Review of Africa Food Security Research Partnership Program
CSIRO-CORAF-BECA (Africa Food Security Initiative)
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name			
AidWorks initiative number	INJ211 (activity 10B290 only)		
Commencement date	December 2010	Completion date	December 2013
Total Australian $	$28 million		
Delivery organisation(s)	CSIRO		
Implementing partner(s)	CSIRO, Biosciences east and central Africa (BecA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD)		
Country/Region	East, Central and West Africa		
Primary sector	Food Security – Agricultural Productivity through Research and Adoption		

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective:

The review had the following objectives:

- Report on the progress of program implementation
- Make detailed recommendations to improve the overall quality of the CSIRO African partnerships program
- Develop options to guide the design of another phase of AusAID support to 2015-16
- Suggest strategies for how the program might be scaled back or concluded post 2015-16

Specifically the review was expected to:

- Provide an assessment of how well the CSIRO partnerships program has carried out to date, based on a review of the performance and progress of the research projects, as well as the capacity building initiatives with African partners; and to assess constraints or issues encountered in implementation.
- Assess the extent to which the program logic is likely to result in development outcomes.
- Provide recommendations for the next phase of the partnerships program to improve development outcomes.
- Develop options to guide the design and the development of another three year or more phase of Australian Government funding for the partnerships, and consider possibilities for program consolidation.
- Prepare three separate reports; one for each field mission and an evaluation report for the overall AusAID–CSIRO partnership.

Evaluation Completion Date: November 2012

Evaluation Team: Andy Hall (Team Leader), Steve Ashley, Howard Elliott, Ian Kershaw (AusAID)

AusAID's response to the evaluation report

- AusAID welcomes the findings and recommendations of the review team and thanks the team for its work preparing the three review reports.
- AusAID acknowledges the impressive progress and strong relationships that have been formed between CSIRO and its African partners, Biosciences east and central Africa (BecA) and West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) – also confirmed by the review.
- AusAID is working with CSIRO and its partners to build on the foundations of the current program and incorporate the findings and recommendations from the review in the current phase. Given the review was conducted mid-term; many recommendations are being implemented in the current phase.
- The review recommendations have also shaped the terms of reference and AusAID expectations for the design of a possible next phase of the program. In particular, in response to the mid-term review, and subject to continued support from the Australian Government, AusAID would seek the next phase of partnership programs to:
    - Consist of separate program designs for the BecA and CORAF/WECARD Partnerships rather than a single program covering both partnerships;
    - Develop research projects that build on current Phase 2 projects with the overall aim of maximising food security and development outcomes, particularly by focusing on adoption and extension of scientific interventions. It is likely that the research will remain focused on the areas already identified, rather than commencing entirely new areas of research;
    - Achieve a balance of investment between supporting activities that have short term development impacts and those that have longer term development impacts;
    - Engage relevant partners for development impact in the design and implementation phases;
    - Have a much stronger socio-economic focus at both the program and at the individual project levels;
    - Demonstrate the overall coherence and logic of the program, by better articulating appropriate theories of change based on agreed development outcomes; and
    - Significantly strengthen monitoring and evaluation at both the program and project levels.
- The sections below set out AusAID's management actions in response to other findings of the MTR.

CSIRO - BecA Partnership

- *Strengthen the role of CSIRO in accessing high-quality expertise in science and impact:*
    - AusAID recognises that to achieve the strongest development outcomes, a range of partners need to be engaged more strongly in the partnership activities coordinated by CSIRO in order to achieve more sustainable food security outcomes (e.g. private sector; policy-makers, social scientists; NGOs). AusAID will ensure that appropriate mechanisms/partnerships will be put in place to achieve this at the program and project levels in the current and any subsequent phases.
    - The design for a next phase will focus on adoption and uptake of research. This necessitates bringing in a wider variety of partners and expertise into the design of projects and their implementation. This is to ensure that research activities focus on addressing development issues, and that research considers value-chain and market drivers.
- *Strengthen the analysis of innovation processes and impact pathways in projects:*
    - AusAID will ensure that the next phase of the program clearly articulates the program logic, because it is critical to the success of a next phase. This involves having: clearly stated objectives and expected outcomes at the program level; each project analysing the feasible impact (or change) pathways and how these might be achieved (i.e. how project inputs will create change that will in turn have impact on livelihoods/ populations); and having a robust system for measuring whether the outcomes are being achieved.
    - Since the review, analyses (including social and economic) have been completed to help understand the impact/change pathways and assist the innovation process in many of the projects. In a next phase, approval of and funding for the program and projects will be tied to

demonstrating their program logic and the connection between the innovation and the uptake/adoption of the innovations (i.e. the impact pathways).

- *Expand the scope of projects:*
    - AusAID agrees that the scope of projects needs to be expanded in a next phase in terms of the range of research (beyond the biophysical to include more socio-economic aspects) and that a wider range of partners are engaged in order to achieve food security outcomes. However, AusAID does not support developing too many areas of research. Projects to be funded under a next phase of the program must clearly articulate the development issue being addressed; the proposed development impacts; the research to be undertaken and its links to the impact pathway; and the range of partners engaged.
- *Practice adaptive management:*
    - AusAID agrees that adaptive management approaches need to be further incorporated and will work with CSIRO in the next phase to ensure the program includes deliberate approaches to accommodate innovation and emerging issues.

CSIRO - CORAF/WECARD Partnership

- *Refine program and project logics and clarify different impact pathways:*
    - AusAID sees having clear program/project logic as fundamental to the success of the proposed investment and to the achievement of development outcomes. This will require: clarity about outcomes and objectives both at the program and project levels; identifying how the projects contribute to the program objectives; and how all activities can be expected to contribute to broader development goals. The design for a next phase will need to set out the program outcomes sought and the supporting logic/outcomes for each project.
- *Develop a project portfolio with diversified impact pathways:*
    - AusAID agrees that within the program portfolio, there should be a mix of projects that seek to achieve development outcomes over both the short and longer-term. An analysis of existing projects (and their components), will be undertaken to ensure that the most appropriate mix of complementary short- and long-term objectives are incorporated in the next phase.
- *Revisit the spread of projects and modes of scientific support and coordination:*
    - AusAID will, as part of a next phase design process, seek consolidation of Phase 2 projects to achieve a more effective and efficient program.
- *Expand the scope of expertise provided by the program:*
    - AusAID will ensure that wider expertise be involved in the design and implementation of the next phase.
- *Bring in additional expertise to address institutional development (more emphasis on supporting CORAF/WECARD to deliver on its mandate):*
    - The design of the next phase of the program will explore where institutional weaknesses exist in relation to the development outcomes proposed, and what assistance is needed.

Both partnership programs

- AusAID supports the use of an Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approach, and appreciates that learning how better to apply this approach is an important part of sustainability of this program and for achieving food security outcomes.
- AusAID recognises limitations to the transferability of lessons and learning across East and West programs, which have differing objectives and modalities of implementation. AusAID therefore questions the benefit of a specific investment in an East and West cross learning project incorporated in a next phase and feels there are more efficient ways of supporting knowledge sharing.
- In a next phase, learning will form an important part of the program as part of the monitoring, evaluation and learning system and is crucial to managing the program to achieve results. Precisely how learning will be incorporated into the program will be determined during the design of a next phase.