

**SPIA Feedback on Draft CGIAR PRMF 2022-2030
October 30, 2020**

SPIA appreciates the decision of the CGIAR Executive Management Team to share broadly the Performance Results Management Framework (PRMF) draft document along with the revised One CGIAR research strategy. Understanding that this is a work in progress, SPIA would like to provide some concrete suggestions to sections of the PRMF, meant to complement SPIA comments provided to the August draft of the research strategy.

- 1) Comment on the table that starts on page 5: The impact indicators currently are a mix between indicators of the reach of CGIAR innovations (# of different types of people reached with CGIAR innovations), indicators of final SDG outcomes (independent on whether CGIAR research played a role in affecting those indicators), and indicators that suggest some type of CGIAR role (e.g. # people assisted to exit poverty). This risks confusing what can or cannot be said about impacts. First, SPIA strongly endorses the importance of documenting the reach of CGIAR innovations. But reach is never a sufficient condition for impact.¹ Referring to reach as an impact indicator may therefore be a bit misleading. It seems appropriate to complement the plans for documenting reach with plans to obtain causal evidence of impact on targeted intermediary or final outcomes, and SPIA strongly recommends that plans to design studies that allow for such evidence are built into the research strategies (proposals) of the initiatives, as they will need to be developed from the start in close alignment with the other activities of the initiatives. Specifically we recommend the following 2 changes :
 - Insert a paragraph before table 5: “Specifically, the CGIAR Initiatives will aim to systematically document the reach of relevant CGIAR innovations and policy influences. In addition, and as reach alone is not sufficient to infer impact on the SDG targets, this will be complemented with causal evidence of impact and impact pathways. The research strategy envisioned to obtain such causal evidence will be integrated in the research of each initiative from the start.”
 - Modify the table to separate the different types of indicators in separate columns Possibly this could be a table where the current last column is replaced by 3 columns: one for “reach”, one for “SDG outcome targeted” and one for “selected causal evidence of impact on specific targets that can be jointly attributed to CGIAR and its partners”.
- 2) Comment on page 6, last sentence first paragraph. The sentence currently reads as if no effort will be made to provide evidence of causal impact. We recommend to change to :

“CGIAR will invest in obtaining causal evidence of impact on specific targets that can be jointly attributed to CGIAR and its partners (acknowledging that such impacts are not obtained by CGIAR alone)”
- 3) Comment on Page 7, bullet points on CGIAR initiatives and CGIAR. To set up rigorous impact assessments that allow to test key assumptions of the ToC in order to learn and adapt the initiative’s activities, these studies need to be designed, from the start, and in close coordination/collaboration with CGIAR researchers and partners leading/collaborating on the initiative. The modalities, institutional set-up, methods of how to do this best deserves more discussion and probably do not need to be specified here (but see further ideas in SPIAs comments on August version OneCGIAR research strategy). But as the mechanisms for impact assessment is different than for evaluative studies, we’d like to suggest:

¹ There is plenty of empirical evidence demonstrating that impacts in real-life cannot be predicted or modelled based on knowing whether and who adopts, see also SPIA’s august comments on the first draft of the OneCGIAR research strategy.



- To split evaluative studies and impact assessment into separate bullet points (both for the bullet list of Initiatives and of CGIAR)
 - Rephrase the bullet point on impact assessment under CGIAR initiatives to:
“Implement and/or commission impact assessment studies, designed from the start of the relevant stages as integral part of the research process (with specific plans for this research included in the initiative’s proposal) to causally test the assumptions underlying the ToC in order to contribute to their improvement and increased impact. ”
 - Rephrase the bullet point on impact assessment under CGIAR to :
“Invest in impact assessment studies, designed from the start of the relevant stages as integral part of the research process (with specific plans for this research included in the initiative’s proposal) to causally test impacts on SDG targets and other indicators relevant for the impact areas. ”
 - Add a bullet specifying
“Invest in large scale data collection (through partnerships) to measure the reach of CGIAR innovations and policy influences.”
 - And rephrase the last bullet point to:
“Ensure that independent evaluations and impact assessments by CGIAR Advisory Services are used for both learning and accountability purposes.”
- 4) Page 8: the section ToC currently indicates they are testable but doesn’t say anything about how they will be tested. This is a particular concern as there are many open questions on how CGIAR can better address barriers to adaptation/adoption/uptake (see also ISDC comments). We suggest to include a sentence after 1st paragraph on page 8:
- “Initiatives will set up research to causally test key assumptions along the ToC, and where relevant, work with scaling partners to provide causal evidence of impacts, and of the best mechanisms to address current barriers to uptake, in the targeted impact areas.”