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**REORGANIZING SACCAR AS
A SECTOR COORDINATING
UNIT INSTITUTIONAL
OPTIONS, ISSUES, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

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INSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS, ISSUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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SECTION 1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Pursuant to a decision of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) taken in August 1996, the Southern African Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Training (SACCAR) is in the process of being reorganized as a sector coordinating unit (SCU) under the aegis of the government of Botswana. The government developed a proposed organizational plan for a transformed SACCAR, which was submitted to the SADC Council of Ministers meeting in Windhoek, Namibia in February 1997. The proposal was approved, but implementation was placed on hold pending the completion of a SADC-wide rationalization study, which was to be finalized by August 1997. The finalization of the study was delayed, and in September 1997, the Council directed the government of Botswana to proceed with implementing SACCAR's transformation. This responsibility fell to the Ministry of Agriculture's (MOA) Department of Agricultural Research (DAR), whose director is chair of SACCAR's board.

The MOA requested technical assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to support the transformation process. USAID's Bureau for Africa, through the Sustainable Financing Initiative (SFI), has been working with SACCAR, and other African research institutions, on issues of research management and financing. SFI provided the services of Dr. Derick W. Brinkerhoff, coordinator for the technical assistance component of SFI, for this assignment. He spent the period of April 5-23, 1998 in Botswana, and April 23-25 in Zimbabwe. The terms of reference for this assistance include the following:

1. Complete an institutional review to identify an appropriate organizational placement within the government of Botswana for SACCAR, and elaborate organizational options.
2. Identify the administrative and financial authorities that the SCU would need to be provided with, and review these with the appropriate government officials to determine the feasibility and actions necessary to establish these authorities.
3. Identify the key actions that need to be taken by the government of Botswana to fully establish the new SCU.
4. Review and clarify next steps for moving forward to complete the key actions identified.

The methodology for the review combined document analysis, interviews with key informants, and discussion with the principal actors involved with SACCAR. This report begins with an overview of the background of SACCAR. The next section summarizes the analytic framework used and applies it to SACCAR. This section is followed by an analysis of SADC SCUs and the implications for SACCAR. The report then proceeds to elaborate institutional options for SACCAR, discussing required operational authorities, placement of the unit within the Botswana government system, staffing and structure, and estimated operating budgets. The next section

addresses institutional linkage issues relating to SACCAR and other SCUs in the food, agriculture, and natural resources (FANR) sector. Concluding sections cover next steps in the transition to an SCU and other issues needing attention.

1.2 Background

SACCAR was created in 1984 by SADC (SADCC at the time) with a combination of international donor and member country funds as a SADC regional entity dedicated to promoting the improvement of agricultural research in the region.¹ SACCAR's original mandate focused on food crops research, but over the years it has been expanded to include export and agro-industrial crops (1987), human resource development and training (1987), and the natural resources sectors (1992). To carry out this broad mandate, SACCAR has pursued the following objectives:

- To promote and disseminate available FANR technologies,
- To encourage and conduct studies of FANR problems common to SADC member countries, or a subset of them, and to initiate collaborative research to address them,
- To foster the generation of new technologies needed by farmers and resource users to increase production, enhance productivity and promote sustainable use,
- To strengthen national agricultural research systems (NARs) and their capacities,
- To promote efficient and continuous dissemination, exchange, and utilization of scientific and technical information,
- To facilitate the development of the human resources necessary to conduct ongoing research and technology development and transfer in the FANR sectors.

Over the years, SACCAR has performed well. It has contributed to the generation of new technologies, improvement in germplasm, and an increased skills base. Through its active role in research networks, it has encouraged information dissemination, scientific debate, and technical exchange. Its support of electronic connectivity has greatly facilitated interaction and information exchange among NARs in the region, and between the region and international partners. SACCAR's efforts in impact assessment have also been noteworthy, incorporating systems development, analysis of research results, and a significant amount of training. The center has also been integral to a number of regional strategic planning and priority setting exercises in the region.

However, since its creation, SACCAR has been heavily dependent upon international donor resources for its operations, principally from USAID, with contributions from Canada and Norway. SADC member country contributions have also been important, though there have frequently been problems with arrears. Concerns over SACCAR's long-term financial

sustainability converged in the period 1995-1996. A USAID evaluation, conducted in March 1996, confirmed SACCAR's record of solid technical accomplishment, and also addressed financial sustainability questions (USAID/RCSA et al, 1996). In June 1996, SFI worked with SACCAR to develop a workplan to focus on sustainability (Brinkerhoff, 1996), which led to a series of technical assistance activities. A key activity was a financial and management analysis of SACCAR operations, which placed in stark relief the center's financial picture and offered a series of reorganization options (Gage, 1996). The analysis provided supplemental background to the discussion and debate on the future of SACCAR and the rationalization of the FANR sector, which culminated in the SADC Council decision taken in August 1996.

Subsequent to that decision, throughout the two-year process of deliberating on its future SACCAR's stakeholders have stressed the importance of the center and its functions. For example as noted at the stakeholders meeting held in Gaborone in March 1997, "there is unanimous agreement that a coordinating body like SACCAR is vital for research coordination and capacity building in the SADC Region." The government of Botswana has made a strong commitment to assuring that SACCAR as an SCU remains capable of fulfilling its role in the coordination of agricultural and natural resources research and training for the region.

SECTION 2 INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 A Framework for Institutional Analysis

There are numerous approaches to undertaking institutional analysis. The approach taken here derives from the dominant analytic paradigm in organizational and management studies, which holds that there is not one single best way to organize, but that appropriate and effective organizational and managerial arrangements are contingent upon key features of the organization itself and the setting within which it operates. Achieving success depends upon the best possible fit, or match, among these various features (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 1990).

The general categories of the organization's internal features include: a) the organization's function, mandate, and strategy, b) its structure, operating procedures, and resource needs, c) the nature and requirements of its tasks and activities, and d) its staff, including number, skills, and aggregate composition. Any serious misalignment among these can result in performance and sustainability problems for the organization.

The organization's operating environment can be classified in a variety of ways. Some commonly applied categories of features of the environment include: a) the degree of uncertainty and predictability, b) the degree and rate of change or of stability, c) the degree of flexibility and the nature of constraints imposed, d) the level of supportiveness for what the organization does and produces, and e) the extent to which resources are available.

In any given situation, certain of these variables will be fixed and others open to change and/or influence. For most organizations, the characteristics of their operating environments set the basic parameters for functioning, leading managers to seek ways to adapt their organization to its surrounding conditions. However, this does not mean that the process of seeking a fit leads only to one-way adaptation. The tools and techniques of strategic management, for example, focus upon ways that managers can seek to influence and shape their environments.

2.2 Applying the Framework to SACCAR

In SACCAR's case, the place to begin is with the organization's mandate and functions, which have been elaborated and ratified by the SADC Council of Ministers. SADC has determined that as an SCU, SACCAR's major functions will be:

- Overall research coordination for the FANR cluster to avoid duplication and maximize resource use
- Liaison with international research organizations and cooperating partners
- Operation of an impact evaluation unit to support SCUs

- Convening of meetings and facilitation of information exchange as it relates to its overall research and training coordination function (SADC, 1996: 86)

This functional mandate for SACCAR as an SCU retains the major functions of SACCAR as a commission, as laid out in the Memorandum of Understanding that created SACCAR. In its proposed SCU form, SACCAR has a continuing mandate to coordinate cross-sectoral research linkages and program networks within the eight FANR sectors,² build a regional and international coalition of support for research and its contribution to economic development in the region, facilitate the creation of partnerships that extend beyond government, and manage and mobilize resources for agricultural research and training both within the region and from international donors.

Thus a key question for this institutional analysis is: given this mandate and set of functions, what organizational arrangements hold the best promise for SACCAR's ability to fulfill them successfully and sustainably? While the decision to re-establish SACCAR as an SCU has already been made, it is instructive to review the experience with other SCUs to identify: a) the fit between SACCAR's mandate and the SCU model, and b) any potential gaps that might require attention.

SECTION 3 EXPERIENCE WITH SCUs AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SACCAR

3.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of SCUs

SCUs have a long history as integral structures within SADC. In 1985 the Council of Ministers endorsed three overarching responsibilities for SCUs:

1. Establishing and maintaining effective consultation with member states and the Secretariat in areas related to their sector
2. Establishing and maintaining effective liaison with international agencies cooperating in the development and implementation of sectoral programs and projects
3. Providing leadership and technical services to advance SADC policies and programs in their sectors

Traditionally, the fulfillment of these responsibilities has led SCUs to concentrate on the following activities: consultation, preparation and coordination of sectoral policies and strategies, program design and planning, identification of resources and financing, implementation monitoring, impact assessment and reporting. Over the years there have been periodic efforts to assess and analyze the effectiveness and utility of the SCU structure (see, for example, Faure et al., 1991). The most recent is the SADC rationalization study, initiated in late 1996, which covers not simply an assessment of SCUs, but of the entire SADC system (Chipeta et al., 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). Volume 2 of this study contains an analysis of SCUs, which is summarized in a table. This summary of SCU strengths and weaknesses is a convenient way of highlighting some of the issues to consider in reorganizing SACCAR.

Table 1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Sector Coordinating Units

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Sense of ownership by members	Limits resource availability
Fits into an existing government structure	Limits involving other stakeholders
Enables a functional approach	Inhibits cross-sectoral linkages
Can easily be expanded by adding sectors	Encourages political rather than economic development
Lowers members' direct monetary contributions to SADC	Hides the true cost of SADC

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Easy staff recruitment (within civil service)	Limits professional skill base
Avoids over-centralization	Increases chances of poor coordination

Source Chipeta et al (1997b 64)

3 2 Implications for SACCAR

These findings could be interpreted as implying that the SCU model is ill suited for SACCAR, given its mandate, despite the fact that several of the strengths included in the table clearly apply in the SACCAR case. Alternatively, however, they suggest critical areas to be addressed in the design of SACCAR as an SCU. The following points relative to the implications for SACCAR of each of the weaknesses flagged by the SADC rationalization study should be noted

3 2 1 Limited resource availability For SACCAR as a commission, the issue of resources and sustainability were a catalyzing factor in the reorganization. A financial sustainability analysis, undertaken by an SFI team in the summer of 1996, painted a clear picture of the costs of SACCAR operations and offered several alternative options, including the SCU path (see Gage, 1996)³. The Botswana government has committed to supporting the operating costs of SACCAR as an SCU, thus in part the resource availability weakness does not apply. However, the question remains of whether international donors, the major source of programmatic, as opposed to operating funds, will find the new SACCAR an attractive option. In this sense then, should donors not be as willing as in the past to provide programmatic resources, the resource availability weakness could apply.

There is, however, another resource availability issue. SCUs, sitting within government agencies and staff by civil servants, have in the past been tapped to work on the ongoing day-to-day tasks of their host agencies at the expense of their regional mandates. This has meant that while "on paper" the particular SCU may appear to have sufficient resources to operate, in practice it may not be able to employ those resources full-time in pursuit of its designated functions.

Implications SACCAR's resource needs will not be met solely by the Botswana government. Therefore the new SACCAR needs to be configured so as to be able to access funding from international agencies and, in the future, possibly from the private and non-governmental sectors as well. The Botswana government will also need to make sure that SACCAR staff are able to focus on their mandated responsibilities and to avoid being pulled away on other tasks within the agriculture ministry or whichever agency the SCU is attached to.

3 2 2 Limited involvement of stakeholders outside of government As noted in a variety of sources, SCUs are primarily public sector and intergovernmental entities, functioning within the SADC system. Historically, they have not proven adept at broad consultation and inclusion of stakeholders outside of the governmental sphere. Whether this outcome is a result of their structure, or of the way that their staffs have construed and acted upon their mandates, is open to interpretation.

In all sectors, particularly FANR, important stakeholders for achieving sectoral goals and implementing sectoral policies are in the private and nongovernmental sectors at national and local levels. SCUs throughout the SADC system need to develop more open and inclusive ways of doing business.

Implications SACCAR as a commission was urged to serve a broader clientele than it has in the past, namely, the public sector national agricultural research institutes (NARIs) and the international agricultural research centers (IARCs). In the past, regional cooperation was seen as principally cooperation between governments, with SACCAR coordinating the efforts of public sector entities. Today, the non-state sectors play an important role in research, technology development, and transfer, which is expected to increase in the future. The new SACCAR as an SCU needs to incorporate and respond to the interests of both state and non-state actors to promote regional integration. It needs a structure and procedures that will encourage it to reach actively beyond its new government of Botswana home to tap into and engage a broad base of stakeholders. The Board, or technical advisory committee, will be critical to this process.⁴

3.2.3 Restricted cross-sectoral linkages Over time, SCUs have been observed to operate in ways that tend to focus their activities within their defined sectoral boundaries, without sufficient attention to the linkages that exist to other, related sectors. This tendency has on occasion led to lack of harmony in policies and strategies, programmatic overlap and duplication, lack of information sharing, and failure to exploit cross-sectoral synergies. Unless there are explicit mechanisms to assure cross-sectoral exchange and integration, the benefits of the decentralized SCU system cannot materialize.

Implications The FANR research sector is by its very nature a crosscutting one, which requires active and continuous linkage with other sectors. SACCAR will need to be organized so as to facilitate and encourage these connections through the use of a variety of mechanisms, for example: a) participatory strategic planning efforts around regional priorities and targets, b) work groups or task forces in program or network formulation, and/or c) active information dissemination and communication across networks and programs. This implies a capacity to exercise leadership with other SCUs and with private sector and non-governmental actors as well. SACCAR's institutional placement will influence this leadership ability. Again, the SACCAR Board needs to be engaged in forging linkages and reaching out to a broad array of stakeholders.

3.2.4 Political rather than economic development This weakness of SCUs identified by the SADC rationalization study may be a contentious one, but it serves to surface an issue that many actors have noted, at least informally. There is a political dimension both to the definition of sectors themselves and to the distribution of SCUs across member states. This dimension can produce a proliferation of separate sectors, which on technical grounds may not necessarily be appropriate, and can exacerbate bureaucratic "turf" concerns.

Implications One immediate implication for the new SACCAR is the need to clarify the rationale and scope for the proposed creation of a new crop production SCU, which in its current list

of functions would appear to incorporate some programmatic areas currently handled by SACCAR. This creates questions regarding SACCAR's role in agricultural research related to crops, a significant piece of its program portfolio, and regarding SACCAR's relationship with the proposed crop production SCU. Another implication is the need to define and agree upon the respective roles of SACCAR and all the other FANR SCUs regarding research and coordination, not just for the new crop sector unit. A longer term implication is that SACCAR will need the bureaucratic authority and political clout to operate cross-sectorally and to manage the "turf" issues successfully. The SACCAR Board needs to play a strong role here.

3.2.5 Hidden cost of SADC This weakness derives from the fact that SCU costs are internalized by the member country that hosts the particular SCU. In one sense, it is an accounting problem, because of the way that public sector budgeting takes place. In another sense it is a strategic management problem, because without financial information organized so as to present the funding picture for each SCU along with the programmatic benefits and regional outcomes it has achieved, it is difficult to demonstrate the utility of the SCU to key constituencies, national, regional, and/or international.

Implications Transparency of costs and benefits is a critical element of financial sustainability. The SFI work with SACCAR as a commission was an initial effort to develop this transparency, both as a management tool and as a constituency-building approach (see Gage, 1996). SACCAR as an SCU will need to install budget and accounting procedures that permit the unit to be transparent. The value of agricultural research and research coordination needs to be demonstrated as concretely as possible. This is important for the full range of SACCAR's constituencies.

3.2.6 Limited professional skill base By attaching SCUs to government agencies and structuring SCU positions as civil service slots with public sector salaries and benefits, SCUs draw upon the pool of talent located within the civil service, and upon those outside the civil service potentially interested in such positions. In several of the SADC countries, this pool is relatively small and lacks critical skills and attitudes. SACCAR as a commission was constituted as a regional entity with the associated salary structure and accompanying benefits, which has made it a costly and unsustainable mechanism, hence contributing to the need for reorganization.

Implications SCUs attached to agencies with civil service salaries may be more sustainable in terms of the budgetary outlay they require. However, if they are unable to attract and maintain the type of staff that can make them effective, then the expenditure, even if sustainable, may not be cost-effective. SACCAR will need to be able to offer to prospective staff a sufficiently attractive set of salary levels, working conditions, and benefits so as to have access to the best possible human resources. Outside technical assistance can assist with building an appropriately skilled human resource base for the SCU, but the unit should not rely on external assistance as a long-term strategy.

3.2.7 Increased chances of poor coordination This weakness reflects the existing track record of SADC SCUs, and in essence flows from the previous six weaknesses identified by the SADC

rationalization study (Chipeta et al , 1997b, see also Faure et al , 1991) It suggests that SCUs in general need to become better at coordination, and that such an improvement relates not simply to the internal management of the units, but also to the larger SADC structures that the SCUs operate within As noted above regarding cross-sectoral linkages, effective decentralization calls for a clear and agreed-upon set of mechanisms and procedures that connect the decentralized elements to each other and to the center, i e , to the SADC Secretariat

Implications SACCAR as a commission has had a regionally based institutional platform from which to undertake its research and training coordination functions As an SCU, SACCAR may face a more difficult situation in dealing with its crosscutting mandate SACCAR will need to forge new approaches to exercising coordination and to linking with the SADC Secretariat , rather than relying upon what other SCUs have done in the past Once again, the role of the SACCAR Board will be important

SECTION 4 REORGANIZING SACCAR

4.1 Operational Authorities for a Reorganized SACCAR

Entities such as SCUs are not statutory bodies, created by legislation, with a predefined set of responsibilities and operational authorities. Rather they are organizational units established pursuant to a SADC Council decision by the statutory agency under whose aegis they function. Thus their responsibilities and authorities are determined by the actors who participate in their creation. In the case of the other SCU located in Botswana, the Livestock Production and Animal Disease Control Unit, it has operated for 19 years without formal terms of reference⁵. What this means for SACCAR is that, in principle, there is considerable flexibility available to frame its organizational arrangements so as to address the implications of the historical weaknesses of SCUs discussed above.

The above analysis, interviews, and review of documents suggest that SACCAR needs the following authorities to operate effectively and to deal with the constraints that have affected SCUs in the past:

4.1.1 Authority to exercise leadership in FANR research coordination Given the cross-cutting nature of SACCAR's mandate and functions, the SCU needs recognized and accepted authority to take a leadership role in agricultural research and its coordination. This authority resides principally in the position of the Sector Coordinator. The SADC Council recommends that Sector Coordinators should be "full time, and graded at least at the Deputy Permanent Secretary level or equivalent". It is clear that the SACCAR Coordinator needs sufficiently senior position, status, and stature to serve as interlocutor and spokesperson with other Sector Coordinators, the SADC Secretariat, NARs, IARCs, and international donors. The other SCU staff members need relatively senior standing and professional credibility as well.

4.1.2 Authority to operate autonomously and flexibly This authority is critical to SACCAR's day-to-day operations. The SCU needs to have the freedom to hire and retain top-quality staff, make decisions, conduct its activities, and manage its work program with a minimum number of bureaucratic and hierarchical oversight and clearance requirements. This relates to such items as correspondence and communication with regional and international partners and donors, travel and attendance at regional and international meetings, contracting and procurement for services as needed, and staff performance review. As the SCU exercises leadership, it needs the flexibility to move quickly to respond to the needs and demands of key stakeholders, to engage in strategic planning and decision-making, and to capitalize on opportunities as they emerge.

4.1.3 Authority to manage and account for funds, national and international SACCAR needs the authority to receive, administer, and account for both operating and programme funds. This authority is important for autonomy and flexibility, without it, SACCAR's ability to fulfill its mandate is likely to be compromised. It is also important for transparency. A critical sustainability consideration is the ability to demonstrate both the true costs and benefits of agricultural research.

and coordination, this authority will assure that SACCAR can be in a position to engage in program budgeting and reporting. This authority is also important to attracting outside funding.

4.1.4 Authority to interact with a wide array of FANR stakeholders To fulfill its mandate effectively, SACCAR needs the authority to engage with stakeholders in both the public and non-state sectors around FANR research and technology transfer issues. SADC itself is seeking to incorporate increased participation of civil society and the private sector into its activities, and SCUs are one of the mechanisms to implement such participation. SACCAR needs the authority to convene regional participatory fora for demand-oriented program/network formulation, which will allow research initiatives to originate from stakeholders and clients, and permit proactive steps to move ahead with such initiatives.⁶

4.2 Institutional Placement Options for SACCAR

Four options were investigated for institutional placement for SACCAR as an SCU. These include the following: a) placement within the MOA and reporting to the Permanent Secretary (PS) through the Director of the DAR, b) placement within the MOA and reporting directly to the PS, c) placement within the Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA), and d) placement within a free-standing quasi-governmental entity. This latter option, suggested by the model of the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), was upon further investigation determined to be inappropriate for SACCAR's situation, and thus is not presented in detail here.

Each option was explored in terms of: a) feasibility for the Botswana government, and b) the extent to which the option provided for the four authorities described above. Administrative feasibility was the initial screen, hence the elimination of the BIDPA-model option, with the second being the degree of authority the option appears to offer, according to the four categories.

4.2.1 Placement within the MOA, reporting to the PS through the Director of the Department of Agricultural Research⁷ In this option, SACCAR is a unit within the MOA. The Sector Coordinator position is a part-time one, allocated to the DAR Director, who assumes the sector leadership function among his other duties. The full-time manager of the unit is located at the D1 grade within the Botswana civil service system, as a deputy department director. Other SACCAR staff would be at the D2 grade and below, depending upon qualifications. Financial management and accounting for SACCAR would be handled by the MOA's finance office, under the direction of the Principal Finance Officer. An accountant would be designated responsibility for SACCAR, possibly on a half-time basis. Donor funds would be managed separately in special accounts (referred to as below the line accounts) to accommodate individual reporting requirements and accountability. Support services for the SCU would be provided through the regular channels within the MOA, e.g., drivers and transport, secretaries, maintenance and janitorial services, and some publication and dissemination services.

In terms of authority to exercise leadership, this option is judged to provide a medium level of authority, due to the hierarchical level of the unit manager, who would be the day-to-day director.

of the SCU, and whose reporting relationship to the PS would be through the DAR Director. To the extent that the Sector Coordinator takes an active role in SACCAR activities and programs, the degree of authority could increase. Authority to operate autonomously and flexibly is rated medium/low. The SCU would be an integrated unit within the MOA, subject to government personnel and operating rules. MOA officials interviewed indicated that the standard procedures for such items as travel clearances and obtaining tickets, for example, would not be impediments, however other sources painted a somewhat less positive picture of how these procedures operate in practice. MOA officials further indicated that SCU staff would be considered full-time within the unit, and would not be pulled off of SACCAR work for MOA assignments, but this risk cannot be totally dismissed.

Regarding financial authority, the view of the MOA is that sufficient leeway exists within the government financial management and accounting system to handle SACCAR's needs, but without assignment of a full-time accountant to SACCAR. Conflicting views from other sources suggested that in practice, the government has had difficulty in staffing to carry out financial management and accounting tasks.⁸ Further, SACCAR programs involve financial tasks that are not simply ex post accounting, but require expeditious handling of the purchase of tickets, per diem arrangements, and so on. Thus based on these findings, this option is rated medium/low on financial authority. Authority for stakeholder interaction is rated medium, based on the likely seniority level of staff available to the unit, and the part-time nature of the Sector Coordinator slot.

Advantages This option mirrors the administrative arrangements for other SADC SCUs and fits readily within existing systems and procedures of the Botswana government. Its utilization of the services of other units within the MOA for financial management and accounting, plus support services, provides economies of scale, although the range of views expressed in interviews raises questions about the real capacity of the MOA to handle these functions, as opposed to espoused intent. Total outlay for salaries and benefits would be, because of the position and rank of the staff at the D1 grade and below, the smallest of the three options. The location of the unit among other technical units of the DAR would help to assure that SACCAR staff are informed about, and in touch with, hands-on operational and technical activities. Additionally, it provides the unit with access to research specialists within the Department.

Disadvantages While this option is the most parsimonious one in terms of budgetary cost and ease of establishment, it has a number of drawbacks and risks. The hierarchical position of the unit director several levels below the PS makes SACCAR highly dependent upon the Director of Agricultural Research, who would be the Sector Coordinator. While the incumbent in that position is highly knowledgeable and supportive regarding SACCAR-- in fact he is the main champion for the SCU-- transfers and promotions within government are standard practice. Thus the current situation cannot be relied upon for the longer term. The position grades for SACCAR staff along with their salary ranges and benefits may not attract sufficiently qualified individuals to permit SACCAR to fulfill its mandate effectively. The medium/low levels of authority that this option offers may also be impediments to the SCU's operations, particularly the dependence of the unit on services from other parts of the MOA. Finally, this option may not inspire confidence among either

regional partners or international donors that programme resources would be well utilized, thus leading to a possible decline in the external support necessary for SACCAR's functioning

4.2.2 Placement within the MOA, reporting directly to the PS In this option, SACCAR is also a unit within the MOA, but placed at a higher level. The Sector Coordinator position is a full-time one, at the Deputy PS level, and reports directly to the PS. The Sector Coordinator would serve as the day-to-day manager of SACCAR. He/she would be at the E1 or E2 grade, with the attendant salary and benefits. The highest level for unit senior staff could conceivably be the D1 grade, though this would depend upon their particular qualifications, and the level at which the positions are graded by the Directorate of Public Service Management. As with the first option, financial management and accounting would be delegated to the MOA's finance office, with a designated half-time accountant. Donor funds would be held in below the line accounts. SCU support services would be provided from the pool available to the ministry.

Due to the higher grade of the SCU manager and the fact that he/she is also the Sector Coordinator, under this option the authority for leadership is ranked as high. Authority to operate autonomously and flexibly is rated medium/low for the same reasons noted for the first option, namely that the SCU is subject to MOA rules, guidelines, and operating procedures. Similarly, financial management authority is also rated medium/low. Authority for stakeholder interaction is rated medium/high, reflecting the possibility for slightly higher level unit staff, the full-time nature of the Sector Coordinator position and its grading at the Deputy PS level.

Advantages This option represents the recommendation of the SADC Council for SCUs, and it accommodates to existing systems and procedures of the Botswana government. It provides the same economies of scale as the first option in the utilization of the services of other units within the MOA for financial management and support services. The higher salary grades for staff would provide for potential recruitment of more senior and more qualified personnel for the SCU. The SACCAR director would be of a sufficiently senior hierarchical level that he/she would be an accepted and respected interlocutor with SADC, other SCUs, NARSs and IARCs, and international donors. Donors might still be concerned about autonomy and flexibility, but they would likely be reassured by the seniority of the SACCAR director, and his/her access to key decisionmakers and stakeholders.

Disadvantages This option would be more costly to the Botswana government, total outlay for salaries and benefits would be higher than the first option (but lower than the third one). The position grades for SACCAR staff along with their salary ranges and benefits, while possibly higher than those of the first option, may still be insufficient to draw the most qualified personnel to SACCAR. The medium/low levels of authority that this option shares with the first for autonomy and flexibility and for financial management are potential impediments to the SCU's operations. These arrangements may not inspire the necessary confidence among either regional partners or international donors to provide the SCU with programme funding, thus limiting operations and ultimately endangering long-term sustainability.

4 2 3 Placement as a unit of the Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA) According to this option, SACCAR would be a semi-autonomous unit attached to the BCA, reporting to the PS for Agriculture through BCA's Governing Council,⁹ or perhaps a specially constituted board that would include among its members MOA and DAR officials. BCA was established in 1991 as an autonomous parastatal and an associate institution of the University of Botswana.¹⁰ The College's enabling legislation (Parliamentary Act No. 9 of 1991) mandates BCA to undertake research and outreach programmes, establish and maintain linkages with regional and international entities, and conduct knowledge dissemination and training, as well as carrying out its academic and degree-granting functions. Thus, there is an appropriate fit between SACCAR's mandate and that of BCA. SACCAR would become the second centre housed at BCA, along with the Centre for Inservice and Continuing Education (CICE).

Under this option, the Sector Coordinator would serve as the full-time director of the unit, and depending upon qualifications and seniority he/she would be in Category 1, Senior Academic staff, somewhere within the L2-L5 range of academic grades. The ideal situation would be to appoint the SACCAR director at the Professor level (L5). Because BCA is a parastatal, the accompanying salary and benefit packages are more attractive than those in the civil service. Other staff would, if sufficiently senior, also fall within Category 1 of BCA staff. More junior staff, if recruited, would fall into Category 2, with Tutor salary scales. A variant of this option would place the Sector Coordinator at the MOA, with a separate full-time director position for the SCU located in BCA.

As in the other two options, financial management and accounting services for SACCAR would be provided by the BCA's administration, overseen by the Principal, the chief administrative officer at the College.¹¹ BCA already has procedures for receiving and accounting for external funds, and would be able to provide the type of financial reporting required by international donors. The required services would also include managing the financial aspects of SACCAR's programme activities, for example, issuing tickets and handling per diems for attendance at meetings, workshops, and conferences. Support services for the SCU would be provided through the BCA units responsible, e.g., drivers and transport, secretaries, maintenance and janitorial services, and publication services.

This option offers the highest levels of authority to SACCAR across the four authority categories. Both the terms of service and the BCA's standing as an educational and outreach institution create the most favorable conditions for attracting a highly qualified individual to the Sector Coordinator/SCU director post. It should be noted that this option does not assume that SACCAR would be staffed with BCA academic personnel, but rather that the SACCAR positions would be filled with specialized and qualified staff recruited externally.¹² Under this option, leadership authority for the SCU is rated as high. Attachment of SACCAR to BCA, which as a parastatal offers a less rigid structure and procedures than government and the civil service, leads also to a high ranking on autonomy and flexibility. The likelihood of SACCAR staff being pulled away from their duties for other activities would be minimal.

Financial management authority is rated as medium because this SACCAR option, like the others, does not provide SACCAR with a separate financial management and accounting capacity, but according to informants offers more accommodating procedures than the MOA. As for authority for stakeholder interaction, the BCA option is rated as high due to the fact that SACCAR would not be a unit within a government ministry, and thus could have a stronger potential to break out of the public-sector-only mode that has characterized SCUs in the past. Reinforcing this rating is the potential recruitment of highly qualified and senior-level staff, besides the unit director, who would be credible and well regarded partners in regional and international fora.

Advantages This option offers clear advantages from a number of perspectives. Looking at the operational authorities offered to SACCAR, it provides the strongest combination of all four: technical leadership, autonomy and flexibility, financial management, and stakeholder interaction. The terms and conditions of service are better in BCA than in the ministry, which gives SACCAR the best chance of attracting and holding qualified staff capable of functioning effectively to implement SACCAR's mandate. BCA's transparent staff recruitment and selection procedures can help maximize the chances that staff hiring for the SCU is merit-based and not politically influenced. Further, BCA has a policy that staff, after having held two consecutive two-year contracts, must reapply for their posts in open competition for the next contract. This policy, together with an internal performance review system that is currently being finetuned to better reflect what BCA staff do, provide a much stronger foundation for performance-based management in SACCAR than would either of the MOA options, where regular civil service systems apply.

A particularly important advantage is the autonomy and flexibility that this option would give SACCAR. Hierarchically, the SCU would be in a strong position to exercise its research coordination function because it could avoid the accusation of trying to exert more "muscle" than its bureaucratic placement would legitimately permit, a charge that is sure to be leveled at SACCAR by other SCUs if the unit were in the MOA. This autonomy is also important for interacting with and convening the range of stakeholders that is needed both to assure the contribution of agricultural research to the economic development of the region and to respond to stakeholders' needs and demands. While the Botswana government might fear that the SCU would be outside their direct oversight, this placement outside of-- but linked to-- government would enhance, not detract from, the unit's effectiveness. The way to make SCUs truly serve their purposes is to increase their ability to respond to, and mobilize, their sectoral stakeholders, not to hem them in with bureaucracy. However, as mentioned above, this option could include the establishment of an oversight committee for SACCAR that would ensure the Botswana government the kind of responsiveness to its concerns that it wants, while securing the operational leeway for the unit that placement at BCA could furnish.

Another advantage to note is that this option holds the highest promise of attracting external funding and giving international donors the confidence that SACCAR can achieve its mandated objectives. Thus, the chances for ongoing programme funding are increased. An innovative opportunity also exists to experiment with generating fee-for-service revenue, which would contribute ultimately to sustainability. BCA's Centre for Inservice and Continuing Education (CICE) already does this, thus setting a precedent here that SACCAR could build upon.¹³

Disadvantages This option would be the most expensive in terms of the salary and benefits packages offered to SCU staff, however, the argument made here is that the extra budgetary outlay by the Botswana government would be worth the increased capacity and effectiveness that would result. The major disadvantage is the short-term transaction costs associated with setting up SACCAR within BCA. The other two options slot easily into existing personnel and organizational systems. This option requires that the MOA and BCA work together not just to establish SACCAR as a centre at BCA, but also to create staff positions that would need approval by the BCA Governing Council, the BCA Appointments Committee for Academic and Senior Staff, and the University of Botswana Appointments Committee for Academic and Senior Staff.

4.2.4 Summary The following table summarizes the ratings for authority in the four categories for each of the three options elaborated. It clearly indicates that in terms of providing SACCAR with the highest degree of operational authorities, the BCA placement option offers the potential for the best fit. The four authorities are essential to maximizing the success potential of SACCAR. It is critical to pursue the option that provides SACCAR with the authorities it needs, rather than going for the quickest and easiest option from a procedural point of view.

Although the staff costs at BCA appear to be the highest of the options examined, two mitigating factors need to be considered. First, it needs to be remembered that all of the options are significantly less costly than SACCAR's current operating budget, thus the standard of comparison should include this fact. Second, discussions are underway regarding the possibility of a merger between BCA and the DAR which would include adjusting the salary and benefits packages of departmental staff upwards to match BCA's. This would effectively eliminate the cost differential among the three options.

Recommendation Establish SACCAR as a centre at BCA.

Table 2 Authority Rankings for SACCAR Placement Options

Authorities	Placement Options		
	MOA-DaGR-PS	MOA-PS	BCA-PS
Sector Leadership	Medium	High	High
Autonomy & Flexibility	Medium/low	Medium/low	High
Financial Management	Medium/low	Medium/low	Medium
Stakeholder Interaction	Medium	Medium/high	High

4 3 Selecting Among Institutional Placement Options

The preceding institutional analysis took SACCAR's mandate as its starting point, elaborated the set of authorities necessary to implement the mandate, and then looked at the organizational characteristics of the various placement options to assess the level of potential fit in terms of offering SACCAR the best prospects for success. This analytic path assumed that the choice among institutional options was open, and led to the recommendation for the BCA placement. This recommendation is substantiated not just in terms of the situation in Botswana, but is supported by lessons in other countries regarding research and technology transfer management and coordination. Among the overarching principles guiding institutional arrangements are to minimize transactions costs and to reduce administrative and bureaucratic overheads (see Alston and Pardey, 1997, Carney, 1998). To the extent that there is a weak fit between an organization's mandate and its institutional home, these costs and overheads are increased.

There is, however, an alternative approach, albeit not an ideal one, which takes a different path. This approach begins with SACCAR's mandate, selects a particular choice of institutional option as given, and then looks at the constraints that option poses that would need to be addressed to give SACCAR the degree of authority necessary to operate effectively. This section of the report proceeds down this path.

As noted above, the Botswana government's preference is for the first option—that is, placement within the MOA, reporting to the PS through the DAR Director. If this option is selected, then the institutional analysis question becomes, how to deal with the limitations of the option in terms of the four authorities SACCAR needs? It should be made clear at the outset that this approach yields a second-best solution. The BCA recommendation was made as a function of the difficulties identified in dealing with the constraints imposed by the other two options. If this were not the case, then an MOA placement would have been recommended as the desired option. The point is not that the MOA is incapable of operating a technical unit within its organizational boundaries—clearly it has that capacity—or that DAR staff are not qualified researchers—the Department has some excellent technical personnel—but that a unit with the cross-sectoral and broad coordinating mandate of SACCAR is unlikely to find a compatible home inside the ministry. Increasing that compatibility involves, in some areas, a degree of change on the part of the MOA that is significant.

The first required authority deals with SACCAR's exercise of leadership in FANR research coordination. The Botswana government's preference for a part-time Sector Coordinator, with a deputy director-level SCU manager reporting to him, poses an important constraint in providing SACCAR with this authority. If there was one universal view expressed in the interviews conducted outside the MOA for this study, it was the need for the SACCAR director to be at a sufficiently high level bureaucratically so as to interact as a peer with senior-level officials in the region and to command respect among national, regional, and international partners. It is difficult to provide suggestions on how the Botswana government can deal with this need in the face of their preferred arrangement. One possibility could be to increase the amount of time that the Sector

Coordinator would dedicate to SACCAR business relative to MOA duties. This, however, may not be realistic. Another would be for the PS to assure SACCAR partners that the SCU director has the full support of, and authorization to speak for, the Sector Coordinator. These are far from ideal measures to deal with the need for this authority.

The authority to operate autonomously and flexibly is, as noted above, critical for SACCAR. To the extent that the SCU is required to follow the standard operating procedures of the MOA, limits are imposed on SACCAR's autonomy and flexibility. Dealing with this constraint may mean making exceptions for SACCAR in certain areas, streamlining MOA approvals and clearances, allowing SACCAR staff more discretionary margin for decision-making than normal, and/or giving SACCAR preference in "jumping the queue" for administrative actions and support services. Regarding financial and accounting authority, the constraint here could be addressed by assigning SACCAR a full-time financial manager and/or accountant, and by allowing SACCAR leeway to enter into contracts with private sector and nongovernmental entities. Some modification of MOA reporting systems may be required, depending upon funder needs.

Exerting the authority to interact with a wide array of FANR stakeholders will be difficult for SACCAR as a unit of the MOA. The tendency, noted by the SADC rationalization study team, as well as others, is for SCUs within government to interact mainly with governments, both that of the host country and of other SADC member states. Incentives for ministry employees to look outside the confines of the public sector are relatively weak. Yet it is clear that SACCAR must reach out beyond government, and its staff must internalize this imperative. Conceptually, addressing the constraints to such outreach will require Botswana government decision-makers to rethink the role of government in the FANR sector, moving away from the notion of the state as the primary actor to one where the state is the steward of an action arena peopled by non-state actors as well as by government personnel. Operationally, dealing with these constraints will mean hiring staff for SACCAR who are willing and able to engage effectively with stakeholders, and creating MOA norms, operating procedures, and incentives that encourage proactive pursuit of a demand-driven constituency-based program of action.

4.4 SACCAR's Internal Institutional Structure

Institutional placement of SACCAR and internal institutional structure are two different questions. Apart from assuming that the unit would be relatively small-- an estimated three to five staff-- the above analysis does not consider the internal arrangements of the SCU. That issue is addressed here. The starting point is the proposal of the Botswana government, which contains a structure consisting of a core of three Senior Programmes Officers (SPO-Research, SPO-Information Sciences, and SPO-Training), reporting to a Principal Programmes Officer (PPO), all supervised and overseen by the SCU Director¹⁴. There are several variants of this proposal on paper, and some include such positions as a secretary and an administrative assistant. These SPOs would in essence constitute single-person units, each assigned one of the key functions of SACCAR per its mandate (SADC, 1996). SACCAR's structure would not include financial management positions, since as the options make clear, these functions will be handled by the parent institution. This arrangement

fits with the intent, both of SADC and the Botswana government, to make SACCAR a lean and trim organization. The function that this proposed structure does not explicitly provide for is impact assessment and support to other SCUs. A possibility is that this function be allocated to the research unit, and that the PPO be assigned to that unit as his/her technical responsibility.

The research unit, then, would consist of a two-person staff-- the PPO and one SPO-- with four functional areas of responsibility. These include the following: a) promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation in agricultural research among member states, with the collaboration of international and regional partners, b) facilitation of information exchange among NARSs and technology transfer to users, c) coordination of SADC agricultural research networks and programmes, and d) establishment and management of a FANR research and technology transfer impact assessment system.

The training unit, consisting of one SPO, would be responsible for three sets of activities. These are: a) promotion of training and human resource development in the FANR sector in collaboration with member states and other SCUs, b) convening and backstopping workshops, conferences, seminars, and meetings related to FANR issues in the region, and c) managing research and travel grants.

The third unit would be information and dissemination. Like the training unit, it would be staffed with one SPO. Its functional areas of activity are as follows: a) maintenance of an agricultural information acquisition, processing, and reference network, b) promotion and facilitation of information exchange and utilization of scientific and technical databases, and c) promotion and facilitation of the publication and dissemination of research tools, findings, and analyses in the FANR sector.

4.5 Examining the Fit Between SACCAR's Structure and Functions

There are a number of imponderables in SACCAR's future that will have an impact on the effectiveness and appropriateness of this structure, making it premature to assess whether the proposed structure will provide the best fit with SACCAR's mandated functions, or what alternative might be better. For an effective transition to the new SACCAR, rather than attempting at this point to put in place a structure that may or may not match needs and requirements, an alternative approach is called for.

Recommendation Focus on recruiting two or three key staff members for SACCAR and allow them to "grow" the structure gradually as a function of addressing the uncertainties facing the SCU.

This approach means building and solidifying the coalition of stakeholders around what SACCAR should do. The appropriate structure for SACCAR will emerge out of this discussion and negotiation process. This evolution will ultimately result in a better fit between SACCAR's structure and functions than trying to design a structure in advance of the process.

In thinking about SACCAR's structure, several of the factors that introduce uncertainty can be identified

4.5.1 Level of programme funding As both documents and interviews have indicated, because SACCAR is in transition, international donors and other partners are withholding judgment as to whether SACCAR as an SCU will remain in the future an attractive and appropriate vehicle for programme funding. Thus, how much programme funding SACCAR receives and for what exact purposes are unknown. The structural design outlined above is based on the assumption that future activities will essentially mirror those that SACCAR as a commission has been pursuing. The path of events within the region regarding SCUs and the role of research makes this assumption questionable. Hence, there is the need to focus now on getting stakeholder "buy-in" around the role and value of SACCAR.

4.5.2 Level of activity This factor is, obviously, closely connected to the previous one. If programme funding decreases, or concentrates more on one functional area than another, then the structure may not fit the tasks. Staff will need to be reassigned, different position profiles might be required, or additional units may need to be created, e.g., a separate impact assessment unit. This uncertainty reinforces the recommendation to take a gradual approach to growing SACCAR's structure. It is fruitless at this juncture to debate whether SACCAR's structure as proposed is too big or too small. This question cannot be answered definitively now, but the answer will emerge over time.

4.5.3 Staff quality A critical uncertainty is who will fill the positions in SACCAR, which is all the more reason not to focus on structure in the absence of those who will actually be doing the work in SACCAR. The importance of this "people" factor cannot be overemphasized. In a small unit such as SACCAR will become, where responsibility for entire functional areas falls upon the shoulders of a single person, the technical competence, commitment, and caliber of the individuals employed are critical. SACCAR as an SCU has no redundancy, no capacity for someone else to pick up the slack should a staff member not perform in his/her areas of responsibility. Around the world, in industrialized as well as developing countries, experience clearly demonstrates that for organizational units whose role is to exercise some form of coordination across organizational boundaries, the quality of the staff of the unit is fundamental to success. In large measure, this is because the coordinating unit rarely has the supervisory authority to command or compel others to cooperate. Staff cannot hide behind bureaucratic hierarchy, but must rely upon the influence they are able to exert, the proactive steps they can take to demonstrate the value of coordination, and the agreements that they can facilitate to make progress. SACCAR has no place for the stereotypical civil service mentality, where employees remain passive until issued instructions, and mindless adherence to rules and regulations predominates. In addition, staff with academic training but little professional field experience will not be appropriate for the SPO positions.

4.5.4 Links with other SCUs A fourth factor influencing the appropriateness of the proposed structure has to do with the interface between SACCAR and other SCUs. For example, the proposed crops sector SCU may require a rethinking of SACCAR's functions, which would certainly impinge

upon its internal structure. To take another example, the French government is in the process of placing expatriate technical assistance at SACCAR to fill an SPO position in the natural resources (NR) sector. The planned new structure, however, does not include a NR unit. Should one be added? The answer depends upon member country negotiations and the outcome of SADC decisions regarding the whole range of FANR SCUs. This issue is discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.6 Agricultural and Natural Resources Research within the SADC SCU Framework

The above analysis has concentrated upon examining the fit between SACCAR's functions and possible institutional placements within the Botswana government, and its functions and internal structural arrangements. Another important fit that needs to be examined is the match between SACCAR's functions and the other SCUs in the FANR sectors. According to the 1996 Maseru SADC Council decision, SACCAR has, as noted above, the following mandate: a) overall research coordination for the FANR cluster, b) liaison with international research organizations and donors, c) impact evaluation, and d) information exchange relating to research and training coordination. In the years since that decision, SADC has pursued a course that is leading in the direction of reallocating responsibilities for FANR sector-specific research functions to the SCUs concerned. SADC's rationale is that decentralization of the research function will enhance responsiveness to FANR sector stakeholders, and-- specific to the NR sectors-- that SACCAR, although allocated responsibility for NR research in the past, has not been able to effectively fulfill this responsibility.

While this rationale has a certain merit, several issues relative to the new SACCAR and to FANR research in the region need to be addressed. First, there are moves underway to decentralize research that, unlike the NR sectors, falls directly into the areas that have been SACCAR responsibilities. For example, this year SADC has made a proposal for a new crop sector SCU. The language in the proposal is open to interpretation regarding the extent to which there is potential for overlap with SACCAR's functions, which have in the past focused strongly on crops sector research. This lack of clarity suggests that more detailed discussion and definition of the new crop sector SCU's mandate will be needed, and interaction between those in the Botswana government developing the new SACCAR and other member country SCUs will be required so as to deal with the overlap, and the potential for confusion and conflict that could arise.

This issue reaches beyond the concern about the crop sector SCU. If each of the SCUs assumes responsibility for its own research function, and argues that it can and should deal directly with stakeholders and cooperating partners in its sector, then operationalizing SACCAR's mandate becomes problematic. Already for example, Namibia, with the marine fisheries SCU, has questioned whether SACCAR should play a role in its activities.

Second, also under discussion is the assignment of SACCAR's regional networks and program portfolio to the responsible FANR SCUs. This possibility further undercuts the official SADC mandate for the new SACCAR, and calls into question what, in reality, SACCAR would actually do. The risk is that SACCAR would become precisely what its reorganizers insist that they do not want, namely a "post office box" coordinator, with little substantive input or value-added.

This possibility also has implications for integration, both regionally among the member countries, and between the region and its cooperating partners, both IARCs and international donors. Regionally, an integrated and coordinated FANR policy and programmatic strategy will become difficult to pursue in practice, official SADC statements to the contrary notwithstanding. This situation will arise because a) an individual SCU will have little incentive to pay attention to the networks and programs handled by other SCUs, and b) over time an individual SCU will become increasingly attuned to the concerns, priorities, and needs of its cooperating partners and funders.

Between the region and its cooperating partners, the possible reassignment of SACCAR's regional networks and programs will likely increase the transactions costs of partners' operations. SACCAR at present coordinates 15 regional programs. Under the current arrangement any partner can touch base with SACCAR about not just its own program, but the others simply by interacting with SACCAR. The alternative would multiply the time, effort, and resources required to maintain such contacts because it would require separate contacts with each SCU responsible for a particular network or program. The tendency would be to focus most strongly on one or two individual networks or programs and let the others proceed on their own. Over time integration from the partners' side would diminish, contributing to a cycle of less integration within the region.

It is clear from the preceding analysis that the success and viability of SACCAR as an SCU depends upon a good fit between its research coordination mandate and the role FANR SCUs are to play in research. This does not mean simply looking for and seeking to eliminate functional duplication and overlaps. Of course, complete duplication is both wasteful of resources and often conflict-producing, but in many research and service delivery systems, a certain degree of overlap is not necessarily undesirable. It can in fact provide the system with the flexibility to respond to unanticipated increases in workload or to temporary capacity constraints. Rather, it means a collaborative effort among member states and their SCUs to develop mutually agreed-upon spheres of responsibility and interaction with SACCAR that provide clear signals to sector coordinators. Based on such signals, SACCAR, the other FANR SCUs, and cooperating partners can work out the details of how research coordination will take place. Not all of these linkages need to be formalized. Experience demonstrates that excessive reliance solely on formal linkage mechanisms can hamper efficient functioning.

A further issue, less immediate but important for the longer term, relates to SADC decisions on the recommendations of the SADC rationalization study (Chipeta et al., 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). If the recommendation to create planning and coordination directorates is implemented, which includes one for the FANR sector, then changes in the institutional linkages among member states would take place. The fate of SCUs within the proposed new directorate structures is unclear, but undoubtedly a process of realignment and renegotiation would result from such a decision. Among people interviewed, opinions were mixed regarding the likelihood of SADC action on the recommendations, the timeframe involved, and the extent of the impact on the current array of SCUs.

SECTION 5 MOVING FORWARD

5.1 Transition Strategy for Establishing SACCAR as an SCU

This section discusses a strategy for SACCAR's transition and elaborates action steps in support of the strategy. Any institutional transformation and redesign are complex and uncertain undertakings, and SACCAR's situation is more complicated than many. There is a natural tendency to seek to reduce the complexity and resolve the uncertainties as quickly as possible. The easiest way to do this is to focus mainly on the bureaucratic and administrative steps necessary to create SACCAR as an SCU. However, the above analysis strongly suggests that such a focus will not result in a SACCAR with leadership and catalytic potential, capable of making a substantive contribution to development in the region, but rather risks setting up a reactive and passive SACCAR that fills the administrative and programme gaps left vacant by other entities. Because SACCAR's coordination and brokerage role is fundamentally a question of linkages with partners and stakeholders, there must be a clear rationale for, and demonstration of, the value-added by SACCAR.

Stakeholders perceive value in terms of outputs and results that relate to the substance of agricultural research and technology transfer.

SACCAR's mandate as an SCU, as approved by the SADC Council in 1996, deals less with substance-- that is, with "what" issues-- and more with operations, the "how" issues. The transition strategy proposed here emphasizes building a coalition of support and agreement around the "what" and allowing the "how" to evolve iteratively and gradually over the next year or so. Clearly, however, the Botswana government needs to be in a position to address the SADC political imperative of establishing SACCAR, given that it has accepted responsibility for the SCU. This aspect is included in the action strategy.

5.2 Action Steps for the Transition Strategy

The proposed steps in this strategy are the following. These are presented in sequential order, although a number of them can proceed concurrently.

5.2.1 Internal review of institutional options The first step is for the Botswana government and particularly the MOA to conduct an internal review and discussion of the options proposed in this paper. This review process could include canvassing the views of outsiders as well, if desired, for example, USAID, current SACCAR staff, SACCAR board members, and so on. The end of this step would result in the government selecting one of the options developed. This should be accomplished prior to the May meeting of the SACCAR board.

5.2.2 Establish a vision working group As soon as possible, form a small, high-level working group, made up of constituents for agricultural research and technology transfer. They would craft a substantive vision statement for agricultural research and technology transfer in the region. This statement, firmly based on stakeholder needs and demands, would be an expression of both intent and of targets relating to science and technology. It would refer to SACCAR's role, but would

concentrate on a developing an indicative picture of what the situation for science and technology in the region would look like in the future as a result of efforts made to respond to needs in promoting and coordinating agricultural research and technology transfer ¹⁵ The target date for completion of the vision statement is in time for presentation to the FANR Ministers' Meeting in June/July, 1998 There may be a need to hold a one-two day roundtable of the working group in May or early June to facilitate the development of the vision, as well as possible follow-up visits to member countries to broaden input into the vision statement

5 2 3 Report to the SACCAR board Present the Botswana government's decision regarding SACCAR's institutional placement option to the board, along with the rationale for the particular option decided upon, and an update on progress Also, use the board meeting to review the progress on the draft vision for agricultural research and technology transfer Address member concerns and build support for the vision and the chosen option The meeting is planned for May 11-13, 1998

5 2 4 Develop SACCAR senior staff position descriptions At this point, job descriptions for the SCU can be developed, concentrate only on the higher level positions The requirements for the others will emerge later This action step includes a number of sub-steps It differs depending upon whether the SCU will be within the MOA or attached to BCA For within the MOA the sequence is a) draft position descriptions, b) review descriptions informally with the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) to assure that they are at the desired level of seniority, c) revise as needed, and d) submit to DPSM for official evaluation and approval Estimates are that this step could be accomplished within a three-week timeframe

For the BCA option, the sub-steps are a) meet with BCA Principal and key members of the BCA Governing Council to clarify how to proceed, b) develop position descriptions according to whatever process is deemed suitable, c) submit positions for approval by the BCA Governing Council, the BCA Appointments Committee for Academic and Senior Staff, and the University of Botswana Appointments Committee for Academic and Senior Staff It is estimated that this process could take between four to eight weeks, depending upon the availability of key actors As noted above, highly desirable here would be the designation of the SCU director position at the level of Professor

5 2 5 Arrange funding for SACCAR positions Once approved positions are in hand, go to the Ministry of Finance for a mid-fiscal-year special warrant request that would transfer funds from the Botswana government's budget line item for contribution to SACCAR to the MOA's operating budget Estimates are that this step would furnish approximately 337,000 Pula for the current fiscal year, sufficient to begin hiring Timing depends upon position approvals and the choice between MOA or BCA options The process could possibly be initiated prior to finalization of approvals, the step might take a couple of weeks total elapsed time

5 2 6 Advertise positions and begin recruitment This step also has a number of sub-components These include a) draft position advertisements and disseminate nationally and regionally, b) circulate a letter to key stakeholders requesting nominations, c) create an interview and selection

committee, d) set up a mini-secretariat to manage candidate dossiers, e) review candidate CVs received, conduct interviews, check references, etc. For the SCU senior positions, allow at least six-eight weeks at a minimum for advertising and perhaps longer (BCA has a specified length of time required for advertising senior faculty posts). The entire process is likely to take at least several months. It should not be rushed, as noted above, who the staff are will be critical to SACCAR's success. It is worth considering interim measures such as temporary technical assistance to fill in while recruitment proceeds (see next step).

5.2.7 Discuss technical assistance needs with donors As is already recognized, SACCAR's transition will require technical assistance to help the SCU to become efficient and effective. SACCAR already receives donor assistance, and this can be accessed to provide short-term technical assistance and to cover operational costs of meetings and travel associated with SACCAR's transition. The MOA has held some discussions regarding future technical assistance with NORAD and USAID¹⁶. Continue these discussions and clarify to the extent possible at this stage the likely needs and tasks. Consider the possibility of identifying someone with appropriate skills and experience to fill an interim role in both assisting with SACCAR's transition and further developing its future strategic vision and plan. This could be a full-time assignment for six-eight months, or a series of assignments by the same person/team during the period. Recognize that USAID assistance to SACCAR will terminate on September 30, 1998. An important sub-step here is for the Botswana government to identify technical assistance needs, draft and submit a proposal to USAID requesting transition assistance beyond that date.

5.2.8 Report on progress at the FANR Ministers' Meeting Present the Botswana government option selected, update the Committee on transition progress to date, and present the vision statement. At this point the Botswana government can announce that SACCAR as an SCU has been established and start-up activities are underway. Several of the ministers will have been contacted and/or involved, formally or informally, as part of some of the earlier steps. This meeting will also be critical to surfacing issues, getting agreement, and building support for SACCAR's vision and its role and functions regarding the other FANR SCUs and concerning the operational implications of coordinating sector research (see next section). The meeting is currently scheduled for late June or early July, 1998.

5.2.9 Report on progress at the SADC Council of Ministers Meeting Present the Botswana government option selected, update the Council on transition progress to date, and present the vision statement. As with the FANR ministers, by this time a number of Council members will have been involved in some way in earlier steps. This meeting will also be an important part of the process of gaining SADC agreement and ratification of SACCAR's vision and substantive rationale, and the linkages and working relationships between SACCAR and the rest of the FANR SCUs. The meeting is scheduled for September 7-14, 1998.

5.2.10 Hire new staff and install them at SACCAR The following sub-steps are included here: a) interview finalists, b) select candidates, c) negotiate contracts, and d) formalize employment. This step is dependent upon the recruitment step, thus timing is variable. As noted earlier, this step should not be rushed.

5.2.11 Conduct an SCU start-up workshop Once the senior staff are in place, and perhaps other staff as well, including technical assistance, is the time to conduct a workshop for the SCU to facilitate start-up of SACCAR under its new institutional arrangements. This workshop would serve a number of critical purposes: a) generate common understanding among the new staff of SACCAR's vision, mandate, and functions, b) develop working relationships among the new staff and promote team-building, c) conduct start-up planning and transition workplan development, and d) introduce the team to selected SACCAR stakeholders and partners. The workshop would be designed and managed by an external facilitator. Experience has shown that such workshops can have a high return in getting new teams and organizations off on the right footing¹⁷. Timing for this workshop would depend upon staff hiring, duration of the workshop would be two-three days.

5.2.12 Elaborate the vision statement into a strategic plan This step is placed as the last one, but it could also be started after the FANR Ministers' meeting. Its placement here is to indicate that the development of a strategic plan will benefit from the participation of SACCAR's new staff. While treated as a separate step, it in fact represents an ongoing process throughout SACCAR's transition phase of building, reinforcing, and expanding the coalition of stakeholders around SACCAR's vision and its mandate. Following up on the vision statement, enlarge the working group to include technical specialists working with agricultural research and technology transfer constituencies to develop the vision into a strategic plan that will guide SACCAR through its transformation and into the post-transition period¹⁸. The Botswana government discussions with donors (Step 7) should include the possibilities for assistance with this strategic planning exercise.

5.3 Other Transition Issues

Besides the steps in the action strategy to create the new SACCAR, there are other important actions that should be considered as well. First is the immediate transition issue that deals with the other side of setting up SACCAR as an SCU, which is closing out SACCAR as a commission. SACCAR needs to be seen as a vital component of the transition to an SCU, not as a discredited lame duck. It has many of the resources that the Botswana government can access to support the transition. For example, SACCAR could support the visioning and strategic planning exercises outlined above, and it could cover some or all of the technical assistance needs as well. USAID has already affirmed to the government its support for utilization of its funds allocated to SACCAR for this purpose.

Recommendation The Botswana government should work with SACCAR to develop and implement a downsizing and close-out plan that will assure the best use of its resources to complement the establishment of SACCAR as an SCU. As noted above in the action strategy, the government should also prepare a proposal to USAID for transition assistance to utilize funds remaining after September 30, 1998.

A second, less immediate transition issue has to do with organizational life-cycles, and connects to the recommendations made earlier about evolving SACCAR's new structure over time,

rather than trying to predetermine it in advance, and about nurturing a coalition around a vision for SACCAR. The issue is that institutional transitions do not happen all at once. They are not discrete events, but are continuing processes. Those involved in transitions often wish that they would happen quickly, and be over and done with. Experience shows, however, that acceding to such desires can cripple the potential of the new entity. Effective and sustainable institutions create value for those who use and pay for what they produce (see Ellsworth, 1997, Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 1990). At this point in SACCAR's life-cycle the long-term process of establishing anew the value of what it can do, and building stakeholder support around that, is ultimately more important to its success and survival than the bureaucracies of its new administrative arrangements.

ENDNOTES

- 1 See IADS (1983) This report established the rationale and the original organizational framework for SACCAR
- 2 These are food security, livestock production and animal disease control, forestry, wildlife, environment and land management, inland fisheries, marine fisheries, and agricultural research A ninth sector has been recently proposed crop production
- 3 See also the SACCAR evaluation report (USAID/RCSA et al , 1996), and the position paper on rationalizing SACCAR and SARCCUS (SACCAR, 1996)
- 4 Once SACCAR is established as an SCU, it is likely that its board will need to be reconfigured as a technical advisory committee For simplicity, the term, board, is used here to refer to the unit's oversight and guidance-providing entity, whatever it will be called
- 5 As the SCU director admitted, this is not an ideal situation, in fact the Livestock SCU anticipates taking advantage of the establishment of the new SACCAR to establish itself as more of a formalized entity within the MOA
- 6 The need for agricultural research systems to incorporate a much wider set of stakeholders, and to develop mechanisms and procedures to foster a performance orientation and responsiveness to demand, is cited as a critical feature for success, both now and into the future See Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1990), Bonte-Friedheim and Sheridan (1997) and Carney (1998)
- 7 This is the option that corresponds to what the Botswana government has proposed to the SADC Council
- 8 For example, the MOA was to provide a senior accountant to SACCAR upon the completion of the contract of existing SACCAR staff, but a suitable candidate could not be found within the required timeframe A contract with Coopers and Lybrand has been let to provide this service on an interim basis
- 9 The PS for Agriculture is Chairman of the Governing Council of BCA
- 10 BCA, although recently created, actually has a long history in that it subsumed the Botswana Agricultural College, which had been in existence since 1967 (see BCA, 1992/1993)
- 11 The Principal would supervise only the financial and related administrative aspects of SACCAR's operations For matters of related to the substance of SACCAR's mandate and functions the reporting link for the Sector Coordinator would be to the PS for Agriculture

12 This type of arrangement is a common feature of U S land grant institutions in which the extension service is attached to the university, and agricultural program managers, researchers, and extension agents have university appointments but are not teaching faculty members

13 It should be noted that CICE is still in the process of negotiating with BCA for a share in the revenue it generates Currently all revenues go into the College's core operating fund

14 The position titles employed within the Botswana civil service system are used here If the BCA placement option is selected, different job classification titles corresponding to the College's personnel system would need to be developed

15 The methodology for this exercise could draw upon what USAID has developed for identifying Agency strategic objectives and the means to achieve them, so-called results frameworks and results packages

16 As part of this institutional analysis and strategic planning exercise, the Department of Agricultural Research and the consultant prepared draft terms of reference for assistance to SACCAR

17 This kind of workshop derives from a well-developed process methodology that is widely used in donor-supported activities The workshops are variously termed team planning meetings (TPMs), project launch workshops, action-planning workshops, or strategic planning workshops See for example, Brinkerhoff (1994)

18 This strategic plan would include within it consideration of sustainability issues for SACCAR and for agricultural research and technology transfer systems (see Ellsworth, 1997)

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