

**SPIA feedback on consultation version of the CGIAR Technical Reporting Arrangement
April 12, 2022**

The Technical Reporting Arrangement is an important undertaking of the SIMEC-endorsed Task Team to provide guidance on how to measure achievements against the CGIAR Results Framework and planned Results of One CGIAR initiatives. It is within SPIA's mandate to provide rigorous, evidence-based and independent strategic advice to the CGIAR System on impact assessment methods and practices, and to improve knowledge and capacity on how research contributes to development outcomes. As both are closely related to the content covered by the Technical Reporting Arrangement, this note provides feedback from SPIA to the consultation version.

SPIA generally applauds the clarity of the proposal of separating annual reporting on progress towards end of the initiative outcomes and portfolio performance, from 3-year reporting on progress towards end-of-initiative (2030) impacts. Likewise, SPIA supports the related recognition that there are different timelines for reporting on planned results of the initiatives and achievements of the System at the portfolio level. The points below aim to provide concrete suggestions on how to improve the three types of reporting envisioned in the technical arrangement.

For type 1 or type 3 reporting

An important innovation of many of the initiative proposals is that many include learning-oriented impact assessments, designed from the start. Results from these rigorous learning studies that are being designed by One CGIAR initiatives can contribute to assess the readiness of several CGIAR innovations. By testing key assumptions of the ToC about how challenges and opportunities effectively scale the innovations, they can help initiatives to refine their scaling strategies and aim for larger impacts. Initiatives have plans for impact analyses to identify and resolve barriers along the Theory of Change. SPIA suggests that **annual reporting include progress in the implementation of the research initiatives Impact Assessment plans** (including e.g. the information on specific impact studies research designs (which were not yet included in the proposal's impact assessment plans), and subsequently on their implementation. This could be part of the report sections 2, 3, 4 or 7 (initiative progress on science, key results or adaptive management).

Second, SPIA wants to emphasize the **importance of the learning orientation of the performance reporting** that is already recognized in the consultation version of the document. In this regard, SPIA advises that the narrative results (report section 8) should avoid providing incentives for selecting impact assessment reporting that would focus only on the system successes. Learning from unexpected results or “failures” should be recognized/rewarded as positive results, as it is crucial to help increase impacts of the CGIAR towards 2030 and increase returns to the investments made on CGIAR research.

For type 2 reporting

SPIA approves the general focus of type 2 reporting on progress towards CGIAR contributions to action area outcomes and impact areas/Global 2030 targets on a selected set of high priority countries. SPIA’s ongoing work on improving and institutionalizing collection of data on diffusion and use of CGIAR innovations in collaboration with national data collection systems can provide a relevant reference. It will be important to assure that lessons learned from SPIAs development of this approach are built on to help the CGIAR focus on credible and relevant evidence in this type 2 report.

While modalities and institutional set-up for a country approach can be discussed in more detail at the appropriate time, SPIA wants to highlight the **need for a broad consultation of CGIAR partners and other stakeholders in the priority countries** and the importance of **rigorous measurement** to document **the reach of CGIAR innovations**.

Given the limited resources for measuring long-term, large-scale impacts of CGIAR research across targeted areas, SPIA **advises against stand-alone country-level baseline** (and subsequent other rounds of data) **on SDG outcome indicators** (poverty, nutrition, environmental outcomes, etc.). In many CGIAR priority countries, national partners are already collecting national-representative data on such outcomes (DHS surveys, LSMS-ISA surveys, 2030x50 initiative and other surveys from national statistical offices). Others outcome indicators (such as those for certain environmental outcomes) can be obtained from satellite imagery or other data sources.

What will be crucial is instead for CGIAR **to plan and invest from the start of the initiatives and by working with scaling partners, on rigorously documenting when, where, to whom, and why the dissemination of CGIAR innovations is happening**. Combining data from existing data collection efforts or secondary sources with this documentation of temporal and spatial scaling efforts in priority countries, can provide the framework to rigorously measure CGIAR impacts in different areas of interest by 2030.



We note that The CGIAR Technical Reporting expects to track progress on the innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness (IPSR) plans for each initiative. The IPSR expects to collect data that will support the determination of the readiness and use of innovations at innovation package and/or portfolio level. However, this data needs to be complemented with **data that tracks how innovations and/or innovation packages are being scaled, at the time that they are being scaled, in collaboration with scaling partners**. Data on when, where and how the innovations are being disseminated is a crucial input to design rigorous impact assessments at the portfolio level.

Likewise, SPIA welcomes the visibility of progress towards policy and capacity outcomes as part of the CGIAR Technical Report. Recognizing the challenges to measure the role of CGIAR research on these outcomes, SPIA suggests to focus part of the efforts **to document when, where and with whom the policy engagement is happening** and to document clearly the specific contributions of CGIAR in these processes.

SPIA stands ready to advise and engage in more detailed discussions on the various points above.