

# US\$5-billion agricultural research portfolio unveiled

Agricultural consortium to focus on "outcome-driven" research.

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The CGIAR Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers has formally presented its new US\$5-billion research portfolio at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

The CGIAR is a global network of research centres working to help foster food security, poverty reduction, and sustainable natural resource management.

In 2009, the consortium — which was formerly known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research — announced it would radically reform its research activities and focus donor funding on 15 research programmes to enable better collation and integration of global research.

Its first research programme was launched in late 2010, followed in mid-2011 by another ten programmes, and the remaining four a few months later.

All 15 had their official Launch in Rio de Janeiro yesterday at the 4th Agriculture and Rural Development Day, which was hosted by CGIAR and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa).

The programmes are organized into five themes: improving yields and profits of crops, fish and livestock; improving sustainability and environmental integrity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation; improving the productivity, profitability, sustainability and resilience of farming systems; improving policies and markets; and improving nutrition and diets.

Frank Rijsberman, the new chief executive officer of the CGIAR consortium, said that the organization had made a deliberate decision to shift its strategy to focus on outcome-driven research.

"Outcomes are a critical concept for bridging the very difficult gap between carrying out research and seeing impacts," Rijsberman told SciDev.Net.

"It is very difficult to link research activities directly to impacts. But we believe it is possible.

From 2013, the CGIAR will invest around \$1 billion a year in agriculture research. Rijsberman said that figure, which is around 20% higher



*Roberto Pera/DPA/Corbis*

Research will focus on outcomes, such as improving the productivity and profitability of farming systems.



annual investments, derives from a 2010 International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) report, which concluded that significant annual investment would be required to ensure food security through to 2050.

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Funding will be provided by the governments of 60 countries, and organizations including the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Rijsberman said funding would not necessarily be allocated to organizations with "big reputations or big needs," but to programmes which could demonstrate firm research outcomes.

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