

Alliance Deputy Executive 2007 Annual Report

1. Introduction

In 2007, the Alliance Deputy Executive (ADE) continued to establish itself as an important arm of the Alliance, in its support to the Alliance Executive in facilitation and management of Alliance business. During 2007, a formal ADE Terms of Reference, spelling out the functions and operational guides of the ADE, was established and endorsed by the Alliance Executive. Significant efforts were made in a number of system-wide developments and cross-centre initiatives. There were also great opportunities for system-wide and cross-centre learning and sharing of experiences among centers.

2. The Alliance Deputy Executive

The Alliance of CGIAR Centers considers that the success of its governance, management and operations resides on the oversight given by the Alliance Board (AB), and the decisions taken by the Alliance Executive (AE) that are implemented by all Centers and facilitated by the Chief Alliance Officer (CAO). The Alliance Deputy Executive (ADE) is a support and implementation organ of the Alliance, dealing with common cross-center issues on research strategy, implementation and quality, as well as financial, audit and administrative compliance with the CGIAR system demands

2.1. Delegation by the Alliance of CGIAR Centers – Links with Alliance Executive.

A good functional linkage and interaction with the AE is vital for the smooth functioning of the ADE, in its support to the Alliance Executive. The AE delegates some research, finance and administrative tasks to the ADE. Such a delegation of tasks is mainstreamed through coordinating the ADE agenda with the AE. To foster the close communication required between the AE and ADE, the Chair of the ADE participates as an observer to AE meetings and keeps a close communication with the AE Chair and CAO.

2.2. ADE Membership and Standing Committees. Membership of the ADE is made up of senior management delegates from Centers; principally Deputy Directors General, Assistant Directors General, and Directors of Corporate Services of Centers.. There are two ADE standing-committees: ADE-Science and ADE-Finance. The former handles issues of research and scientific directions of the Alliance, and the latter, issues of finance, corporate governance and management. The chairs of ADE-Science and ADE-Finance are elected yearly among committee members (one vote per center if required). The Chair of the ADE-Science is the ADE Chair. The ADE may invite observers or special guests to their meetings, as the need arises to address the issues at hand. The coordinators of Challenge Programs are ex officio observers at ADE meetings and receive ADE communications through its list-server and other means.

2.3. Agenda Items, Decision-Making Process and Meetings. The agenda items for ADE meetings are prepared by the Chair of the ADE Science and Finance respectively, in consultation with the ADE, CAO and AE Chair. Items may be requested by ADE

members, the AE, the CAO. ADE envisages that most of its decisions and agreements will ensue from consensus building, but in certain (rare) occasions the majority rule will prevail. Each Center has one vote, irrespective of the number of participants from any Center at the meeting. ADE meets twice a year and close to the AE/AB meetings. The second meeting of the year is often scheduled prior to the CGIAR Annual General Meetings (AGM) and in the same venue or location of AGM. The first (mid-year) meeting is hosted by one of the members of the Alliance of CGIAR centers and will include a session on scientific and strategic directions or issues, and as possible, a field trip to appreciate the research undertakings of the hosting center for this mid-year meeting.

2.4. The ADE Executive Committee (ADE-ExCo). This committee supports and assists the ADE Chair in the functioning of the office. Membership of the ADE-ExCo includes the incumbent ADE Chair, the immediate past ADE Chair, and elected Chairperson of ADE-Finance. The ADE-ExCo organizes the program for each ADE meeting, and interacts with the AE, through the ADE Chair, at AE meetings. They also keep e-interactions for monitoring emerging issues that may need urgent attention from ADE members without waiting for the regular meetings.

2.5. The ADE Chair. The ADE Chair normally serves a one-year term. S/he represents ADE in interactions with AB, AE, the Chief Alliance Officer, Science Council, the CGIAR System Office and other CGIAR members as well as outsiders in any tasks given by the Alliance of CGIAR Centers. The Chair's main roles are to facilitate ADE's decision-making processes as well as reaching ADE's agreements, and to inform periodically ADE members on any matters arising and needing their attention or for knowledge sharing.

3. Main 2007 Highlights

Two ADE-Science meetings were held in Rome (May) and Beijing (November) during 2007 under the leadership of the ADE chair Kwesi Atta-Krah (Bioversity International), who took this role from Douglas Pachico (CIAT). The chair of the ADE-Finance was Gerald O'Donoghue (Bioversity International). ADE-Finance held a mid-year meeting in Nairobi. The whole ADE met jointly prior to AGM07 in Beijing. Throughout the year there were frequent email exchanges on several issues, especially regarding research matters. The next lines provide a succinct briefing of the main task accomplished during 2007.

3.1. Approval of the ADE Terms of Reference (TOR). The ADE terms of references were drafted and approved by the AE in their December 2007 meeting at Beijing. The main elements of the TOR are provided in above section.

3.2. CGIAR System Priority (SP) Framework Plans (FP). The CGIAR endorsed the new System priorities for Research at the AGM05 in Marrakech. The SP-FP describe the CGIAR's research role in the context of global initiatives and cutting edge research being

carried out elsewhere, by agencies, in industry, advanced research institutes and national agricultural research systems. They will, ideally, be compiled with the help of international experts in the field and all will be subject to peer review. A framework plan is a research plan which aims identifying clear 5- and 10-year goals for the strands of research within a SP, more closely define the scope, boundaries and timeframes of the plan for research, define the means to conduct world-class research which addresses these specific goals, link CGIAR research to other actors, including external providers of research excellence, place CGIAR and external collaborative approaches in appropriate relation to relevant ongoing or upcoming global initiatives, identify the responsibilities across identified elements of the System and its partners (including for developing syntheses, policy and coordination of the SP approach) –which will be translated into jointly planned output targets in medium-term plans, and estimate the optimal budget and other resources required to allow the SP research to proceed. Throughout 2007, 12 SP-FP were drafted and submitted to the Science Council for peer-review process. They are for SP 1A, 1C, 1D, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4B, 4C and 5C. They emerge from collective action through a consultative process including main CGIAR actors, and sometimes partners and global experts in the field. During the first quarter of 2008 other two SP (1B and 2A) will be submitted to the Science Council for their peer review, and the remaining (2D, 4A, 4D, 5A, 5B and 5D) before around mid-2008 since some progress was made for some of them during the year under review. The text format for the SP-FP includes background and introduction, vision (what the priority hopes to contribute to), scope and boundaries: what the priority will contain, specific goals and main target milestones (in 5 and 10 years), links to other SP, implementation mechanisms, partners and partnerships, capacity building, and minimum and optimum resource needs. Some FP also added definitions and the process followed for drafting them in their annexes.

3.3. Assessment on System-wide and Eco-Regional Programs (SWEP). The ADE conducted a cursory back-of-the-envelope assessment on the 17 SWEP, in terms of relevance as SWEP, efficiency, impact, and funding base. This was an internal exercise to guide further actions. The AE commended the rationale and concept for this collective assessment and mandated ADE to produce a “white-paper” to update the Alliance thinking with respect to the various collective action mechanisms in use and beyond SWEP, e.g. platforms or initiatives. This ADE “white-paper” should help decide when collective action is needed, what mechanism to use, and where (needs and justification, operational issues, anticipated gains. filtering mechanisms)? It should develop a toolkit of mechanisms and with brief description of each mechanism, and provide some thoughts on oversight mechanisms and responsibilities (including suggested role of ADE), and time-boundness (exit strategy and who to implement it). An ADE sub-group will be submitting the first draft for perusal among members during the first half of 2008. Subsequently it will be shared with AE and through them with the Science Council and CGIAR membership.

3.4. Challenge Programs (CP). AE asked ADE to undertake an assessment of *Lessons from First Cycle of Challenge Programs*. The AE took note of the Lessons Learnt exercise conducted by ADE on first cycle CP. Some of the recommendations especially in relation to governance were discussed as possible input into the process for the next

batch of CP. The AE called on ADE for stronger strategic input into guiding development of the full proposals for the ongoing second cycle CP to ensure that they would be of acceptable quality as CP. ADE has ensured that each of the small-writing group steering the proposal development include one of their members.

3.5. Medium Term Plan (MTP) Development Process. ADE members shared their experiences with the MTP development process in their meeting as well as with the Science Council. Such sharing facilitated the improvement of the MTP guidelines, which became more friendly-user.

3.6. System-wide Online Tool for MTP reporting. An ADE sub-group participated actively with ICT-KM, Science Council and CGIAR Secretariat on the development of an online tool, which is intended to help compile and submit MTP information. Some of the advantages of this new tool are that they can be searched quite easily, one can view the MTP of other Centers, and it can be completed on the Internet. Information for other types of reports can be more easily compiled given that much of the information will already be available from the online tool. The technical capacity to support this tool is currently available at all the Centers given that the technology required is minimal. The proto-type of this online tool (known as *EASY-MTP*) was launched during the end of year meeting at Beijing, and most Alliance Centers agreed to use it during the submission of their 2009-2011 MTP. The Alliance sees *EASY-MTP* as a good example of a bottom up initiative driven by the centers and adopted by the Science Council. The ADE identified its clients for *EASY-MTP* as: Research managers, center's staff, development investors, national partners, and the Science Council.

3.7. Regional MTP for sub-Saharan Africa. The two regions (West and Central [WCA], East and Southern [ESA]) have adopted a similar approach to development of regional plans although there is some difference in pace of evolution. Both have been designed to have 'light' coordination, developed through a bottom up approach and each has a coordinator. ADE members, through their respective Centers' engagement, worked together with the regional MTP coordinators on shaping respective research plans for each sub-region. The regional plans are aligned to sub-regional organizations (SRO) and are supposed to facilitate collective action. However, Centers do not have to align all their research activities within the regional plans. The ESA regional plan has four flagship projects while the WCA regional plan has five projects. The Alliance of CGIAR Centers has expressed commitment to fully engage in the implementation of each the programs. Progress has been made in linkage with SRO (namely CORAF and ASARECA), and more recently, also with FARA. This process is on-going and a meeting planned for the first half of 2008 with FARA and SRO.

3.8. Performance Measurement Indicators. ADE engaged with the Science Council and the CGIAR Secretariat to come up with a more effective Performance Measurement System (PMS) and guidelines for the audit. ADE felt that the Science Council was very transparent and positive in considering the suggestions made through the ADE inputs given in this consultative process. The PMS for 2007 includes some of the observations provided by ADE on behalf of the Alliance of CGIAR Centers.

3.9. Joint Science Council-ADE meetings. In both ADE meeting held in 2007, there were interactions with Science Council (members and staff). The meetings were held in a very positive mood and friendly environment, which was acknowledged by all attending. Some issues arose in relation to the various items discussed and were clarified. These would be incorporated into the various instruments such as CP process, MTP guidelines, or PMS. The Science Council and ADE agreed to continue with such encouraging exchanges between both and that individual issues needing follow up to be dealt as they arise.

3.10. Other Strategic Interactions. ADE provided feedback, upon request from the ADE, to other international initiatives such as FAO' Climate Change or the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development. They were given as an input to their deliberations and with the aim of improving such undertakings.

3.11. Finance Highlights.

3.12. Election of new ADE Executive for 2008. Kwesi Atta-Krah stepped down at the end of 2007. ADE decided to de-couple the ADE chairmanship from the AE chair and elected Rodomiro Ortiz (CIMMYT) as the 2008 ADE chair, and John McDermott (ILRI) as the 2009 ADE chair. Gerard O'Donoghue was re-elected as 2008 ADE-Finance Chair. Table 1 lists the ADE members as per February 2008.

4. Key Issues and Action Points for follow up in 2008

- Continued commitment of ADE to work together to enhance efficiencies within the system and to minimize bureaucracy and duplication,
- To be able to play significant support role in the identification of the Development Challenges on which the future operations of the CGIAR research will be focused.
- To continue to work effectively with the Science Council and CGIAR Secretariats on the technical and science components of our work. We have appreciated our joint sessions with the Science Council, and we intend to continue with this practice.

Members of the Alliance Executive and Alliance Deputy Executive as per Feb. 2008

Center	Alliance Deputy Executive-Science	Alliance Deputy Executive-Finance
Africa Rice Center	Marco Wopereis	Aguibou Tall
Bioversity International	Kwesi Atta-Krah * Paul Harding	Gerard O'Donoghue ***
CIAT	Douglas Pachico	Albin Hubscher
CIFOR	Yemi Katerere	Sharat Kumar
CIMMYT	Rodomiro Ortiz **	Martin van Weerdenburg
CIP	Charles Crissman	Carlos Alonso
ICARDA	Marteen van Ginkel	Koen Geerts
ICRISAT	Dyno Keatinge	Rajesh Agrawal
IFPRI	Mark Rosegrant	David Governey
IITA	Paula Bramel	Lakshmi Menon
ILRI	John McDermott	Brigitte Laude Bruce Scott
IRRI	To Phuc Tuong Michael Jackson	Norman McDonald
IWMI	David Molden Deborah Bossio	Amol Khisty
World Agroforestry Center	Tony Simons	Laksiri Abeysekera
World Fish	Patrick Dugan Jamie Oliver	Wayne Rogers

* 2007 Chairman of the Alliance Deputy Executive (ADE) and Chair of the ADE-Science Group

** 2008 Chairman of the Alliance Deputy Executive (ADE) and Chair of the ADE-Science Group

*** 2007-2008 Chair of the ADE-Finance Group