

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY
SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE FOURTH SAFGRAD OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
(13 & 17 FEBRUARY, 1989)
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

S A F G R A D

Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development
Coordination Office
01 BP 1783, Ouagadougou 01
Burkina Faso

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING OF
13 FEBRUARY, 1989

At the August 1988 Oversight Committee (OC) meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, it was agreed that the Committee would convene before the Council of National Directors of Agricultural Research meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina , on 14-16 February, 1989. Accordingly, the OC met on Monday, 13 February, 1989, with the following members present:

L.K. Fakambi, Chairman
I. Babiker
J.A. Ayuk-Takem
S. Da
H. Mercer-Quarshie
A.M. Emechebe
P.D. Fall, OAU/STRC (Ex-officio)
J.M. Menyonga, (Ex-officio), Secretary
T. Bezuneh, Rapporteur

Observers:

G. Kingma, USAID/SAFGRAD
J.M. Haki, replacing G.H. Semuguruka

A decision was taken that since OC members are elected on a personal basis and not on the basis of their official functions, for a period of three years, the membership of Dr. Semuguruka (no longer Director General of the Tanzania Agricultural Research Organization) should still be retained. Accordingly, he should be informed in writing by the Chairman of the Oversight Committee. Meanwhile, Dr. J.M. Haki (from Tanzania) was allowed to participate in the meeting as an observer.

Matters Arising from the Third OC Meeting

^{Before}
After adoption of the minutes of the OC meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya in August 1988, the following amendments were made:

Page 6, ii) to read: "The Committee stressed the importance of cowpea research for both grain and forage production as well as for adaptation in cereal-based cropping systems".

Page 8, para.2 to read:" The Committee noted the report by the Director of ICRISAT's Cereals Programme".

SAFGRAD Evaluations

The August-September 1988 SAFGRAD II mid-term evaluation by USAID was discussed by the Committee and note was taken of the recommendations made. While some questions were raised regarding some of the summary statements, the OC expressed satisfaction over the positive reaction by USAID to the recommendations.

Dr. Fall encouraged the SCO to take a strong stand with ICRISAT and IITA concerning the collaborative research networks funded by USAID, noting that USAID had repeatedly requested ICRISAT to provide full-time network coordination as well as budgets for network operations. He further reported that the Secretary General of the OAU had agreed to hold meetings in the near future in Addis Ababa on additional support to SAFGRAD. Dr. Fall requested SAFGRAD to document its experiences in transfer of technology over the past decade, in order to show the impact of research and on-farm testing carried out in Burkina Faso and selected countries. This would constitute a strong base for SAFGRAD II and help to project SAFGRAD as a vital organization.

Formats must be found for a suitable structure of SAFGRAD. SAFGRAD may need to have its own statute within the OAU, whereby more formal delegation of powers is accorded to the SAFGRAD Coordination Office.

With regard to the Farming Systems Research programme of SAFGRAD, members requested more information on the FSR evaluation by IFAD. It was noted that a 3-5 year support for FSR was not

very realistic, since some programme components such as agroforestry, soil and water management, etc require long-term commitment.

The Committee was informed that IFAD had shown interest in a new form of collaborative research support to the West African Farming Systems Research Network through SAFGRAD.

Preparation for the NARS Directors' Conference

The Agenda for the NARS Directors' Conference (14-16 February) was endorsed by the Committee. The Chairman presented a draft of his report which was to be presented to the NARS Directors. It was discussed at length and some amendments proposed.

Further discussions were left to be continued on 17 February, 1989 after the Conference of NARS Directors.

Minutes of the Oversight Committee Meeting of 17 February, 1989

Present were:

L.K. Fakambi, Chairman
I. Babiker
J.A. Ayuk-Takem
S. Da
H. Mercer-Quarshie
A.M. Emechebe
P.D. Fall, OAU/STRC (Ex-officio)
J.M. Menyonga (Ex-officio), Secretary
T. Bezuneh, Rapporteur

Observers:

G. Kingma, USAID/SAFGRAD

Roles of the Oversight Committee

The Chairman pointed out the need to elaborate the roles of the Oversight Committee. It was commented that general guidelines were provided within the Council report document of February 1987 (page 22, paragraph 8 and page 25, item 2.2 of the English version). After a lengthy exchange of views on the matter, the Committee agreed to precise its roles in the future.

Harmonizing the Work of the Oversight Committee with that of respective Network Steering Committees

The Committee agreed on the necessity for Network Coordinators to ensure that approved minutes of Steering Committee meetings of the respective networks are sent to the SCO for onward transmission to Oversight Committee members.

To effectively monitor network activities, the Oversight Committee needs to receive (through the SCO) the following documents or reports:

- i. Annual technical or any relevant reports of the Network Coordinators;
- ii. The biennial self-assessment reports of respective networks;
- iii. Minutes of the regular meeting of the SCO and Network Coordinators.

Furthermore, chairmen of the respective networks may be invited occasionally to attend the OC meeting to serve mainly as resource persons.

It was also reiterated that important documents for OC meetings should be sent at least one month before each meeting.

SAFGRAD Coordination Office and the Oversight Committee

The International Coordinator and Director of Research of SAFGRAD should keep OC members abreast of the following activities:

- i. Research activities of various networks - by the Director of Research
- ii. Report on management issues - by International Coordinator
- iii. Mission reports - by both officers
- iv. Financial report to be tabled at appropriate meetings of the OC.

Institutionalization of SAFGRAD

In expressing a few concerns about SAFGRAD which is an OAU project, the Assistant Executive Secretary raised the following questions: Has SAFGRAD fulfilled its mission as a project? Is it necessary for it to change its current status? It must be noted that institutionalization of SAFGRAD as a long-term activity entails permanent financial consequences by the OAU. Besides, SAFGRAD would also be placed completely under OAU regular bureaucratic machinery. Two options were therefore discussed:

- i. Evolving SAFGRAD as a permanent unit within the framework of OAU/STRC.
- ii. Evolving SAFGRAD as an agency.

In either case, the Committee noted the need to develop a statute for SAFGRAD.

A Committee of three members was established, comprising Dr. Fall, Assistant Executive Secretary of OAU/STRC; Prof. Fakambi, OC Chairman and Dr. Menyonga, International Coordinator of

SAFGRAD. The Committee is expected to elaborate the advantages and disadvantages of SAFGRAD being a permanent bureau of OAU or an agency. This will be tabled at the next meeting of the OC.

Strengthening Capabilities of the SCO

a) Management of Funds

Credibility to manage funds is largely dependent on the professional quality and support staff of SCO. As SCO would be more involved with disbursement of network and other research funds to NARS, there is need for the latter to account in a timely manner and efficiently for funds allocated to it. The SCO should therefore, improve its capacity to assist NARS. It was commented that OAU/ STRC-SAFGRAD's financial management capabilities have been greatly improved during the last few years. It may be necessary for the financial management experts of SCO to visit some NARS and assist local staff in situ on how to adequately account for funds disbursed to them.

b) Attraction of more Funds

This responsibility of the SCO depends on the extent to which research issues are formulated into project activities. In this regard, OC members expressed their willingness to assist. It was commented that the funding of SCO management could be achieved largely from overhead administrative costs if SAFGRAD manages to attract more funds for its projects. Among the possible donors that were mentioned for SAFGRAD to approach were EEC, GTZ, Italian and Japanese Governments. It was stressed that the OC should be knowledgeable on projects submitted to donors. In order to catch the timely "market" for donor support, the SCO should not wait for the approval of the Committee before submitting any of its proposals for funding.

Preparation of SAFGRAD III

The Director of Research commented that preparation of SAFGRAD III would soon be initiated. With regard to SAFGRAD collaborative research networks, the coordinators and respective network steering committees would be involved in the development of research programmes for the various networks. This would be followed by project formulation by the SCO using consultants from NARS and other sources. The development of a long-term plan for SAFGRAD, would also involve working groups to elaborate the plan. The thrust of the medium and long-term programmes of SAFGRAD would be to strengthen the research base of NARS.

CORAF Meeting in Dakar

Dr. Fall, Assistant Executive Secretary of OAU/STRC was requested by the Committee to accompany Dr. Menyonga and Dr. Ayuk-Takem to the CORAF meeting. With regard to the participation of Dr. Fall, the Chairman of the Oversight Committee was asked to write officially to the OAU Secretary General with a copy to the Executive Secretary of OAU/STRC.

Chairman's Report to the Council of NARS Directors

It was noted that the Oversight Committee deliberations had been impressive. The Chairman's report however was not made available to NARS Directors because it had not been fully completed. It was suggested that the report should include comments (or executive summary) on the outcome of network self appraisal and highlights on the minutes of the three meetings of the Committee. In the meantime, it was suggested that the NARS Directors of SAFGRAD member countries should receive minutes of all Oversight Committee meetings.

Election of Vice-Chairman

The SCO management reported that it was sometimes very difficult to get in touch with the Chairman due to the numerous responsibilities entrusted to him in his country. This was

confirmed by the Chairman himself who agreed with the suggestion of SCO management to elect a Vice-Chairman. After a brief exchange of views, the Committee elected Mr. H. Mercer-Quarshie of Ghana as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Other Matters

1. Members resolved to take their responsibilities within the Committee more seriously to justify the confidence of the NARS Directors entrusted to them.
2. The work programme of the SCO would be distributed to members just before the OC meeting with regard to preparation of the biennial meeting of NARS Directors.
3. Dr. G.H. Semuguruka should be informed immediately that he is still a member of the OC, having been elected in his personal capacity.
4. The attention of the Council of NARS Directors would be drawn to any member that frequently absents himself from OC meetings.

Date and Place of next Meeting

Date: 2-4 October, 1989

Place: Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Oversight Committee of SAFGRAD, during its meetings of 13 and 17 February 1989 in Ouagadougou, recommended that:

1. More details be included in the description of activities and responsibilities of the Oversight Committee, its Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretariat.
2. Network Coordinators should ensure timely reporting of their activities to facilitate their study by the Coordination Office in preparation of OC meetings.
3. A committee of three members should study the advantages of OAU administrative formats and propose a long-term status for SAFGRAD that provides financial strength, continuity and administrative flexibility within the OAU.
4. The OC, in recognizing the financial credibility of the SCO, encourages the latter to utilize its experience to streamline the transfer of research support to NARS, even if this would mean the design of an adequate accounting procedure by the SCO accountants for some NARS.
5. The OC should be more involved in project development and preparation, in order to present project proposals at an opportune time to potential donors for funding.
6. Further preparatory work be effected by the Coordination Office to develop long-term plans of SAFGRAD, utilizing the documents as presented to the conference of NARS Directors in February 1989.
7. Technical network reports and evaluations be reviewed and presented to the NARS Directors by the Chairman of the Oversight Committee. Network Coordinators can be invited to Directors meetings if and when deemed necessary.

8. The meeting convened by CORAF in Dakar, Senegal in March 1989 should be attended by a representative of OAU/STRC in addition to the team mandated by the Council of NARS Directors.

Vote of Thanks

The Oversight Committee of SAFGRAD, at its fourth meeting in Ouagadougou, expressed its deep appreciation to IFAD for having funded (through SAFGRAD) farming systems research programmes in Benin, Burkina Faso and Cameroon and to other donors (USAID, FAC, IDRC and the Ford Foundation) for their continued support.

The Committee is grateful to the Government of Burkina Faso for renewing the OAU/STRC-Burkina Agreement to further facilitate the smooth running of SAFGRAD.

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