

2010 Review of the Central Advisory Service for Intellectual Property (CAS-IP) and Future Scenarios of Intellectual Property Management in the CGIAR

Summary of Report to DGIS for CGIAR Consortium Board and Fund Council Discussion

Background: This external review¹ was commissioned by DGIS to evaluate progress in its project that through a €2.5M grant has funded a large proportion of CAS-IP support to the Centers and the System over the past four years. In addition, given the current CGIAR reform process, DGIS requested a forward thinking review of the broader context of IP management in the CGIAR. The review team² comprised a set of independent international professionals with extensive experience in key areas relevant to IP management in the CGIAR. The review team consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including IP specialists, senior managers and scientists from across the CGIAR, NARS and ARIs, as well as donors and other key representatives of the international agricultural development community.

Future context: The intellectual property (IP) management³ strategy of the new CGIAR consortium cuts to the core of the system's philosophy and values. It is a litmus test for the commitment of Centers and the CGIAR executive to create a truly integrated system capable of a significant shift in its relevance and impact. It is critically important that the future IP management framework of the new CGIAR is apparent to those formulating and initiating the CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) / Megaprograms (MPs). Rigorous IP management is of paramount importance for any organization aspiring to be a serious player in the application of modern biosciences and it must have the same operational importance as finance, audit, HR, impact assessment, and communications.

Importance of systemwide IP management: Since 2000, CAS-IP has successfully helped to enhance the competence of CGIAR Centers and their partners to manage IP in their respective positions in various value chains and impact pathways. The feedback received by the review was consistently positive but stakeholders (and many insiders) consider that the CGIAR is ignoring the importance of comprehensive IP management. This is an image that will lead to extensive missed opportunities with donors and partners, and will in turn seriously limit the CGIAR's impact and relevance, particularly in new technology-based areas.

Managing the transition: Many of the Centers have established in-house units to manage routine IP issues which also serve as the backbone of the CAS-IP led CGIAR Communities of Practice in IP⁴ that provide an essential mechanism to stimulate further learning and innovation. Some Centers have not yet developed sufficient in-Center capacity to support their real needs in this area properly. However, meanwhile there is an urgent need to design and implement a strong 2010-2011 transition phase to ensure the most efficient evolution to the new structure while at the same time providing the Consortium and the Centers with the support they need to deal with on-going IP management issues.

New operational structure: It is recommended that during 2011 the current central service should be replaced with a central IP unit that focuses on the emerging set of priority issues associated with the increasing role of the private sector and proprietary technologies in international agriculture. This would include a small central team of senior experts in IP management (including expertise in negotiation, liability and stewardship) which should be based in the Consortium CEO's office. This unit would help the CGIAR system pull together to ensure it has sufficient capacity and credibility to build major new partnerships that deliver the best possible deal for the CGIAR's ultimate beneficiaries. The unit would also ensure that the CGIAR has the know-how to develop international public goods and to deal with major relevant international bodies such as the ITPGRFA, CBD, UPOV etc. In summary, this review makes a number of key recommendations to help establish an integrated strategy and synergistic process for efficient IP management across the CGIAR.

¹ The full report is available upon request to the Review Team mailbox: casip2010review@gmail.com

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³ The term "IP management" is used in the broadest sense to include intellectual assets and technology transfer management

⁴ These CoPs include the National Partners Initiative and the IP focal points/IP Managers group