemwide Programme	External Review: TAC/iSC	External Review: Convening Centre	External Review: Other	Convening centre EPMR/CCER
All Programmes/Groups	TAC Review of the 8 Ecoregional programmes (2000).* iSC (2002) Lessons learned report.		CDC (2004) of 10 WB funded SWEPs (2002-3) Assessment and recommendations for WB funding CDC 2004. Core funding for sytemwide and ecoregional programs (2002)	
African Highlands Initiative		CCER 1996		ICRAF EPMR 1998
Alternatives to Slash and Burn	TAC 2000* (2005-ongoing)	CCER 1995	2002 (ASB in Brazil)	ICRAF EPMR 1998
Central Asia and Caucasus				ICARDA EPMR 1999
Collective Action and Property Rights	2003			IFPRI EPMR 2004
Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion	TAC 2000*	1996 1999		CIP EPMR 2002
Desert Margins Programme	TAC 2000*			ICRISAT EPMR 2003
Global Mountains Programme	TAC 2000*			CIP EPMR 2002
Inland Valley Consortium		CCER 2004		WARDA EPMR 2000
Participatory Research and Gender Analysis Programme		2000		CIAT EPMR 2000
Rice-Wheat Consortium	TAC 2000*	2003		CIMMYT EPMR 2004
Systemwide Genetic Resources Research Programme	1999			IPGRI EPMR 2003

Systemwide Initiative on Malaria in Agriculture				(IWMI CCER 2003, CCER Water, Health and Environment, 2002)
Systemwide Initiative on Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture				CIP EPMP 2002
Systemwide Livestock Programme		2000 ¹		IRRI EPMP 1999
Systemwide Programme – Integrated Pest Management	2003			IITA EPMP 2001
Systemwide Initiative on HIV/AIDS				- ²
Systemwide Water Management Initiative				(IWMI CCER 2003)

2.1 Review issues

The TAC (2000) review of Systemwide Programmes with an Ecoregional Approach identified that *“One reason why the standard of monitoring and evaluation of ecoregional programmes has been unsatisfactory is probably because these programmes have been largely excluded from the independent external review process of the CGIAR.”* and therefore

- EPMPs and CCERs should explicitly focus on how the revised framework for regional NRM research has been mainstreamed.
- System level NRM programmes should be subject to external reviews, commissioned by the lead centre and its partners on a regular basis (3-4 yearly) with ‘sunset reviews’ every 10 years.

Table 1 illustrates the different types of reviews that have been carried out since the SWEPs were initiated. The final column in Table 1 shows when the latest EPMP’s were undertaken for the respective convening centres. ICRAF carried out CCER’s on both the ASB and the AHI prior to the EPMP in 1998 but this has not been the case for many other convening centres. IWMI’s CCER of all its activities in 2003 in anticipation of the forthcoming EPMP includes a brief assessment of the SWIM-2 and SIMA SWEPs for which it is the convening centre. The EPMPs provide only brief assessments of the convening center’s SWEPs and focus on the management implications for the center, such as the DMP in ICRISAT’s 2003 EPMP. The issue was also raised by the TAC (2000) review that convening of the SWEPs does not necessarily need to be done by CGIAR centres in future which would further reduce the coverage of SWEPs by EPMPs. Table 1 shows that review practice has been variable and several SWEPs have not been reviewed. The TAC (2000) Report also suggested that “future reviews of the non-ecoregional Systemwide Programmes examine the extent of their interaction with pertinent Ecoregional Systemwide Programmes although this has not been included explicitly in the external reviews to date.

¹ Hybrid review commissioned by the centre with TAC input.

² WARDA’s latest EPMP was in 2000 when SWIHA was just beginning

The external SWEP reviews carried out so far have not focused on the need for further reviews or the reporting and review process in general. The 8th CGIAR ExCo meeting (May 2005) raised the issue of oversight and reporting for the Challenge Programmes (CPs) with the following proposal:

CPs should submit more detailed and uniform reports (instead of ad hoc progress reports). A template for these reports would be provided and this should be fully aligned with and built on the approved MTPs and contain a summary highlighting, at the minimum:

- *Main accomplishments (by program component),*
- *Financial outcome for the previous year,*
- *Operational issues and challenges,*
- *Lessons learned during the year.*

It was suggested that a template (standardized format) be formulated for this purpose and that follow-up to Systemwide and Ecoregional Programs (SWEPS) should also be taken up by ExCo, in a manner similar to CPs.

All centres now have to complete Medium Term Plans (MTP's) annually for a rolling three year period which provides a more regular reporting instrument for the SWEPS. Since 2004 the SWEP should be included in the convening centre MTP which should make it easier to trace the performance of the SWEPS.

An iSC report (2002) raises the issue of sunset clauses and the timeframe for SWEPS. There is no fixed timeframe for existing SWEPS and there is no requirement to limit their duration. The TAC (2000) recommendation that in depth sunset reviews be scheduled every 10 years would ensure SWEPS do not continue indefinitely although the fact that a number of SWEPS have ceased to operate or have been developed into other programmes indicates that some do have a finite existence anyway. The Centre's priority programmes continue for indefinite time periods with progress being monitored according to specific output targets and periodic evaluations. SWEPS may also require indefinite terms but the periodic evaluation of progress relating to output targets could indicate whether such long term multi-center collaboration remained appropriate or whether the research could be mainstreamed into the work of a centre (Fitzhugh and Brader, 2002).

2.2 Funding

Since SWEPS were introduced funding for the CGIAR centres has become less fungible or unrestricted and more targeted. This has meant that while the SWEPS were being introduced to improve efficiency by coordinating common research activities and pooling resources there was a concomitant rise in the level of competition for resources both within and between centres. TAC originally recommended \$10m a year as seed money for the SWEPS but this was not allocated by donors in practice. With funding below the expected levels many SWEPS have had to adjust their plans such as by reducing the use of competitive grant awards to partners. The competition between programmes for targeted funding resources has raised the potential for conflicts of interest and convening centers in particular have to consider the cost of subsidising coordination costs for SWEPS not explicitly covered by these funds. More recently the World Bank has provided core funding as catalytic grants to

reinforce existing funding and assist with the development of new programmes. An allocation of \$1.5m per annum has been made since 2002 for between 5 and 7 programmes. A recent review of this allocation by CDC recommended that based the experience with core funding as catalytic grants over the period 2002-2004 it should continue for existing SWEPs and new initiatives if they are approved by the SC. However, a further recommendation also highlights the need for performance measurements suited to the SWEPs to be developed as part of the CGIAR Performance Measurement System. The establishment of milestones for monitoring progress, as discussed above, could also facilitate multi-year core funding dependent on milestones being met.

2.2 Partnerships

The multi-center partnerships that are implemented for Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes tend to be funded by the same agencies that fund the other priority research carried out by the centers. The Challenge Programmes (CPs), were introduced in 2001 to attract both funding and partners outside the traditional agricultural research sphere. Despite funding limitations the external reviews for SGRP (1998), SLP (2001) and the eight ecoregional programmes (1999) were positive about the partnerships being developed such as the “excellent progress in developing partnerships with NARS laying a good foundation for future collaboration” and “cost effectiveness appeared to have increased significantly through partnerships”(TAC,2000). The coordination costs required to facilitate these partnerships is a key concern for SWEP coordinators including the need for providing grants to participating organisations. World Bank core funding can be expected to cover these coordination costs for approximately half of the current SWEPs (Fitzhugh and Brader, 2002).

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The Systemwide approach to research has now been employed by the CGIAR for over a decade. During this time the research programmes have been reviewed in various ways from external reviews of programmes both individually and in groups, to external reviews commissioned by the convening centre, and joint/hybrid centre commissioned and external reviews. SWEPs have needed to be flexible to adapt to the changing research priorities of the participating centres and the realities of the funding climate. The long term nature of the research programmes, combined with funding uncertainty and competition has led to a lack of clarity regarding the status of SWEPs as a whole. There has also been little or no analysis of sunset strategies. While some individual programmes are performing well with appropriate funding, others have not developed as originally planned.

New modalities for addressing complex research issues have evolved since the beginning of SWEPs and Centres, through the Alliance, are now more experienced in the implementation of partnerships for different outcomes. These evolving factors and the new priorities for the CGIAR means that the future direction of SWEPs as a particular instrument for implementing the CGIAR agenda needs clarification.

There are a number of options for providing guidance for the future and further discussion could focus on:

- Clarity in the purpose of the different instruments used by the CGIAR to implement complex research agendas.

- An analysis of best practice for the governance of the different instruments with a goal to minimise transaction costs and focus on the delivery of research outcomes.
- The realignment of the appropriate instruments and to implement the new CGIAR priorities.
- Incorporating the same ME procedures (MTPs, PM, CCER/EPMRs) for all instruments.

The following action plan is proposed for implementing the above changes:

1. The Science Council completes the review of those SWEPs with a significant ongoing research agenda.
2. The CG Secretariat and the Alliance provide a best practice analysis for the different instruments for implementing complex research agendas based on past experiences.
3. The Alliance and the Science Council align current SWEPs to new system wide priorities identifying a) SWEPs for sunset and b) new initiatives to implement the new priorities.
4. The Centres begin ME programmes (MTPs, PM) for all instruments for review by the Science Council.
5. The convening centres and systemwide governance develop a programme with the Science Council for the external review (CCER and as part of the EPMR).
6. A recommitment of funding to *all appropriate instruments* for implementing the new CGIAR priorities.

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Key Web pages

<http://www.cgiar.org/impact/initiatives.html>

Annex 1: Summary information

Table 2 : Summary information for Systemwide and Ecoregional Programmes

Programme	Acronym	Convening Centre	Collaborating Centres/Partners	Year Started	Funding 2004 (\$)
African Highlands Initiative	AHI	ICRAF	CIAT, CIP, CIMMYT, IFPRI, IITA, ILRI, IPGRI, TSBF, NRI, ALTERNIA, Norwegian Univ. of Agr., Alemeya Univ. of Agr. And Mekele Univ., Makerere Univ., FIFAMANOR	1995	1,050,400
Alternatives to Slash and Burn	ASB	ICRAF	CIAT, CIFOR, IFPRI, IITA, TSBF, AARD, EMBRAPA, IRAD, INIA, PCARRD, RFD.	1992	760,000
Central Asia and Caucasus	CAC	ICARDA	CIMMYT, CIP, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI, IPGRI, ISNAR, IWMI NARS (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan); and 9 other partners	1998	3,123,404
Collective Action and Property Rights	CAPRI	IFPRI	ALL CENTRES Over 100 other research institutions and NGOs in developing countries and ARIs.	1996	1,224,000
Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion	CONDESAN	CIP	CIAT, ICARDA, ICRAF, ILRI IFDC, ICIMOD	1993	1,104,000
Desert Margins Program	DMP	ICRISAT	ICRAF, ILRI, IPGRI, IFDC, TSBF, CIRAD, IER, ISRA.	1997	50,000,000 (2002-2008)
Global Mountains Program	GMP	CIP	CIAT, ICRAF, ILRI, ICIMOD, IFDC	1997	1,286,000
Inland Valley Consortium	IVC	WARDA	IITA, ILRI, IWMI, NARES of 10 WCA countries, NGOs and Farmer Org., FAO,	1993	897,000

			CIRAD, Wageningen, Univ., CORAF-WE CARD		
Participatory Research and Gender Analysis Program	PRGA	CIAT	ALL CENTRES, CIAD IES INIAP, CORPOICA EMBRAPA, LI BIRD PROINPA, PROSEMPA & ASAR, ZAMORANO, FIDAR, NORAGRIC, U. OF MAINE, U. OF GUELPH, APPALACHIAN S. U., U. OF HOHENHEIM, NARC	1997	933,000
Rice-Wheat Consortium	RWC	CIMMYT	CIP, ICRISAT, IRRI, IWMI, CABI, Cornell Univ, GFAR, IAC, IACR, Massey Univ., Mud Springs Geographers, Univ./Melbourne; BRRI, BARI, WRC, Farmers organizations, NGOs, ICAR, NARC, and other Agr. Institutions of Bangladesh, India.	1995	604,000
Systemwide Genetic Resources Research Program	SGRP	IPGRI	ALL CENTERS except IWMI which was a member for 2 years. FAO in Steering Committee. NARS and ARIs in specific activities, eg. 44 NARS and 31 ARIs 1999- 2001.	1994	1,146,000
Systemwide Initiative on Malaria in Agriculture	SIMA	IWMI	IITA, ILRI, IPGRI, ISNAR, WARDA, KARI, ICIPE.....	2001	30,000
Systemwide Initiative on Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture	SIUPA	CIP	CIAT, ICRAF, IITA, ILRI, IWMI, WARDA, AVRDC	1999	730,000
Systemwide Livestock Program	SLP	ILRI	CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IFPRI, IITA, IRRI, CONDESAN	1995	1,113,000
Systemwide Program – Integrated Pest Management	SP-IPM	CIP	CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRISAT, IITA, IRRI, ISNAR, WARDA, AVRDC, CABI, ICIPE, FAO Global IPM Facility,	1996	158,228

			IPM Forum hosted by CABI, PAN, GCPF.		
Systemwide Initiative on HIV/AIDS	SWIHA	WARDA	CIFOR, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICLARM, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IFPRI, IITA, ILRI, IPGRI, ISNAR, WARDA, FAO, UNDP, ECART, CATAD/IARD, DANIDA, SIDA, CIDA, IDRC, Univ.of East Anglia, Ministries, NGOs, UNAIDS, SACCAR, COROAF/WECARD, ECAPAPA	2000	55,000
Systemwide Water Management Initiative	SWIM2	IWMI	CIAT, CIFOR, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICLARM, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IFPRI, IITA, ILRI, IPGRI, IRRI, WARDA, NARES, ARIs	2001	2,487,000