

Summary of Recommendations

To ensure the effective involvement of all professional staff in the field and at headquarters in the evolution of the Centre's research agenda, and in the development and updating of the project portfolio, there is a need to use the annual planning meeting in a more effective manner.

The Panel recommends that the annual planning meeting is organized in such a manner that it becomes the main joint research planning exercise during the year. All scientists need to be fully involved; projects should be discussed in project working groups and the outcome of the discussions presented to plenary. It should become a planning week where all professional staff members interact with each other and contribute to the updating of the projects and the development of the research agenda.

Given the poor state of development in most highland regions and the high degree of poverty, considering the special interest of certain donors in supporting research activities for mountain areas, and noting also the research activities carried out by ICARDA over time in highland areas, **the Panel recommends that ICARDA establishes a highlands research network for the CWANA region to develop and implement a pragmatic agricultural research programme for the highland agro-ecologies.**

Outsourcing is a popular principle within the CGIAR System, but so far little effort has been made to carefully analyse the costs and benefits of it.

The Panel recommends that Management reviews the available information related to outsourcing to decide if ICARDA should spend more efforts on outsourcing. It is important to first analyse the current experiences in order to determine under which conditions outsourcing will be beneficial to the Centre. Such an analysis should also address the positive effects on the relationships with NARS.

The Panel was not convinced that there is always adequate feedback from the results obtained under the field projects into the MTP projects, and that the objectives, outputs and work plans of the latter are updated accordingly.

The Panel recommends that ICARDA prepares a status report on the flow of information from field to headquarters, and vice versa, of results obtained under special projects, as well as on the current practices of updating the MTP projects, and to use the information collected for the preparation of a set of best practices.

The Panel considers that there should be no double messages to ICARDA partners and staff, and that all research activities and related matters in the field should fall under research and be reported as such.

The Panel recommends that the Board of Trustees examines the current management structure with the purpose to develop new arrangements where there is one clear line of reporting for all research matters.

Given the overall developments in agricultural research planning and implementation, and considering the increasing importance of inter-disciplinary special projects in ICARDA's research agenda, **the Panel recommends that ICARDA undertakes a detailed review of the current breakdown of its research agenda, with the purpose to re-formulate the 19 MTP projects into a smaller number of inter-disciplinary projects that can effectively address the research needs of the major production systems in the dry areas.**

During the country visits the Panel was made aware that funds for research are available in a number of countries under rural development projects. However, in many cases these funds do not seem to be used for the strengthening of research activities in the countries concerned.

The Panel recommends that ICARDA explores with the national partners the opportunities for strengthening linkages with rural development and related projects as a means to increase the financial contributions to agricultural research.

Countries desire the involvement of ICARDA in activities outside its traditional mandate, because of its extensive experience and reputation as an International Centre, and its capacity to appraise and ensure the quality of the research undertaken. Such efforts can be undertaken at limited costs and are essential to address problems of major concern.

The Panel recommends that ICARDA reviews the possibilities of expanding its role as an honest broker in triangular arrangements involving the Centre, specialized research institutes and countries in CWANA, for the promotion of research activities on problems outside its traditional mandate.

Given the interest expressed by the scientists to make better use of students to strengthen their research activities, **the Panel recommends that in the light of the new funding realities leading to more limited permanent staff resources, the Centre revises its current training policy to facilitate the employment of students.**

In Latin America there is considerable potential for the effective use of ICARDA inputs and technologies. Faba bean and barley are important crops in certain areas; natural resource management is a major concern in virtually the whole continent.

The Panel recommends that the Board of Trustees reviews the costs and benefits of maintaining an active ICARDA Regional Programme in Latin America, as a basis for a decision to be taken on the development of further plans for the involvement of the Centre in this region.