

***Recommendations of the 3rd External Programme and Management
Review of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
and Responses by the Centre's Board and Management***

The Panel recommends that:

Strategies

1. *ICRAF consolidate its strategic research priorities into a long-term workable strategic plan that directs more effort towards a small number of relevant emerging research topics. (page 93)*

Response

ICRAF's Board and management fully agree. We are cognizant of the need for investment in emerging sciences as part of our research portfolio, and acknowledge the panel's reference to a number of emerging research topics deserving more investment. The completion of our strategic planning framework in 2005 and its endorsement by the Board provides the opportunity to finalize a new strategic plan that sharpens the Centre's priorities, priority-setting processes, the vetting of initiatives, and the definition of a smaller number of emerging research issues for long-term impact. These processes will be further developed and reviewed on a regular basis. We will examine the balance between strategic, applied and adaptive research, and develop metrics for each. And we will be conducting further scenario analyses along the lines suggested by the panel to underpin these efforts. With this clearer focus, our prime task will be to harmonise it with the dynamic operational implementation realities and opportunities.

2. *an analysis be undertaken of the likely impacts of involvement in large development projects, including the Millennium Villages Project, on ICRAF's overall balance between research and development, staff commitments and administrative costs; it is also important to ensure that projects with restricted funds be aligned with ICRAF's strategic research goals (page 40)*

Response

The Board and management fully agree. We recognize the importance of defining the Centre's role as a partner in large development-oriented projects, and will exercise greater care in defining and articulating the linkages between development-support and our strategic research. Our participation in development projects generates international public goods. The guiding principle is that ICRAF does research for development, not development itself. We will develop a new policy guideline and practical implementation plan for ICRAF's future involvement with development partners. We will review our involvement in the Millennium Research Villages Project to examine scientific and financial risks. We recognize, however, that the project has the potential to develop a major new methodological approach for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This approach involves elucidating a

framework for integrated rural development in Africa based on the CGIAR's platform of INRM.

Regions and Systemwide programs

3. *ICRAF merges its south Asia and South East Asia programs into an Asia Region, with liaison units posted in India and China with clearly stated roles. (page 46)*

Response

ICRAF accepts the need to focus its regional efforts to ensure strategic research impacts. The Board has already initiated a number of steps in this direction, and has approved a decision to integrate our Sahelian and African Humid Tropics Regional Programmes into a West and Central Africa Regional Programme. The Programmes Office will examine further ways to balance the need to meet our mandate in diverse environments with considerations of operational efficiency. The Centre will engage in a thorough analysis to determine the full implications of the Panel's recommendation to consolidate work in the two Asian regions, taking into consideration other viable options, as well as the views of our partners at the national and subregional levels in South and Southeast Asia.

4. *ICRAF ceases to maintain Latin America as a Region but instead retains a liaison unit there, associated with the Amazon Initiative. (page 48)*

Response

Board and management conducted an analysis on the future of the Centre's work in Latin America in April 2005. Three options were reviewed in depth at the Board of Trustees meeting in January 2006, including the solution indicated by the Panel. The panel's recommendation is the favored option, to be implemented through the process of establishing the business plan of the forthcoming Amazon Initiative Ecoregional Program. Decisions on this issue will be finalized after necessary consultations with AI partners.

5. *ICRAF maintains its role in ASB. The Panel concurs that the capacity developed in ASB should be sustained and strengthened to maintain a global platform in which ICRAF's innovative research can be validated and implemented (page 55)*

Response

We agree. ICRAF and ASB partners look forward to working closely with the CGIAR secretariat, the Science Council, and other partners to secure necessary funding to sustain and strengthen this valuable global platform.

6. *the CGIAR commission an external review of the AHI Systemwide Program to seek answers to the questions raised by the Panel and make recommendations on the future role of ICRAF in the AHI. (page 57)*

Response

We agree. AHI is both a CGIAR Systemwide Programme and a network of ASARECA. We support the commissioning of an external review of AHI that could be implemented as a review jointly-commissioned by the CGIAR and ASARECA. We will consult with ASARECA on this. The Executive Secretary of ASARECA is a member of the ICRAF Board. We will initiate discussions with donors and other stakeholders on the issue. We recognize that AHI can do more to articulate its role in the development of IPGs, and to illustrate how these methods have led to impact in benchmark sites. An internal impact assessment of AHI is already scheduled for 2006, and will complement the external review.

Governance and Management

- 7. ICRAF Board and management strictly enforce their “zero-tolerance” approach to staff and service providers who transgress the rules and procedures governing the use of the Center’s resources, taking prompt, decisive and unambiguous action when malfeasance has been established; the results should be communicated (with appropriate safeguards) to all Center staff and other parties affected. (page 78)*

Response

ICRAF’s policy manual has explicit and detailed processes for pursuing disciplinary measures, and these will be further clarified where any ambiguities exist. The Board and management will continue to vigorously implement these policies. The Centre will move to ensure that when such cases come to our attention they will be resolved as soon as possible and within a maximum of three months whenever possible. We recognise that we have not shared our decisive action in some cases with all staff and this will be remedied in future. The Internal Audit Unit has a strong mandate to guide and manage this aspect of our personnel policy. Where there is credible evidence of malfeasance staff members will be immediately suspended during investigation of the case.

- 8. major risk factors be discussed thoroughly at the BoT level and risk management becomes a standing agenda item for each session of the full BoT. (page 78)*

Response

We welcome this recommendation. ICRAF has made significant progress in developing its risk management system, and is further strengthening it under the guidance of the CGIAR Internal Audit and the Centre’s Internal Audit Unit. Risk management has become and will continue to be a regular agenda item at every Board meeting.

- 9. a review by the CGIAR audit unit of ICRAF management’s BOT secretariat policies and management’s procedures including, but not limited to, the production and dissemination of documents for all board meetings, to provide a foundation for the most expeditious possible improvement program. (page 80)*

Response

We accept this recommendation, and will commission such a review by the CGIAR Internal Audit Unit.

10. *ICRAF engage the services of an independent, appropriately qualified and experienced management consultant to work with the three most senior levels of management to clarify and strengthen their respective roles and responsibilities, and to establish appropriate managerial processes. (page 82)*

Response

We fully support this recommendation. The SLT has already embarked on such a process. This will now be extended to the top three levels of senior management. We believe that the inputs of a management consultant will provide valuable support to ICRAF to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of all management personnel.

11. *ICRAF urgently recruits a qualified and experienced professional Human Resources manager, whose training and experience cover the entire spectrum of HR services, including staff management, staff development, but also compensation and benefits. (page 63).*

Response

We agree that this is important and urgent. Our recent experiment to manage our complex human resources with a nationally-recruited professional did not produce the desired result. We are currently recruiting a fully-qualified and experienced HR manager to provide vigorous, innovative leadership across the full range of HR services.

12. *ICRAF appoints a suitably qualified and experienced Chief Operations Officer (at the level of ADG-Operations) with overall responsibility for Financial Services, Human Resources, Operations, a Joint Services Unit to be established with ILRI and all other administrative services. (page 102)*

Response

The response to this recommendation will be addressed jointly with the response to recommendation 15 (see below).

Internal organizational changes

13. *the Office of Strategic Initiatives be repositioned as a unit reporting directly to the DG and assisting the Office of the DG principally in resource mobilization and external relations. (page 101)*

Response

We agree with the intent of this recommendation to focus the Office's role principally on strategic resource mobilization and external relations, including our partnerships and alliances. This office also spearheads our linkages with international policy, science dialogues and our strategic planning processes. The Board and management will fully reflect on the ways that these functions can be further strengthened, within the context of any eventual structural changes. The Director of Strategic Initiatives is a position with leadership responsibilities that the Board has endorsed at the SLT level. The position already reports directly to the DG and will continue to do so, while sustaining strong connections to the global themes and regional programmes.

14. *a Joint ICRAF-ILRI Corporate Services Unit be established as soon as possible, including IT, Research Support and Communications. (page 58, 59, 66, 69)*

Response

We agree, and are currently pursuing the establishment of a joint services platform with ILRI in the context of the Eastern and Southern Africa MTP process. Naturally, the composition of any joint ICRAF/ILRI Services Unit is a matter that will require sustained discussion and agreement with ILRI. The IT Unit is already a joint resource of the two Centres. Research Support is currently in advanced stages of implementation as a joint resource. The possibility of managing Communications and other corporate and research services in this way will also be considered.

15. *ICRAF moves to the following revised organizational structure and staffs it appropriately. (page 102)*

Response

This response relates to both recommendations 12 and 15. We understand and agree with the broad intent of these recommendations to further clarify roles, improve corporate services, consolidate units, and strengthen the cohesion of cross-unit linkages. The Board and management will fully analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed structure and modifications or other alternatives that may meet the intent of this recommendation. We believe that final organizational changes should be derived from the informed knowledge and insights that Board and management obtain from these analyses.

