

Evaluation title: Review of CGIAR Management Response System to Independent Evaluations

The review Terms of Reference (ToR) can be consulted [here](#).

Date of Management Response: 10 March 2025

Person-in-charge for Follow-up to Management Response: Julien Colomer, Director, PP

Overall response to the evaluation: Management thanks the Evaluation team for their diligent and inclusive approach to this evaluation.

Management recognizes that independent evaluations provide valuable inputs to adaptive management, that the robust tracking of Management Response (MR) Actions provides assurance and transparency to stakeholders, and that CGIAR-wide learning can and should amplify the sharing of knowledge and experience to which independent evaluations contribute.

Aligned with the evaluation findings, management considers that a lean and fit for purpose end-to-end approach to independent evaluation (design, delivery, recommendations) and MRs (action setting, tracking and reporting) should support system-level assurance and learning. Management's input to the 1st CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board Meeting (Oct 2024) flagged issues with independent evaluation design (high number of recommendations per evaluation, need to strengthen recommendation coherence and quality), and Management appreciates efforts through this evaluation to reduce the number of recommendations per evaluation and increase their quality. Management likewise commits to strengthening its MR tracking, quality assurance, and reporting approach, in support of stronger CGIAR-wide assurance and learning.

Management offers the following reflections on this and future evaluations and MRs:

- The role of IAES is to assess the effectiveness of CGIAR and make recommendations for improvement. Management's role is to determine how to act on such recommendations, including the assignment of relevant roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, while Management takes note of the Evaluation's recommended, detailed assignments of roles and responsibilities; it has reserved the right to determine the 'who' and the 'how'.
- One of the evaluation's suggested measures for implementation implicates Center staff and their time allocation. System Organization Management cannot commit to actions on behalf of Centers in this regard (e.g. monitoring recommendation implementation at Center level). It is each Center's prerogative to take what actions are deemed necessary based on System-level Independent Evaluations.
- This MR contains decisions, actions, and responsibilities defined by IAES, in addition to those defined by Management. The future or ongoing use of a common MR template by IAES and Management should be subject to further assessment before it becomes a default, and Management cautions against using this template to commit SIMEC or other governance body to Actions.

Recommendations and actions					
Recommendation 1: The Evaluation Function of IAES should adjust the management of independent evaluations, including the development of recommendations and timelines for MR, to fit changing contexts, and to be able to report annually on the uptake of recommendations to support evidence-based planning, programming, and decision-making across CGIAR. IAES, in its advisory capacity, should ensure that independent evaluations are accompanied by clear suggestions on which stakeholders should be involved in the development of the MR and its implementation.					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary)		<p>The IAES Evaluation Function (IAES EF) fully supports Recommendation #1 and concurs with the proposed measures put forward by the review team. Seven actions will be implemented, as detailed in this template—four pertaining to Recommendation #1 and three under Recommendations #2 and #3. For instance, IAES is keen to communicate with PPU to potentially extend the MR development phase, benchmarked to industry standards, ensuring better alignment with responsibilities, particularly during system/evaluation transition times. EF will further guide external evaluation teams to enhance consistency and streamline recommendations. Furthermore, IAES EF, within its advisory capacity, will leverage understanding gained from the evaluation activity to advise on which key stakeholders to engage in MR development [This approach has already been implemented in the MR system review.] Finally, SIMEC members underscored the significance of institutionalizing an annual review of progress in MR uptake within independent evaluations as a fixed annual agenda item for the System Council.</p>			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
IAES EF will organize recommendation refinement workshops (prior to validation meetings) with key stakeholders for all its independent evaluation	IAES EF	Systematically for all evaluations conducted by the EF.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The activity will require more days and potentially more travel, hence more resources. However, funding will be reprogrammed from other areas of the approved EF budget.

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Recommendations and actions					
activities requiring a formal MR.					
IAES EF will finalize existing guidelines, namely the Guidance on Evaluation Reports (IEA Guidance Note G5) and the CGIAR's Management Engagement and Response (MER): Process and Performance Evaluations in CGIAR , to ensure prioritization and consistency across evaluation reports, and that recommendations do not exceed ten per evaluation.	IAES EF	By December 2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IAES has foreseen resources for guideline updates in 2025, under which this activity will fall. Quality assurance checklists and future external evaluation team ToRs will emphasize this requirement.
IAES EF will include a note with each evaluation report, with suggestions to the PPU and the appointed MR coordinator on key stakeholders to involve in the MR development process.	IAES EF	By 25 July and thereafter.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This action does not require additional resources. As part of its quality assurance role, IAES EF will ensure that evaluation teams identify and include key stakeholders for recommendation refinement and implementation based on their deep understanding of the evaluand. IAES EF will formally communicate this stakeholder list when sharing the report for MR development.
Institutionalization of a fixed annual agenda item for the System Council to review the status of MR to evaluations which requires an	SIMEC and IAES	By December 2025 and thereafter.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This action does not require additional resources, funding will be reprogrammed from other areas of the approved EF budget. This effort will

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Recommendations and actions					
amendment to the IAES ToR to include this new item/role.					be designed to complement the Type 3 reporting exercise.
Recommendation 2: CGIAR should revisit the positioning of responsible parties tracking the implementation of recommendations to independent evaluations and its MR actions. Under its new structure, CGIAR should consider this function as a joint responsibility of the Chief Scientist's office, specifically the PPU and PCU. PPU should oversee the tracking of MR actions at the portfolio level, while the PCU should manage tracking at the program level. CGIAR should continue to refine its technical modalities to enhance the effective tracking of MR actions, followed by a revision of its guiding MR System documents.					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary)		<p>While CGIAR recognizes the importance of effective tracking and follow-up on management responses to independent evaluations, the assignment of tracking responsibilities is a management function, not an evaluation function. The role of IAES is to assess and report on the effectiveness of tracking mechanisms but should not prescribe CGIAR's internal management structures or responsibility allocation.</p> <p>That said, CGIAR agrees that the tracking of MR implementation must be strengthened to improve accountability, transparency, and learning across the system. We accept the principle of enhancing tracking and have included as actions most of the possible measures for implementation suggested in the MR System Review report.</p>			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
IAES EF will provide further guidance on the MR template (or its equivalent within the newly developed tracking system) to support the MR-appointed coordinator at the time of drafting the MR.	IAES EF	By 30 June 2025 and thereafter.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This action does not require additional resources. The IAES EF staff will develop an annotated template for MR, based on the best practices and results of the analysis conducted by the MR review team.

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Recommendations and actions					
Enhance the current MR tracking approach to reduce manual data entry to improve visibility and accountability of the MR actions without creating unnecessary administrative burden. A digital tool, inclusively developed, could potentially integrate elements from other actors and assurance providers in the future (e.g., Internal Audit, Risk Management).	Office of the Chief Scientist	Q2 2026	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Estimated USD 25,000 for system upgrades and process optimization. If funds are unavailable, a manual tracking system will be used in the interim.
Enhance the existing QA processes (e.g., guidance, support, tools) to provide greater assurance and transparency.	Office of the Chief Scientist	Q4 2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Update the PPU Process Note and following implemented revisions and changes to the MR system elements	Office of the Chief Scientist	Q2 2026	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Develop process to escalate when MR actions are delayed, not implemented or not updated, ensuring better follow through	Office of the Chief Scientist	Q4 2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Management will conduct a review of all open MR Actions by end 2025 to identify core	Office of the Chief Scientist	Q4 2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

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Recommendations and actions					
priorities aligned to strategic and operational requirements. IAES will be involved in the process.					
Recommendation 3: CGIAR should enhance an organizational culture of learning—where evidence-based planning and programming is applied—by streamlining processes and reducing fragmentation (across centers) to leverage insights from CGIAR's independent evaluations, and lessons learned and best practices deriving from other evidence-based exercises within CGIAR.					
Management Response		Fully accepted <input type="checkbox"/>		Partially accepted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not accepted <input type="checkbox"/>
Management Response (commentary)		<p>Management supports actions that activate needs-driven linkages between CGIAR's Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Impact Assessment and Foresight (MELIAF) functions across centers, Programs, System and Independent levels. The Technical Reporting Arrangement 2025–30 (currently undergoing clearance) provides a concrete example of activating linkages specifically related to the minimum data standard for Technical Reporting across pooled and non-pooled funding sources.</p> <p>Management agrees that lessons and insights from Independent Evaluations should cohere with and leverage lessons and best practices stemming from other evaluative exercises across the CGIAR (e.g. center- or Funder-led evaluations, internal audits) to support effective delivery of the 2025–30 Portfolio. Management requests that the Office of the Chief Scientist be included in the annual stocktaking exercise led by IAES and Internal Audit functions.</p> <p>Management considers that the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Community of Practice (MELCOP) with active engagement from center MEL Focal Points can play a key role in facilitating the share of lessons and best practices.</p>			
Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted: One of the suggested measures for implementation implicates center staff and their time allocation. Management cannot commit to actions on behalf of centers in this regard (e.g., monitoring recommendation implementation at center level). It is each center's prerogative to take what actions are deemed necessary based on System-level Independent Evaluations.					
Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation	If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?	

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Restart MELCOP and support Center engagement to inter alia share lessons and best practice.	Office of the Chief Scientist	2025	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Conduct an annual stocktaking exercise to review and reflect on similarities and discrepancies in lessons learned and recommendations provided to the system, to further strengthen engagement between IAES and Internal Audit.	IAES EF and IA	By 25 December and thereafter.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EF and IA can take advantage of other events to meet in person and allocate resources as available. IAES EF will use the qualitative review of MR uptake (see actions for recommendation #1) as an input for this session and jointly design the event with IA. No additional resources are required.
IAES will use events and platforms—such as the 2025 induction programs for governance and management, MELIAF activities—to share results, lessons learned, and best practices from IAES work.	IAES	By 25 December and thereafter.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This action does not require additional resources. Per Objectives 3 and 4 of the approved IAES EF plan, EF will continue leveraging opportunities to engage with CGIAR management and the MELIA professional network (MELIA CoP), and participate in face-to-face meetings, pending the organization of MEL meetings and funding availability within the EF plan.