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2023 Plan Reconfirmation: Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service & supported independent bodies



Independent
Advisory and
Evaluation
Service

CGIAR's Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service ([IAES](#)) provides operational support as the secretariat for the **Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)** and the **Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)**, and implements CGIAR's multi-year, [independent evaluation plan](#) as approved by the [System Council](#). IAES and supported bodies are operating under an approved CGIAR Advisory Services [three-year workplan](#). The purpose of this document is to reconfirm the second year of this multi-year plan and fine tune the 2023 activity set. The narrative and financial plan is organized by three workstreams that relate to the three distinct mandates: ISDC, SPIA, IAES/ Evaluation function (treated as a separate budget line) and the underpinning support of IAES. Exhibit 1 supplies objective-based budgets.

Independent Science for Development Council

The ISDC 2022-2024 multi-year vision concentrates on delivering its terms of reference, namely, to support System Council and the CGIAR system. This plan presents categories of ISDC activities, with high-level statements of outputs over three years.

Commissioned studies and papers – Setup and design of end-user focused studies and papers to meet the developing advisory needs of One CGIAR (output: reports containing actionable recommendation for SC and a Journal special issue on inclusive innovation that will underpin the scientific credibility and legitimacy of ISDC's recommendations). The year 2023 will see the commissioning of a study on foresight/megatrends using existing evidence and a special journal issue to serve as a companion to the planned Science Forum.

Initiative development and execution – Input or reviews requested by System Council of One CGIAR Initiatives (output: reporting, reviews, evidence-driven external advice to stage-gating in 2024 drawing on, e.g., expert knowledge, evaluation evidence). 2023 may see the external review of five Platforms delivered to System Council (pending further information).

Innovation Science for Development Forum Series – Planning and holding of a Science Forum that will build on the innovation 2022 commissioned Technical Note topics (e.g., culture and capacity, trade-off analysis, and inclusion) and be formulated as System Council meeting side-events (output: Science Forum series 2022-24). The 2023 Science Forum will build from the symposium on inclusive innovation at TropAg during 17th meeting of System Council.

Semi-annual ISDC meetings & System Council Consultation – Agendas and System Council engagements geared towards developing advice pertinent to One CGIAR (outputs: advice prepared for, e.g., System Council's 18th and 19th meetings).

One CGIAR support – In keeping with adaptive management and codesign principles, science for development advice will be provided for arising needs.

ISDC advisory products – Translational materials to make advice more accessible, including video or audio content, briefs and infographics.

Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

SPIA is in the middle of the second business cycle (2022-2024) of the six-year workplan (2019-2024) approved by System Council in 2018. The workplan aims to deliver a variety of outcomes and outputs against SPIA's three objectives: (1) embed a culture of impact assessment into the system, (2) provide independent evidence of CGIAR research impacts and (3) institutionalize the collection of data on the reach of CGIAR innovations in priority CGIAR countries. To further the six-year plan, in 2023 SPIA will implement the following actions.

A culture of impact assessment – Support the implementation of CGIAR initiatives impact assessment plans using a light touch follow-up to matchmaking with academic researchers to design rigorous impact assessments around initiative research questions. This will include a peer review process for impact assessment

research designs being developed by the initiatives and their academic partners.

Implement a series of activities/events to strengthen the impact assessment capacity of the CGIAR system. Some activities (webinars, fellowships) will support early career social science researchers to design rigorous impact assessment studies, and some other activities aim to facilitate the use of rigorous evidence of CGIAR impacts.

Independent evidence of CGIAR research impacts – Support the completion of accountability, learning and methods development studies in the SPIA portfolio and continue facilitating the development of partnerships with external researchers working in impact assessment and interested in CGIAR relevant research questions.

Support the synthesis, dissemination and reflection of independent evidence of CGIAR impacts from the portfolio of SPIA funded studies to speak to One CGIAR research agenda.

The reach of CGIAR innovations in priority countries – Provide rigorous independent evidence of the reach of CGIAR-related innovations in Uganda at the System level and update the existing evidence for Ethiopia. Likewise, SPIA will continue to implement activities in Vietnam and Bangladesh aiming to provide evidence of reach of CGIAR innovation in these two countries by 2024.

Provide guidance on methods and metrics, as part of the measurement agenda, to improve the documentation of reach and impacts of CGIAR innovations and policy engagement at national level.

IAES/ Evaluation function

The IAES/Evaluation function delivers process and performance evaluations and associated activities to increase use of evaluative evidence. The multi-year evaluation plan is distributed across four areas, to support an 'evaluative' and evaluated CGIAR portfolio.

Conduct and quality assure external evaluative activities – Completion of ongoing 2022 engagements: (i) GENDER Platform evaluation; (ii) joint PRMS information products study; (iii) deliver quality assurance modality for internal SLO review (consultation ongoing). New activities commencing: (iv) evaluation of Genebank Platform (tailored to support transition from Platform to Initiative); (v-vi) full evaluability assessments (EA) of two Regional Integration Initiatives; (vii) GDI action plan assessment (n.b., joint activity with Internal Audit); and, (viii) to anticipate from 2024 to 2023 the planned advisory review of change management and governance in One CGIAR (consultation ongoing). Otherwise, 2023 will see an overarching body of work towards (ix) scoping and planning to underpin 2024 independent evaluation of selected initiatives.

Evaluation standards, guidance & capacities – To support excellence across a CGIAR-wide evaluation practice, operationalizing the CGIAR Evaluation Policy & Framework will continue: co-develop guidance on evaluating Gender, Diversity and Inclusion; launch Management Engagement & Response guidance; test and roll-out EA and Evaluating QoR4D guidance.

Engaging with One CGIAR – Engaging with governance, management, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) practitioners in One CGIAR to understand the need for, and to support uptake and use of, evaluative evidence. Active coordination with Project Coordination Unit, Portfolio

Performance Unit, and other MEL practitioners, to support portfolio management processes and complement second line assurance MEL activities. The joint third-line assurance approach with internal audit will be fine-tuned.

Knowledge management – Core activities: positioning CGIAR's global know-how on evaluating quality of science by applying the CGIAR QoR4D Framework to process and performance evaluations; steering and participating in EvalForward community of practice (EvalForward is the community of practice of the evaluation offices of the Rome-based Agencies of the UN and CGIAR). Convert independent evaluation recommendations and advice to video or audio content, briefs and infographics; translate selected materials.

IAES/Operations

CGIAR's IAES underpins the implementation and delivery of the above three workstreams. IAES provides operational support as the secretariat for ISDC and SPIA, and implements CGIAR's multi-year independent evaluation plan (deliverables described in the previous section).

The IAES plan covers staffing to support all three workstreams. IAES staff deliverables directly align to the three preceding workstream-specific sections. Staffing comprises nine full-time equivalents (FTEs), to which will be added a two-year appointed early career professional to support the communication of the plethora of evaluative evidence that will mature during the 2023 and 2024 period; i.e., communications surge capacity for SPIA and IAES/Evaluation function.

As part of its cross-cutting supportive role, IAES provides website, social media, and branding platforms that undergird workstream-specific communication and knowledge management activities. When appropriate and aligned with mandate, the IAES also supports the amplification, cross-fertilization and coherence in messaging across multiple workstreams to general and specific audiences.

IAES issues policies and procedures to support the good stewardship, confidentiality, freedom from conflicts of interest and other fundamental aspects that characterize well governed and managed independent advisory and evaluation bodies.

IAES holds budgets and spending accountability for the funds supporting the workstreams. Table 1 summarizes the 2023 budget, and projects the 2024 budget. Notes present variance and rationale against the three-year approved budget for 2023.

Table 1: IAES 2023 and 2024 Budget (in 000 USD)

	2023	2024
ISDC	1,019 (1)	1,268
SPIA	3,772 (2)	1,678
IAES/Evaluation	1,488	2,182
IAES	2,057 (3)	2,119
Total	8,336	7,247

Budget notes: No net increase in 3-year business cycle budget: (1) ISDC increase in 2023 against approved plan primarily relates to projected increased costs of travel (2) For SPIA an estimated 880K would be reprogrammed from 2022 to 2023 related to adapted approach to early career researcher support and adaptation to the grant-making component (no cost extensions for ongoing studies) (3) recalibration of staff costs less (100K). See Exhibit 1 for objective-based budget per workstream in 2023 and 2024 (estimation).

Exhibit 1: ISDC, SPIA and IAES 2023-24 Budget by Objective

'000 USD	2023	2024 (est)	2-Y Total
ISDC			
Initiative & Portfolio Reviews	45	315	360
Generating CGIAR Scientific Advice: Commissioned Studies	50	30	80
Innovation Science for Development Forum Series	215	215	430
Council Honoraria & Targeted Products	292	291	583
Consensus Building & SC Consultation	330	330	660
Overhead to CGIAR hosts	87	87	174
ISDC Sub-Total	1,019	1,268	2,287
SPIA			
Supporting the impact culture in the CGIAR	720	639	1,359
Expanding and deepening evidence of impacts of CGIAR research	1,341	168	1,509
Improving and institutionalizing collection of data	1,563	788	2,351
Oversight, management, monitoring & evaluation	87	31	118
Overhead to CGIAR hosts	61	52	113
SPIA Sub-Total	3,772	1,678	5,450
IAES/EVALUATION FUNCTION			
External evaluative activities (process & performance)	1,151	1,834	2,983
Evaluation guidance	79	74	153
Engagement with CGIAR on process/performance eval	47	44	94
Knowledge management & translation of eval knowledge	179	198	376
Overhead to CGIAR hosts	32	32	64
EVALUATION Sub-Total	1,488	2,182	3,670
IAES OPERATIONS			
Personnel, communications, procedures, engagement, hosting and overhead charges	2,057	2,119	4,176
IAES and supported independent bodies TOTAL	8,336	7,247	15,583

