



**KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KEFRI):
RESEARCH PROGRAM AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

Sponsored by: Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management
(PSFM-KEFRI/FD/GTZ)

Muguga, Kenya
March 1997

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary highlights the main issues arising from the Research Programme and Management Review of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), which was undertaken from 4 - 29 November 1996. The review was conducted in accordance with Terms of Reference which were prepared by KEFRI, in conjunction with the Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management (PSFM) project. The principal objectives of the review exercise were to:

- Assess KEFRI's research programmes with respect to their relevance to national objectives; actual and planned research outputs; the establishment of research priorities; and the appropriateness of implementation strategies
- Assess the adequacy of the human and technical/material resources available to KEFRI, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation
- Assess the adequacy of the management and administrative support services in supporting the implementation of research programmes
- Conduct a strategic analysis of KEFRI's current structure and organisational arrangements, and make appropriate recommendations for improvement

in order to make recommendations for the enhancement of needs oriented research at the eco-zone and national levels, through improved efficiency and effectiveness.

The results of the review are summarised below under sub-headings which reflect the individual Terms of Reference.

Research Programmes

In the absence of a KEFRI-wide research programme, it is impossible to judge the programme as a whole. A sample of field activities was visited, in addition to which research publications and reports were reviewed. A small sample of research proposals was evaluated.

None of the documents consulted dealt in adequate detail with priorities for either national development or for research. In the main this is because of a concentration on topics, whereas what is required is prioritisation at experiment level. In as far as can be judged, KEFRI is pursuing a relatively balanced research programme, but in many cases experiments are designed which do not fully consider either research needs or existing knowledge. Much greater transparency is required if any review is to be effective.

Proposals have been made in the report to widen the involvement of beneficiaries and other stakeholders in programme development and prioritisation. This activity is recommended to be carried out by groups who are effectively sub-committees of the KEFRI Board of Management. It must be observed that the process is constrained by the inadequacies of forest sector planning and prioritisation, and it is important that KEFRI is not expected to undertake forest sector planning before it can prioritise its own contribution.

The mechanisms used to implement research in a technical way are basically sound. The problems relate to the organisational structure, which is heavily focused on disciplines, as well as the depleted state of many outstations. In the past, the use of donor funding reinforced the discipline based structure, and KEFRI effectively became a group of projects, rather than a tightly knit institute. However, KEFRI has initiated this review through PSFM in order to obtain recommendations on how to improve on its current activities and performance.

The report makes suggestions and recommendations on how the various weaknesses identified might be addressed, but also recognises that the process of change is one which has afflicted forestry research in Kenya for a sustained period. It is considered important that a period of substantial stability should follow the next round of change

Programme Resources

KEFRI has access to modern, spacious and well constructed buildings at Muguga and Kitui, and solid facilities at Maseno. Outside these, most field stations are run down and poorly equipped. They are also poorly located for the provision of services to staff. It is recommended that before any programme of renewal is started, the research programme is developed and prioritised. From this, the likely need for field facilities can be judged. In general, the approach should be towards larger stations with a regional mandate rather than small, conveniently located stations, as this will facilitate and reduce the cost of administration and control. If isolated stations are necessary, they should be linked to a sister institution.

Urgent consideration is required for the provision of long term maintenance of the stations.

In addition, it is noted that KEFRI does not have title deeds to any of its land, and this issue should also be addressed as a matter of urgency.

KEFRI has a large staff of 1,505, of whom 96 are scientists and professionals. In general, the structures used are not ideal for problem oriented research, nor for effective management control. *not help at all, long term?*

Training has concentrated too much on higher degrees for scientists, at the expense of training for all staff grades, and the use of local universities for higher degrees. The staff structure and staff policies need significant revision if KEFRI is to function efficiently and effectively. The system proposed is one of Management By Objectives (MBO), based around individual experiments, with performance related pay being progressively introduced. It is unlikely that significant salary increases can be funded, but a number of allowances could usefully be revised to improve conditions and staff motivation. It is very important that all staff, and not just scientists, are considered in human resource planning.

The prospects of sustainability look far from good at KEFRI's present size. Local funding is unlikely to increase other than with inflation, and the proportion of budget committed to personal emoluments, at around 80%, is far too high. KEFRI must seek outside donors and sponsors, and investigate revenue generating options such as contract research and consultancy. It is important that KEFRI has a prioritised research programme to present to donors, and to make it proactive in dealing with them. In contract research and consultancy, attention is required to ensure that there is no serious drift from nationally set priorities in the search for additional revenue.

It appears that KEFRI is overstaffed at all levels, and it is recommended that an analytical review be undertaken to determine realistically what level of funding might be sustainable. As KEFRI increasingly enters the highly competitive field of international research funding, it must ensure that its applications, research management and outputs are of a acceptable and competitive international standard.

Management Services

At present, KEFRI is operating to norms established for the public service, but is not providing the level of service required to facilitate efficient and effective operation of a research institution. The finance and administration functions will require significant overhauling if they are to support effectively the introduction of Management By Objectives and Cost Centres.

KEFRI must develop appropriate codes of practice and procedures which are designed to facilitate research activities. Such codes and procedures should be clearly documented, and made explicit to all employees. At present, the administrative appears unable to cope with the demands placed on it.

As far as can be judged, administrative controls and standards are as would be expected given the resources available. However, it is a matter of concern that the last audited accounts are for the 1993/94 financial year.

Current and Proposed Organisation Structure

The review supports the definition of four Core Programmes, but recommends that the discipline based structure be replaced by a matrix structure to serve these four programmes. It is essential that research is cross-disciplinary and problem focussed, and a matrix structure is the most efficient way of achieving this. The subdivision of the Core Programmes should be on the basis of activities and not disciplines (eg. regeneration, tree and stand management, products and services, etc.).

The review team considers that the constitution of the Board of Management should be revised to reduce the level of government representation, and widen the membership of collaborators and users, especially including the private sector. The mandate of the Board should be redefined to focus on policy and strategic issues. At the same time, the team considers that the definition of research programmes should be carried out by sub-committees of users and collaborators separately for each Core Programme, with the final version being negotiated by a group of representatives of each and approved by the Board.

The proposed KEFRI Research Management Team is made up of the Director, two Deputy Directors (responsible for Research, and Finance & Administration), the Assistant Director (responsible *inter alia* for information and donor liaison), and the four Core Programme Co-ordinators. The structure of the administrative arm of KEFRI also requires revision so that it can support research more effectively. In particular, the financial function must be revitalised.

The main body of KEFRI would operate as a matrix structure, with principal researchers for each experiment, and project leaders for each group of experiments.

Overall, the report proposes a series of actions which are illustrated by examples. It is not considered appropriate for an outside review to direct precisely what KEFRI should do; rather the report makes suggestions as to processes and procedures which should be adopted to help KEFRI meet its objectives in a more effective way. It is vital that these processes and procedures be initiated and monitored by KEFRI, and that KEFRI itself takes ownership of the changes and improvements.