CGIAR Research Initiative Review Report
Proposal: Fragility, Conflict, and Migration Initiative
10 October, 2022

The proposal Fragility, Conflict, and Migration concludes the ISDC Initiative proposal reviews for 2022. Occurring in three phases, ISDC reviewed a total of 33 proposals.

Using the same process for all external reviews, three external subject matter experts reviewed each Initiative proposal. Of the three reviewers, one served as a coordinator and worked closely with an ISDC member in the development of this report for System Council. The Quality of Research for Development in Practice for One CGIAR provided the background and guidance for reviews. Please visit the ISDC Reform Advice webpage for all external Initiative review reporting since 2021. In keeping with previous assessments, ISDC also provided the individual scores as well as the consensus scores (Figure 1) and a comparative analysis of the scores for the final two Initiative proposals against the average consensus scores across the 17 Quality of Research for Development (QoR4D) criteria (Figure 2).

Review Summary and Actionable Recommendation

This is a bold, ambitious, and timely proposal that sets out to address some of the most critical challenges confronting the global community, specifically that hunger and food crises are increasingly concentrated in areas affected by conflict that are also vulnerable to climate change. The reviewers agree that the challenge statement is very well written and convincingly argued, and strongly support this CGIAR Initiative.

At the same time, the reviewers have very substantive concerns. While new approaches are needed to inform and facilitate the integration of humanitarian programming with development (including food system/climate response) and peacebuilding approaches to address the root causes of crises, parts of this proposal place CGIAR squarely in the middle of communities that are dealing with complex multiple stressors including very sensitive governance and conflict issues. This ought to have spurred a more reflective and humble assessment of the consequences of these contextual intricacies both for the Theories of Change (ToCs) and for the realism of what is being proposed with respect to time horizons (unrealistic) and feasibility. Feasibility concerns include exceptionally challenging governance and conflict issues; secondary data limitations; difficulties in generating credible data for research and conducting impact evaluations in conflict settings. It is not clear that CGIAR has the capacities and capability to tackle the whole scope of these problems now. To limit reputational risks, it might do better to trim the proposal to hew more clearly to its globally recognized strengths.

What is termed "comparative advantage" is at best a fairly rudimentary capability statement. The creation of desired outputs is neither compared to that of alternative output providers, nor is it assessed against the internal provision of alternative outputs, which is the essence of CA. In terms of capabilities, CGIAR might be well placed to carry out some Work Packages/Pathways—but not all. CGIAR has globally respected capabilities for modeling and for working with national governments and partners to help them use and adapt such models for their own purposes. If current models can be modified to better reflect today's reality of complex crises and the need for decisions that consider impacts across several sectors—this will be an important achievement in itself. Likewise, the capacities are there to analyze at-risk population segments to better guide targeting, and to carry out research to analyze the impacts of alternative forms of social protection programs. If these capacities can stretch to complex crisis space, this will already be a major achievement.

Less clear are CGIAR capacities to take on field-level governance research and field work to assess social and economic dynamics of communities under increasing stress. Here, on the ground experience and social science skill needs will be significant with legitimate concerns about the availability of talent pools that can be tapped to fill these capability shortfalls. This may be a case of relying more heavily on partner institutions for these skills—letting them lead activities—while CGIAR builds up anthropology, sociology, communication, organizational assessment as well as political economy skills over the longer term.

Overall Strengths of Proposal

Challenge Statement. The research problem presented in Fragility, Conflict, and Migration (FCM) is clearly defined and targets major gaps in research knowledge that are critically important to address the changing nature of global food crises which increasingly are due to conflict and insecurity-often intertwined with increasing climate instability. Traditional humanitarian assistance was designed as a short-term stopgap measure until the situation normalized and longer-term "development" approaches could take over. But this approach isn't working anymore as crises are increasing and are more complex and protracted. A new approach is needed that integrates

humanitarian programming with development and peacebuilding approaches to address the root causes of crises. Scattered policy and programming efforts exist and concerted research attention by CGIAR is very welcome. The SDGs will not be achieved without a major shift in how we deal with complex crises.

Elements of the MELIA plan: Excellent focus in the MEL on the quality of partnership engagement and development and the responsiveness of the Initiative to partner needs. Excellent and appropriate attention to the likelihood of changing contexts and implications for the ToC and program.

CGIAR has a comparative advantage and prospects for making a difference both in areas that take advantage of in-house capacity to fill critical knowledge gaps (e.g., modelling, gender, extending social protection to conflict and climate affected areas) and for working effectively with national governments and a wide range of partners. These are important organizational strengths. At the same time, a more balanced exercise might have included further comparative advantage reflections including whether instead of leading, CGIAR should have considered co-leading or being a major partner in an FCM initiative led by another organization.

Overall Weaknesses of Proposal

Theory of Change: There seems to be an implicit assumption that knowledge equals action. Knowledge is good and needed but having the knowledge does not mean it will be acted upon. Maybe it is too early in the process for this, however, how that knowledge will translate into action is not clear. More thought should go into the process upfront so that more synergies likely to lead to action are built into the research, outreach, and scaling efforts.

Capacity Building: This is discussed, but only in vague, general language that "it will be done" with a few common examples. To really build capacity takes more than bringing people to the same room or events. It takes alignment, shared vision, results, impact, focused mentorship, success stories and more. While the activities mentioned in the report are not bad, the linking to tangible capacity dedicated to solving the problems are less clear. Further and given potential importance of this Initiative, capacity building with a view to develop, strengthen, and embed local expertise in each of the areas covered by the four Work Packages should be more explicit and elaborated on. While equitable partnerships are mentioned—and given the growing influence of decolonization thinking and agendas—there is scope for CGIAR to be more pro-active and innovative on this front.

Here we provide comments, not on a particular section, but on the proposal as a whole.

- While there is some acknowledgment of the methodological challenges and of the need for mitigating strategies to address some of these, this otherwise reads like a fairly standard proposal with discussions of secondary data, RCTs and of scaling up as if there were no particular hurdles or challenges associated with research and scaling up in the very challenging contexts in which this work will be undertaken.
- In addition, and on comparative advantage, CGIAR is very well placed to carry out some Work Packages/Pathways—but not all. CGIAR has capabilities for modeling and for working with national governments and partners to help use and adapt the models for its own purposes. If current models can be modified to better reflect today's reality of complex crises and the need to make decisions considering impacts across several sectors—that will be an important achievement in itself.
- CGIAR also has capacities to analyze at-risk population segments to better guide targeting, and to carry out research to analyze the impacts of alternative forms of social protection programs. If these capacities can stretch to complex crisis space—this will also be a major achievement.
- Less clear are CGIAR capacities to take on field-level governance research and field work to assess social and economic dynamics of communities under increasing stress. The social science skill needs will be significant. This may be a case of relying more heavily on partner institutions for these skills—letting them lead activities—while CGIAR builds up anthropology, sociology, communication, organizational assessment as well as political economy capacities over the longer term.

Areas of Divergence among Review Team and ISDC Resolution

Not applicable.

Scoring

The next section focuses on specific proposal scoring. Reviewers scored each of the 17 QoR4D criterion individually. The three scores were then aggregated for an overall score for each QoR4D criterion. The criterion that received a 1 or 0 are presented with a rationale.

3   2   1   0

The project addressed the criterion in an intentional, appropriate, explicit, and convincing way with supporting evidence

There is good evidence that the criterion has been addressed explicitly and with good intent, but the approach is not fully persuasive or may lack some clarity

There is some evidence that the criterion was considered, but is lacking completion, intention, and/or is not addressed satisfactorily

There is no evidence that the criterion was addressed or that it was addressed in a way that was misguided or inappropriate

No action ⟷ **Significant Changes**

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
1. Clearly defined research problem that addresses Impact Areas, is a high priority in the targeted geographies, is well aligned to shared, multi-funder priorities, and is well informed by previous research findings and evaluations	Challenge statement 2.1, Learning from prior evaluations and Impact Assessments 2.3, Impact statements 5	**Relevance**, Effectiveness	3
The research problem presented in FCM is clearly defined and targets major gaps in research knowledge that are critically important to address the changing nature of global food crises. Most food crises today are due to conflict and insecurity, often intertwined with increasing climate instability. Traditional humanitarian assistance was designed as a short-term stopgap measure until the situation normalized and longer-term "development" approaches could take over. But this approach isn't working anymore as crises are increasing in number and are more complex and protracted. A new approach that integrates humanitarian programming with development and peacebuilding approaches to address the root causes of the crises is needed. Scattered policy and programming efforts exist but concerted research attention by CGIAR is very welcome. The SDGs will not be achieved without a major shift in how we deal with complex crises. This Initiative will help address criticisms that CGIAR does not give enough attention to fragile states and to the extreme poor.			
2. Evidence that the Initiative is demand driven through codesign with key stakeholders and partners (Investment Advisory Groups, governments, private sector, funders) and research collaborators within and outside CGIAR	Participatory design process 2.6, Challenge statement 2.1, Work Package ToCs 3.2	**Relevance**, Effectiveness	2
There is strong evidence that this Initiative is demand driven and codesigned with key stakeholders and partners and that there are many potential research and outreach collaborators. However, the majority of partners are "ANTICIPATORY." Given the stage of this proposal and its nature, this seems reasonable and to be expected given that this is a relatively new focus area described as "unique" for CGIAR. Accordingly, most discussions appeared to be with external donor and multinational organizations. Although there are letters of support from national governments and local NGOs/civil society organizations, it is not clear how they contributed to the design and their views on the priorities for CGIAR work in this area. It is also not clear how the Initiative engaged the local private sector, which plays an outsize role both in food system development and in economic development of fragile areas. With a focus on informing policy and programming change in such a politically charged area, one might have expected much more attention to local public, private and civil society engagement.			
3. Research questions, objectives, outputs, and outcomes are aligned to the research problem, and are measurable with defined deliverables	Work Package ToCs 3.2, Measurable three-year (End of Initiative) outcomes 2.2, Priority-setting 2.4, Management plan 7.1	**Relevance**, Effectiveness	2

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
These are uneven across the proposed Work Packages (see further discussion in individual reviewer reports). The most convincing WPs-pathways were those that clearly built upon a previous area of strength for CGIAR (modeling, gender work). In other cases, the need is great, and the research questions are important—but the questions, methods, objectives, outputs and outcomes come across as superficial and uninformed by relevant, existing research. CGIAR skill and experience gaps could be complemented by robust partnerships with external organizations (e.g., as demonstrated by CCAFS, A4NH CRPs). While many partnerships are mentioned throughout the proposal, it is not clear if/which partners may take a leading role in some of the activities to complement CG skills/resource shortfalls.			
4. Overall Theory of Change with intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts at scale clearly described. Assumptions are documented, causal linkages are clear, especially the role of partners in driving impact	Full Initiative ToC 3.1	**Effectiveness**, Relevance	1
The ToCs are generally weak. Figure 3.1.1, which purports to represent the Full Initiative ToC diagram, provides summaries for what one is hoping to achieve in terms of uptake for each of the four work packages: this is followed by a set of standard women's empowerment indicators and some rather vague references to numbers of policies, regulations etc. at various levels that were changed based on CGIAR research. There are no clearly articulated assumptions or causal linkages to suggest that potentially difficult challenges have received the careful consideration they deserve. The proposal suggests important research to learn what works and share findings with organizations that *could act*. This is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure change. Knowledge about what to do does not mean that actions will follow. Change is hard to achieve and there are many competing interests to account for. Perhaps it is left to future projects to build on, but still, more thought **now** into how to persuade and encourage adoption, not just dissemination, would speed up adoption and enhance scaling potential. The Initiative toggles between informing policy change on the upstream side, and downstream engagement to improve implementation in the field. There is great benefit to bringing research, evidence, and scientific method to bear on the whole spectrum of complex crises issues. But CGIAR capacities to work on downstream and local engagement with partners are not yet robust, and, if a leading role is envisioned for one or more partner organizations with complementary skills, it is not clear enough in the proposal. The Initiative might thus benefit from taking a smaller bite at this very important problem, at least initially, and scaling back the scope of the initiative.			
4.a Individual work package ToCs (score individually) Work package 1 Work package 2 Work package 3 Work package 4	Work Package ToCs 3.2	**Effectiveness**, Relevance	WP1: 2.3 WP2: 1 WP3: 1.3 WP4: 1.7
All three reviewers have a variety of concerns about the work packages, their respective ToCs and the viability of the many and very ambitious outcomes that are anticipated. Below are individual responses from the reviewers rather than a consensus. Reviewer 1: WP1 is the most proximate and easiest to see initially, and its impact is more likely to be adopted as described. WP2 is a good start, but unclear how it will lead to actionable change in the system. Needed, but the direct link is opaque. WP3 is mixed. Some of the scaling and stabilization seem solid. Less clear is the GESI initiative. Yes, working with partners helps, but does not ensure change in this area. It seems to assume that since GESI's are more impacted by FCASs they will benefit. Maybe so. However, other than including partners it does not seem well thought out. WP4 is necessary, but a step in the process to change. However, the scalability interventions are promising and could start the change process. Reviewer 2: WP 1 - 2 Pathways 1, 2, 4 research questions, objectives, outputs, and outcomes are excellent—aligned to the problem and also achievable—expanding well on previous CGIAR experience to meet new needs. But Pathway 3 dealing with governance arrangements was less convincing. The research approach here appears somewhat superficial—how have related research findings informed this pathway? For example, the 2019 report of the Task Force on Extremism in Fragile States, convened by the US Institute of Peace, drew on the work of many scholars of resilience and fragility led to the landmark US Global Fragility Act. This is an extremely complex and sensitive area. Does CGIAR have the skillset to take it on?			

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
WP 2 - 1 How does this Initiative define a migrant? Pathways 1 and 2 were very good overall, focusing on applying CGIAR data and expertise to understand conflict and migration hotspots and impact of climate and produce an evidence-based hotspot dashboard. But Pathways 3 and 4 raise concerns. For Pathway 3 it is not clear: How the research questions and methods reflect related previous research on these issues—particularly the body of resilience research? That the projected outputs are feasible within the Initiative timeframe. Mercy Corps, World Vision, and other international NGOs have done significant technical work on herder-pastoralist conflicts and peacebuilding among agriculturalists. It is very difficult and time-consuming work. How/if FCM will draw on this work and these experienced partners? For Pathway 4, output 2.10 seems extremely ambitious or alternatively very superficial in this timeframe. For 2.11 how will this work draw on the scores of humanitarian aid assessments over the years? WP 3 - 2 The body of work on resilience would seem to be very relevant here. It is not mentioned. How would FCM build on the resilience work and push it further? How will this work build on the CG's successful work with WEIA and take it into new areas? CGIAR has done impressive work on social protection programming—from Ethiopia's long-running program to recent efforts to address covid impacts. How will this WP build on that work and take it in new directions? WP 4 -1 In this WP, CGIAR seems to take a direct role as program implementor. Does FCM have the skills to manage the accelerator and is this the best use of its scarce resources? It is not clear that this is a comparative advantage for CGIAR. As an alternative, an observatory model might be considered—where the partner is the primary implementor and the role of the research organization is advisory/analytical. Reviewer 3: For the four Work Packages, which are respectively, evidence-based decision-making to promote anticipatory action for "compound crisis" situations (WP1), the promotion of ways to integrate long-term FLWS actions into emergency operations (WP2), the evaluation of scalable programming to stabilize livelihoods in FCASs (WP3), and the promotion of innovation through partnerships providing strategic grants (WP4), the ToC Figures and accompanying texts are more detailed and informative but variable in terms of meeting expectations. The ANTICIPATE WP will be integrated with relevant CGIAR and other Initiatives and will be modelling and data based. This is potentially very useful and my only and main concern here is that the proposal overestimates the availability of existing multi-year datasets that are sufficiently granular to deliver the needful. For WP2, and while the ambitions capture important and timely issues, there are (serious) concerns about data and feasibility, especially for outputs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6. These concerns are accentuated by the short timelines. Similar concerns apply to 2.10 (oversimplification) and 2.11 (no acknowledgment of the IE challenges in fragile, conflict affected areas and how these will be tackled). A further question is how useful and representative social media data are likely to be in these contexts? For WP3, STABILIZE, and while the overall work package is important, there are again concerns about realism within the proposed time horizon. What is the time horizon required to credibly evaluate **scalable** initiatives to **stabilize** livelihoods? And what are the theoretical underpinnings of the paths to greater local stability? There are question-marks about the viability of 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.9: while the emphasis on strategic partnerships with organizations and others with strong local anchoring is important, one is left with the impression that some of this was prepared in a rush without thinking carefully through what will actually be required. I agree that there is a case for finding innovative solutions and think this has the potential to add value even if vaguely articulated in the present version.			
5. Research methodology and methods (and supporting activities) are fit-for-purpose, feasible, and assumptions and risks are clearly stated	Work Package ToCs 3.2, Priority-setting 2.4, Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness Plan 4.1	**Credibility**, Relevance, Effectiveness	1
While there is some acknowledgment of the methodological challenges and of the need for mitigating strategies to address some of these, this otherwise reads like a fairly standard proposal with discussions of secondary data, RCTs and of scaling up as if there were no particular hurdles associated with undertaking research and attempting to scale up in the typically very demanding contexts this work will be undertaken. As indicated above, this failure to engage with and think through the implications for feasibility and for the overall agenda carries the risk of derailing an otherwise timely and very important initiative. We would thus advise a rethink			

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
where the overall aim could be to arrive at a narrower set of priorities, acknowledging that what the proposal currently sets out to deliver is unlikely to be feasible: against that backdrop, what will it be most important to retain and focus on?			
6. Analysis of trade-offs and synergies across the CGIAR Impact Areas; ex-ante assessment of project benefits provides logical rationale for scaling of impacts	Projection of benefits 2.7, Result framework 6.1, Impact statements 5, Innovation Packages and Scaling Readiness Plan 4.1	**Effectiveness**, Credibility	2
In 2.7, yes, makes sense to clarify that projected benefits are not delivery targets, as "impact lies beyond CG sphere of control or influence." Estimates of potential beneficiaries seem logical and plausible but it is not clear what "conservative predictions" of 2% or 3%or 4% are based on?			
Very interesting and revealing application of Laderach et al. and global peace index for climate adaptation and mitigation projections.			
The proposal often gives the impression that the barriers to integrating across sectoral silos are technical and due to lack of knowledge and evidence. The latter are surely lacking, and this is the sphere where CGIAR can make a significant contribution with this initiative. But there are other barriers to cross-sectoral work that should at least be acknowledged, e.g., disciplines speaking different technical languages, funding modalities of different donors that impede coordination, ethnicity, etc.			
7. Evidence that the Initiative will likely lead to impact at scale through integrated systems approaches that drive innovation in research and partnerships, including linking to and leveraging of other Initiatives within and outside CGIAR	Projection of benefits 2.7, Work Package research plans and ToCs 3.2	**Effectiveness,** Credibility, Relevance,	1
It is difficult at this very preliminary stage to provide predictions about scaling potential: an important and valuable contribution to knowledge would be to use case studies to develop a conceptual framework for analyzing and addressing barriers and catalysts for scaling in fragile and conflict-affected, typically weak governance settings.[1]			
Achieving impact at scale is a much longer-term proposition than demonstrating use of aspects of the innovation packages by governments, donors, organizations and improving collaboration between CGIAR Initiatives. There is not enough information in the proposal to assess the potential for deeper longer-term impact of the Initiative beyond this rather instrumental view of scaling. A key determinant of propensity to scale is the degree to which the innovations/changes are accepted and "owned" by local partners. It is not clear that the initiative places enough priority on this aspect or will have the resources to facilitate this quality of engagement and ownership.			
8. Ethics, including equitable partnerships, information disclosure, biases, and potential conflicts of interest are considered; proposal defines how formal research ethics approvals will be sought/granted	Policy compliance and oversight 8	**Legitimacy**, Credibility	NA
9. Research design and proposed implementation demonstrates gender and social inclusion that can be tracked in outcomes	Gender equality, youth & social inclusion 5.3, Projection of benefits 2.7	**Legitimacy**, Effectiveness	2
Gender is a particular focus of the proposal—research design and proposed implementation build on excellent past work by CGIAR but is occasionally formulaic here. One could, e.g., have distinguished between the direct and indirect impacts of conflict, by gender. Youth and underrepresented social groups receive less attention and while many GESI outcomes will be impacted if the initiative is successful, how these will be tracked by the initiative is not very clear.			

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[1] Initiative developers may wish to look at the work of Jonathan Papoulidis, who has written extensively on scaling in fragile/conflict affected states, see https://www.brookings.edu/author/jonathan-papoulidis/

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
10. A risk framework that details main project risks and mitigation actions across areas of science, funding, operations, partnerships, ethics, and environment	Risk assessment 7.3	**Credibility**, Legitimacy, Relevance	2
In general, the risks identified, and mitigation actions proposed are plausible and provide hope of sustainable impacts. Missing: ongoing risk(s) of research/program disruption from ongoing or new conflict or new episodes of climate shock and indications about how these risks will be addressed.			
11. CGIAR capacity and its comparative advantage and appropriateness to lead the work is justified. This includes the skills, diversity and multi-/trans-disciplinarity of the research team and approaches to meeting gender and diversity targets	Comparative advantage 2.5, Initiative team 9.1, Gender, diversity and inclusion in the workplace 9.2	**Relevance**, Legitimacy, Effectiveness	2
CGIAR is very well placed to carry out some Work Packages/Pathways—but not all. CGIAR has globally respected capabilities for modeling and for helping national governments and partners use and adapt the models for their own purposes. If current models can be modified to better reflect today's reality of complex crises and the need to make decisions considering impacts across several sectors—that will be an important achievement in itself. Likewise, the capacities are there to analyze at-risk population segments to better guide targeting, and to carry out research to analyze the impacts of alternative forms of social protection programs. If these capacities can stretch to complex crisis space—again this will be a major achievement. Less clear are CGIAR capacities to take on field-level governance research and field work to assess social and economic dynamics of communities under increasing stress. The on the ground experience and social science skill needs will be significant with legitimate concerns about how these capability shortfalls will or can be filled. This may be a case of relying more heavily on partner institutions for these skills—letting them lead activities—while CGIAR builds up anthropology, sociology, communication, organizational assessment as well as political economy capacities over the longer term. On the latter, further comparative advantage reflections could have included questions about whether instead of leading, the CGIAR should have considered co-leading or being a major partner in an FCM Initiative.			
12. Capacity building within project teams, partners, and stakeholders captured in capacity development plan. This can include development of early career researchers and partner staff, support/empowerment for under-represented stakeholders, and building partner networks	Capacity development 9.3	**Credibility**, Legitimacy	1
CGIAR has been very successful at capacity development with partners that leads to their ability to use and adapt models, WEAI, and other tools. However, the range of capacity building and recipients detailed in question 12 and implied in the proposal is much broader and will require a tailored approach for each group. This is not well laid out in the proposal. Given the capacity needs of CGIAR that will be required for this proposal—a much more detailed and reasoned plan, including budget, implementation details, and measurement plan is needed. This is somewhat addressed, but not well supported. Having some training and networking is important but does not equal capacity or commitment to the work. It is great to say mentorship and other opportunities will be made available, however, it is not clear in the budget or implementation plan that this will be actively prioritized and/or measured. We appreciate the need for flexibility but saying you will do something without putting energy and measurement into it is unlikely to succeed over the long term. Suggest setting up a better measurement plan for capacity building. Further and given the scale and potential importance of this initiative, capacity building with a view to develop, strengthen and embed local expertise in each of the areas covered by the four Work Packages should be more explicit and elaborated on. While equitable partnerships are mentioned—and given the growing influence of decolonization thinking and agendas—there is clearly scope for CGIAR to be more innovative also on this key front.			
13. Project management mechanisms and (if applicable) additional scientific oversight and governance	Management plan and Risk assessment 7, Research governance 8.1	**Legitimacy**, Credibility	1

Criteria	Proposal Sections	QoR4D Elements	Consensus Score
measures effectively and efficiently support the Initiative objectives[2]			
Given the contextual settings this work will cover, a credible research governance set up will be crucial. The 8.1 text reads like a general policy statement where the management mechanisms and oversight proposed are standard. Compliance with CGIAR policy does not guarantee success or may not be particularly well tailored to manage the elevated risks and avoid pitfalls in these, often very challenging field settings. Which preparation and monitoring mechanisms will be in place to ensure the safety of field staff, to measure progress and trigger action (e.g., short notice evacuation) should this become necessary? One would expect to see discussions of field staff training covering, e.g., how to behave and minimize risks to oneself, field staff and respondents in conflict-affected areas.			
14. Justified and transparent costing explicitly linked to expected Research for Development results	Financial Resources 10	**Legitimacy**, Effectiveness	1
This proposal suffers from the same problem as all the Initiatives—very limited space allowed for the budget discussion. As a result, it is impossible for reviewers to credibly comment.			
15. Anticipated research outputs (knowledge, technical, or institutional advances, specific technologies or products, policy analyses) are described and knowledge/gaps they will fill are evident. Protocols for open-data and open-access compliance are evident in plan (including budget)	Work Package research plans and ToCs 3.2, Open and FAIR data assets 8.2	**Credibility**, Effectiveness	2
The research outputs are well described, and protocols are evident. The feasibility and utility of these research outputs varies across work packages and pathways. The data will follow FAIR. Where the data will be housed, cleaned and who will have access to it is less clear.			
16. Monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL) plan for the Initiative is clearly defined, with flexibility to adapt. MEL plan supports effective management and learning, including baseline data collection, and evaluative and review processes corresponding to stage-gates and course-correction decisions. MEL occurs during the life of Initiative and is used proactively to reflect on and adapt the Theory of Change, where appropriate	MELIA plan 6.2, Planned MELIA studies and activities 6.3, Measurable three-year (End of Initiative) outcomes 2.2	**Credibility**, Effectiveness, Legitimacy	2
There simply isn't enough information to make an informed assessment: there is little deliberation of the challenges associated with undertaking impact evaluations and generating credible data in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including the realism of time horizons for achieving impacts and even more so for scaling up. The ToCs, which are meant to showcase critical assumptions, lack depth: while qualitative case studies can cover some essential formative ground, it is also necessary to build trust not only among local parties who may be at loggerheads but also between research teams seeking to strengthen social cohesion and establish trusting relations with local communities. There are, again, few (if any) reflections on the time it may take to develop such trusting and high-quality local relations.			
17. Well-defined plan for Initiative-level evaluation and impact assessment based on expected end-of-Initiative outcomes and impact. Links between the impact assessment plan and indicators in the Theory of Change are clear	MELIA plan 6.2, Planned MELIA studies and activities 6.3, Full Initiative ToC 3.1, Work Package ToCs 3.2, Projection of benefits 2.7	**Effectiveness**, Relevance	2
While reiterating the criteria 16 concerns, the MELIA plan is consistent with defined outcomes and impacts: it also provides space for consideration of how results and analyses should inform next-stage benchmarks.			

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[2] Each proposal will have standard text on CGIAR research governance arrangements already agreed for section 8.1. This was a CGIAR decision during proposal development.

Figure 1 represents original scoring from each reviewer and consensus scoring for each criterion. *The consensus score across reviewers may not reflect the mathematical average.* For purposes of the figures below, the QoR4D criteria have been shortened. Please note that criterion 8 on ethics was not scored.

Figure 1: Individual Reviewer and Consensus Score
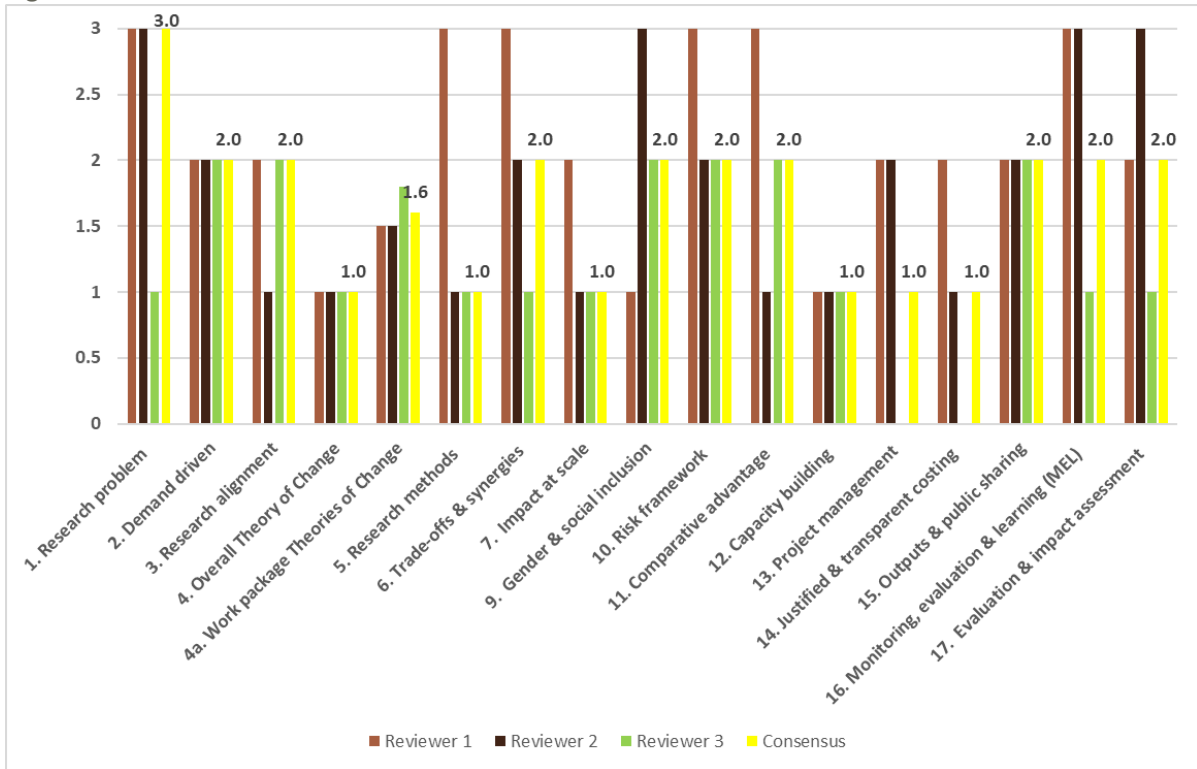
Two consensus scores were greater than 0.5 variance from the mathematical average. Please refer to criteria 1 and 5 (both with a variance of 0.7 from the mathematical average) above for rationale of these consensus scores.

Figure 2: Average Consensus Scores Across 33 Proposals by Phase