

**SCIENCE COUNCIL OF THE CGIAR
STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR THE 6th EPMR of CIAT**

October 2006

1. The SC suggests that the panel gives the highest priority to addressing the issue of **Center direction and focus, broadening of its funding base and structure the board, management and staff in a way that maximizes and rewards funding the mission.**
2. A major recommendation of the last EPMR was to ensure that CIAT maintained adequate support for its regional and global research on commodities. **To what extent has CIAT maintained the right balance between its commodity and NRM research? And its global and regional focus.**
3. A large component of CIAT's portfolio is made up of small and discrete activities which may lead to inefficiencies in the deployment of resources. In response to SC criticism of having a large number of apparently unrelated projects, it appears that CIAT, rather than completing and/or eliminating these projects, has merely subsumed them under one program. The SC encourages the EPMR to assess **how CIAT could rationalise, concentrating on fewer, well-selected areas of strategic international research with high potential benefit to the poor in the tropics.**
4. Are CIAT's activities in agroenterprise development contributing to IPG in this area? Is CIAT's **current and proposed research agenda consistent with CIAT's comparative advantage?**
5. Is CIAT's proposed expansion of research on tropical fruits well focused to deliver IPGs? Does it draw adequately on experience elsewhere in this new area of research? What areas of CIAT's commodity research will be forgone to embrace new research in tropical crops? How were such tradeoffs decided?
6. As a result of a recent major funding shortfall there are some substantial resource shifts among projects but the criteria for these reallocations is not clear. The Center states that research on genetic improvement will "not be fundamentally changed". However, changes in project funding projections for 2007 do not quite support such a statement. Some projects have greatly increased funding projected for 2007 from MTP06-08 (beans, tropical fruits, rural agroenterprise development, and participatory research); others have major reductions (rice, cassava).
7. Is the work of the TSBF integrated into other projects such as the communities and watershed project? Does CIAT have the right balance in NRM research – between biophysical and social, between the landscape / watershed and the management of the resources at the "crop based system" level, between understanding driving processes (IPG) and local activities?
8. What are the working relations between CIAT and other centers with similar crop focus? Specifically what's the relationship with the cassava research of IITA and the tropical pasture research of ILRI?