

Progress Report on Implementation of EPMR Recommendations

Name of Center: ICARDA
 Dates of EPMR Report Presentation and Discussion: 23 July 2006
 Science Council: 11 Sep. 2006
 Executive Council: 17/18 Oct. 2006
 CGIAR Annual General Meeting: 5/6 Dec. 2006 (AGM06)

Recommendation As listed in the EPMR report	Center's Response Accepted or not accepted	Implementation		
		Milestones	Progress Achieved	Target Date of Completion
1. The Center should emphasize its global mission and de-emphasize somewhat its regional mandate to become a world class research institution for the Dry Areas, for which ICARDA needs to improve its science quality.	Accepted in principle. We share the Panel's view that ICARDA emphasizes its global ecoregional mission, focusing on the key challenges in dry areas. ICARDA will maintain its activities in Central and West Asia and North Africa (which accounts for a major part of the non-tropical dry areas), focusing on activities that address the underlying problems of agriculture in the dry areas and contribute to our global objectives. It is important for ICARDA to continue to build on the knowledge base gained from working in the subregions and with its vast network of partners. The balance between global emphasis and subregional needs will be a cornerstone of the new Strategic Plan. Our commitment to science quality is paramount. It is unrelated to the geographic focus of the research and addressed under later recommendations.	Regional Task Forces for non-tropical dry areas outside CWANA propose plans for future ICARDA activities in global sub-regions for consideration by Board (Science Quality is handled under Recommendation No. 13)	Regional Task Forces presented summaries of initial deliberations to BoT. Under implementation	First step taken May 2007
2. The Panel recommends that the current science structure consisting of six MegaProjects (MPs 1-6), that are really large programs, needs further realignment. This leads the Panel to recommend that ICARDA reconsider the readjustment of its thematic program structure along the following lines	Accepted in principle. We recognize that there is scope for improvement in the thematic program structure. Decisions on the final structure will flow from the Center's new strategic plan.	The current science structure consisting of six MegaProjects (MPs 1-6) realigned in a new thematic program structure (see Rec. 3-5)	Implemented: Realignment of research portfolio approved by BoT after deliberation and approval in principle in March 2007	May 2007
3. The two currently separate MPs focusing on natural resources, MP3 (on desertification) and MP1 (on water) should	Accepted in principle	Integration of the two separate MPs focusing on natural resources, MP3 (on desertification) and MP1 (on	Implemented	April 2007

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merge as a single Water and Land Program, while the MP3 activities on land tenure, rangelands and policy options should be integrated with work on diversification (currently MP4) and other work on socio-economics and policy be integrated in MP5.		water) into a single Integrated Water and Land Management Program. Research on activities on land tenure, rangelands and policy options integrated into Diversification and Sustainable Intensification of Production Systems Program. Socioeconomic and policy research conducted within Social, Economic and Policy Program	Recruitment of rangeland scientist pending funding Implemented	2007? April 2007
4. The MP6 activities on knowledge management should be integrated within the other research programs and MP6 should not be a separate research program, given the priorities and dimensions of ICARDA. The Seed Unit, now in MP6, should move to MP2, while other parts of MP6 fit better in MP5 or in horizontal units.	Accepted in principle. We recognize that there is scope for improvement in the thematic program structure. Decisions on the final structure will flow from the Center's new strategic plan.	MP6 disbanded as a separate research program Seed Unit moved into Biodiversity and Integrated Gene Management Program	Implemented Implemented	April 2007 April 2007
5. To avoid further disruptions to researchers, the Panel recommends that the recommendations made above are considered for implementation only after new strategic plans are in place.	Accepted. We agree with the Panel that further changes to structure should be made after the new strategic plan is in place to minimize disruption to ongoing research.	Changes to structure implemented (April 2007) after approval in principle of the overall research direction of the Strategic Plan (March 2007) by BoT	Implemented	May 2007
6. The Panel recommends that MP1 embraces research on water policy, institutions and adoption strategies to further enhance a very good program in water management.	Accepted. We are conscious of the importance of policies and institutions in providing an enabling environment to enhance the adoption and impact of improved water management and conservation technologies and practices. We will further strengthen ongoing activities in these areas.	Research on the effectiveness of existing water policies included in the program's MTP	Review of water policies initiated within the framework of the benchmark water project	2010

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	<p>The Center has already included in its 2006-2008 Medium-term Plan outputs related to water policies and institutions.</p> <p>The water management research program (MP1) will continue implementing research in these aspects through collaborative activities with the Center's socio-economic program (MP5), and with national programs and other partners including IWMI and IFPRI.</p>	<p>Recruitment of policy specialist</p> <p>Adoption and impact assessment studies of improved water technologies</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Two adoption and impact assessment studies of water management research are in progress</p>	<p>2007</p> <p>2009</p>
7. The Panel recommends increased efforts in agronomy to assist countries in bridging the yield gap between actual and attainable yields, by researching the agronomy, crop management and economic incentives required to generate the needed synergies with the breeding efforts. The Center should consider deploying the new staff at appropriate regional programs/offices of ICARDA.	Accepted. ICARDA will further enhance its emphasis on agronomy and related research and will strengthen its ongoing activities and expertise to focus on producing agronomic international public goods using modeling and agroecological characterization tools. It will build on the experience gained in reducing yield gaps in several countries of the region. The specific deployment of additional staff will be decided based on the Center's new strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of special agronomist pending fund availability Crop yield gap analysis investigated using modeling and GIS technologies for sub-sample countries 	<p>Under implementation</p> <p>Research is under planning</p>	<p>2009</p> <p>2008</p>
8. The Panel recommends that additional investments are made in the GISU unit by providing it with sufficient scientific staff to tackle the challenges of the new Water and Land Program (Recommendation 3). It is further recommended that ICARDA should map, with the help of modeling and available data on actual yields over several years, the difference between actual yields of crops and the yields expected if the crops were limited only by water and not by disease or management.	Accepted. We are conscious of the importance of GIS and remote sensing in research on sustainable management of natural resources, germplasm collection and conservation, poverty mapping, and in up- and out-scaling the results of its location specific work. ICARDA will seek additional resources to support the GISU in enhancing its activities and expertise in modeling and mapping and to support the analysis of yield gaps and the additional research listed under Recommendation 7.	<p>Strengthening GISU Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Int. RA-level position: Remote Sensing Specialist position filled. Int. RA-level position: Land Resources Mapping filled. <p>Yield gap modeling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A crop simulation modeler recruited (under spouse employment). Work plan on yield gap modeling prepared for MTP 2008-2010 	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Agreement by German Center for International Migration (CIM) to provide ICARDA with an expert</p> <p>Implemented</p> <p>On course for Implementation</p>	<p>March 2007</p> <p>Recruitment by late 2007</p> <p>Contract starting Mar. 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>

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9. The Panel recommends the development of a strategy for research in horticulture by identifying the subject matter where the return on research investments would be highest in the various agroecologies of the Dry Areas. The Panel identified tree crops such as olive, almond and pistachio, as one of the most promising areas for horticultural research in the Dry Areas. The Panel believes that networking and partnering would be the most appropriate instruments for knowledge dissemination and problem solving, with ICARDA linking the NARS with advanced institutions.	Accepted in principle. We share the Panel's view on the need to develop a Center strategy for research in horticulture with a clear focus on horticultural options that are well adapted to dry areas and which will enhance the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers. In 2002 on the request of the Board, ICARDA commissioned a study on the desirability and feasibility of research on fruit and vegetables, which was subsequently discussed and approved by the Board. Olives, almonds and pistachio would be appropriate candidates but others such as dates, figs, pomegranates, grapes and other horticultural crops might also be considered.	Strategy for the expansion of horticultural research, with special attention to high value vegetables and dry area fruit trees, developed.	Under implementation (IFAD-sponsored NENA strategy workshop on horticulture held March 2007 and on Herbal Aromatic and Medicinal Plants planned for July 2007)	2008
	The Center's strategy would define the criteria for selection of the most appropriate horticultural options for the various production systems of the dry areas and clearly define ICARDA's specific role and comparative advantages in such a research program. ICARDA agrees that networking and partnering would be the most appropriate approach.	Partnerships with NARS developed in horticulture: A NENA horticultural group with representatives from NARS, and ARIs and others will be formed	under implementation	2008
	ICARDA has already established partnership in horticulture with AVRDC (the World Vegetable Center). In addition, ICARDA has been conducting research on dryland fruit trees, vegetables, and medicinal, herbal and aromatic crops over the last few years, in partnership with national programs and NGOs through specific restricted projects. The information from this initial research will be considered in developing the proposed strategy on horticultural research, which will align with the new CGIAR System Priority 3 on reducing rural poverty through agricultural diversification and emerging opportunities for high-value commodities and products.	Partnerships with NARS and ARIS developed in horticulture	Under implementation: Joint recruitment of vegetable scientist and market specialist underway with AVRDC	2008

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10. The Panel recommends that the forage (feed) legume program should be merged with one or all of the food legume programs on the basis of the cropped area, potential impact and technology transfer, similarity of species, and need for synergism among the research groups.	Accepted. We agree with the Panel's recommendation to merge the feed/forage legume improvement program with the current food legume programs. ICARDA will revisit the staff allocation in feed and food legume improvement based on an analysis of opportunities and needs in a changing environment and in alignment with the Center's new strategic plan.	The position of feed legume breeder eliminated. Feed/Forage improvement has been merged with Food Legume improvement with responsibility of grasspea transferred to the Lentil Breeder and responsibility for vetch moved to the Seed Unit.	Implemented Implemented	February 2007 February 2007
11. The Panel recommends that additional staff is hired to increase the capacity of the socioeconomics Program.	Accepted in principle. We recognize the need for additional staff to respond to the increased demand for socioeconomic, policy, gender and institutional research in the dry areas. We also recognize the value of a critical mass of socio-economists, but must ensure the continued integration of socioeconomic with biophysical research. In this regard, we will assess the merits of hosting all socio-economists under a single socio-economics program. We plan to recruit an additional P-level position in production economics and risk analysis and to seek additional expertise in policy and institutions, gender, and marketing/competitiveness. In addition, ICARDA will continue strengthening its collaboration with other CGIAR centers, advanced research institutions and national programs. ICARDA is discussing with IFPRI the resumption of a joint appointment for research in policies and institutions.	All socio-economists hosted under a single socio-economic program to maximize productivity of existing socioeconomic critical mass Hiring of a new P-level scientist position in Social, Economic and Policy Program Joint appointment with IFPRI for policy research	Implemented: All socio-economists now hosted under Social, Economic and Policy Program Implemented ICARDA is discussing with IFPRI a joint appointment for policy research in CA within the framework of CACILM project	April 2007 2007 2008
12. The Panel is keenly aware that in suggesting growth in certain scientific areas, and that, if funding is not substantially increased, such changes will be at the expense of existing areas. To generate the needed resources, the Panel recommends a strategy of combining consolidation of some	Accepted. We share the Panel's view that, if funding is not substantially increased, the growth in certain specific areas suggested in the Center's new Strategy will be at the expense of other areas. Among measures to generate the resources necessary, we agree to consolidate some MPs and Units and, as part of succession planning, to replace	Consolidation of six MPs into four Programs completed (see Recs 2-5) (See Rec. 17 for Succession Plan)	Implemented	April 2007

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MPs (3 and 6), together with the consolidation of service units, and the replacement of retiring senior staff with junior scientists.	senior staff with junior scientists, where appropriate, while ensuring that research leadership and science quality is maintained.			
13. In cases where outputs in refereed, international journals were less than adequate, the Panel recommends an assessment of the causes for the low productivity.	Accepted. We concur with the Panel's assessment that the output of refereed international publications is uneven across the spectrum of the Center's research. We agree with the consequent need to assess and address the causes for the differences in publication outputs among scientists. We note, however, the Panel's observation that the production of other types of publications, such as edited book chapters and monographs, by ICARDA scientists has increased in the last five years. We share the Panel's concern of the use of international refereed journal publications as a sole indicator of science quality. We would look forward to contributing to a system-wide debate on this issue.	On an individual scientist basis the causes of low output focused upon as part of the annual planning and performance appraisal system with clear expectations laid out Center-wide assessment of the causes of low publication productivity completed	Quality-focus (publication output) assessments initiated in 2007 Implemented	2008 2007
14. That the Board oversees the development of a succinct strategic plan by Center management to provide clear direction to ICARDA.	Noted: Planning for the new ICARDA Strategy was initiated by the Board in 2004 and the Strategy 2007-2016 will be concluded early in 2007. Finalization of the new Strategy was timed specifically to allow consideration of the EPMR Recommendations and the views of the new Director General.	Overall research direction of ICARDA Strategy approved by Board of Trustees (BoT) BoT approves ICARDA Strategy 2007-2016	Implemented The Board of Trustees has discussed the Strategic Plan in depth at both the extraordinary meeting in March 2007 and at a regular Board meeting in May 2007. The SP has been approved in principle and it is anticipated that it will be formally endorsed by the BoT at its November 2007 meeting.	March 2007 Nov. 2007

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15. That the Board and management develop a donor strategy designed to increase the spread of long term grants.	Accepted in principle. We agree with the Panel's view to develop and regularly update a Board-approved strategy for resource mobilization.	Resource mobilization committee (RMC) formed and meet regularly	Under development	2006
		New ADG (ER & C) and RMC draft donor strategy for BoT	Under development	2007
		BoT approves donor strategy	Not achieved	2008
16. Monitoring of the performance of the DG and Board based on the strategic goals to ensure timely implementation of the strategic plan	Accepted. The Board is conscious of its responsibility for regular performance appraisal of the Board, Board Chair and Director General. We agree with the Panel that such performance appraisal includes monitoring of strategic goals to ensure the timely implementation of the strategic plan.	To be discussed by BoT	The Board had preliminary discussion on the issue at the May 2007 meeting and is planning to implement a systematic performance evaluation process for the DG and Board Chair on a pilot basis at its November 2007 meeting.	May 2007
17. A Board policy be developed on succession planning to ensure senior staff in key positions have a potential successor in place and that this requirement is included in the performance targets for the DG, ADGs and Directors of Finance and HR.	Accepted in principle. We share the Panel's concern over succession planning for key senior staff positions in line with Center needs. This may not require a separate Board policy since the Board will continue to oversee management actions in this regard.	Rolling Succession Plan accepted by BoT	Implemented	August 2006
		Rolling Succession Plan implemented	Under implementation	On-going
18. Adopting a formal Board policy with a clear process for reporting in appropriate behaviour, which is communicated clearly to all staff.	Accepted. We agree with the Panel on the need for a "whistle-blower" policy regarding unacceptable behaviour, which will be developed and communicated to staff.	The recent CCER on Administration and Finance had a different approach to the issue	Under consideration as follow-up to the CCER	On-going
19. Adopting a Board policy that the Chair of Audit Committee approves the Chair's expenses and the Chair approves the Director General's expenses or such policy that ensures protection for the Chair, DG and finance officers	Accepted. The current procedure on the expenses of the Board Chair and Director General will be updated, resulting in a Board-approved procedure.	Board for consideration	Under consideration	On-going

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20. That more frequent full Board meetings be organized including video conferencing.	Accepted. As of 2007 the Board will have two regular meetings per year. Extraordinary meetings of the full Board or its Executive Committee may also be convened, if and when necessary. We will examine the practicality of video conferencing and other media.	Two full board meetings convened annually	Implemented	2007
21. ICARDA conduct a CCER on Management and Finance to investigate and provide best practice to ICARDA Management on: (i) The Finance Department's role within the wider ICARDA body (ii) The HR strategy to attract and retain the highest calibre staff with fair and transparent performance management systems.	Accepted. We agree with the Panel's recommendation to have a CCER on Management and Finance to assess and provide best practices to ICARDA management including the role of Finance within the wider ICARDA body and an HR strategy to attract and retain high caliber staff. The CCER included the issues raised by the Panel and it was conducted prior to the 2007 Board Meeting.	CCER on Management and Finance conducted	Implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCER conducted Feb. 2007 • Response on recommendations approved by BoT 	Mid-2007 May 2007
22. Given the dispersed nature of ICARDA's research activities, the Panel also recommends that External audits should routinely include visits and reviews of the regional and outreach centers, at least on a random (selective) or rotational basis	Accepted. We share the Panel's view that the External Auditors will routinely review the Center's regional and outreach offices on a selective or rotational basis, in addition to the regular reviews by our internal audit.	Under further discussion with Board, discussed in Audit Committee	Is being considered	On-going