



IEA  
Independent Evaluation Arrangement

# Evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program “Forests, Trees and Agroforestry” (FTA)

*Inception Report*

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## Glossary and Acronyms

AFS	Agroforestry systems.
Appraisal	An ex-ante assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential for impact and sustainability of a research program or other development activity, usually prior to a decision on funding it.
Attribution	The ascription of a causal link between observed (or expected) changes and a specific intervention.
Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention.
Best practice	Methods and techniques that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and which are used as benchmarks to strive for. There is, however, no practice that is best for everyone or in every situation, and no best practice remains best for very long as people keep on finding better ways of doing things.
Comparative advantage	In economic terms, a comparative advantage in producing or selling a good is possessed by an individual, firm or country with the lowest opportunity cost (as opposed to absolute cost) in producing the good. In the context of this evaluation, the term refers more broadly to the role and mandate of the CGIAR in producing its agreed outputs (mainly global public goods).
Component	One of the 5 thematic sections or sub-programs of FTA. Used alternating with “Theme” in FTA documentation.  This Inception Report consistently uses the term “Component” in order to avoid confusion (“Theme” is used to describe sub-programs as well as sub-sub-programs).
CCEE	CRP-Commissioned External Evaluation.
CGIAR	The name CGIAR comes from the acronym for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. In 2008, CGIAR underwent a major transformation. The name and acronym CGIAR is retained for continuity.
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture.
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research.
CIRAD	Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement.
CRP6	CGIAR Research Program 6: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry. Referred to as “FTA” throughout this report.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were



	achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
Efficiency	A measure of how resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
Evaluation	The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, program or policy, its design, implementation and results. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making processes of major stakeholders.
Evaluation criteria	Different aspects of quality of a program which are used internationally to develop evaluation questions and serve as a check that all major issues have been considered. The most widely-used criteria are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.
Evaluation matrix	A brief and clear description of the evaluation questions and proposed approach to each question, summarized in tabular form.
FC	Fund Council of the CGIAR.
FTA	CGIAR Research Program 6: Forests, Trees and Agroforestry: Livelihoods, Landscape, Governance.
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF refers to the original name of the center, International Council for Research in Agroforestry).
IEA	CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement.
IDO	Intermediate Development Outcome.
Impact Assessment	In the CGIAR this term is generally used for a study which uses experimental approaches, economic techniques and models to estimate the degree of changes in selected outcomes and impacts that is attributable to defined interventions of the CGIAR.
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
ISPC	Independent Science and Partnership Council of the CGIAR.
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation.
MEIA	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment. MEIA is also the name of a 4 people FTA team working on these topics.
Monitoring	A process of continuous or periodic collection and analysis of data to compare how well a project, program, or policy is being implemented against expected results, in order to track performance against plans and targets, to identify reasons for under or over achievement, and to take necessary actions to improve performance.
Outcome	The likely or achieved intended short-term and medium-term effects of an



	intervention's outputs.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Partnerships	The institutional and financial arrangements made by partners, formal and informal.
Peer review	A generic term for a process of self-regulation by a profession or a process of review involving qualified individuals within the relevant field. Peer review methods are employed to maintain standards of relevance and quality, improve performance and provide credibility.
Relevance	The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with global and national priorities and policies, as well as those of intended beneficiaries, partners and donors. In the CGIAR, it also refers to the extent to which the program or activity is consistent the aims and System Level Outcomes, comparative advantage and reform agenda of the CGIAR.
Results	The output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a development intervention.
REWP	Rolling Evaluation Work Plan.
SLO	System Level Outcome.
SPIA	Standing Panel on Impact Assessment of the CGIAR.
SRF	CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework.
Theme	One of the 5 thematic sections or sub-programs of FTA. Used alternating with "Component" in FTA documentation.  This Inception Report consistently uses the term "Component" in order to avoid confusion ("Theme" is used to describe sub-programs as well as sub-sub-programs).
ToR	Terms of Reference.



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Origins of the Evaluation

As part of the reform of the CGIAR, an Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) Office has been established, located in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, under the Fund Use Agreement between FAO and the CGIAR Fund.

The main mandate of the IEA is to lead the implementation of the CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluation through conducting strategic evaluations of major research programs of the CGIAR and the development of a coordinated, harmonized and cost-effective evaluation system in the CGIAR.

A first evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) has been agreed with the participating CGIAR Centers, the CGIAR Consortium and the CGIAR Fund Council.

### 1.2. Purpose and Structure of this Inception Report

The principal purpose of this Inception Report is to provide a detailed account of the approach and methodology with which the planned evaluation intends to investigate and answer its evaluation questions.

The draft version of this Inception Report serves as a tool for dialogue and for obtaining feedback on the evaluation team's emerging understanding of the context in which FTA operates (Chapter 2), the program itself (Chapter 3), on the above-mentioned evaluation design factors (Chapters 4-6) and on organization and timing of the evaluation (Chapter 7), in order to ensure the relevance of questions asked, effectiveness and efficiency of evaluation activities, and uptake of evaluation results.

The final version of this Inception Report will serve as a guide and as a standard for the inquiry, synthesis and dissemination phases of this evaluation that follow the inception phase during which this report is written.

This report is structured as follows.

- Chapters 2 and 3 introduce the context and provide a detailed description of the program to be evaluated. These chapters serve as introduction to readers not familiar with the subject and demonstrate and test the evaluation team's emerging understanding of the program. For readers interested in methodology only, these chapters can be skipped.
- Chapters 4 through 7 describe the methodology: purpose, audience and scope of the planned evaluation (Chapter 4), the evaluation questions and their relation to



evaluation principles and criteria (Chapter 5), the methodology used to tackle the evaluation questions (Chapter 6), and evaluation organization and timing (Chapter 7).

Literature referred to in this report is summarized after Chapter 7.



## 2. Context of the Evaluation

In the first section of this chapter, a summary of the major trends and their impacts is provided as a backdrop for the FTA evaluation. Annex A provides a more detailed account of these macro-trends. In the second section of this chapter, the CGIAR context is described.

### 2.1. Global Forest and Agroforestry-Related Macro-Trends

The world's forests and woodlands are undergoing far-reaching changes as a consequence of human actions, with great implications on the well-being of people and the sustainability of the environment. Most of the adverse developments are related to deforestation and forest degradation, in particular in the tropics and sub-tropics. In the 1990s, around 16 million ha, and in the last decade, about 13 million ha of natural forests were annually converted to other land uses, 75-80 percent into agriculture and livestock grazing (FAO 2010; IPCC 2007). Agricultural expansion has helped to increase food production but, depending on location and management practices, has often led to high environmental costs as well. At the same time, the existing forest and tree resources, and the associated genetic diversity, have not been managed well to make use of their potential for sustainable forestry development and sustainable farming.

The complex environmental and rural development challenges that humanity is facing today require strategies that can alleviate the compounded issues using integrative approaches. Achieving individual results, as for example, increasing productivity, has to be accomplished in a holistic manner, i.e., by enhancing productivity while simultaneously contributing to recover and conserve biodiversity, sequester carbon and reduce environmental degradation (Montagnini et al. 2002). Agroforestry systems (AFS), as human-designed systems that, if well designed and managed, can harmonize agriculture, forestry and conservation, can provide such an approach with technologies that can address multiple development and environmental problems in an integrative fashion and contribute to the improvement of rural livelihoods.

Smallholders' land uses include a variety of systems that lie in the interface of agriculture and forestry so as to supply their needs for food, fiber, energy and timber. Agroforestry systems and tree planting in an agricultural setting are the most frequent land uses among smallholders in tropical developing countries throughout the world. Estimates of the area under AFS worldwide have yielded over 1000 million ha, with additional large areas that are currently sustaining unproductive crops, pastures, as well as degraded lands that could be brought under AFS in the near future (Nair et al. 2009; 2010). Agroforestry practices are quite complex and can, for example, be grouped in five categories: 1) Shaded Perennials, 2) Shaded Annuals, 3) Multistrata, 4) Silvopastoral, and 5) Complementary systems (Montagnini et al. 1992; Montagnini et al. 2011; Somarriba et al. 2012).

Agroforestry systems can increase productivity in the short and long term, with the advantages of being biodiversity-friendly and bringing social and economic advantages in particular to farmers (Verchot et al. 2007; Bhagwat et al. 2008; Redondo Brenes and Montagnini 2010). In addition, AFS can serve an important role in adaptation to climate





change due to the ameliorating effects of trees on air temperatures. AFS can also contribute to climate change mitigation due to carbon sequestration in woody components of the systems, as well as in soils (Montagnini and Nair 2004; Verchot et al. 2007; Murgueitio et al. 2011). AFS are considered a cornerstone in the current trend of promotion of transformation of agriculture to “Climate-smart agriculture”, an agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, resilience (adaptation), reduces/removes greenhouse gases (mitigation) while enhancing the achievement of national food security and development goals (FAO 2012). AFS can also diversify income and benefit large landholders who can make use of highly technified advances in agriculture, livestock and forest science (Garrity 2004; Pinazo et al. 2007; Montagnini et al. 2013). When AFS are practiced at a small scale, they are often perceived as systems geared to increasing sustainability in absence of external inputs and to ensuring subsistence of local/ indigenous populations (Soto Pinto et al. 2010). One of the major criticisms to AFS is that they often cannot provide for a change in social or economic status (Rocheleau 1999; Alavapati et al. 2004; Franzel et al. 2004). However, added value to selected AFS products along with proper market development can improve livelihoods of smallholders as shown by many recent successful experiences throughout the world (Scherr 2004; Bennet and Franzel 2009; Montagnini et al. 2011).

The impacts of natural forest and woodlands loss and forest degradation – on the level of entire landscapes as well as for specific species and populations – are well recognized. Forests are one of the most important carbon sinks but – at the same time – the sector shows very high human-induced greenhouse gas emissions that are mainly due to deforestation and forest degradation. Declining natural forest cover and reduced quality of the remaining forests have diminished global biodiversity, weakened the capacity to provide watershed management and soil conservation services, threatened important forest areas used for cultural and spiritual purposes, endangered people’s forest-based livelihoods and subsistence due to the loss of critical ecosystem resources and services, reducing overall resilience of human and natural systems. Projections suggest that 40% of biodiversity in the tropical and sub-tropical forests could be lost due to climate change (Fischlin et al. 2009). In a bid to ensure the security of food, bioenergy and wood fiber supplies, significant environmental stresses are being placed on water resources and forest lands critical for ensuring water supply. Negative impacts are most serious in developing countries, and in particular in rural areas where people and ecosystems are already particularly vulnerable. However, not enough is known yet on the impacts of climate change, especially on the most vulnerable ecosystems and populations, and ways of reducing vulnerability must be identified.

The potential of forests and trees to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation continues to decline. Since it is now inevitable that global temperatures are increasing, adaptation is becoming more important at all levels, increasing the need to identify and preserve highly resilient ecosystems, forest types and species and developing modified forest management systems that are better adjusted to higher temperatures and less frequent rainfalls and related impacts (pests, fire, invasive species, etc.)

These transformative changes are influenced by global macro-trends related to population growth and associated demographic dynamics, economic growth and its distribution, climate change, the shift towards low-carbon biomass economy, and globalization. These drivers of change do not operate in isolation but are interlinked through processes that cut across many different sectors such as forestry, agriculture, water, energy, and manufacturing of goods, and

influence the delivery of forest-related environmental services. The drivers of forest change also cut across different scales from farm households, forests and broader landscapes to national, regional and global levels. Global processes, such as climate change, can directly affect the health and resiliency of forest-related eco and socio-cultural systems. On the other hand, local-level action is needed to address global climate change issues (Galloway et al. 2010; Kanninen et al. 2007). Importantly, these drivers of change are not only negative causing forest loss but they also create opportunities for improving the livelihoods of rural people based on sustainable utilization of a range of forest resources and enhancing the resource base for multiple purposes using agroforestry, woodlots, plantations, etc.

The key global macro-trends influencing trees and forests are summarized below.

- **Population growth and poverty trends.** The world population will continue to increase reaching 8.3 billion people in 2030 and 9 billion by 2050, the latter representing an increase of 2 billion from today. Almost 98 percent of the population growth will take place in the developing world, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (UN Population Information Network 2013). Along with population growth, the number of undernourished people has increased significantly since the mid-1990s reaching about 870 million worldwide. The largest number and share of undernourished children and hungry people live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In these regions, the share of malnourished population has also been increasing in recent years (FAO 2012a) and the poor depend on agriculture, forests and other natural resources for their livelihoods. It is estimated that by 2050, food production must be increased by 70 percent to feed an additional 2 billion people, which will increase the demand for land (WWF 2011). Growing more food, wood and wood fiber and increasing wood fuel production will help meeting increased basic needs and contribute to income and employment generation but will also result in increased competition for land and water resources. Where population increases are significant and subsistence or low productivity commercial agriculture remain the norm, more land will progressively come under agricultural production – often by converting forested areas (FAO 2012b).
- **Economic growth and forestry.** The world's fastest growing economies are those of the developing and emerging countries such as China. It has been estimated that by 2050, non-OECD countries will account for some 70 percent of the increase in global economic output, which, combined with a huge population base, translates into a boom of demand for minerals, feed and food and tree products such as fruits, gums and wood. These developments – under suitable conditions – can contribute positively to economic development also in the rural areas. However, growing competition for trade of those products – and for use of the associated land – at the same time increases incentives for illegal logging. More affluent societies and the shift towards increased meat consumption are adding additional stress on agricultural production, and forest and water resources. They also augment pressure on ecosystems and their services through increased greenhouse gas emissions that need to be mitigated and adapted to.
- **Climate change and shift towards low-carbon economy.** Deforestation is the second largest anthropogenic source of carbon dioxide after fossil fuel combustion, and is

responsible for a large share of global carbon emissions causing global warming.<sup>1</sup> Higher temperatures, changes in rainfall volumes and shifts in rainfall patterns reduce agricultural productivity, disrupt hydrological cycles, endanger water availability, may influence rainfall over wide areas, and also make forests more vulnerable to the damage caused by fires, pests and diseases. This is likely to cause additional forest loss and create a vicious circle with important ramifications for the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, long-term supply of forest goods and services such as biodiversity and soil conservation. On the other hand, forests can play an increasingly important role in sequestering emissions from other anthropogenic sources and mitigating climate change. Wood-based bioenergy represents also an important source of renewable energy. One of the major trends to address climate change worldwide has been the shift towards renewable energy, including wood biomass which has reduced fossil fuel-related carbon dioxide emissions in many parts of the world. On the other hand, bioenergy trends are already influencing land and food prices and are increasing the competition for land and water resources.

- **Increasing globalization.** As many developing and emerging countries offer the best long-term market prospects for paper and wood products, and good growing conditions for fast-growing plantations, both paper and pulp and fiber production are shifting increasingly to Latin America and Asia. The same is also holds for agricultural production. Various types of investors are interested in investing in land and forestry in developing and emerging countries to satisfy this increasing demand from sustainable but also from unsustainable sources. The global and regional investment and market developments offer significant opportunities for sustainable and profitable agricultural, forest and agroforestry production, processing and marketing that can make significant contributions to poverty reduction and economic growth in developing countries, provided suitable institutional conditions are in place. However, under weak governance systems and insufficient management capacity, land grabbing and destruction of valuable natural forests are common especially in developing countries.
- **Land pressure, and intensification:** Rural populations continue to grow in absolute terms leading to reduced farm sizes and continuous farming without fallows. There are many examples in the developing world of degrading landscapes, stagnant or decreasing yields of crops, requiring integrated soil management of which woody species have been proven to play a critical role, for example in the semi-arid Sahel region.

Further trends, for example urban-rural interactions or remittances, put additional pressures on trees and forests. The importance of various drivers, as well as challenges and opportunities, varies depending on the context, for example different types of landscapes or levels of economic development. The above drivers explain many of the changes taking place regarding deforestation and forest degradation, as well as intensification of land use and the need to introduce more productive agroforestry and agricultural systems and woodlots. These

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<sup>1</sup> Older studies estimate deforestation to contribute 15-20 percent of global carbon emissions. This share has likely decreased, mainly because of the increase of emissions from other sectors.



developments can be described conceptually using a forest and land use transition curve. This “model” provides a general framework for organizing research with the FTA.

Effective responses to mitigate and adapt to negative – and maximize positive – effects of the global macro-trends outlined above require innovative, high-quality research focusing on a range of management systems from natural forest management to agroforestry, and represent the *raison d’être* of FTA.

## 2.2. CGIAR Context: the Reformed System

Established in 1971, the CGIAR is now in its 42<sup>nd</sup> year. It has grown from a group of four centers,<sup>2</sup> through a series of attempted and successful reforms, expansions, and consolidations to today’s global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food secure and environmentally sustainable future. Research is currently being carried out by 15 international agricultural research centers that are members of the CGIAR Consortium.

The findings of an independent review of the CGIAR system and those of a Change Management Initiative, both initiated in 2007 but building on earlier deliberations, led to the adoption of a new CGIAR business model in 2009 and to the gradual establishment of the bodies and processes of the reformed CGIAR. A schematic functional overview of the reformed CGIAR is provided in Figure 1. This Inception Report does not attempt to describe the establishment or the functioning of the reformed CGIAR in any detail; excellent descriptions can be found elsewhere (CGIAR 2012).

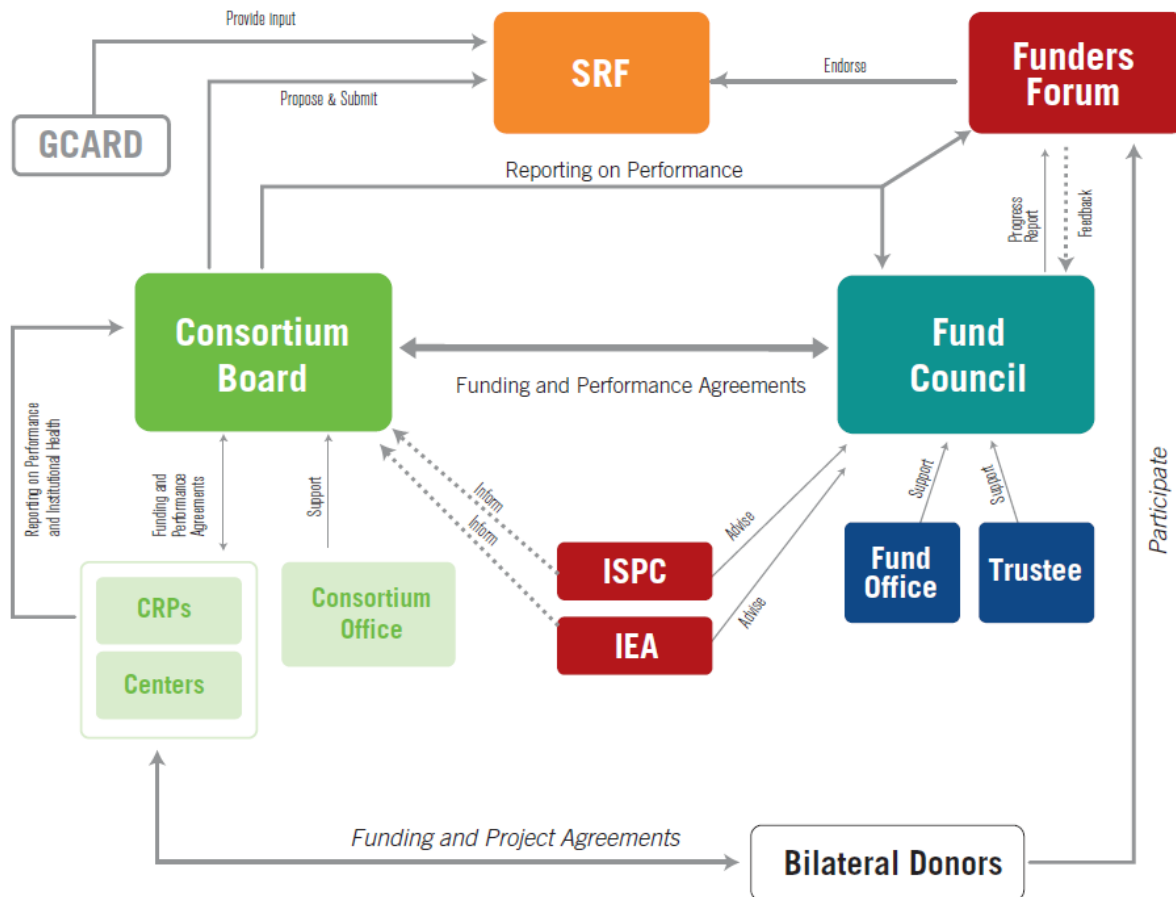
The cornerstones of the reformed CGIAR are:

- the creation of a *Fund Council*, with its own office, that is located in the World Bank in Washington DC and of the *Funders Forum*, to which the Fund Council reports;
- the creation and legal establishment as an international organization of the *CGIAR Consortium*, consisting of a *Consortium Board*, a *Consortium Office* (located in Montpellier, France), and the continued existence of the 15 CGIAR research centers, now as Consortium members;
- the transformation of the former CGIAR Science Council into the *Independent Science and Partnership Council* (ISPC), located in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy; and
- the establishment of the *Independent Evaluation Arrangement* also hosted within FAO in Rome.

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<sup>2</sup> The *Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo* (CIMMYT, Mexico, founded in 1966), the *Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical* (CIAT, Colombia, 1967), the *International Institute of Tropical Agriculture* (IITA, Nigeria, 1967), and the *International Rice Research Institute* (IRRI, Philippines, 1960).

Figure 1. How the new CGIAR works (CGIAR 2012, p. 88).



Within the framework of the reformed CGIAR, research is implemented within 7 principal areas of research by 15 CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs, formerly Mega-Programs) that are listed in Table 1.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Apart from funding to these 15 CRPs, the Fund Council has also approved stability funding for CGIAR Centers and Challenge Programs and funding to support CGIAR genebanks, the long-term component of the latter of which is sometimes referred to as 16<sup>th</sup> CRP.



**Table 1. CGIAR Research Programs.**<sup>4</sup>

Name	Number	Lead center	Initial 3-year budget (USD million)	Fund Council approval date
Dryland Systems	CRP1.1	ICARDA	123	November 2011 (with conditions)
Humidtropics	CRP1.2	IITA	144	October, 2012
Aquatic Agricultural Systems	CRP1.3	World Fish Center	60	July 2011
Policies, Institutions and Markets	CRP2	IFPRI	266	December 2011
Wheat	CRP3.1	CIMMYT	228	October 2011
Maize	CRP3.2	CIMMYT	238	April 2011
Rice (GRiSP)	CRP3.3	IRRI	593	November 2010
Roots, Tubers and Bananas	CRP3.4	CIP	183	December 2011
Grain Legumes	CRP3.5	ICRISAT	139	March 2012 (with conditions)
Dryland Cereals	CRP3.6	ICRISAT	84	March 2012 (with conditions)
Livestock and Fish	CRP3.7	ILRI	120	July 2011
Nutrition and Health	CRP4	IFPRI	191	December 2011
Water, Land and Ecosystems	CRP5	IWMI	246	November 2011
Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA)	CRP6	CIFOR	233	April 2011
Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)	CRP7	CIAT	393	February 2011

Each CRP is led by a single CGIAR lead center with overall implementation responsibility. Each lead center stands at the top of a contractual hierarchy with other CGIAR centers or institutions external to the CGIAR for implementation of that CRP's work program.

CRP objectives and strategies are informed and linked to system-level vision and objectives by a central policy document, the *CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework* (CGIAR 2010; 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from the Fund Council website ([http://www.cgiarfund.org/research\\_portfolio](http://www.cgiarfund.org/research_portfolio)), visited on August 1, 2013.

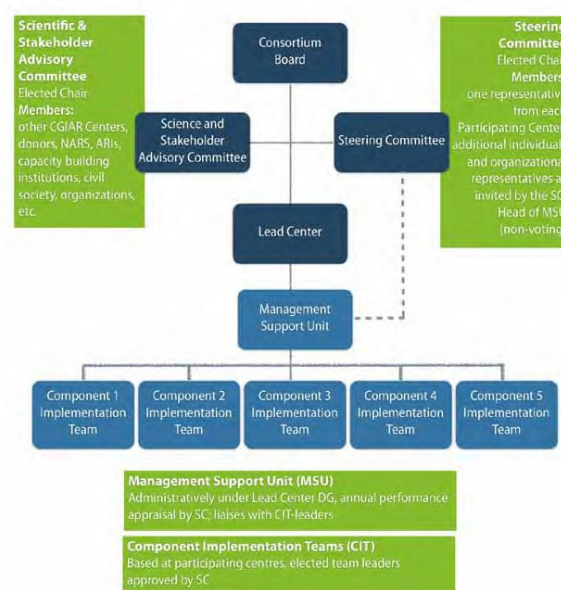
### 3. The CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry

The CGIAR Research Program *Forests, Trees and Agroforestry* (FTA) – the program to be evaluated – was approved by the Fund Council comparatively early, in April 2011, as part of the second batch of CRP approvals (see Table 1). FTA is led by the *Center for International Forestry Research* (CIFOR), headquartered in Bogor, Indonesia. CIFOR was founded and joined the CGIAR in 1993. CIFOR implements the program together with three CGIAR centers and other partners. The CGIAR partner centers are:

- the *World Agroforestry Centre* (previously, and today’s legal name: the *International Council for Research in Agroforestry*, ICRAF), Nairobi, Kenya, was founded in 1977 and joined the CGIAR in 1991;
- *Bioversity International* (previously: the *International Plant Genetic Resources Research Institute*, IPGRI), Rome, Italy, was founded and joined the CGIAR in 1974; and
- the *Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical* (CIAT), headquartered in Cali, Colombia, was founded in 1967 and joined the CGIAR in 1971 as one of the founding centers of the CGIAR.

FTA’s governance and management structure is summarized in Figure 2. CIFOR, the lead center, is to report to the Consortium Board on program implementation. The FTA Steering Committee, composed of representatives of all participating centers and some external partners, is to provide strategic direction, and a Scientific and Stakeholder Advisory Committee is to offer additional advice.

**Figure 2. FTA governance and management structure (FTA 2011, p. 232).**

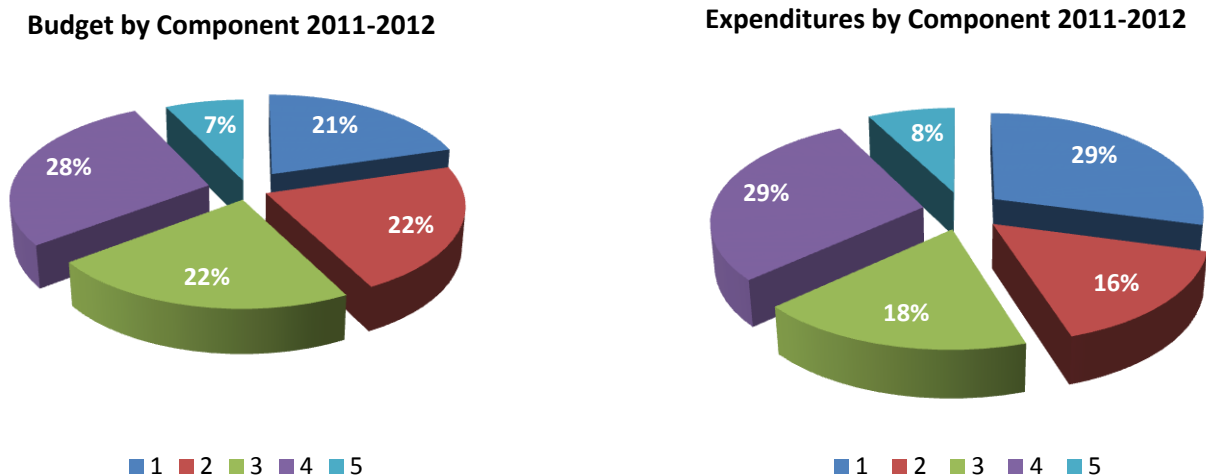


Five components (also called themes in FTA documentation) form the core of FTA’s research and impact strategies:

1. smallholder production systems and markets;
2. management and conservation of forest and tree resources;
3. landscape management for environmental services, biodiversity conservation and livelihoods;
4. climate change adaptation and mitigation; and
5. impacts of trade and investment on forests and people.

In terms of budgets (Figure 3), for 2011<sup>5</sup> and 2012, FTA was dominated by Component 4 (28 percent), followed by Components 1, 2, and 3 (21, 22 and 22 percent, respectively), and Component 5 (7 percent). In terms of actual expenditures (also Figure 3), components 1 and 4 were largest (29 percent each), followed by Components 2 and 3 (16 and 18 percent), and Component 5 (8 percent). It should be noted that the lion’s share of FTA funding is bilateral in nature and that therefore larger spending may be related to additional bilateral grant volumes rather than budget re-allocations or overspending.

*Figure 3. Component budgets and expenditures from program start until year-end 2012 (FTA Performance Report 2012).*



Budget-wise, as shown in Table 2, components 1 and 3 are dominated by ICRAF-implemented projects, and components 4 and 5 by CIFOR. Correspondingly, these components are led by those centers. Component 2 is dominated by Bioversity (47 percent of budget) and CIFOR (41 percent) and led by Bioversity.

<sup>5</sup> After FTA started.



*Table 2. Center budget shares per component for 2012.*

Component	Lead center	Budget shares in percent			
		CIFOR	ICRAF	Bioversity	CIAT
1	ICRAF	22	<b>73</b>	3	2
2	Bioversity	41	12	<b>47</b>	-
3	ICRAF	22	<b>78</b>	-	-
4	CIFOR	<b>77</b>	20	1	2
5	CIFOR	<b>95</b>	3	-	2

The five components are interlinked, and intended to cooperate across components and centers. They are complemented with cross-cutting themes dealing with gender, capacity strengthening, sentinel landscapes, communication/knowledge sharing, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment (MEIA).

In the three sections that follow, the components (section 3.1) and the cross-cutting themes (section 3.2) are described in terms of their rationale, objectives and research themes, and implementation progress to date. The last section (3.3) summarizes FTA's evolving theory of change.

### 3.1. Description of FTA Components

*Note: the information provided in this section is based on FTA documentation (e.g., FTA 2011; 2011a; 2012; 2012a) available to the evaluation team and does not represent any assessment or judgment by the team.*

#### Component 1: Smallholder Production Systems and Markets

**Rationale.** Agroforestry systems (AFS) are becoming increasingly relevant worldwide as society has come to recognize their multiple roles and services: biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, restoration of degraded ecosystems, and tools for rural development. Despite positive developments, AFS are still largely undervalued and underfinanced. There is great potential to enhance the sustainable delivery of various products and services from these systems if constraints related to production capacity and technology, market access, and secure land tenure are removed and more enabling policy and institutional environments supporting small-scale agroforestry producers are developed.

**Objectives and research themes.** The main goal of Component 1, under the leadership of ICRAF, is to inform a new global understanding of the potential for smallholder and



community forests to enhance the wellbeing of the rural poor. Within FTA, Component 1 in particular intends to call the attention of practitioners, academics and policy makers to key issues and approaches in agroforestry and related land use systems that can be useful to address the complex environmental and productivity problems of degraded agricultural lands throughout the world. Research projects in Component 1 have been newly drafted or selected from existing projects as long as they contribute to the three main objectives of the component:

1. enhancing productivity and sustainability of smallholder forestry and agroforestry practices, including food security and nutritional benefits, through better management of production systems;
2. increasing income generation and market integration for smallholders through utilization of forest and agroforestry options; and
3. improving policies and institutions to enhance social assets and to secure rights to forests, trees and land.

To achieve these objectives, research in Component 1 is focused on three broad themes:

- enhanced technical practices that facilitate sustainable smallholder and community forestry and secure safety-nets from forests;
- development of tools, guidelines and approaches that strengthen local organizations and forest enterprises to enhance outcomes from smallholder and community forestry; and
- recommending policies and approaches that promote sustainable livelihoods through smallholder and community forestry.

Projects led by the four participating Centers, CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, and CIAT are included. Ongoing research under Component 1 includes the following projects (the center that houses each project is in parenthesis):

- overcoming constraints to community-based commercial forestry in Indonesia (CIFOR);
- value Chains for Mahogany and Teak Furniture (CIFOR);
- value Chains for Cacao (Bioversity);
- sustainable Management of Dry Forests in Ethiopia (CIFOR);
- Makala Sustainable Fuelwood Project in DRC (ICRAF); and
- Amazon Smallholder and Community Forestry Mosaics (ICRAF).

**Implementation progress.** According to FTA documentation, some of the key accomplishments in the first two years of implementation of Component 1 include:



- in Cameroon, RRCs (Rural Resources Centers, an FTA innovation in seed and seedling delivery) led to more people being aware of agroforestry, and the proportion of people planting high value trees more than doubled;
- positive effects of trees on crop yield were found across the Sahel, of typically 15 to 30 percent improvement under a canopy of mature trees, with trees becoming a significant source of household livelihood;
- in Uganda and Nicaragua, the ‘Gender, Tenure and Community Forests’ Project is well into its second phase, involving the Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) methods in 15 communities and promoting community advocacy with government and NGOs;
- the Makala Project (Sustainable management of wood fuel in the Democratic Republic of Congo) finalized an initiative to monitor the wood fuel value chain around Kinshasa and Kisangani. During 2012 the research reports were disseminated to local stakeholders and government;
- in Zambia, Component 1 collaborated with the Finnish Embassy, the Government of Zambia, and other key stakeholders to develop a 5-year forestry and development plan focused on sustainable wood fuel production.

A new joint CIFOR and ICRAF project by ACIAR to be implemented starting in 2013: Development of timber and non-timber forest products’ production and market strategies for improvement of smallholders’ livelihoods in Indonesia.

## **Component 2: Management and Conservation of Forest and Tree Resources**

**Rationale.** Forest conversion and resource overharvesting and degradation diminish and threaten tree and other forest resources, affecting people’s livelihoods as well as undermining biodiversity and the maintenance of carbon pools and other environmental services. There is a great need to act to conserve and better manage remaining forest and tree resources in situ, circa situ and ex situ. Existing technical, management and governance approaches are insufficient for managing natural forests and woodlands for multiple resources and services to the benefit of the rural poor in developing countries and to conserve the resources, including tree genetic resources that they provide. Demand for forest products is increasing rapidly but most resource populations are mined rather than managed; knowledge on the silviculture and management of priority species must be improved so they can meet the demands of today and tomorrow. In this context, the conservation, availability and sustainable use of tree genetic resources and other forest and woodland species is vital to safeguarding and increase supplies and quality of timber and non-timber products from which rural people obtain food, fuel, fiber and income. Priority species vary among regions and along the gradient from wild to semi-domesticated. Among them are cacao and coconut, major income sources for rural people and also potential models for approaches to conserving and making available valuable diversity of other tree species. At the same time, large areas of degraded land need to be reforested to



become self-sustaining sources of resources and environmental services. The knowledge and tools to do so are lacking.

**Objectives and research themes.** The overarching goal of Component 2, under the leadership of Bioversity, is to increase the likelihood that important forest and tree resources will be available for future generations while – in parallel – improving the well-being of the poor who are dependent on these resources for their livelihoods. The focus is on developing and testing new forest and tree management practices at a level of the forest management unit and for tree populations across the forest to farm gradient. The following key research themes have been developed to fulfill these objectives:

- understanding the threats to populations of important tree species and formulating effective, efficient and equitable genetic conservation strategies;
- conserving and characterizing high-quality germplasm of high-value tree species along the forest-to-farm gradient;
- developing improved silvicultural and monitoring practices for the multiple-use management of forest ecosystems; and
- developing tools and methods to resolve conflicts about distribution of benefits and resource rights in the use of forests and tree resources.

Particular attention is being focused on the FTA Sentinel Landscapes.

**Implementation progress.** To date, the focus has been mainly on output delivery and on engagement with partners in the research process to enhance the likelihood of adoption. The main reported research outputs and “success stories” in FTA documentation include:

- in the Sahel, there is widespread increase in tree cover from farmers encouraging natural regeneration, with over 5 million ha impacting 2.5 million people in Southern Niger alone;
- thematic studies for FAO’s State of the World’s Forest Genetic Resources. This provides a foundation for a global action plan for the conservation of the world’s forest genetic resources;
- a global strategy for conserving cacao diversity was developed through collaboration with key stakeholders and is being promoted;
- an analysis of the implications of the definition of forest degradation for the implementation of restoration and reforestation activities;
- publication of a Special Issue in *Forest Ecology and Management* on “Multiple Use of Tropical Production Forests: From Concept to Reality”, comprising 11 papers;
- development of mechanisms for cooperation between timber concessionaires and communities;



- Modules on forest genetic resources conservation and use to train over 200 students and professionals;
- Outcomes are emerging from projects that have been ongoing for five years or more, notably the United Nations Environment Programme – Global Environment Facility co-funded project on conservation and improved use of fruit trees in Central Asia, which has led to farmers planting locally adapted varieties of fruit and nut trees on degraded land.

### **Component 3: Landscape Management for Environmental Services, Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihoods**

**Rationale.** The driving forces behind ongoing deforestation, forest degradation and associated “forest transition” as well as recovery of ecologically functional forest and tree cover are still not well-known at a landscape level. Current technical approaches and policy and institutional models for managing and monitoring natural forests in many parts of the developing world do not ensure provision of multiple benefits to multiple stakeholders at the landscape scale. Research can contribute to the development of new implementation strategies to alleviate pressure on natural resources and the environment, while at the same time working side by side with stakeholders intending to preserve and improve livelihoods of people affected by land-use transitions and land-use change.

**Objectives and research themes.** Under the leadership of ICRAF, Component 3 has outlined the following objectives:

1. understanding the drivers of forest transition as a prerequisite for their management;
2. understanding the consequences of the forest transition for environmental goods and services and livelihoods; and
3. enhancing response and policy options to sustain and maximize environmental and social benefits from multi-functional landscapes.

**Implementation progress.** As a component with a strong focus on action-oriented research intended to exert effective change on the ground in collaboration with their partners, Component 3 listed the following milestones as part of the first two years of activities:

- the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) endorsed CIFOR and partners’ Landscape Approach;
- the Government of Kenya explored how the Water Act can be reconciled with performance based payments for ecosystem services;
- substantial progress has been made in research synthesis on aspects of landscape management, notably for greenhouse gas emissions from oil palm and land use change in Indonesia;



- three paradigms – commodification, compensation and co-investment – are now recognized in part because of Component 3’s synthesis of economic incentives to support environmental services;
- component 3 has articulated 12 hypotheses for FTA’s Sentinel Landscapes with respect to understanding patterns and drivers of forest transition, mainly related to temporal change, spatial patterns and institutional challenges at the forest/non-forest transition.

#### **Component 4: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation**

**Rationale.** The overall rationale for this component is based on the recognition of the central contribution of forests and trees to carbon sequestration and mitigation of emissions while acknowledging that deforestation and forest degradation are significant sources of carbon emissions and contributors to global warming with adverse impacts on already vulnerable ecosystems and rural people. There are also significant knowledge and data gaps concerning the impacts of changes in the climatic system on forests, trees and agroforestry (climate vulnerability). New knowledge can help to design proper mechanisms for promoting climate change mitigation and enhancing the usefulness of forests, trees and agroforestry systems in increasing climate resilience (climate change adaptation). Further, research can contribute to identifying approaches to gain simultaneous adaptation and mitigation benefits and clarifying potential synergies and trade-offs. All this information and research findings need to be fed efficiently to policy makers (e.g. UNFCCC) and land managers seeking to build forests, trees and agroforestry into climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and improve related governance arrangements.

**Objectives and research themes.** The overall objective of Component 4 is to contribute to the development of new global and national forest-and-climate regimes and sub-national initiatives related to climate change, forests and trees in ways that ensure that they are effective, efficient and equitable. The resulting outcomes will contribute to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and augmenting carbon stocks through better management of forest- and tree-based resources while increasing local and societal resilience through forest-, agroforestry- and tree-based adaptation measures. It is expected that within five years, research results will have shaped key features of the global regulatory systems as well as governance and financing priorities for forest-related M&A measures.

FTA includes three key research themes regarding climate change:

- harnessing forests, trees and agroforestry for climate change mitigation;
- enhancing climate change adaptation through forests, trees and agroforestry; and
- understanding the role of forests, trees and agroforestry in achieving synergies between climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Research carried out under these three foci is planned to secure the integration of different stakeholder groups at different levels. The foreseen research foci are: international- and



national-level policies, sub-national and local initiatives, and best-practice methods. The main research topics by theme and focus are summarized below:

1. Mitigation:

- focus 1 (policies): Interaction between international agreements and national policies and requirements for making these efficient, effective and equitable;
- focus 2 (sub-national): Relation between REDD+ initiatives and local context/potential livelihood improvement;
- focus 3 (methods and tools): Best practices and participative approaches for setting baseline estimations and for the establishment of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems; and socially inclusive approaches for mitigation initiatives.
- geographic priorities: South America: Brazil, Peru, Bolivia; Africa: Ghana, Cameroon, DRC, Tanzania, Kenya; SE Asia: Indonesia, India, Nepal, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea (and Laos and Mexico to be added in 2013 and 2014, respectively).

2. Adaptation:

- focus 1: Role of the international and national policies and funds as means for reducing vulnerability of people and ecosystems;
- focus 2: Climate vulnerability of forests, trees and agroforestry; adaptation measures at the ecosystem level; livelihood and ecosystem resilience; and institutional and technical measures as means for reducing vulnerability of people and ecosystems;
- focus 3: Cost-effective tools for assessing impacts and selecting appropriated EBA measures; social inclusive approaches for EBA measures.
- geographic priorities: Central America: Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua; Africa: Burkina Faso, Mali, Uganda and Tanzania; SE Asia: Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

3. Synergies between mitigation and adaptation (M&A):

- focus 1: Opportunities and modalities for linking M&A in international and national policies; effective governance mechanisms that favor M&A synergies;
- focus 2: Ways for increasing M&A synergies at sub-national and local levels; smallholder land use patterns and M&A;
- focus 3: Best practices and decision support tools for M&A initiatives;
- geographic priorities: Sub-set of above.



FTA's Sentinel Landscapes will be used for understanding changes in mitigation and adaptation variables over time.

**Implementation progress.** According to FTA documentation, around 70 projects include activities in Component 4. Over 75 percent of these projects are solely dedicated to climate change (mitigation and/or adaptation) with a budget of around 55 million USD. CIFOR leads around 65 percent of these projects and ICRAF and CIAT the remaining 35 percent. There are activities in 27 countries. The most relevant countries (according to budget allocation) are Indonesia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania, Vietnam and Peru (in this order) with a budget allocation of 50 percent of the total for the component. A summary of the progress listed under Component 4 so far includes:

- emerging knowledge has been made available through publications on the role of forests and trees for climate change mitigation and adaptation. This includes several scientific articles and other publications like the book *Analyzing REDD* – which summarizes three years of work of the Comparative Global Studies on REDD+, or outputs on institutional issues on REDD. This emerging knowledge has been available to many actors including decision-makers in the UNFCCC, policy makers at the national levels and forest users. This knowledge transfer has taken place using various communication media (see below on outreach);
- progress on methodological issues and tools as well as corresponding training modules. Some relevant examples are:
  - REDD+ methods including stepwise approaches for setting the Reference Emission Levels (REL) and for undertaking MRV. The REL framework was accepted by the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in 2011;
  - tools for forest and adaptation (e.g. CRISTAL-forest);
  - best practices realizing the potential of ecosystem-based adaptation approach (EBA);
- FTA has provided an important understanding on the role of agroforestry systems and trees outside the forest in addressing climate change (both mitigation and adaptation) using the concrete research results from country partners both in Africa (e.g. Cameroon) and Latin America (e.g. Colombia). Further it has made relevant progress in designing tools and methods for clarifying the link between securing ecosystem services (including biodiversity conservation) and climate change strategies;
- progress on data collection in the following:
  - basic local and satellite based data for setting a reference emission levels for REDD+;
  - carbon mitigation potential of AF systems;





- climate change impacts on forest ecosystems and trees; and
- climate stress coping strategies at the household level;
- outreach: The program has used several communication channels including technical reports for partner countries, training, scientific/peer reviewed papers (at least 80 publications), policy briefs, blogs and internet trainings, preparation of guidelines and manuals (e.g. on assessing REDD+ feasibility, projecting climate change impacts on agroforestry systems, assessment methods for EBA and its relation to mitigation). One example is the FTA outreach work – across all FTA components – at Forest Day 6 during the last CoP of the UNFCCC. The Forest Day itself created a space for dialogue and knowledge exchange for 800 experts including 240 climate change negotiators. This outreach strategy seems to give access to a very wide community of researchers, practitioners and policy makers dealing with climate change, especially in developing countries.

### **Component 5: Impacts of Trade and Investment on Forests and People**

**Rationale.** This component, with CIFOR as a lead center, has been designed to address global, regional and national trade and investment trends that influence the sustainability of forest management, forest landscapes and people's livelihoods. Trade and investment are seen as major underlying drivers presenting both opportunities and threats related to land and forests use. The rationale for the design of this component is largely based on identifying ways to minimize the adverse impacts of global trade and investments by large-scale, transnational operators in forests and people's livelihoods, and their trade-offs. It assumes that improved understanding of the impacts and trade-offs between accelerated investment and globalized trade in people's livelihoods and forest conditions may contribute towards improved policy responses. According to the FTA Proposal (FTA 2011), there are no other comprehensive, multi-level comparative research programs, with a look across diverse regions, that aim at assessing sustainability impacts of forest-related trade and investment and related trade-offs.

**Objectives and research themes.** The overall objective of Component 5 is to contribute to reducing the negative impacts and enhancing the positive impacts of global and regional trade and investment on forests and forest-dependent communities through contributing to major shifts in forest-related trade and investment patterns. There are two major research themes:

- understanding the processes and impacts of forest-related trade and investment; and
- enhancing responses and policy options to mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts of trade and investment.

Five subject areas that cut across the two themes have been prioritized:

- impacts of growing demand in emerging economies for forest and agricultural products, minerals and energy on forests and agroforestry landscapes and the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities;



- impacts associated with bioenergy development;
- drivers and impacts associated with large-scale agribusiness investments, with emphasis on large-scale land acquisition, processing and trade and their impacts on economic development, forest conditions and distribution of benefits;
- dynamics of illegal logging and timber trade linked to domestic and global markets, and effectiveness of various policy measures in controlling (illegal) forest utilization trade and mitigating associated negative impacts; and
- financial flows affecting forests and deficiencies in the financial governance systems that enable persistent forest-related corruption and money laundering.

The most important global research themes deal with the analysis of global investment and trade trends related to timber and commodities that influence forest landscapes, the impact of China-related trade and investments, the effectiveness of voluntary multi-stakeholder global and regional processes associated with trade agreements and negotiations (WTO, regional trade agreements) and controlling trade (FLEG, FLEGT-VPA, US Lacey Act etc.), and promotion of responsible financing and investment by the international public and private financial sector. Under this component, a major project was implemented looking at the impacts of biofuel policies of the European Union (EU) in relation to the expansion of biofuel feedstock cultivation and biofuel production in developing countries.

Although much of the research under this component is of global nature, it also looks at the local impacts of investments and policy response to manage such impacts at multiple levels from global processes and mechanisms to sub-national initiatives. In 2013-2015, about one third of research is planned with a purely global orientation, and in addition sub-national and national level research is linked to specific global or regional processes. The FTA Proposal (FTA 2011) identifies the following priority regions: Congo Basin, East and Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, Mekong region, Amazon Basin and Cerrado/Chaco. Altogether, 20 countries are listed. The review of research proposals and completed research projects indicates that Indonesia, Congo Basin and Brazil are prioritized.

**Implementation progress.** According to FTA documentation, Component 5 has made good progress in delivering the planned outputs during the first two years of implementation. Based on the FTA Performance Monitoring Report 2012, (indicator and “traffic light” annexes) more than 90 percent of the planned milestones were met. One major study dealing with the local economic geography of greenhouse gas emissions embedded in trade in the Amazon has been delayed for implementation as part of the Sentinel Landscapes initiative.

In 2012, Component 5 organized three major events dealing with processes of formalization of access to, and trade in natural resources and land; corruption and natural resource management, and biofuel contribution to bioeconomy. In 2011, eight such events were organized. In addition, Component 5 researchers have informed policy dialogues both at the global and national levels in numerous workshops and meetings and a south-south exchange on sustainable oil palm development was organized. No information is available on the use and impacts of the organized fora and of the provided information.

According to FTA documentation, some of the main outputs include:



- in 2012, the China-Africa project conducted fieldwork on value chains and household impacts of Chinese trade and investment, focusing on timber, in Gabon, Mozambique and Zimbabwe;
- an EC-funded project for assessing the implications and trade-offs and biofuel development on forests was completed in March 2012, under which about 50 publications were produced and a web-based dataset of investments in biofuels was produced;
- work assessing the influence of large-scale investments in forests and local people's rights was concluded in Papua Province, Indonesia, that culminated with the publication of several articles and the expansion of this work to Kalimantan;
- analysis on domestic and international timber markets was published in Cameroon and Gabon, and in process reports for DRC, Indonesia and Brazil, with inputs on FLEGT implementation and national policies;
- a thematic Sentinel Landscape research "Oil palm: Landscapes, market chains and investment flows" has been initiated that involves a network of several partners working actively in five countries where there is oil palm development;

### 3.2. Description of FTA Cross-Cutting Topics

*Note: the information provided in this section is based on FTA documentation (e.g., FTA 2011; 2011a; 2012; 2012a) available to the evaluation team and does not represent any assessment or judgment by the team.*

#### Sentinel Landscapes

**Rationale.** There is a shortage of multi-disciplinary long-term data sets necessary to understand the drivers and impacts of land use change and impacts of various development interventions including forestry. As most ecological systems, agroforestry, due to its multiple components, defies rigorous replication and statistical analyses. The Sentinel Landscapes approach is expected to mitigate these drawbacks while providing global focal points for multidisciplinary research dealing e.g. with sustainable exploitation of natural resources. The CGIAR has also been lacking research instruments for engagement and dialogue with the broader suite of researchers, development efforts and stakeholders working in rural areas for enabling collaboration and collation of comparative results and the identification of cross-national patterns.

**Objectives and research themes.** The objectives of the Sentinel Landscapes cross-cutting theme are:

1. to work in a coherent set of Sentinel Landscapes for long-term research where existing data sets and partnerships can be used to monitor the impacts of exogenous and endogenous change at the landscape scale; and



2. to develop and apply field-tested and standardized research protocols to allow global comparative studies of forest transition stages, economic and demographic conditions, and climatic and biophysical determinants of environmental services and livelihood options.

This approach provides a framework for comparative analysis at multiple scales, from intensive studies specific to a single location to analysis on national, eco-regional and international levels using large-scale samples (e.g. to support global comparative research). This is expected to allow the generation of high-value international public goods, when conducted within a robust conceptual framework and research design.

The Sentinel Landscapes approach cuts across all five FTA components. For example, Sentinel Landscapes work is being used by Component 3 to test the scope for using policy instruments which vary along the tree cover transition. The approach also provides Components 1 and 2 with an opportunity to test one of the most controversial issues in forestry and agroforestry science: how replicable are results of forestry and agroforestry experiments? Using Sentinel Landscapes for at least a portion of the research under each FTA component is intended to give a strong boost to the integration of research across components and to limit the risks of “research silos”.

So far, a total of six Sentinel Landscapes have been selected but the list may expand. Some Sentinel Landscapes are geographically defined while others are issue-bounded. Geographically defined Sentinel Landscapes are:

- Central America: project regions in Nicaragua/Honduras, and, Maya forest (regions in Honduras/Guatemala);
- Western Amazon: sites located Madre de Dios and Ucayali departments in Peru, Acre state in Brazil, Pando in Bolivia;
- Southeast Asia: Mekong and Borneo research sites; and
- West Africa project sites (Congo Basin and Sahel).

There are also two issue-bounded Sentinel Landscapes:

- tropical Forestry, referring to production forests across a set of sites in different geographical locations); and
- oil palm: Landscapes, market chains and investment flows.

**Implementation progress.** Progress so far, as documented by FTA, is summarized below:

- meeting and communicating with all FTA Components to promote the concept of conducting research in Sentinel Landscapes;
- developing criteria for candidate landscapes. Organizing a workshop in Bogor in May 2012 to finalize selection criteria of a network of priority landscapes;



- conducting a detailed analysis of existing networks;
- selecting initially six Sentinel Landscapes;
- agreeing on baseline data collection, scope and methodology; and
- organizing 12 workshops in 2012 across Sentinel Landscapes.

### **Gender-Responsive Research in FTA**

**Rationale.** Women's roles in managing forests, agroforestry and tree genetic resources are often underappreciated and their potential to contribute to improving livelihoods is often not fully tapped. Further, women, various ethnic and religious groups and disadvantaged people do often not enjoy equal access to forest and land resources and services and cannot participate equally in decision-making on management, use and allocation of forest and tree resources. Not enough is known about how deforestation and forest degradation, as well as forest transition, affect vulnerable groups and more evidence is needed on how the relative participation of men and women in decision-making about and control of benefits influences sustainable use and management of forest and tree resources. Research can enhance the understanding of how institutional, cultural and attitudinal contexts entrench inequity and squander opportunities to improve women's lives and how to improve gender equity in forestry and agroforestry to the benefit of women and broader local and national social and economic development.

**Objectives, strategies and research themes.** According to FTA documentation, gender is integrated into all FTA components and activities with the objectives of:

1. identifying policies, technologies and practices that will enhance gender equity in access, use and management of forests and trees, and the distribution of associated benefits; and
2. avoiding or mitigating negative impacts on women and other vulnerable groups associated with relevant local or global processes.

Each of FTA's five components has a dedicated budget for gender-responsive research. The program includes gender-related research questions and looks at developing gender sensitive research methods in all five components.

FTA uses four approaches for achieving gender inclusion as follows:

1. partnerships and alliances: through collaboration with government ministries, NGOs, and women's organizations;
2. gender disaggregated data and analysis;
3. adaptive learning, including awareness raising and capacity building for men and women; and



4. knowledge sharing based i.a. in the lessons learned from pilot projects to demonstrate the value addition of increased attention to gender.

The program proposes the following main areas of gender-sensitive research:

- resource use and management;
- resource tenure;
- decision-making;
- access to information and knowledge; and
- access to, distribution of, and control over benefits (e.g. REDD+ benefits; value chains).

Women are not the only social group suffering from social inequity. Therefore, FTA is intended to also cater to other disadvantaged or vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples, the youth and the elderly. For example, the program emphasizes a disaggregation of the generalized categories of ‘men’ and ‘women’ in order to capture other salient attributes. A careful use of participatory methodologies is intended to provide scope for locating the most salient features of disadvantage in each setting and for ensuring their inclusion in the research and action process.

**Implementation progress.** In 2012, an FTA Strategy for Gender-responsive Research and Action was prepared, based on the CGIAR Consortium-level gender strategy that was approved in early 2013, to provide guidance on mainstreaming gender issues and gender-oriented research across all five FTA components.

Main outputs and achievements, as documented by FTA, include:

- gender Strategy approved in early 2013;
- gender equality targets have been defined;
- institutional architecture for gender mainstreaming has been developed in a form of guidelines, recruited staff and capacity building;
- gender methods manual and gender framework in English, Bahasa, French and Spanish have been developed;
- ICRAF has formed a Gender Implementing Team;
- Bioversity has hired a gender specialist;
- Bioversity has conducted training on gender transformative methods;
- Bioversity has established a Gender Fellowship program that is funding 5 developing country scientists to analyze gender aspects of ongoing Component 2 FTA projects;



- a guide for writing gender-responsive proposals for scientists and guide to reviewing/approving gender-responsive proposals for managers has been developed (CIFOR);
- field tips for conducting gender-responsive research have been developed (Bioversity);
- five workshops to train FTA researchers in gender concepts, methods and integration have been held;
- a gender strategy at-a-glance i.e. a short, 2-3 page version of the gender strategy has been synthesized; and
- four active gender post-docs positions have been filled and two more post-doc recruitments are currently under way (CIFOR, ICRAF). A gender Finland APO (CIFOR) has been filled and Component 1 has hired a gender specialist as a staff member.

FTA has also produced a series of articles on gender-related aspects. In particular Components 1 and 3 have been active in producing gender-related research dealing with:

- analysis of women's participation in forest management decisions (C1);
- analysis of gender-relevant laws and policies in community forestry in Uganda and Nicaragua (C1);
- gender and value chains (C1);
- gender differentials in the knowledge, use, management and threats to food trees (C2);
- gender differentiated analysis of access, use and management in the context of concession allocations (C2);
- gender differentiation and food security (C3);
- ecological corridor concepts and gender-specific dispersal (C3);
- global comparisons of gender, poverty and forest use/management (C3);
- analysis of women's roles in ecosystem management and land-use decision-making process (C3);
- gender differentiated analysis of environmental services and land-use management (C3);
- gender differential access and control of resources (C3);
- tools and methods for assessing vulnerability and planning adaptation with local communities (C4);



- gender, participation in REDD+ initiatives; and
- gender analysis of the impacts of trade and investments, including assessment of inclusive and gender equitable business models (C5).

### Capacity Building

**Rationale.** There is a substantial capacity gap in most developing countries in areas dealing with different aspects of forestry and agroforestry both in terms of institutional capacity and human resource capacity. In particular, there has been an erosion of capacity in forestry and agroforestry research while, at the same time, research needs at local and also global levels have increased both in terms of capacity and complexity. Capacity strengthening is seen as a crucial element of FTA both in terms of helping developing countries to undertake relevant, quality research and in implementing FTA research objectives and impact targets.

**Objectives and strategies.** The objective of FTA capacity building is to strengthen the capacities of forest/agroforestry research communities, intermediary institutions and networks, and teaching and training institutions. There are five main strategies:

1. capacity assessment;
2. individual capacity building;
3. institutional capacity building;
4. supporting teaching and training organizations; and
5. building and supporting networks among research and intermediary organizations.

**Implementation progress.** Capacity building has been taking place on-the-job through partnerships with different research organizations and through carrying out formal trainings and workshops to train researchers in specific research projects. According to FTA documentation, in 2012, FTA conducted almost 100 workshops or training programs in nearly 40 countries, reaching a total of some 3000 participants. FTA researchers have supervised 60 Ph.D. and M.Sc. students.

FTA has developed a new capacity building strategy and has initiated, in 2013, an FTA-wide research project “Toward more effective capacity building – a comparative evaluation of FTA partner center experiences.”

### Communication and Knowledge Sharing

**Rationale.** FTA, as all CRPs, is an outcome and impact-oriented research program. Unless research findings are communicated effectively to the relevant intermediary and ultimate target groups and unless the generated knowledge is widely shared and made easily available to those interested, the planned impacts are unlikely to materialize. A CGIAR Stripe review





(CGIAR 2009) has raised the concern that the majority of CGIAR publications may remain relatively unknown. Bridges between science and policy must be built in order to meet FTA impact goals, requiring effective knowledge-sharing in addition to relevant, high quality research. Furthermore, the challenges are also very much related to the effectiveness of partnerships in research and through which impact pathways of respective FTA components need to materialize.

**Objectives and strategies.** The goal is to maximize the impact of FTA outputs through creating and implementing an integrated communication program across all centers. The main objectives are:

1. create a strong and dynamic online presence for FTA;
2. create cutting-edge publications to maximize impact of FTA research findings;
3. market FTA outputs to key stakeholders; and
4. promote FTA-internal communications to maximize synergies.

The key strategies for implementation are:

- more effective dissemination of FTA publications;
- sharing knowledge through conferences; and
- developing a dynamic interactive website.

**Implementation progress.** The FTA Communications Team has continued operating and undertaking a range of activities to improve communication and knowledge-sharing across FTA components. Main outputs and activities, according to FTA documentation, include:

- joint FTA booths in conferences;
- coordinated blogging across centers; and
- reaching an increasing number of stakeholders, including publication downloads, web and blog hits, media followers and conference attendees.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment (MEIA) as a Cross-Cutting Theme**

**Overview of the FTA MEIA strategy.** The CGIAR principles, its Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, and the draft Consortium-level Monitoring Principles guide Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment (MEIA) activities of all CRPs. FTA is to manage its operations and projects to achieve the system-level results set forth in the CGIAR Strategy and Results Frameworks (CGIAR 2011; 2012) and monitor and evaluate progress toward achievement of tangible and measurable results, outputs and outcomes under that framework as well as assessing financial and operational performance and partnership and



other stakeholder engagement. Based on these frameworks, an FTA MEIA strategy has been developed to:

- foster a strong outcome and system-level impact orientation, based on clear and explicit impact pathways, that link FTA research inputs to research outputs and then to component outcome and intermediate development outcomes (IDOs) which all contribute to the SLOs;
- provide guidance for strategic planning at different levels;
- provide feedback to enable learning and adaptive management;
- provide information for internal and external semi-annual and annual reporting;
- create a hierarchical system where lower-level monitoring, evaluation and reporting feed into higher-level internal and external evaluations and provide basic information for impact assessments;
- ensure overall coherence and reasonably standardized approaches for monitoring and reporting across FTA at different levels; and
- provide evidence on returns on investment in research under FTA.

Outcome mapping, Outcomes Theory and Contribution Analysis are tools promoted by FTA to be used at various levels from project to theme. Other tools listed in the FTA proposal (FTA 2011) include Most Significant Change Analysis, social networking analysis, discourse analyses, bibliometric analysis and conventional before/after and with/without quantitative impact analyses. Monitoring efforts are focused on indicators of progress toward outcomes (called “progress markers”) and evaluation is focused on the delivery of outcomes (as proxies for impacts).

The success of MEIA and the management of the entire FTA hinges on the development of sound impact pathways on the component and project-level as well and on linking research outputs to CRP level outcomes and then to system level objectives.

A significant share of FTA research is oriented towards supporting policy and institutional change which creates methodological challenges for MEIA, e.g. in terms of counterfactual analysis and development of appropriate outcome/impact indicators, and the design and management of research interventions. Monitoring and evaluation in FTA is challenging also because of the complexity and inter-related nature of the impact pathways at different levels.

**Organizing MEIA work.** Monitoring is the responsibility of each Component Coordinator, supported by senior scientists from participating centers and by the Management Support Unit. Component Coordinators are responsible for providing regular and timely semi-annual and annual progress monitoring reports and contribute to the FTA final report.

A dedicated MEIA Team with scientists from participating centers and partner organizations has been formed to help FTA components and projects develop clear and explicit impact pathways and progress markers, and in general develop harmonized MEIA approaches and



tools within FTA. The MEIA team is also responsible for coordinating the development of the FTA-level IDOs and conducting or coordinating internal evaluations.

Bilateral funding dominates FTA research which also creates additional monitoring and reporting requirements and also another layer of evaluations.

**Implementation progress.** Apart from the establishment of the MEIA team itself, FTA documentation lists the following achievements until and including 2012:

- a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment Strategy for FTA (2012-2016) in 2012;
- more detailed impact pathways and underlying theories of change descriptions for FTA and its five components, including a DoView Outcomes Model in 2013;
- participatory development of IDOs;
- annual and semi-annual progress monitoring reports for 2011 and 2012;
- development of FTA operational plans with output targets and verifiable indicators for the program components and sub-components as well as for the FTA MEIA work for 2013-2015;
- outcome mapping training for Component 2 staff;
- planning for ex-post impact studies in Congo Basin and Guinea;
- template and first applications of narrative progress reporting by component and use of “traffic light” system and progress indicators (markers) in performance monitoring); and
- review of Component 2 by an external evaluator.

### 3.3. FTA’s Evolving Theory of Change

FTA’s initial theory of change is summarized in the FTA proposal document (FTA 2011) and a more detailed summary of theories of change for each FTA component can be found in Annex B to this inception report.

The outcomes of individual components are to ultimately contribute to four CGIAR system-level outcomes (SLOs). These SLOs are:

- reduction in rural poverty (SLO1);
- increase in food security (SLO2);
- improved human nutrition and health (SLO3); and



- sustainable management of natural resources (SLO4).

In 2012, the program significantly advanced the articulation of Intermediary Development Outcomes (IDOs), explaining how FTA research components contribute to these and, through them, to the SLOs. The generic theory of change underlying FTA, and associated impact pathways, recognize both the policy-oriented and smallholder foci of its research. Noting the difficulty in tracing pathways of research right through to the SLO level, the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) of the CGIAR recommended that CRP-level Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) needed to be defined to correspond with the System-level IDOs and to be supported by carefully constructed impact pathways linked to SLOs.

FTA's current, more detailed and refined theory of change model comprises the generic theory of change, component-level impact pathways and descriptions of how those are linked to FTA-level IDOs, system-level IDOs and, ultimately, SLOs. FTA has introduced an interactive online model to represent and visualize these relationships. The model schematically represents the main research outputs, and the pathways by which those outputs (and the process itself) influence partners and research users. In turn, these partners and users are assumed to have influence at higher levels, and contribute to the delivery of IDOs.

The program is currently in the process of further developing its IDOs and overall and component-level impact pathways. The following seven FTA-level draft IDOs – and their relation to SLOs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – were shared with the evaluation team at the time this report was finalized.

#### “Enabling environment IDOs”

1. policies and practices supporting sustainable and equitable management of forests and trees adopted by conservation and development organizations, national governments and international bodies.
2. local institutions strengthened and collective action enhanced for improved forest and tree management in landscapes.

*The IDOs 1 and 2 contribute to the achievement of the remaining IDOs, as such they concern all SLOs and are directly aligned with the proposed SDG 10 (Good Governance and Effective Institutions)*

#### “Impact-type IDOs”:

3. greater gender equity in decision-making and control over FTA resource use, management and benefits are improved through women's empowerment. *All SLOs; SDG 2 (Empower Girls and Women and Achieve Gender Equity);*
4. income from goods and services derived from FTA systems enhanced. *SLO 1; SDG 1 (End Poverty);*
5. production and availability of foods, fuel and other products from FTA systems increased for poor dependent people. *SLO 2 and SLO 3; SDG 5 (Ensure Food Security*



*and Good Nutrition) and SDG 8 (Create Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods and Equitable Growth);*

6. resilience to environmental and economic variability, shocks and longer term changes of rural communities enhanced through greater adaptive capacity to manage FTA systems. *SLO 4; SDG 9 (Manage Natural Resource Assets Sustainably) and SDG 11 (Ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies);*
7. biodiversity and ecosystem services (including carbon sequestration) from forests and trees conserved or improved in key target countries. *SLO 4; SDG 9 (Manage Natural Resource Assets Sustainably).*

FTA is a large and complex program and individual impact pathways are numerous and interwoven and all impact pathways are expected to result in contributions to various IDOs, suggesting an underlying intertwined change process which remains to be clarified.

The foreseen impacts imply major changes on various levels:

- changes in the behavior of individuals (farmers, rural people in general, consumers, policy makers, REDD and other practitioners), communities, SMEs and companies and how they interact with each other and with various government institutions;
- changes in local, national, regional and global level policies, legislation and institutional arrangements; and
- changes in the adoption of new technologies or making better use of already available technologies and information.

Such transformational change requires a strong rationale, linking the specific component projects to outputs, outputs to the IDOs and then to SLOs and system level IDOs, as well as a set of related assumptions.



## 4. Purpose, Audience and Scope of the Evaluation

### 4.1. Purpose and Audience

The principal purpose of this evaluation is to enhance the contribution that FTA is likely to make to reaching CGIAR goals and to solving evolving global, regional and national forestry and agroforestry-related challenges. In order to inform an interim phase and/or the second phase of FTA that are likely to be designed while the evaluation is still ongoing, emerging evaluation results will be shared with the FTA team as described in section 7.4.

The principal audiences under this purpose are the governance bodies and the management of FTA and its participating centers, as well as the CGIAR Consortium and the CGIAR Fund. The CGIAR Fund Council will be the formal recipient of this evaluation.

Further audiences are FTA stakeholders external to the CGIAR. These consist of research partner organizations, upstream boundary partners, whose decisions and policies are to be informed by FTA research, and downstream boundary partners, i.e. the intended intermediary users of FTA outputs. A preliminary list of these partners has been compiled by the evaluation team based on available documentation and own knowledge in Annex C but makes no attempt of exhaustive coverage of FTA's large stakeholder universe.

A secondary purpose of the evaluation is to help the CGIAR Consortium, the CGIAR Fund, and the ISPC in building a body of experience on the suitability of structures and governance and management arrangements of CGIAR Research Programs.

Another secondary purpose is providing the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement with implementation experience of CRP evaluations in view of future CRP evaluations.

### 4.2. Scope and Boundaries

This Inception Report refines the scope set in the draft terms of reference for this evaluation.

**The evaluation covers program planning, all FTA research activities, and related governance and management processes from program inception in early 2011 to a cut-off point in mid or late 2013.**

FTA research is understood to comprise of:

- **new FTA research**, i.e. FTA research projects planned and started after FTA became operational around July 2011, and
- **transferred FTA research**, i.e. FTA research projects planned and started before but ended after FTA became operational (or still being active).

At this point, this nomenclature is adopted for convenience only and does not imply any judgment about the type, relevance or direction of research. Any assessment of how new and



transferred research may differ will pay tribute to the fact that FTA became operational gradually over time, rather than at a specific date.

**This implies that, for transferred research projects, the period under investigation in this evaluation extends also to before 2011.**

Research covered by the evaluation is restricted to projects mapped to FTA. To this end, it is important to keep in mind that – while some FTA projects are fully funded through the unrestricted funding channels set up as part of the recent CGIAR reform – most FTA projects are based on project-specific bilateral grant contracts between the implementing centers and donors that effectively bypass those unrestricted channels. Therefore, project mapping depends also on what is “declared” as an FTA project by the participating centers. Most of those projects also receive an unrestricted funding component which may be used as a criterion for demarcating FTA from non-FTA projects as long as this financial information can be obtained for all projects in a reliable and consistent manner. Moreover, projects may also be partially mapped, e.g. only parts of projects, to FTA.

Not all evaluations question suggested in the preliminary evaluation matrix (CGIAR 2013, Annex) will be addressed, or not to the degree suggested, as summarized in Annex D.



## 5. Evaluation Questions, Principles, and Criteria

### 5.1. Principal Evaluation Questions

The evaluation covers and is organized around the following six principal evaluation questions:

1. How coherent and relevant are FTA objectives?
2. What is the comparative advantage of FTA?
3. Is FTA research of high quality?
4. Is FTA likely to deliver its intended results?
5. Are FTA cross-cutting activities relevant and effective?
6. Are FTA institutional arrangements effective and efficient?

These six evaluation questions categorize the 89 specific preliminary evaluation questions provided in the earlier draft terms of reference (CGIAR 2013, Annex) and cover their content apart from exceptions that are detailed in Annex D. The usefulness of a simplified set of top-level evaluation questions lies in the guidance and structure they provide for analysis and for the final report.

All questions are both summative and formative in nature, i.e. they examine the past to draw insights and recommendations for the future. In addition, question 4 – and to some extent also question 5 – assess the likelihood of future results on the basis of currently available information as described in more detail in section 6.4.

It is understood that answering these evaluation questions requires a thorough understanding of the CGIAR-internal and external context, including the legal, regulatory, and financial operating environment being established in the reformed CGIAR.

In what follows, the evaluation questions are presented in more detail.

**1. How coherent and relevant are FTA objectives?** This entails the assessment of logical coherence of program- and component-level objectives and impact pathways, the degree to which project-level objectives fit into program- and component-level objectives, and the evolution of this fit with the onset of FTA. Relevance is then assessed from the *supply side*, by analyzing how well FTA's research objectives answer to key global, regional, national and land-landscape level forestry and agro-forestry challenges and opportunities and how FTA objectives and impact pathways match with CGIAR system-level policies, for example how FTA and system-level Intermediary Development Outcomes (IDOs) relate to each other. From the *demand side*, relevance is assessed by how well FTA objectives and impact pathways respond to the needs of intermediary users and ultimate beneficiaries of FTA products. Finally, the overall coverage of research objectives, as well as the segmentation of FTA research into components, is critically examined for gaps and overlaps.





*This question assesses coherence and relevance on the basis of FTA objectives and impact pathways and makes no assessment of FTA implementation performance (which will be assessed in subsequent questions).*

**2. What is the comparative advantage of FTA?** This covers *horizontal relevance*, i.e. to what extent FTA capitalizes on the comparative advantages of its participating centers and key partners, and whether the choice of participating centers and partners maximizes overall comparative advantage. This also covers *vertical relevance*, i.e. whether FTA as a program – as well as its constituting centers and partners – operate at the right levels in the landscape of global, regional, national and subnational programs and within the right segments of the program’s impact pathways to make fullest use of their relative strengths. Finally, this question also assesses the *relevance of design*, i.e. to what degree the current component structure and the institutional arrangements of FTA are conducive to strengthening its comparative advantage.

*The assessment of relevance of design will draw upon evaluation question 6.*

**3. Is FTA research of high quality?** This covers quality of science in a *narrow sense* as well as in a *wider sense*. In a *narrow sense*, quality of science is assessed by examining whether conditions for high quality scientific output are present, i.e. whether scientific staff is sufficiently qualified, enabled and motivated, and whether technical and other resources and support are adequate. The quality of scientific outputs and of scientific ex-ante and ex-post peer review and other quality assurance procedures is examined. In a *wider sense*, quality of science is understood as one necessary step towards program effectiveness and assesses the degree to which research is designed and prioritized according to its potential for future development and environmental impact, including providing incentives and a space for innovation and learning from failure, and the usefulness of FTA’s forest and land use transition framework.

*In the narrow sense, the assessment of scientific quality will focus on FTA center staff. It should be noted that FTA outputs are not restricted to published research as, for example, the case for germplasm and applied technology. This question will draw to some extent on question 5. The analysis of quality of science in the wider sense will overlap with questions 1 and 4.*

**4. Is FTA likely to deliver its intended results?** This question assesses both *progress to date* as well as *likely future results* and covers both transferred and new FTA research (see section 4.2). *Progress to date* is analyzed by comparing spending, project implementation, project outputs and outcomes (if any, and if assessable) to operational and strategic targets. The assessment of *likely future results* builds on the *progress to date* and the assessment of scientific quality (question 3) and examines the conditions for future outputs, outcomes, and impacts along project and component-level impact pathways. The latter represents a central methodology in this evaluation that is described in more detail in section 6.4.

*This question will draw on questions 1 and 5. In-depth analysis on the project- level is restricted to 3-5 sample projects per component.*

**5. Are FTA cross-cutting activities relevant and effective?** Each cross-cutting activity is assessed on the *program level* as well as on a *component and project level*. On the *component*



*and project level*, the degree to which cross-cutting objectives and activities are integrated into projects and components is examined. On the *program level*, central additional activities (if existent) not mainstreamed into components are assessed. Overall, the effectiveness of cross-cutting activities is analyzed against objectives for these activities. The following cross-cutting and support activities will be covered with emphases as indicated:

- a. **Sentinel Landscapes:** contributions to FTA and other research, international public goods produced, (financial) sustainability.
- b. **Gender:** FTA gender strategy, degree of mainstreaming and implementation status.
- c. **Capacity Development:** FTA capacity development strategy, degree of mainstreaming and implementation status.
- d. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment:** harmonization and coverage of project- and program-level M&E, relevance and usefulness of results frameworks and related indicators, contributions of impact assessments to project, component and program objectives.
- e. **Partnerships:** FTA partnership strategy, inclusiveness and coverage of required partners, relevance and effectiveness of current partnerships.
- f. **Communication:** FTA communication strategy, relevance and contribution to delivering FTA outputs and outcomes, targeting of boundary partners and intended users.

*In-depth analysis on the project level is restricted to 3-5 sample projects per component.*

**6. Are FTA institutional arrangements effective and efficient?** This covers the question of organizational effectiveness and whether FTA-induced transaction costs appear to be justified by gains in program performance and organizational effectiveness, for example by realizing collaborative synergies among participating centers or by enabling FTA centers and partners to – collectively – address priority research areas more effectively than before.

This question covers the following areas with emphases as indicated:

- a. **governance and management arrangements:** coverage, gaps and overlaps in standard governance and management functions, governance and management efficiency, incentives for reaching FTA objectives in the most efficient way;
- b. **administrative procedures:** administrative efficiency, staff time requirements, advantages and disadvantages of using center versus potential program-owned (or potentially emerging CGIAR-level) systems and procedures;
- c. **financial management:** budgeting and management of FTA financial resources, management of unrestricted versus bilateral funding, financial flexibility and sustainability of FTA.

## 5.2. Evaluation Principles and Criteria

The evaluation will follow established international evaluation principles (OECD DAC 1991) but, at the same time, will take into account and provide feedback on emerging evaluation principles at the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement.

The evaluation will cover the standard evaluation criteria *Relevance*, *Effectiveness*, *Efficiency*, *Impact*, and *Sustainability* as defined by the OECD DAC (OECD DAC 2010) and further adapted and detailed for Global and Regional Partnership Programs (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group 2007). In addition, the evaluation will also cover the additional evaluation criterion *Quality of Science*. The evaluation questions described in the previous section are related to these evaluation criteria as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3. Coverage of evaluation criteria by evaluation questions**

Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria					
	Relevance	Effective-ness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainabi- lity	Quality of Science
1. How coherent and relevant are FTA objectives?	■	■				
2. What is the comparative advantage of FTA?	■		■			
3. Is FTA research of high quality?		■		■		■
4. Is FTA likely to deliver its intended results?		■		■	■	
5. Are FTA cross-cutting activities relevant and effective?	■	■			■	
6. Are FTA institutional arrangements effective and efficient?			■		■	

In contrast to the five OECD DAC criteria for which international consensus definitions exist, and in spite of a growing body of guidance (e.g., CGIAR 2002; 2005; Sumner et al. 2009; IDRC 2011), no such consensus seems to exist for the *Quality of Science* criterion. For the purposes of this evaluation, therefore, this criterion is defined through the related evaluation questions and the methods and tools for information gathering and analysis associated with investigating it that are presented in Chapter 6.

The evaluation will cover the evaluation criteria with different intensity.

- **Relevance** will be thoroughly evaluated, covering five different dimensions. Evaluation question 1 assesses the need for research in the field of forests, agroforestry and trees both from the perspective of the international community

(*supply-side relevance*) as well as from the perspective of intended intermediary and ultimate beneficiaries (*demand side relevance*). Evaluation question 2 examines FTA's placement in the landscape of global, regional, national and subnational programs and organizations in terms of competition and overlap (*horizontal relevance*) and complementarity to up- and downstream boundary partners (*vertical relevance*). Finally, also as part of evaluation question 2 but drawing on the findings on FTA's institutional arrangements (question 6), relevance of FTA's setup (*relevance of design*) is compared to the situation before FTA was established.

- **Effectiveness and impact** are evaluated in evaluation questions 4 and 5 by complementing a *summative* assessment of results achieved to date with a forward-looking analysis of the likelihood for future results. Due to the fact that FTA is a young program, results achieved to date in research projects started after FTA was formed are likely to be limited to implementation of activities, outputs, and possibly contributions to early outcomes, while results for transferred FTA research – i.e. research started before FTA was created but now part of FTA – are likely to be more mature. The likelihood for future results is then extrapolated from implementation performance to date, combined with an assessment of the logical integrity of FTA's impact pathways, and empirical verification of critical assumptions implicit in those impact pathways as detailed in section 6.4.
- **Efficiency** is assessed in terms of *operational and governance efficiency* only by examining reduced or additional transaction costs in FTA procedures, management, and governance, compared to the situation before, and qualitatively assessing how they are offset by plausible gains or reductions in program effectiveness and likely impact. FTA's *allocative efficiency*, i.e. how outcomes and impacts the program is likely to contribute to compare to invested resources, will not be assessed.
- **Sustainability** is evaluated in two ways. The *sustainability of outcomes and impacts* to which FTA contributes is assessed as part of evaluation questions 4 and 5, and the *financial sustainability of the program itself* is assessed as part of evaluation question 6.
- **Quality of Science** is reviewed as described in evaluation question 3.

The evaluation criteria quality of science, effectiveness, and impact are understood as a hierarchy of necessary conditions: quality science is necessary (but not sufficient) for effectiveness, and effectiveness is necessary (but not sufficient) for impact.

The interpretation of these six evaluation criteria for the CGIAR is part of an annex to the draft Standards for Independent Evaluation in the CGIAR. The CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) is in the process of finalizing these standards, including those annexes. In close collaboration with the Head of IEA, the evaluation will draw on these emerging criteria to the extent useful and, at the same time, provide feedback on their applicability in the context of a CRP evaluation.

## 6. Evaluation Methodology

In this chapter, the evaluation methodology is described. First, information sources for this evaluation are listed (section 6.1). Then, evaluation work packages are introduced and defined (6.2 and 6.3). Work packages represent closely related information gathering and analysis activities and can be considered the most detailed description covering all evaluation methodology in this Inception Report. Specific methodologies meriting additional highlighting are detailed in the remaining sections of this chapter (sections 6.4 through 6.6).

### 6.1. Information Sources

The evaluation will draw its primary information and data from the following sources:

- documents;
- project and financial databases;
- interviews;
- group discussions;
- center and project site visits;
- expert knowledge; and
- online surveys.

**Documents.** Information from various types of documents will be used in various work packages, as illustrated in Table 4.

*Table 4. Document types used in the evaluation.*

Document type	Examples
FTA documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA proposal (drafts and final), ISPC and other feedback</li> <li>• FTA and center/partner annual reports and other progress publications</li> <li>• FTA operational plans for components and cross-cutting and support activities (sentinel landscapes, gender, MEIA, capacity development, partnerships, communications)</li> <li>• FTA policies and guidelines</li> <li>• FTA websites</li> </ul>
FTA participating center and partner publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publications from FTA partners (see Annex C)</li> </ul>
CGIAR system-level documentation (Consortium, Fund, ISPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy and Results Framework, Consortium policies, ISPC and consortium guidance on system- and CRP-level Intermediary Development Outcomes (IDOs)</li> </ul>
Meeting minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA Steering Committee</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA Science and Stakeholder Advisory Committee</li> <li>• FTA all-component meetings</li> <li>• Boards of Trustees of CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, CIAT</li> <li>• Consortium Board and Fund Council</li> </ul>
Peer-reviewed journal publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journals such as Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, the Journal of Biodiversity and Ecological Sciences, the Journal of Horticulture and Forestry, etc...</li> </ul>
Other scientific publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scientific Publications published by FTA Centers and/or scientists</li> </ul>
Relevant strategic documents and assessments from international organizations, networks, and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UN-REDD Programme, The International Tropical Timber Association (ITTO)</li> <li>• The Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Resources Institute (WRI)</li> <li>• The World Bank Group, regional development banks (e.g. ADB, AfDB), selected bilateral agencies</li> <li>• The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), IUFRO Special Project on World Forests, Society and Environment (IUFRO-WFSE), the Poverty Environment Network (PEN), the Latin American Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN), the Sub-Saharan African Forest Genetic Resources Programme (SAFORGEN), the European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN), the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), Forest Trends, the Asia-Pacific Agroforestry Network (APAN), the Man and the Biosphere (MAB), International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI), Smithsonian Center for Tropical Forest Sciences (CTFS)</li> </ul>
Relevant policies and assessments from developing countries' governments and national and local research organizations and NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National forest and agroforestry, climate change, and biodiversity policies</li> <li>• World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)</li> </ul>
FTA performance contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance contract Consortium-CIFOR</li> <li>• Performance contracts of CIFOR with FTA centers and partners</li> </ul>
Prior assessments, reviews and evaluations, building on the IEA Repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Program and Management Reviews (EPMRs) and Center Commissioned External Reviews (CCERs), audits, and management reviews of CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity and CIAT</li> <li>• CGIAR system-level evaluations and change process documents</li> <li>• Recent reviews of the system-level and CRP governance by the Fund and Consortium, ISPC and IEA</li> <li>• FTA impact assessments</li> </ul>

These documents will be collected by the evaluation team and managed in a *document depository* in a shared folder to which all evaluation team members have online and offline access and to which each team member contributes in their field of subject-matter expertise.

**Databases.** The evaluation will also draw on information contained in project proposal, grant management, and financial databases of the four FTA centers CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, and CIAT, as well as in spreadsheets and lists FTA may have compiled centrally. The team's preferred *modus operandi* will be to obtain direct access to these databases in order to allow

for timely access and to avoid burdening the centers' information systems managers with repeated requests. Table 5 provides an overview over the centers' information systems and the access status at the time this report was finalized.

**Table 5. Access to FTA centers' information systems**

Information system	Center	Access status
Project Management Office	CIFOR	Direct access established on July 16, 2013
Sun System (financial)	CIFOR	No access
PMIS (Proposal Management and Information System)	ICRAF	Direct access established on July 8, 2013
GMIS (Grant Management and Information System)	ICRAF	Direct access established on July 8, 2013
Sun System (financial)	ICRAF	No access granted (but offer to provide information upon request in a timely fashion)
Platinum (financial)	Bioversity	No access granted (but offer to provide information upon request in a timely fashion)
Grants database	Bioversity	(No access granted but offer to provide information upon request in a timely fashion)
Project Manager	CIAT	No definite reply yet

**Interviews.** A central source of information will be structured and semi-structured interviews, conducted either face-to-face during team travel or via video/audio or audio-only links. Most interviews will be conducted by two evaluation team members. Confidential interview notes will be compiled for all interviews following standard templates as a basis for subsequent content analysis.

Interviews will be conducted with individuals from the following groups:

- **“FTA management”**: the FTA director, FTA component coordinators and component focal points, and coordinators of cross-cutting and support activities.
- **“FTA researchers”**: Principal Investigators (PIs) and researchers working on FTA projects. FTA management is part of this group.
- **“Center management”**: DGs, DDGs and senior managers from CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, and CIAT.
- **“Center administration”**: managers and staff from CIFOR's, ICRAF's, Bioversity's and CIAT's administrative units (e.g. human resources, information systems, finance, legal).
- **“Center governance”**: Boards of Trustees of CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, and CIAT.



- **“CGIAR system”**: the Consortium Board, the Consortium CEO, and Consortium Office staff; the Fund Council, the Fund Council Executive Secretary and Head of Fund Office, and Fund Office staff; and ISPC, the Executive Director of the ISPC Secretariat, and ISPC Secretariat staff.
- **“Boundary partners”**: intended intermediary users of FTA outputs, both downstream (towards implementation) and upstream (towards influencing policy).
- **“International key informants”**: key informants from international development, climate change and biodiversity communities (political/COPs, scientific, NGO).

**Group discussions** will be held with FTA management, FTA researchers, and, possibly, with the FTA Steering Committee and the Boards of Trustees of some of the FTA centers.

**Center visits.** The headquarters and some of the regional offices of CIFOR, ICRAF and Bioversity will be visited by the entire evaluation team or by selected team members. Due to its minor overall budget share in FTA, CIAT will not be visited at all – or only by the Evaluation Team Leader with a focus on governance and CCAF-FTA interface management. CIAT staff working on FTA will however participate in video/audio interviews and online surveys.

**Project site visits.** Selection evaluation team members will visit project sites in several countries as detailed in sections 6.5 and 6.6.

**Expert knowledge.** The evaluation will tap into expert knowledge within and outside of the evaluation team. The areas of expertise of the team members are described in section 7.1. Regarding team-external expert knowledge the evaluation team has the option of conducting expert interviews or, if appropriate, commissioning additional analytic work on specific aspects to outside experts. In addition, an expert panel will be formed as discussed in more detail in section 7.2 to provide expert opinions on the evaluation findings.

**Online surveys.** Two or three online surveys will be conducted as indicated in Table 6. The surveys will be launched after a substantial number of interviews have been conducted in order to allow for informed and relevant survey questions.



*Table 6. Online surveys.*

Target group and Survey name	Target group description	Related work packages (and evaluation questions)
“FTA researchers”	Research staff involved with FTA projects	J(3), M(3,4,5), N(6)
“FTA research and boundary partners”	Up- and downstream boundary partners and parallel research partners that can provide feedback on critical assumptions in program-, component- and project level theories of change	F(1), L(4), and with lesser intensity: M(3,4,5), N(6)
“International community” <i>Optional, i.e. if a homogenous and relevant target group can be identified</i>	Key informants on international processes on development, climate change, and Bioversity in the field of forests, agroforestry, and trees, from political, donor, scientific communities and civil society	F(1)

Each survey will be implemented along the following steps:

- survey design and test;
- assemble contact information;
- conduct surveys including measures for increasing response rate; and
- analyze results and write up as report annex.

## 6.2. Work Packages for Addressing Key Evaluation Questions

Evaluation activities are grouped into 17 *work packages* that represent closely related information gathering and analysis activities. These work packages are described in more detail in the next section. Table 7 provides an overview over how these work packages contribute to answering the principal evaluation questions.

**Table 7. Contribution of evaluation work packages to answering evaluation questions.**

Work packages	Evaluation questions					
	1. How coherent and relevant are FTA objectives?	2. What is the comparative advantage of FTA?	3. Is FTA research of high quality?	4. Is FTA likely to deliver its intended results?	5. Are FTA cross-cutting and support activities relevant and effective?	6. Are FTA institutional arrangements effective and efficient?
A. Evaluation support						
B. Liaison with IEA, Ref. Group, Expert Panel						
C. Inception Report						
D. Objectives and Theories of Change	X	X		X		
E. Matching analysis	X		X			
F. Supply- and demand-side relevance	X					
G. Horizontal and vertical relevance		X				
H. FTA component coverage and structure		X				
I. Sample projects case studies	X	X	X	X	X	X
J. Quality of research			X			
K. FTA results to date				X		
L. FTA future results				X		
M. Cross-cutting and support activities			X	X	X	
N. Governance and Management						X
O. Administrative procedures						X
P. Financial management						X
Q. Final report writing and building in feedback						

### 6.3. Description of Work Packages

Individual work packages are described below in terms of their *key evaluation activities*. The first three work packages (A-C) describe preliminary and support activities and the last work packages (Q) the writing of the evaluation report. The 13 remaining work packages (D-P) describe evaluation activities during the evaluation inquiry and synthesis phases and serve as principal description of the methodologies used.



**A. Evaluation Support.** Key activities are:

- manage shared team folder, maintain document repository;
- obtain and maintain access to FTA and center grant and proposal management systems;
- support team members with analysis.

**B. Liaison with IEA, Reference Group, Expert Panel.** Key activities are:

- interactions with and feedback to IEA;
- interactions with Reference Group;
- interactions with Expert Panel.

**C. Inception Report.** Key activities are:

- *desk research:* Write and adapt background overview;
- *desk research:* Write syntheses of a) description/objectives, b) theories of change, and c) implementation status for each component and each cross-cutting topic;
- *desk research:* produce preliminary list of partners to visit (input for travel planning);
- *analysis:* conduct preliminary portfolio analysis (input for site selection);
- *desk research:* develop general evaluation methodology and draft evaluation plan, including team visits;
- *desk research:* write and adapt Inception Report based on feedback obtained.

**D. Objectives and theories of change.** Contributes to answering evaluation questions 1, 2 and 4. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research:* collect information on objectives and theories of change on program, component, sub-component level, and for cross-cutting activities;
- *analysis:* changes over time, completeness, and legitimacy;
- *analysis:* assess coherence, i.e. how well do program, component, and sub-component-level objectives and theories of change match.

**E. Matching analysis.** Contributes to answering evaluation questions 1 and 3. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research*: collect and synthesize grant objectives and descriptions into an Excel spreadsheet;
- *analysis*: develop unambiguous rating criteria for how well project-level objectives match component-level objectives;
- *analysis*: rate all projects and draw conclusions.

**F. Supply- and demand-side relevance.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 1. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research* (team, per component): synthesize documented consensus on need for research on forests, agroforestry, and trees from the international political, donor and scientific community, including proper citations;
- *desk research* (support): collect and synthesize CGIAR system-level objectives, theories of change, and their evolution over time;
- *interviews* (with CGIAR system representatives, i.e. Consortium Board, Fund Council, ISPC, and their respective secretariats): ask about future evolution of system-level targets and their intended use;
- *desk research* (team, per component): synthesize documented consensus on need for research on forests, agroforestry, and trees from the perspective of intended intermediary users and/or beneficiaries, including proper citations;
- *interviews* (key informants from international communities or representing beneficiaries' perspectives): ask about FTA's supply- and demand-side relevance;
- *(Optional) online survey* (international political, donor and scientific community): ask about FTA's supply- and demand-side relevance;
- *online survey* (key informants on critical assumptions in component and program-level impact pathways, likely up- and downstream boundary partners and parallel research partners): ask about FTA's supply- and demand-side relevance;
- *analysis* (team, per component): assessment of how well FTA's objectives and theories of change are supported by supply (both international and CGIAR-system-level) and demand-side needs;
- *desk research* (per component and cross-cutting topic): write synthesis of findings.

*This work package does not assess the relevance of CGIAR system-level objectives.*

**G. Horizontal and vertical relevance.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 2. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research* (team, per component): synthesize the landscape of global, regional, national and subnational programs and organizations working in fields parallel or complementary to FTA (this activity will likely need to be restricted to a selection on the national and sub-national levels);
- *interviews* (with FTA coordinators and focal points, FTA researchers): ask about research and boundary partners as input to the partner landscape;
- *interviews* (with FTA research and boundary partners): obtain information on perceived core competences of partners and on perceived horizontal and vertical relevance of FTA;
- *analysis* (per component): assess what (if any) FTA research activities would better be in-/ outsourced from/to other research organizations and provide supporting rationale;
- *analysis* (per component): assess whether FTA activities along its various impact pathways remain within the areas of comparative advantage of its centers and partners or whether some up- or downstream activities would better be in-/outsourced from/to boundary partners (and provide supporting rationale);
- *desk research* (per component and cross-cutting topic): write synthesis of findings.

**H. FTA component coverage, overlaps, gaps, structure.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 2. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research*: collect and synthesize information about component and cross-cutting topics content definitions with focus on guidance on how to assign projects to components and cross-cutting topics;
- *interviews* (with FTA coordinators and focal points): ask about how components and cross-cutting topics were initially defined and about ongoing re-definitions;
- *analysis* (team): assess if the totality of components and cross-cutting topics cover everything FTA should cover (as found in the relevance analyses);
- *analysis* (team): assess whether there is a useful rationale for the current component structure and how ambiguities and/or overlaps between components can be addressed;
- *desk research* (per component and cross-cutting topic): write synthesis of findings.

**I. Sample projects case studies.** Contributes to all evaluation questions. Key evaluation activities are:

- *analysis* (team, per component): identify 3-5 sample projects per component, also covering cross-cutting topics, as described in section 6.6;
- *desk research*: obtain full available project documentation on sample projects, information on partners, and contact information of people involved;
- *desk research*: assess available documentation, build an opinion on quality of research design and quality of research outputs;
- *interviews* (sample project PIs, sample project research staff, some extra interviews with non-sample-project researchers if convenient during site visits):
  - i. understand drivers during concept phase, prioritization and institutional incentives;
  - ii. understand project concept and project-level impact pathways, including relevant research and boundary partners;
  - iii. understand implementation performance: project outputs and contribution to outcomes;
  - iv. understand project reporting lines and project management arrangements/hierarchy;
  - v. obtain live impression on researchers' qualifications.
- *site visits* (sample projects, extra visits only if convenient): live impression of research sites, verification of reported activities and results on the ground, interaction with staff on the ground;
- *desk research* (per sample project): agree on case study template in team, write 3-5 page sample project summary for each project, and synthesize conclusions per component and for the entire program.

J. **Quality of research.** Covers enabling conditions for quality research, qualification of research staff, and priority setting and research management. Contributes to answering evaluation question 3. Key evaluation activities are:

- *online survey* (FTA research staff): obtain feedback on enabling conditions for researchers (funds, oversight, equipment, etc.), perceived incentives for cooperation (CGIAR-internal and external) and innovation, and perceived staff qualifications. Researchers may also be asked to provide their top 3 publications or other results so far;
- *interviews* (sample projects researchers, as part of sample project case studies): in-depth understanding of enabling conditions for good research, qualification of sample project researchers, of how sample projects were incepted, and what incentives influenced project design and selection;

- *interviews* (FTA coordinators and center research managers/focal points): map research priority setting processes, research project proposal development, implementation oversight and corrective action procedures (component-center-matrix), as well as incentives for innovation;
- *analysis* (all projects, for written research outputs): data gathering, downloads, annual bibliometric publication trend, impact factor, and citation trend analysis pre/during FTA (as one proxy for research output volume and quality evolution);
- *analysis* (sample projects, for written research outputs): data gathering, principal researcher publication and h-factor record (as one proxy for researcher qualification), compare to benchmarks if available, otherwise compare across components and centers.

**K. FTA results to date.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 4. Key evaluation activities are:

- *analysis* across all projects:
  - i. disbursements against budget;
  - ii. implementation progress against plans, as far as can be obtained from FTA or center databases and reports.
- *analysis* (sample projects, as part of sample project case studies): in-depth understanding of implementation performance against plans.

**L. FTA future results.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 4. Key evaluation activities are:

- *analysis* (per component, team): identify and list key assumptions along component (and program) impact pathways critical to future FTA impact;
- *analysis* (sample projects, as part of sample projects case studies): identify and list concrete assumptions critical for project-level contributions to outcomes and impacts;
- *online survey(s)* (key informants on critical assumptions in component and program-level impact pathways, likely up- and downstream boundary partners and parallel research partners): understand whether key assumptions are fulfilled and collect improvement suggestions;
- *interviews* (FTA coordinators and focal points, selected key informants): deeper understanding of whether key assumptions are fulfilled and on measures for improvement;
- *desk research* (per component and cross-cutting topic): write synthesis on
  - i. Description and rationale of critical assumptions;

- ii. Assessment of the degree to which these are fulfilled;
- iii. Lessons and recommendations.

**M. Cross-cutting and support activities.** This work package is repeated, with adequate intensity, for each of the following cross-cutting and support activities:

- sentinel Landscapes (SL);
- gender;
- capacity development;
- monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment (MEIA);
- partnerships;
- communication.

Contributes to answering evaluation questions 3, 4 and 5. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research* (as part of objectives and theory of change work package):
  - i. synthesize objectives and theories of change – or contribution/impact stories if no separate theories of change exist – for Sentinel Landscapes, Gender, Capacity Development, MEIA, Partnerships, and Communication;
  - ii. identify what portion of work in cross-cutting activities is central in nature (i.e. funded and implemented separately from component work) and what is mainstreamed (i.e. integrated/mainstreamed into components, funded either centrally or through components).
- *interviews* (coordinators and central staff of cross-cutting activities): refine understanding of targets and theories of change, refine understanding of central versus mainstreamed work, obtain feedback on implementation status (central and mainstreamed);
- *online surveys* (FTA research staff, possibly also FTA partners as part of key informant survey): understand degree to which targets and implementation of cross-cutting activities have been mainstreamed, also in relation to targets;
- *interviews* (as part of sample project interviews): in-depth, project-level understanding of the degree to which targets and implementation of cross-cutting activities have been mainstreamed, also in relation to targets;
- *desk research* (per cross-cutting area): write synthesis of findings along matrix of description/objectives/theories of change versus central/mainstreamed activity.



N. **Governance and Management.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 6. Key evaluation activities are:

- *desk research*, including:
  - i. review relevant findings in earlier reviews on CGIAR system- level, programmatic (CRP, Challenge Program, and System-Wide Initiatives), and center-level governance and management reviews, including the system and CRP-level governance reviews implemented at the time this Inception Report was written;
  - ii. synthesize available guidance on CRP-level governance arrangements, including on FTA governance and management arrangements;
  - iii. understand FTA centers' management structure;
  - iv. obtain and review contracts along the FTA performance contract hierarchy.
- *analysis* of meeting minutes (attendance, discussion and decision-making content analysis) of the last 5 years, or from when relevant: identify degree to which standard governance functions (see: World Bank Independent Evaluation Group 2007) are covered by what body, assess management of overlaps and gaps. Conditional on availability of minutes, the following bodies should be covered:
  - i. FTA Steering Committee;
  - ii. FTA Science and Stakeholder Advisory Committee;
  - iii. Consortium Board;
  - iv. Fund Council;
  - v. Boards of Trustees of CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, CIAT.
- *interviews* (as part of CGIAR system-level interviews, participating centers' Board of Trustees (BOT) interviews, possibly BOT group discussions, center management interviews): deepen understanding of degree to which standard governance functions (see: World Bank Independent Evaluation Group 2007) are covered by what body, management of overlaps and gaps, surface perceived issues, lessons, and suggestions;
- *online surveys* (as part of FTA research staff survey, possibly also as part of FTA partners survey): Collect feedback on managerial oversight and guidance, perceived issues (e.g. cross-center management, two-masters situations, FTA terms of reference versus center performance feedback mismatches);
- *interviews* (as part of FTA coordinators and focal points, FTA researcher interviews): deepen understanding of managerial oversight and guidance,

perceived issues (e.g. cross-center management, two-masters situations, FTA terms of reference versus center performance feedback mismatches).

*Synthesis and writing for this work package done as part of report writing (Q)*

**O. Administrative procedures.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 6. Key evaluation activities are:

- *interviews* (as part of FTA coordinator interviews): Surface FTA administrative issues and record plans to address them;
- *interviews* (center admin staff: HR, finance, IS, DG office): Map centers' administrative procedures and obtain information about FTA integration measures;
- *interviews* (as part of CGIAR system-level interviews): record plans to address inter-center coordination issues.

*Synthesis and writing for this work package done as part of report writing (Q)*

**P. Financial management.** Contributes to answering evaluation question 6. Key evaluation activities are:

- *interviews* (as part of FTA coordinator interviews): Surface FTA fundraising and fund allocation issues;
- *interviews* (as part of center management and BOT interviews): record plans to address FTA fundraising and fund allocation issues, including financial risk management;
- *interviews* (as part of CGIAR system-level interviews): record plans to address FTA fundraising and fund allocation issues, including financial risk management.

*Synthesis and writing for this work package done as part of report writing (Q)*

**Q. Evaluation report.** Key activities are:

- synthesis of findings and team written and oral team input;
- writing of a draft report;
- finalization of evaluation report based on feedback received;
- dissemination of findings.



#### 6.4. Assessment of likely future results

Since FTA will be operational for only two years at the beginning of the inquiry phase of this evaluation, a key challenge for this evaluation will be to assess *likely future results* associated with activities recently implemented.

A theory-based approach, drawing on elements of *Outcome Mapping* and *Contribution Analysis* is chosen to address this challenge.

Theories of change (i.e. the pathways or networks of cause and effect with which FTA activities are gradually translated into outputs that contribute to outcomes and, ultimately, to impacts) will be recorded – based on available information – on three levels: a generic theory of change on the program level, theories of change on the component level, and project-level theories of change for selected sample projects. The program proposal document itself and recent and ongoing work of FTA’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Assessment (MEIA) team are likely to largely inform the theories of change on the program and component level. Project-level theories of change are based on project proposal documentation and interviews with the respective principal researchers.

FTA theories of change appear to exhibit two principal types of pathways:

- pathways linking to *upstream boundary partners*. These are national governments, multilateral normative or consensus-building institutions, and intermediary entities influencing the former;
- pathways linking to *downstream boundary partners*, i.e. intended intermediary users or ultimate beneficiaries of FTA products.

Likely future results are assessed along both types of pathways by first confirming *logical coherence* and then *verifying underlying assumptions*. In these analyses, it is recognized that the development of impact pathways is an ongoing process within FTA.

The initial analysis of logical coherence is based on formulated impact pathways only and does not require empirical evidence. It consists in examining whether individual steps of cause and effect along pathways indeed add up to an uninterrupted causal chain that links primary activities to ultimate outcomes and impacts.

Instead, the subsequent analysis of underlying assumptions does require empirical evidence that needs to be gathered through desk review, interviews, and surveys with FTA staff, and implementation and boundary partners. First, underlying assumptions themselves and means of verification are formulated if not explicit in theories of change. Then, empirical evidence from different sources is gathered, triangulated, and synthesized.

Findings from both analyses are then combined into an assessment of likely future results and of potential bottlenecks along the various causal pathways.

While, at this general level, analyses along the upstream and downstream pathways are alike, the target groups for empirical verification are different.



## 6.5. Selection of countries for field visits

Figure 4 shows – based on a preliminary estimate<sup>6</sup> – how total bilateral grant volumes associated with FTA are distributed over countries. At the time this Inception Report was finalized, the evaluation team was still in the process of assembling an exhaustive and coherent database of FTA projects. Figure 4 should therefore be considered a rough estimate only and a similar but more reliable analysis, including separation of old from new research, will be part of the evaluation report.

Country selection is based on the following considerations:

- as visible in Table 6, the allocation of funding is highly asymmetric across countries and focused on a few high-intensity countries;
- the team plans to visit the headquarters of the three main FTA centers: CIFOR (Bogor, Indonesia), ICRAF (Nairobi, Kenya), and Bioversity (Rome, Italy) for interviews and team-meetings in any case. In order to minimize travel costs, field visits will be conducted in those same countries if relevant;
- if possible, country visits should cover countries in the different global regions FTA operates in;
- in consultations, the FTA program director suggested that Indonesia, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Peru would be most relevant to visit, among other because the FTA teams in those countries would also be involved in managing regional projects, a fact not visible in the simplistic budget estimate Table 6 is based on. Furthermore, China, India, Congo (Kinshasa) and Brazil were suggested as further countries for visits, albeit with secondary importance.

Therefore, the evaluation team plans to conduct field visits to:

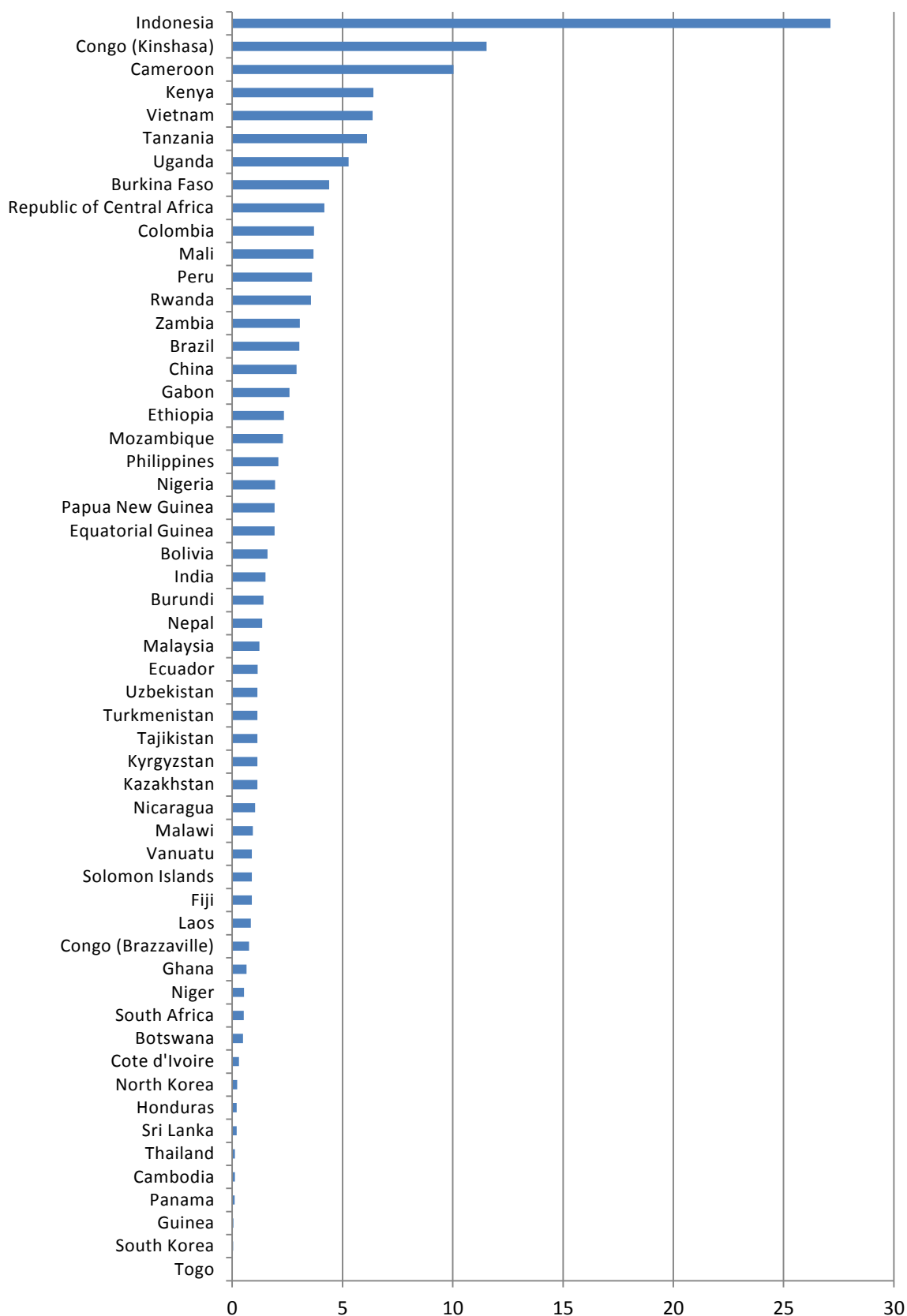
- **Indonesia** and **Kenya** in connection with headquarter and regional office visits;
- **Cameroon** and/or **Congo (Kinshasa)** because of the significant grant volume implemented in those countries;
- if considered cost-effective, also to **Peru** and/or **Brazil** in order to also cover Latin America; and
- optionally, also **India** and/or **China**.

Concrete planning of country visits naturally hinges on what projects should be visited and may be adapted based on that.

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<sup>6</sup> Only total bilateral grant volumes are considered as listed in available documentation and databases to which the evaluation team has been granted access. Multi-country grants have been evenly split over all countries.

Figure 4. Estimate of total bilateral FTA grant volumes per country (in USD million).





## 6.6. Selection of sample projects

Sample projects will be selected – within the limits of the resources available for this evaluation – based on the following criteria:

1. coverage of the largest grants;
2. inclusion of projects in which centers collaborate;
3. coverage of projects deemed relevant for this evaluation by FTA and the participating centers;
4. accessibility, i.e. project research activities should be located so that most can be visited by the evaluation team members during country field visits. This criterion works both ways – project selection is influenced by the country selection and the country selection is influenced by candidates for project visits. The accessibility criterion is not relevant for global research projects without dedicated in-country activities;
5. balance between projects started before and after FTA became operational around July 2011. However, projects not under implementation in September 2013 (when the main phase of the evaluation begins) will not be selected; and
6. component and cross-cutting topic coverage:
  - coverage of all FTA components with at least three projects per component (with possible overlaps for multi-component projects);
  - at least two projects should explicitly cover gender as part of their project objectives but can be included above;
  - at least two projects should explicitly cover Sentinel Landscapes as part of their project description but can be included above.

These criteria serve as guide to a useful selection of sample projects. It is understood that, very likely, not all criteria can be fulfilled simultaneously. The final choice for sample projects is not part of this Inception Report. It is however likely to consist of the list of a selection of projects from the listing of largest bilateral FTA grants and from suggestions kindly provided by component leaders, their respective focal points, and the leaders of cross-cutting activities.



## 7. Organization and Timing of Evaluation Activities

### 7.1. Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be conducted by a team of 5 evaluators:

- Markus Palenberg (Team Leader, evaluation methodology and governance specialist);
- Marko Katila (Evaluation, forest policy, economics and trade specialist);
- Florencia Montagnini (Agroforestry and biodiversity specialist);
- Carmenza Robledo (Climate change specialist); and
- Federica Coccia (IEA Evaluation Analyst).

More information on the evaluation team is available in Annex E.

### 7.2. Evaluation Governance and Quality Assurance

The evaluation is managed and commissioned by the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangements (IEA) and evaluation team members and the team leader are individually contracted by the IEA.

Evaluation team members report to the team leader who, in turn, reports to the head of the IEA. The ultimate recipient of the evaluation is the CGIAR Fund Council.

Principal guidance on the scope and the conduct of the evaluation is based on the evaluation terms of reference (CGIAR 2013) and on this Inception Report. The IEA is responsible for the quality control of the evaluation process and outputs, and dissemination of the results. In addition, because this evaluation represents an important learning opportunity for the IEA itself – being both the first CRP evaluation and among the first evaluations commissioned by the IEA – intense and informal interactions between the IEA and the evaluation team are envisaged throughout the evaluation process.

Two advisory bodies will inform the evaluation:

- a **reference group** has been established, mostly representing the share- and stakeholders of FTA that have an institutional interest in the outcome of the evaluation; and
- an **expert panel** will be convoked by the IEA to provide an independent second opinion on the draft and final evaluation report.



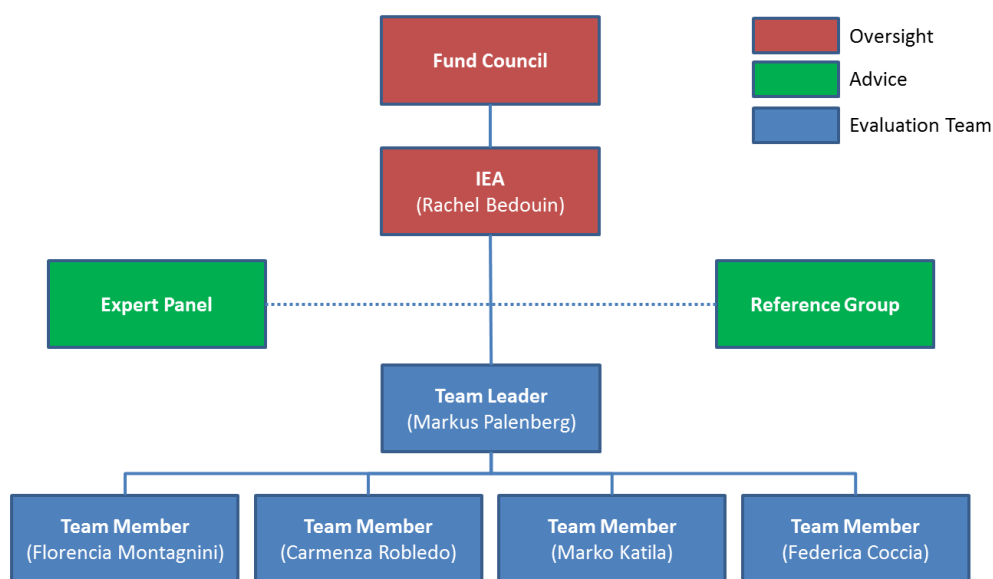
The reference group consists of nine members that are listed in Table 7 below.

**Table 7. Reference group membership.**

Name	Title	Organization
Pierre Fabre	Directeur, département environnements et sociétés	CIRAD
John Hudson	Vice Chair, Board of Trustees	CIFOR
Peter Kanowski	DDG	CIFOR
John Lynam	Chair, Board of Trustees	ICRAF
Robert Nasi	FTA Director	CIFOR
Ravi Prabhu	DDG Research	ICRAF
Jeffrey Sayer	Member of ISPC	ISPC
Luis Solórzano	Director of Staff	CGIAR Consortium Office
Stephan Weise	DDG Research	Bioversity International

The evaluation governance structure is summarized in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5. Evaluation governance.**





Within the team, responsibilities for components and cross-cutting topics are assigned as depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Team responsibilities (team members' initials) for components and cross-cutting topics.

Program-level (MP)	Theme 1 (FM)	Theme 2 (FM)	Theme 3 (FM)	Theme 4 (CR)	Theme 5 (MK)
Sentinel Landscapes (FM)					
Gender (CR)					
Capacity development (MP)					
MEIA (MP, MK)					
Partnerships (MP, FM)					
Communication (FC)					
Institutional performance (MP) (governance and management, administrative procedures, financial management)					

### 7.3. Resources

The current time allocation estimate for evaluation team members is about 420 days, not counting the IEA team member that will be available on an almost full-time basis over the entire evaluation period. In addition, travel is covered as outlined in the next section.

### 7.4. Expected Outputs and Dissemination

In addition to this Inception Report, the evaluation will produce two interim and one final output.

- **A PowerPoint presentation on “Emerging Findings”** will be prepared to provide FTA and participating centers and partners with early information – if required and as far as available – that may be useful in the process of preparing for the second phase of FTA.
- **A PowerPoint presentation on “Draft Findings”** will be prepared for the Fund Council Evaluation and Impact Assessment Committee after the end of the inquiry phase.
- **A comprehensive evaluation report** – the main output of this evaluation – will be prepared. That report will consist of an introduction to the topic and the evaluation itself, of several substantive chapters describing findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and of several annexes. The main findings and recommendations will be summarized in an executive summary.

Based on these outputs, the IEA and the evaluation team leader will conduct or participate in several dissemination events that will be planned and scheduled in 2014 and may cover live presentations, online presentations and webinars.

## 7.5. Timeline

Table 8 provides an overview over the evaluation calendar.

**Table 8. Evaluation timeline.**

Evaluation phases	Dates	Milestone
<b>Inception phase</b>	August 24, 2013	Draft of Inception Report
	September 13, 2013	Feedback on draft Inception Report by FTA and reference group
	September 25, 2013	Final version Inception Report
<b>Inquiry phase</b>	September 14, 2013 – February 28, 2014	Inquiry activities
	September 30, 2013 – January 31, 2014	Team travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIFOR HQ and Indonesia partner and field visits (entire team, October 2013)</li> <li>• ICRAF HQ and Kenya partner and field visits (entire team, November or December 2013)</li> <li>• Bioersivity HQ visit (selected team members, January 2014)</li> <li>• Additional field visits by selected team members (tbd): Cameroon, Congo/Kinshasa, Peru, Brazil, India, China</li> <li>• Final team meeting in Rome (January or February 2014)</li> </ul>
	December 1, 2013 – January 31, 2014	Online surveys
	December 2013	Emerging findings (PowerPoint presentation to FTA Steering Committee and management, and to the reference group)
<b>Synthesis phase</b>	March 2014	Draft findings (PowerPoint presentation to Fund Council)
	April 2014	Draft evaluation report
	May 2014	Feedback on draft evaluation report
	May 2014	Expert panel report
	May 2014	Final evaluation report
	June 2014	Management response
<b>Dissemination phase</b>	From June 2014 onwards	Various dissemination events



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