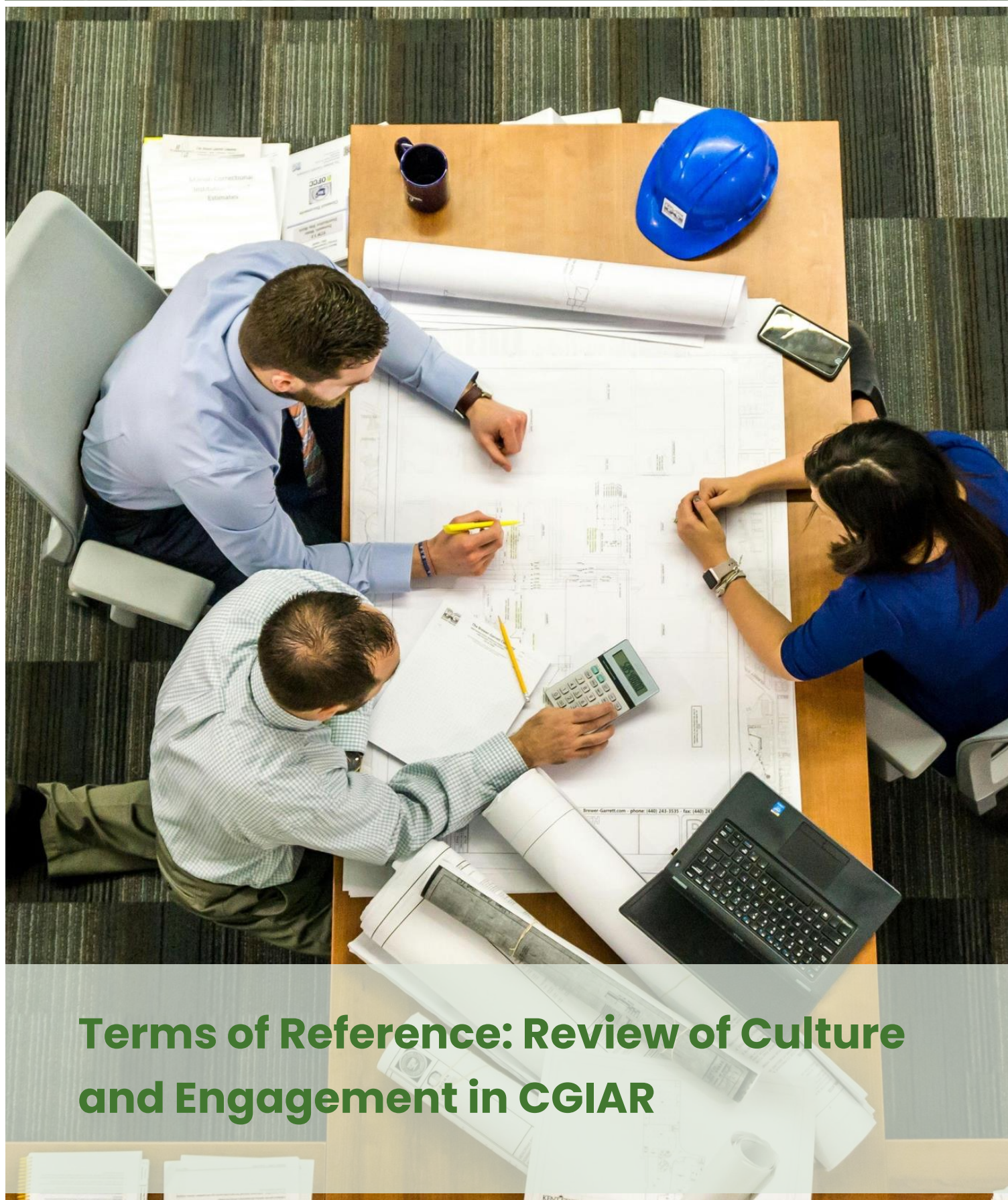




Independent  
Advisory and  
Evaluation  
Service



## **Terms of Reference: Review of Culture and Engagement in CGIAR**

August 2025

Correct citation: CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service. 2025. *Terms of Reference: Review of Culture and Engagement in CGIAR*. Rome: IAES Evaluation Functions. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation>

Cover image: IAES stock images.

# **Terms of Reference: Review of Culture and Engagement in CGIAR**

August 2025

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose and Objectives .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Framing and Purpose .....	1
1.2	Objectives.....	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Background.....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1	Context of CGIAR .....	1
2.2	Background and Rationale for the Review.....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Scope, Approach and Methods .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	Scope .....	4
3.2	Approach.....	5
3.3	Criteria and Questions.....	5
3.4	Methods.....	6
3.5	Considerations and Limitations .....	8
<b>4</b>	<b>Deliverables and Knowledge Management .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Timeline, Management, Roles and Responsibilities in the EA Process .....</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1	Timeline for Culture and Engagement Review .....	10
5.2	IAES/EF and IA Management and Responsibilities .....	11
	<b>Annex 1. Mapping of 2023–24 Action Plan with indicators to 2025–27 Plan.....</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Annex 2. Internal Audit Purpose and Process.....</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>Annex 3. Evaluation Function .....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Annex 4. Recommendations from the Evaluation of the Gender at the CGIAR Workplace (2017) by Acceptance Status.....</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Annex 5. Documents Reviewed .....</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Annex 6. Team Biographies and Declarations of Interest .....</b>	<b>21</b>

# List of Figures

Figure 1. Timeline for C&E review process ..... 10

# List of Tables

Table 1. Key components and outcomes, 2020-21, 2023-24 and 2025-27 ..... 2

Table 2. Evaluation criteria and review questions ..... 5

Table 3. Milestones and outputs ..... 9

# List of Boxes

Box 1. Outputs of joint review ..... 9

Box 2. Role of IA and EF ..... 11

# Acronyms

AFRC	Audit, Finance, and Risk Committees
C&E	Culture and Engagement
CG	Consultative Group
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GDI	Gender, Diversity and Inclusion
EA	Evaluability Assessments
EF	Evaluation Function
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
EMD	Executive Managing Director
GI	Genetic Innovation
GLT	Global Leadership Team
IA	Internal Audit
ICI	Integration, Coordination, Independence
IFA	Integration Framework Agreement
IP	Integrated Partnership Board
IPB	Integrated Partnership Board
ISDC	Independent Science for Development Council
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MR	Management Response
MYEP	Multi Year Evaluation Plan
P&C	People and Culture
PPU	Portfolio Performance Unit
PRMS	Performance and Result Management System
RAFS	Resilient Agrifood Systems
QA	Quality Assurance
SIMEC	Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
SC	System Council
SO	System Office
SPs	Science Programs
SPIA	Standing Panel on Impact Assessment
ST	System Transformation
ToC	theory of change
ToR	Terms of Reference
WoW	Ways of Working



# 1 Purpose and Objectives

## 1.1 Framing and Purpose

Under the System Council (SC)-endorsed Multi-Year Evaluation Plan (MYEP) ([2025–27 Workplan for IAES \(SC/M21/DP5\)](#)), the review of the 2020–27 [Gender, Diversity and Inclusion \(GDI\) Action Plans](#) and [the Action Plan for Advancing Culture and Engagement \(C&E\) in CGIAR's Workplaces](#) is a joint activity between the Evaluation Function (EF) and the CGIAR Internal Audit (IA) function. Recommendations will be subject to a [CGIAR Management Response \(MR\)](#). In 2017, [Evaluation of the Gender at the CGIAR Workplace](#) was conducted with MR available on [evaluation function website](#) and summed up in Annex 4.

Towards supporting both accountability and adaptive learning related to GDI/C&E in CGIAR workplaces, this joint advisory and summative and formative review will consider how well GDI/C&E practices are embedded in governance (SC; IPB-board and center board), management (Executive Managing Director (EMD), Global Leadership Team (GLT) and center management), research, and organizational culture across the CGIAR integrated partnership. The intent is to provide credible, independent evidence regarding ongoing implementation of [the 2025–27 Action Plan](#) and assessment of the previous 2020–24 plans, to build on historical context of the 2017 evaluation.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objective is to deliver an integrated advisory and assurance review that:

- **Independently assesses** the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability of results across CGIAR's three successive GDI Action Plans (2020–27), including the supporting systems, controls, and dashboards.
- **Validates** the governance roles, risk mitigation measures, and data quality parameters (completeness, accuracy, timeliness, relevance, usability, and efficiency) that underpin GDI reporting and related evidence-based decision-making at both center and system levels.
- **Corroborates evidence** to advise on if and how to enhance the 2025–27 Action Plan implementation.

Towards meeting the objectives, the Terms of Reference (ToR) is organized into four sections: (1) Background and rationale; (2) Approach, method, and process; (3) Description of deliverables, knowledge management and dissemination; and (4) Timeline, roles and responsibilities in carrying out the review, including MR.

Annexes are included for additional context: (1) Mapping of two GDI Action Plans; (2) Internal Audit Purpose and Process; (3) CGIAR Evaluation; (4) Recommendations from the Evaluation of the Gender at Workplace (2017); (5) Key Documents Reviewed; and (6) Team Biographies and Declarations of Interest.

# 2 Background

## 2.1 Context of CGIAR

The 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy of CGIAR implemented a portfolio structured around [three Science Groups \(2022–24\)](#) and later launched the programmatic [Portfolio 2025–30](#) accompanied by a revision of [the organizational structure](#). Since 2022, CGIAR portfolios have worked to achieve impact across CGIAR's five Impact Areas: (1) Climate adaptation and mitigation; (2) Environmental, health and biodiversity; **(3) Gender equality, youth and social inclusion**; (4) Nutrition, health and food security; and (5) Poverty reduction, livelihood and jobs. In the [2030 Strategy](#), CGIAR committed to following seven new

Ways of Working (WoW), or implementation approaches, to ensure that research provides real solutions for development.

The [Framework for GDI](#) in CGIAR's workplaces was launched in 2020, which states that a diverse and inclusive team can more consistently solve problems accurately and successfully than homogenous teams. Advancing workplace GDI will enhance the quality of decision making, deepen the relevance of advice and outputs, and enhance efficiency and effectiveness, which is essential for CGIAR's workplace, where creativity, responsiveness and collaboration are essential to success. Since then, to operationalize the Framework, three Action Plans were launched:

- In 2020, the first [Action Plan for GDI in CGIAR's Workplaces 2020-21](#) accompanied the Framework.
- The second [Action Plan for advancing Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR's Workplaces 2023-24](#) considered GDI achievements<sup>1</sup> and lessons with incorporated evidence-based best practices.
- The third Plan for 2025-27 is now named [the Action Plan for Advancing Culture and Engagement \(C&E\) in CGIAR's Workplaces](#).

Preliminary mapping of key components of the three plans in Table 1 indicates consistency in intended outcomes. Annex 1 provides additional detail on the adaptation of the indicators for the key outcomes and related components between 2023-24 and 2025-27 Plans.

**Table 1. Key components and outcomes, 2020-21, 2023-24 and 2025-27**

Key Components 2023-24	Commitment Areas 2020-21	Outcomes 2023-24	Outcomes 2025-27
<b>Fostering diversity and inclusion</b>	We commit to fostering diversity and inclusion	Inclusive leadership: Our leaders are committed and equipped to practice and model inclusive leadership behavior.	Inclusive leadership: CGIAR's leadership is inclusive and able to build environments of trust, collaboration, innovation and creativity, where people are heard, recognized, and empowered to contribute.
<b>Providing fair Safe and inclusive workplaces</b>	We commit to providing fair, safe and inclusive workplaces	Inclusive workplace culture: Every person who works at CGIAR feels welcomed, valued, and supported to have an equal chance to succeed <sup>2</sup>	Workplace culture: Staff across CGIAR feel valued, respected, and supported to reach their full potential.
<b>Raising gender equity, diversity and inclusion awareness and reducing bias, including unconscious bias in the workplace</b>	We commit to raising gender equity, diversity and inclusion awareness and reducing bias, including unconscious bias, in the workplace	Diverse representation: Through equitable recruitment, retention, and advancement, CGIAR works to reflect the world it serves with a broad range of diversity dimension represented at all levels	Workforce representation: Through equitable recruitment, retention, and advancement, CGIAR works to reflect the world it serves with a sharp focus on workforce representation and talent analytics to enable data-based decisions and talent development.
<b>Accountability on workplace for gender equity,</b>	We commit to accountability on workplace gender	Accountability: Everyone is held accountable to deliver on CGIAR's GDI vision	Accountability: Everyone is held accountable to deliver CGIAR's vision, and support collaboration, continuous

<sup>1</sup> TBC Link provided in the [announcement](#) is not working, to be confirmed.

<sup>2</sup> Outcomes and outputs for Principle 5– Progressing in Partnerships– cut across and are embedded within Principles 1-4.



Key Components 2023–24	Commitment Areas 2020–21	Outcomes 2023–24	Outcomes 2025–27
<b>diversity and inclusion advancement</b>	equity, diversity and inclusion advancement		learning, service, and respect as critical components of how we look at ourselves and how we deliver our science.
<b>Progressing in partnership</b> —Outcomes and outputs for Principle 5—Progressing in Partnerships—cut across and are embedded within Principles 1–4.			

Source: GDI Action Plan 2020–21, 2023–24 and C&E Action Plan 2025–27

Monitoring and reporting of GDI/C&E-related results are supported through the following elements:

- Capturing of data: [CGIAR Workforce Dashboard](#).
- The GDI Action [Plan 2023–24](#) mandated Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems to include gender-disaggregated and equity-focused indicators,<sup>3</sup> and resources for GDI efforts.
- Policy guidance: The CGIAR-wide [Evaluation Framework and Policy](#) includes a dedicated standard *Responsiveness to GDI*.<sup>4</sup> Under the [Evaluability Assessment \(EA\) Framework](#), a GDI-dedicated domain requires an assessment of how interventions incorporate equitable participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups in the theory of change (ToC).

## 2.2 Background and Rationale for the Review

The 2025 GDI/C&E review is the second evaluative effort of GDI in the workplace; the first one was [Evaluation of the Gender at the CGIAR Workplace](#) (2017). Between this 2025 review, and the 2017 evaluation, several other evaluative activities, though not focused specifically on GDI, provided GDI-related recommendations. The 2025 GDI/C&E review provides an opportunity to assess the status of 2017 and other related recommendations identified in each report, and the results thereof. These are briefly listed below.

- [Sub-study on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\)](#) under [the three Science Group \(SG\) Evaluations](#) (2024)<sup>5</sup> covered both programming/gender in research and GDI aspects related to gender-balance and GDI-related experience [[Portal](#)]. The study highlighted mixed progress of GDI during implementation of SG 2022–24 Portfolios. While the representation of women in the workforce was stable, women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles, indicating women 's contribution in decision making roles is less when compared to their male counterparts. The study found that the System Transformation (ST) SG has the highest level of gender parity, followed by Resilient Agrifood Systems (RAFS) and Genetic Innovation (GI) science groups.
- [Evaluation of the GENDER Platform](#) (2023) made recommendations to use metrics in individual performance assessments that determine gender knowledge and skills, recommending the formerly-named People and Culture (P&C) Group to develop individual-level indicators (see [the MR Tracker](#), maintained by PPU), including metrics in individual performance assessments that determine gender knowledge and skills, and individual-level indicators.<sup>6</sup>

[Synthesis of Learning from a Decade of CGIAR Research Programs](#) (2021) made recommendations on seven WoWs to improve the coverage of cross-cutting themes (e.g., gender, youth) in MELIA by

<sup>3</sup> Output: 4.3 GDI is mainstreamed into CGIAR MEL activities to enhance oversight for GDI mainstreaming.

<sup>4</sup> CGIAR Evaluation Framework 2022, page 4.

<sup>5</sup> The study objective was to provide evaluative evidence across the three SG evaluations with key findings, conclusions and learnings to guide recommendations. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/science-groups-evaluations>.

<sup>6</sup> [PPU Process Note](#) update is requested semi-annually from responsible CGIAR units for recommendations.

strengthening MEL disciplinary skills as applied to design and implementation. The synthesis study also recommended expanding socio-economic work on in-depth gender and youth studies with strengthened in-house capacity or additional partners.

**Evaluation of Gender at the CGIAR Workplace** (2017) was the only targeted assessment of GDI in the last decade. A strong commitment to increasing the representation of women was identified across all levels of the system and its centers. The evaluation noted progress among the centers in establishing policies to foster gender equity, although there is a significant gap between espoused values and policies and actual practice at the managerial and operational levels. While moderate progress in the representation of women has been made since 2008, women remain under-represented in professional, scientific, and leadership roles in the centers, at least to a moderate extent. It also concluded that priority should be given to increasing the representation of women in groups that have the strongest bearing on the delivery of the center's missions, which will require target-setting and proactive recruiting. The evaluation made [nine recommendations](#) with a MR issued from the System Management Board. See Annex 4 for a list of recommendations.

The CGIAR Internal Audit (IA) function collaborated with the GDI team during the development of the initial framework to clarify objectives and determine how IA could provide necessary assurance. This marks the first engagement including GDI. Related activities include: a 2024 review of Ethics and Business Conduct frameworks across all centers, a 2023 Talent Management Risk Assessment, center-wide audits of casual labor practices, and a 2021 Culture Risk Assessment. The findings from these engagements inform this current work.

## 3 Scope, Approach and Methods

This joint advisory engagement will assess CGIAR's progress and effectiveness in implementing its GDI Action Plans over two key periods: the completed 2020–24 plans (summative) and the early phase of the 2025–27 C&E Plan (formative).

### 3.1 Scope

Scope and coverage for this joint engagement will be primarily CGIAR-wide to include CGIAR system-level entities and selected centers.

The review will examine both operational mechanisms and thematic focus areas to assess how effectively CGIAR integrates GDI into its systems and culture. The following elements will be in scope:

- System and Control Mechanism behind implementation of GDI action plans.
  - Governance and responsibilities *vis-à-vis* GDI in centers and across partnerships.
  - Governance and accountability for GDI implementation, including roles, responsibilities, risks, and controls.
- Inclusion of elements of GDI action plans in institutional planning, performance management, and reporting systems (e.g., GDI/Workforce Dashboard, workforce metrics, Performance and Result Management System (PRMS)).
- Organizational processes supporting GDI across staffing, leadership, and research.
- Understanding and application in CGIAR workplaces of key concepts such as gender equality, intersectionality, gender-transformative approaches, youth inclusion, and the inclusion of other vulnerable or under-represented groups.

- Staff and stakeholder experiences with GDI Initiatives and perceptions of organizational culture and inclusiveness.

Out of scope for this review: in-depth assurance procedures or detailed testing at center level; an assessment of individual centers or Initiatives; and gender or GDI concepts in research methods and programming. However, selected examples may be drawn upon for illustration and triangulation.

## 3.2 Approach

Guided by the [CGIAR Evaluation Framework Policy](#) and IA approaches, the advisory and assurance study will employ a summative approach for the two Action Plans from 2020–24 and a formative approach for implementing the 2025–27 Action Plan. Both will aim to understand the GDI/C&E within CGIAR and will use a similar IA and evaluation approach, with the formative review including additional questions on how to enhance evidence implementation of [the 2025–27 Action Plan for Advancing C&E in CGIAR's Workplaces](#).

The approach will be guided by [Real Time Evaluation](#), a method suited for supporting CGIAR adaptive management, and will collect data using a mixed-methods design. A participatory approach will encourage engagement with the C&E/GDI team throughout all the review phases (see Figure 1). The participatory nature of the IA and evaluation aims to enhance relevance, usability, and credibility. The most valuable and credible review benefits from involvement of the funders and C&E/GDI team.

CGIAR governance bodies (such as the Integrated Partnership (IP) Board and SIMEC), management, and Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) representatives were invited to join an *ad hoc* consultative group (CG), co-chaired by the IAES director and IA lead.

## 3.3 Criteria and Questions

Review questions are guided by the mandates of the EF and IA, along with their related guiding documents: the Evaluation Framework and Policy (2022), and the IA Charter (See Annexes 2 and 3). For this joint activity, the evaluation criteria and thematic focus provide framing for key review questions, then organized by function, EF or IA. When both functions address the same questions, their methods may differ based on mandate and expertise. This may provide unique insights and differing perspectives to the same question, adding depth and breadth to the review.

**Table 2. Evaluation criteria and review questions**

Criterion/ thematic area	Sub-questions	IAES/ EF	IA
<b>A. Coherence and compliance</b>	1. To what extent does the GDI/C&E Action Plan align with the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy?	x	
	2. How coherent are GDI-related results between previous and 2025–27 Action Plans <i>vis-à-vis</i> the 2020 GDI Framework? What is the coherence between the GDI and C&E formulation and framing of the 2025–27 Plan evolution?	x	
	3. How well do the GDI Action Plans comply with funder/legal requirements and CGIAR policies?		x
<b>B. Relevance and sustainability</b>	4. To what extent have GDI/C&E-related recommendations for policies and practices to foster gender equity been mainstreamed within	x	

Criterion/ thematic area	Sub-questions	IAES/ EF	IA
	organizational practices for the relevance of the GDI Framework and 2025–27 Action Plan? <sup>7</sup>		
	5. How does GDI/Workforce reporting integrate with the performance reporting of CGIAR?	X	X
	6. To what extent do CGIAR's assurance mechanisms provide GDI-related information that is timely, reliable, and useful for informed decision-making, and how does this support the relevance and sustainability of the GDI agenda?	X	X
<b>C. Effectiveness</b>	7. How effectively do governance and accountability structures support GDI implementation across CGIAR?	X	
	8. How effective are data controls, streamlined processes, and coordinated assurance lines in supporting GDI systems?		X
	9. How timely, reliable, and decision-useful is GDI monitoring and reporting?	X	
<b>D. Efficiency and Risks</b>	10. Are roles, responsibilities, and controls clearly defined and functioning to support GDI risk management and implementation?	X	X
	11. Are oversight and management responsibilities appropriately defined, separated, and exercised in practice?	X	X
	12. How integrated and effective are CGIAR's assurance systems in supporting GDI with strong controls and processes?		X

### 3.4 Methods

The joint review team will use a mixed methods approach and determine suitable data collection methods for each evaluation question. The Inception Note will specify how the evaluation team, IA, or both will address each question, clarify the planned data collection method, and identify data sources. The proposed data collection methods are outlined below.

#### a. Secondary data collection

Secondary data collection will involve using existing information that was gathered initially for another purpose, such as CGIAR reports, surveys, or other documents. It is valuable for providing background context, identifying trends, addressing the evaluation questions, and in doing so, informing gaps in data. In this way it further informs primary data collection. The desk review will be the method for secondary data collection.

- **Desk review:** The team will review relevant documents. An illustrative list is provided below, and additional documents are listed in Annex 2. CGIAR GDI Action Plans (2020–24 and 2025–27).
  - P&C Workforce data and metadata.
  - Internal policies and guidelines.
  - Risk registers, MRs, and control matrices (if available).
  - Previous evaluation and audit reports (e.g., GENDER Platform Evaluation, SG evaluation sub-study).
  - 2024 system-wide engagement survey aggregated and anonymized results.

<sup>7</sup> Related to the evaluation question in the 2017 Evaluation.

- Sample data validation reports or Quality Assurance (QA) checks (e.g., gender tagging, workforce analytics).
- Organizational charts and role descriptions relating to GDI implementation.

## b. Primary data collection

Primary data collection is used to gather first-hand, specific information directly. It is useful for obtaining current, focused insights. The anticipated primary data collection tools include, but are not limited to:

- **Structured online survey:** Distributed across CGIAR centers and System Office (SO) to capture staff and management views on GDI/C&E systems, data use, and accountability. The survey will also collect some quantitative data points (e.g., use of tagging tools, involvement in GDI planning). For coherence and comparability, linkages will be made with the tool from the staff engagement survey.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** Conducted virtually with a cross-section of internal stakeholders:
  - System Office staff (e.g., GDI Function, HR, MELIA, IAES)
  - Center HR or GDI focal points
  - GLT members
  - Governance and oversight representatives (e.g. SIMEC, IP Board)
  - Selected researchers and Initiative leaders
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs):** FGDs are a qualitative method for collecting data, involving a small group of participants who share their views, experiences, and attitudes on a specific topic through a guided conversation. These will be conducted by function or region.
- **Photovoice or testimonial input (optional):** Participants may voluntarily share short audio or video reflections on how the GDI Action Plan affected them, supporting a deeper understanding of the lived experience of GDI in CGIAR.
- **Testing/validation:** Where necessary, targeted validation with selected centers will be performed to gain insight into the design and consistency of key processes and controls. These activities will be limited in scope and intended to provide a high-level understanding rather than detailed testing (see section 2.4).

A data quality assurance (QA) case study will be developed to integrate and synthesize findings from the primary and secondary data collection methods to generate an illustrative assessment of the quality, reliability, and decision-usefulness of CGIAR's GDI data systems. The case study will incorporate direct testing and validation of the GDI/Workforce dashboard's data and functionalities.

## c. Risk assessment

A risk-based assessment approach would focus on identifying and evaluating areas of higher risk, materiality, and strategic relevance to CGIAR's GDI objectives. The risk assessment will inform the scope and prioritization of audit input, helping ensure that assurance and insights are aligned with key GDI implementation risks and control effectiveness.

- **Review of risk registers, MRs, and internal control matrices** to understand how GDI-related risks are identified, mitigated, and monitored across the CGIAR system.
- **Analysis of audit and evaluation reports** to identify recurring weaknesses or gaps in oversight, accountability, or implementation capacity.
- **Engagement with stakeholders** (e.g., IAES, HR, GDI function, governance actors) to validate perceptions of risk and surface any blind spots or inconsistencies in implementation.

- **Mapping controls to key risk areas** to assess whether current systems of provide adequate coverage of the key risks.

The risk assessment will be completed during the inception phase. The focus will be on the key risks affecting the achievement of the GDI objectives.

#### **d. Sampling**

Because the study employs a mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative sampling techniques will be used. For the quantitative approach, stratified random sampling will ensure a representative sample of the target population, enabling the collection of generalized and statistically reliable data. This method ensures that important demographic factors, such as age and gender, are represented proportionally. For the qualitative approach, purposive sampling will be employed, which encompasses more than 16 specific types, to select participants who can offer in-depth experiences and insights. The type of purposive sampling will be determined during the inception phase. Sampling aims to support a comprehensive exploration of underlying attitudes, behaviors, and motivations regarding GDI. Together, these sampling strategies facilitate methodological triangulation, improving the validity and depth of the results. Additional details will be provided in the Inception Note.

#### **e. Validation and joint analysis, triangulation**

Data collection results will be used to provide an evaluative and risk-informed perspective, support triangulation of findings, and ensure recommendations are actionable and aligned with areas of greatest exposure. In line with participatory assurance and real-time feedback principles:

- Preliminary findings will be shared and discussed with key stakeholders (e.g., GDI lead, P&C, IAES) to verify interpretations.
- Recommendations will be collaboratively developed to increase likelihood of uptake, with validated findings through a review process. GDI/C&E with EF/IA commissioned review team will jointly review emerging recommendations for feasibility and relevance before finalization.

### **3.5 Considerations and Limitations**

While the review aims to provide a comprehensive and balanced assessment, several limitations should be acknowledged. The availability, consistency, and quality of GDI-related data—such as GDI Dashboard metrics, and workforce information—may vary across centers and periods, potentially affecting the depth of analysis. Differences in how key GDI concepts (e.g., gender-transformative approaches, intersectionality, youth inclusion) are understood may lead to variation in responses. Participation in surveys and interviews is voluntary, which may result in non-response bias or under-representation of certain groups. The diversity of center contexts and maturity of GDI implementation may limit generalizability, and time and resource constraints may affect the extent of data triangulation and stakeholder engagement. Finally, ongoing organizational transitions within CGIAR may influence GDI implementation and stakeholder availability during the review period.



## 4 Deliverables and Knowledge Management

1. **ToR:** Post-Concept Note, the ToR was made available to SIMEC for EF and approval for IA from the IPB-Audit, Finance, and Risk Committees (AFRC) to add to the 2025 plan. Following approval, the EMD/GLT, GDI, and other stakeholders will be notified about commencing the review, with a published ToR ([example](#)). Individuals solicited to join the *ad hoc* CG will be notified of ToR availability.

### Box 1. Outputs of joint review

The **main outputs** of this joint assurance effort include:

- ToR
  - Inception Note ([example link](#))
  - Review report with up to five recommendations subject to MR
  - Inputs for the 2025 status update against the 2025–27 Annual Report of P&C (with contributions from C&E).
  - Summary Brief on the GDI/C&E Review (adapted from the executive summary, [example here](#)).
2. **Inception Note:** The aim of the inception report is to provide a transparent understanding among all key stakeholders regarding the review focus, questions, methods, and valuing process ([example](#)).
  3. **GDI/C&E Review Report:** The report will include triangulated evidence answering evaluation questions, and a set of **evidence-based, prioritized, high-level recommendations**—co-developed and validated with key stakeholders—for strengthening the implementation of the 2025–27 GDI Action Plan. These findings will support CGIAR’s governance bodies and executive leadership by providing actionable insight to inform a formal MR and the 2025 update to the C&E Annual Report, thereby enhancing the credibility, effectiveness, and impact of GDI commitments across t CGIAR. It will be accompanied by the template with Recommendations for MR.
  4. **Inputs for the 2025 status update against the 2025–27 P&C Annual Report of P&C:** Evidence and lessons learned towards endorsing implementation of the 2025–27 Action Plan for any course corrections.
  5. **Summary Brief:** Provide a summary of the report and include recommendations (see [brief](#) from an evaluation of the GENDER Platform). It will be translated into French and Spanish.

Table 3 illustrates key milestones and outputs with timeline.

**Table 3. Milestones and outputs**

Milestone/output	Date	Responsible/role
1 Development of the Concept Note; inviting a CG	June	EF/IA team with review E&C; IAES Director and IA Executive <i>vis-a-vis</i> CG set-up
2 <b>TORs:</b> Development and dissemination of the ToR to CG	August	EF/IA team with review by C&E team; IAES Director and IA Executive <i>vis-a-vis</i> CG interaction
3 <b>Inception Note</b> elaborated, data collection, analysis, report development conducted; for information dissemination to CG	August–October 2025	EF/IA team, EF, with support from C&E team; IAES Director and IA executive dissemination

Milestone/output	Date	Responsible/role
4 <b>Report</b> with formal recommendations subject to MR; input into update against 2025–27 Action Plan	By 14 November for endorsement/approval by respective committees of EF/IA	EF/IA review team with validation from the C&E team and recommendation refinement with CG (pending its timely availability)
5 Development of the MR (aligned to <a href="#">PPU Process Note</a> )	By 30 January 2026	C&E team with CGIAR management.

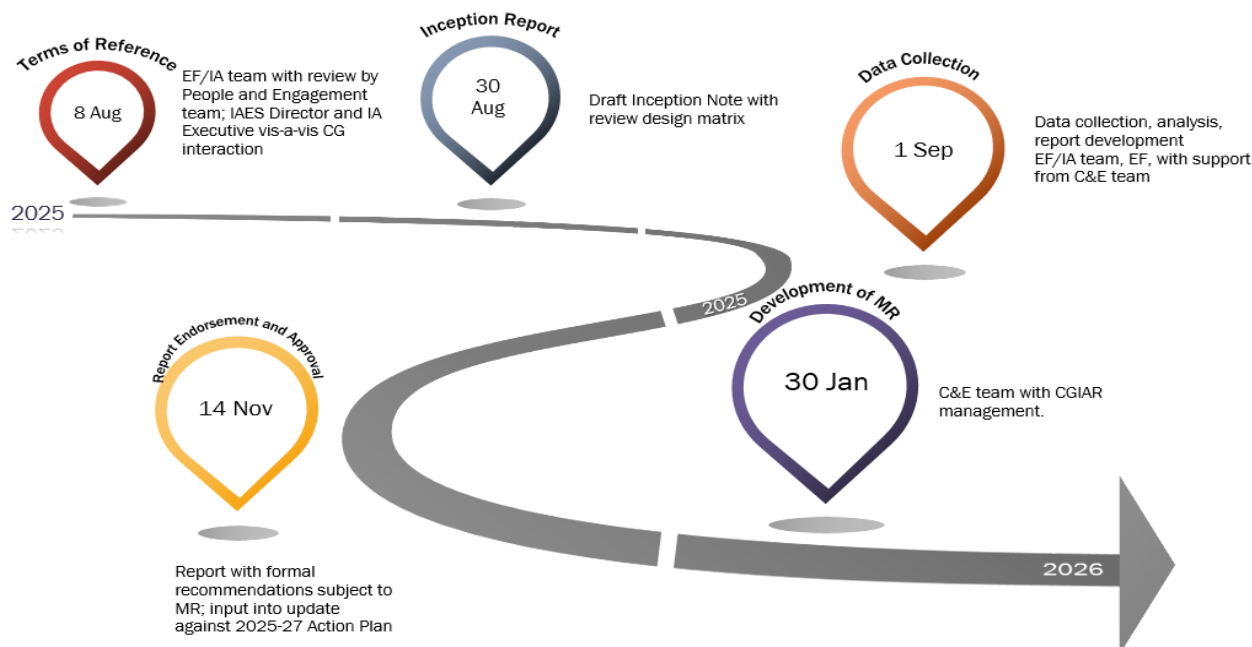
## 5 Timeline, Management, Roles and Responsibilities in the EA Process

Complementing the C&E/GDI lead, CGIAR governance (IP Board and SIMEC), and management and ISDC representatives will be invited into **an ad hoc CG**,<sup>8</sup> co-convened by the IAES Director and IA lead. Key deliverables will be submitted to the CG and IPB-AFRC, EMD/GLT, GDI, and other stakeholders.

### 5.1 Timeline for Culture and Engagement Review

The review process proceeds through five phases, commencing 2025 third quarter and continuing into 2026: (1) Concept Note finalization–June; (2) ToR development–July; (3) Inception Note development, collection, and analysis from August to October; 4) Report development and endorsement by November 14; and 5) Development of MR by 30 January 2026. Figure 1 provides visual representation of the main project milestones.

**Figure 1. Timeline for C&E review process**



<sup>8</sup> IAES CG is a high-level reference during an evaluative activity commissioned by the SC. Group effort will be prioritized during scoping (during defining questions) and developing recommendations (when findings are translated to recommendations by an external evaluation team).

## 5.2 IAES/EF and IA Management and Responsibilities

The EF of IAES, IA and C&E indicated designated resources for this review.

IAES and IA are responsible for planning, conducting the initial design, managing IAES and IA respective consultant selection and contracts, and initiating and managing the workflows. Both IA and EF will be co-responsible for (1) selecting, contracting, and convening the team; (2) contractual arrangements; (3) monitoring and supervision; (4) facilitating access for data collection; (5) coordinating QA and validation; (6) guidance and support on documentation (e.g., required templates, editorial services and graphics); and (7) developing a knowledge management approach and products.

### **Box 2. Role of IA and EF**

The IA and EF jointly design the activity and key deliverables. Data collection and analysis will be jointly done between IA and EF, with additional clarity on roles to be elaborated on the Inception Note for this GDI/C&E review.

The review team from EF includes experts with data inquiry skills suitable for the mixed methods process and a deep understanding of GDI: a gender expert consultant, an IAES research analyst, and an ICT expert will be steered by the EF lead. On the IA side, two consultants with experience in GDI-related audits will support the IA function head or equivalent. See Annex 6 for proposed team biographies and Declarations of Interest.

# Annex 1. Mapping of 2023–24 Action Plan with indicators to 2025–27 Plan

Outcomes/Indicator		Indicator retained in C&E Action Plan 2025–27?
<b>Outcome 1: Inclusive Leadership</b> Our leaders are committed and equipped to practice and model inclusive leadership behaviors	<b>1.1 Leadership behaviors are clearly defined</b> <i>Indicator:</i> Leadership competency model includes defined inclusive behaviors	YES
	<b>1.2 All leaders<sup>3</sup> are trained in how to be inclusive leaders and how to build a diverse and equitable workplace</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders that have completed training (# of leaders, % of total leaders)</li> <li>Leaders' GDI skills improved and capacities strengthened</li> </ul>	YES
	<b>1.3 All leaders model inclusive behaviors internally and externally</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel Pledge Signatories (# of leaders, % of total leaders)</li> <li>Engagement Survey's responses related to perception of leaders' demonstrated commitment to inclusive behaviors</li> <li>Standard leadership behaviors established</li> </ul>	PARTIALLY <i>Rationale:</i> Rather than <b>modelling</b> inclusive leadership being an outcome, the new Action Plan focuses on the importance of <b>impact</b> and measures whether CGIAR's leaders are seen by staff as demonstrating inclusive leadership. Therefore, the Panel Pledge element has been dropped, but the engagement survey indicator retained. The Panel Pledge is still active and being promoted but is no longer an indicator for this outcome.
	<b>1.4 Leaders actively sponsor and champion GDI internally</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published ToR and regular well-attended Steering Group meetings (minimum four annually)</li> <li>Annual leadership survey responses identifying their self-assessed capability and yearly activities.</li> </ul>	NO <i>Rationale:</i> Evolution of the organizational context (sustained period of reorganization, governance changes) over the time period meant that this activity was neither timely nor appropriate. ToRs for the Steering Committee were drafted, but this was dropped going forward in the new AP, as successful ways of working had been established. The work of the GDI Function and its strategic direction are overseen by the EMD and SC. Monthly briefings with Center P&C Leads and bimonthly participation in the P&C CoP help ensure the relevance and successful implementation of our work.
	<b>1.5 System Board are fully aware of and aligned with CGIAR GDI workplace approaches</b> <i>Indicator:</i> Updates delivered to SC and IPB	YES

Outcomes/Indicator		Indicator retained in C&E Action Plan 2025–27?
<b>Outcome 2: Inclusive Workplace Culture</b> Every person who works at CGIAR feels welcomed, valued, and supported to have an equal chance to succeed	<b>2.1 Inclusion is clearly defined and understood by everyone as a core part of CGIAR Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicator: Completion of culture principles, action plan and framework</li> </ul>	NO <i>Rationale:</i> The Culture Framework workstream was suspended at the request of the EMD/DEMD until further notice.
	<b>2.2 Increased understanding and capacities for all staff to contribute to a diverse and inclusive workplace</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of staff who have completed e-modules</li> <li>Number of GDI e-modules, instructor-led courses, toolkits and guides available by language</li> <li># Of downloads from knowledge hub of toolkits and guides</li> </ul>	YES
	<b>2.3 CGIAR's GDI Architecture, including Community of Practice, is formalized and fully resourced to build support for inclusive workplaces and underrepresented groups</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear Charters for all existing and new ERG published and publicly available</li> <li>Launch of new ERGs</li> <li>Launch of ERG dashboards</li> <li>Launch of Male Allies group</li> <li>Attendance and evaluation at annual meeting</li> <li># Of GDI focal points, ERGCC and other GDI CoP members trained</li> </ul>	PARTIALLY <i>Rationale:</i> ERGs have been reformulated/rebranded as "Colleague Communities" in the new AP. The indicators on this focus on staff engagement with the Colleague Communities, rather than the creation of additional groups. Though GDI Focal Points were initially assigned, the momentum of this group was not sustained. It was deemed that the P&C CoP was a more suitable mechanism for coordinating GDI efforts across Centers. Other themes were found to be more of interest for ERG development than the male allyship group proposed in the 2023–24 AP. Allyship became and continues as a central focus in the GDI work, but with a broader scope and meaning beyond gender and male allyship.
	<b>2.4 GDI-related communications and knowledge products are regular and accessible</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ERG Knowledge Hub established</li> <li>Usage of Knowledge Hub (# of visits, page views, time on site and # of downloads)</li> <li>Organogram for GDI dept in line with P&amp;C</li> <li>Communications metrics appropriate to channels and defined in strategy (e.g., followers, reach, attendance at events, website visits)</li> <li>An Inclusive Language Policy with accompanying guidance is developed</li> </ul>	YES

Outcomes/Indicator		Indicator retained in C&E Action Plan 2025–27?
<b>Outcome 3: Diverse Representation</b> Through equitable recruitment, retention, and advancement, CGIAR works to reflect the world it serves with a broad range of diversity dimension represented at all levels	<b>2.5 A cross-CGIAR approach to workplace wellbeing is adopted</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-CGIAR wellbeing approach developed and approved</li> <li>Report developed and widely circulated</li> </ul>	YES
	<b>3.1 A broad range of diversity dimensions beyond gender are defined, and disaggregated targets are set</b> <i>Indicator:</i> Collected and reported bi-annually on key GDI workforce data	YES <i>Note:</i> Workforce data collection has adjusted from being bi-annual to annual in the new AP to alleviate Center reporting burdens and streamline efforts, and in recognition that the slow rates of progress towards gender parity do not require biannual monitoring.
	<b>3.2 GDI is mainstreamed into all recruitment policies, processes and procedures using effective evidence-based solutions</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CGIAR Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit mainstreamed</li> <li>De-biasing recruitment training provided</li> <li>Development cross-CGIAR approaches to returnship, scholarships and internships.</li> <li>Internal dashboard on recruitment, promotions and retention</li> </ul>	PARTIALLY <i>Rationale:</i> Efforts to strengthen and standardize good practices in line with the Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit are continued in the new AP, but the mainstreaming of this into policies is not desired or feasible in CGIAR's new operating structure. These efforts are expanded in the new AP, to include exit practices.
	<b>3.3 GDI is mainstreamed into all talent performance, development and retention policies, processes and procedures using effective evidence-based solutions</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive Performance Management Best Practice Guide developed, good practices mainstreamed</li> <li>Mentorship program piloted</li> <li>Flexible work guide published</li> <li>CGIAR benefits reviewed</li> <li>Pay gap guidance published</li> </ul>	PARTIALLY <i>Rationale:</i> Support to make performance management more effective and inclusive remains a central part C&E's new AP. The mentorship program will also continue to be strengthened. The focus on pay gaps and benefits, is now considered out of scope of the C&E Function.
<b>Outcome 4: Accountability</b> Everyone is held accountable to deliver on CGIAR's GDI vision	<b>4.1 Regular GDI monitoring and reporting takes place and recommendations based on findings shared (e.g. GDI Matrix, workforce dashboard, engagement and pulse surveys)</b> <i>Indicators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GDI Matrix revised</li> <li>Reporting of workforce data formalized in Privacy Notice</li> <li>Workforce dashboards with targets</li> <li>GDI-responsive engagement survey</li> </ul>	YES <i>Note:</i> Reformulated as the Culture and Engagement Index. <b>Currently developing a revised GDI accountability framework, the "GDI Index," to replace the existing GDI Matrix.</b> The GDI Index will align with the upcoming 2025–2027 Action Plan and will be socialized amongst Center Q3 and Q4 2025. The existing dashboard will be updated to reflect the GDI Index and will serve as the primary benchmarking tool for Centers to track their progress.



Outcomes/Indicator	Indicator retained in C&E Action Plan 2025–27?
<p><b>4.2 GDI is key component of staff competencies and embedded in everyone's performance review</b></p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of CGIAR core values and competencies</li> <li>• Staff assessed on GDI competencies</li> <li>• Managers and staff trained on Performance Management</li> </ul>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Work on creating shared core competencies for all staff and leaders continues in the new AP, but this has moved to be under Outcome 1 and 2.</p>
<p><b>4.3 GDI is mainstreamed into CGIAR monitoring, evaluation and learning activities to enhance oversight for GDI mainstreaming</b></p> <p><i>Indicators</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation design and conduct strive to fully address GDI parameters</li> <li>• Evaluation teams are gender balanced and include GDI-related expertise</li> <li>• GDI issues and principles are mainstreamed across core sections of the evaluation reports and ensuring that GDI-related findings are reflected in the conclusions and recommendations of evaluations</li> <li>• Understanding/capacities around responsiveness to gender, diversity, and inclusion (GDI) standard of the Evaluation Framework</li> </ul>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Note:</i> As guidance has already been designed and adopted, and C&amp;E has no authority over these departments, work with Audit and Evaluation is in the form of ongoing engagement and support.</p>
<p><b>4.4 GDI is mainstreamed into CGIAR audit activities to enhance integration of GDI considerations</b></p> <p><i>Indicator:</i> Audit requests answered</p>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Note:</i> As guidance has already been designed and adopted, and C&amp;E has no authority over these departments, work with Audit and Evaluation is in the form of ongoing engagement and support.</p>
<p><b>4.5 GDI budgets are set, adopted, tracked, and reported on</b></p> <p><i>Indicator:</i> Approved annual GDI budget.</p>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> GDI Budgets are reported on to the Management Team and Finance Team.</p>
<p><b>4.6 Individual staff, teams and leaders are formally recognized and rewarded for advancing GDI in the workplace</b></p> <p><i>Indicator:</i> Launch of updated awards program</p>	<p>YES</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Awards will continue under the new AP, but have moved to Outcome 2: <i>Inclusive Workplace Culture</i></p>
<p><b>4.7 The Gender, Diversity, Inclusion and Culture Department is fully staffed and resourced</b></p> <p><i>Indicator:</i> GDI Function staffed and resourced</p>	<p>NO/PARTIALLY</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> A fully resourced C&amp;E Function and Action Plan were made an indicator in the new AP rather than an outcome.</p>

## Annex 2. Internal Audit Purpose and Process

CGIAR Internal Audit function provides support to CGIAR governing bodies and management in responsibly managing CGIAR resources in an efficient manner. By offering independent, risk-based, and objective advice, in addition to insight and foresight, we fortify CGIAR's ability to create, safeguard and maintain value.

Internal Audit is accountable to the Integrated Partnership Board via the Partnership Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (P-AFRC). Center/Alliance Internal Audit teams report functionally to their respective Center/Alliance Boards via the Center Audit, Finance, and Risk Committees (AFRC). The Heads of Internal Audit report administratively to their respective Director General/Executive Director. The Internal Audit teams work in conjunction with one another as a community of practice, headed by the Chief Audit Executive a.i., with assistance from Internal Audit Support Services.

The quality of IA work is underpinned by conformance with the [Global Internal Audit Standards](#).

**Planning process:** Audit engagements begin with structured planning, where the internal audit team gains a deep understanding of the business context, processes, and key risks. A **risk-based approach** is used to prioritize audit activities based on areas of greatest significance to the organization's objectives.

**Execution:** Audits are conducted using a consistent methodology, involving interviews, documentation review, control testing, and data analysis. The objective is to evaluate: for this engagement

- **Adequacy** – whether processes and controls are appropriately designed to mitigate relevant risks.
- **Effectiveness** – whether those controls are operating as intended and achieving their desired outcomes.
- **Efficiency** – whether resources are being used optimally, avoiding waste or duplication.
- **Reliability** – Is the data used for decision making reliable, accurate and timely provided

This structured approach helps identify control weaknesses, improvement opportunities, and areas of good practice.

**Reporting:** Audit results are shared with relevant stakeholders through clear and concise reports. These highlight key findings, underlying root causes, risk implications, and practical recommendations for improvement. Final reports are submitted to the **IPB-AFRC** and shared with management to support effective oversight and follow-up. Included in these reports are recommendations agreed with management.

By delivering timely and relevant assurance, the Internal Audit function strengthens accountability, improves performance, and supports the long-term resilience of the organization.

## Annex 3. Evaluation Function

The Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES)'s [Terms of Reference](#) approved by the System Council articulates the mandate of **the Evaluation function (EF)**. The EF delivers and supports **process and performance evaluations** to provide accountability, support to decision making, and lessons for improving and effectiveness of agricultural research for development outcomes. The [CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Policy](#) guide the work of the function.

- The 15 core standards and principles for the practice of evaluation in CGIAR as outlined in the Evaluation framework dictate the guiding principles of the IAES's Evaluation function. These principles establish the parameters for independent, robust, utilization-focused evaluations that support accountability and learning, and guide decision-making.
- Evaluation criteria in the box below are detailed in the Evaluation Policy. Apart from Quality of Science (QoS) evaluation criterion, extended guidance on other criteria is available under the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/>

Final evaluation reports are submitted to the [System Council via SIMEC](#); recommendations are subject to Management Response in the [Evaluation & MR Actions Tracker](#).

**Relevance:** The extent to which the intervention's objectives and design respond to the needs, policies, and priorities of users/clients and global, regional, and country partners/institutions and continue to do so if circumstances change. Consistent with the QoR4D framework, attention is given to the importance, significance, and usefulness of the work implemented in the problem context, associated with CGIAR's capacity to address the problems.

**Effectiveness:** The extent to which the intervention achieved, and/or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across subgroups of users/clients. Consistent with the QoR4D framework and in the CGIAR context, this criterion considers the extent to which research is positioned for use and has generated knowledge, products, and services with high potential to address a problem and contribute to innovations, outcomes, and impacts. Effectiveness, therefore, implies that research has been designed, implemented, and positioned for use within a dynamic theory of change, with appropriate leadership, capacity development, diversity of research skills, and support to the enabling environment to translate knowledge into use and to help generate desired outcomes.

**Impact:** The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to contribute to generating significant positive or negative, intended or unintended higher-level effects. Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention.

**Coherence:** The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country or a sector or within CGIAR; its overall fit. *Internal coherence* addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out within CGIAR, and the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which CGIAR adheres. *External coherence* considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context—that is, its complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with others, its value-added, and its avoidance of duplication of effort.

**Efficiency:** The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way—that is, the overall use of resources. "Economical" refers to the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes, and impacts in the most cost-effective way possible compared with feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context. This criterion may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).

**Sustainability:** The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. This criterion focuses on continuation of benefits, not on external funding, and highlights the multidimensional nature of sustainability.

**QoS:** The QoS evaluative criterion pertains to scientific credibility and legitimacy. The definition of the criterion derives from the QoR4D frame of reference, which records CGIAR's System-wide agreement on the nature and assessment of research quality. The QoR4D describes research quality according to 4 key elements: relevance, scientific credibility, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Relevance and Effectiveness are treated as separated evaluation criteria.

## Annex 4. Recommendations from the Evaluation of the Gender at the CGIAR Workplace (2017)<sup>9</sup> by Acceptance Status

Recommendations	Status of Acceptance
<b>Category A: Recommendations under the mandate of the System Management Board, including those directed at the Board, the System Management Office, CRPs, Centers, and the CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research</b>	
Recommendation 2a. To concretize the overarching vision on gender, the System Management Board should develop and adopt a time bound Policy on Gender in CGIAR Research which sets out expectations and shared commitments of both Centers and CRPs.	Accepted
Recommendation 3a. CGIAR needs to put in (a) a "Gender Champion" on the System Management Board	Accepted
Recommendation 3b. CGIAR needs to put in place (b) a Task Force, supported by a consultant, to revise and update the 2015 CGIAR Diversity and Inclusion Strategy;	Not accepted <i>Explanation:</i> The Board feels that the updating of the 2015 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy should be driven and coordinated by the HR CoP.
Recommendation 3c. CGIAR needs to put in place (c) the hiring of a Gender at the Workplace Senior Advisor to provide expert advice and support to the System Management Board and individual Centers;	Not accepted: <i>Explanation:</i> The Board feels that given there is capacity within the System, enhanced through the available collective efforts of the Centers in the HR CoP, it can draw on these for expert advice as well as through the identified Gender Champion on the Board. Additional expertise may be acquired when needed.
Recommendation 6. The System Management Board should require reporting every two years from the Centers on progress against the key performance indicators defined in the Gender and Diversity Policy and the System-level Gender at the Workplace Strategy as well as a compilation of innovative experiences or lessons learned in advancing gender diversity.	Accepted: Noting that each Center Board is responsible and accountable for setting policy and monitoring progress of their Center in this area but recognizing the already commendable efforts of the HR CoP in trying to collectively report on KPIs.
Recommendation 3d. CGIAR needs to put in place (d) the reestablishment of the Gender at Work Focal Points in the Centers to assist their Senior Administration move their strategy forward;	Partially supported <i>Explanation:</i> It is up to Centers to decide on Gender in the Work Focal Points, considering that the HR CoP may offer the opportunity for a collective source of information and guidance for Centers to draw on.
Recommendation 4. A new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community of Practice should be established to enable members, drawn from both the Center and System levels, to stay current with the field, share knowledge and best practices, collectively maintain a web-based resource and communication hub.	Not supported. <i>Explanation:</i> Given that the existing HR CoP is already active in this area, the Board feels that this be further supported by the Centers to strengthen its mandate, and possibly membership, to provide valuable knowledge and best practices

<sup>9</sup> [Evaluation of Gender in Research and CGIAR in Workplace](#)


Recommendations	Status of Acceptance
<p>Recommendation 5. A comprehensive System-wide Training Program for working with diversity and implicit bias should be developed and customized for CGIAR.</p>	<p>Not Supported. <i>Explanation:</i> A collective effort amongst Centers to identify needs and how to meet those needs through their own awareness and training programs may be more feasible and beneficial.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7. All Centers should develop a compelling case outlining the benefits of gender diversity for their organizational performance in terms of its mission, strategic goals, workplace efficacy, and impact within one year of the approval of the System-level Vision Statement and Strategy (Recommendation 1 and 2). Centers should complement the case with a clear strategy with key performance indicators.</p>	<p>Supported</p>
<p>Recommendation 8. Centers should move beyond policies to take a more proactive and systematic approach to strengthening diversity and inclusion at the levels of practice and behavior. Particular emphasis should be given to proactive mobilization of female candidates in recruitment, particularly at the leadership and scientist levels</p>	<p>Supported</p>
<p>Recommendation 9. Centers should prioritize building inclusive workplaces by (a) ensuring that Senior Leaders and Managers communicate systematically and regularly their commitment to fostering gender diversity and inclusion, (b) taking critical steps to strengthen inclusion, and (c) assessing progress every two years to determine whether they are closing the gap between men's and women's experiences of inclusion in the Centers. The findings and resulting action items should be shared with the Center Board.</p>	<p>Supported</p>
<p><b>Category C: Recommendations directed at the System Council</b></p>	
<p>Recommendation 1. The System Council adopt an overarching, high-level CGIAR Vision Statement on Gender Equity, covering both gender in research and gender at the workplace, in order to: a) enshrine the system's commitment to gender equity and b) provide an overall accountability framework on Gender. To action this recommendation, the Evaluation also recommends that the System Council appoint a 'Gender Champion' from among its members, to lead the development of the vision statement, drawing on input from other relevant bodies and Council members, and to ensure, ongoing, that gender issues in research and at the workplace are kept on the Council's agenda.</p>	<p>Supported</p>
<p>Recommendation 3e. CGIAR needs to put in place the organizational infrastructure, processes and mechanisms and resources to advance gender diversity, equity, and inclusion, including: (e) the allocation of Windows 1 and 2 funding to support this organizational infrastructure for its first year of operations.</p>	<p>Not supported: <i>Explanation:</i> The System Management Board instead supports that the necessary activities can be successfully carried out across the Centers rather than through the central positions proposed to be funded by this allocation.</p>

## Annex 5. Documents Reviewed

1. Action Plan for Advancing Culture and Engagement (C&E) in CGIAR's Workplaces 2025-2027. <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/37804290-e5a9-4e4f-9dbf-f29db6ad821d/content>
2. Action Plan for Advancing Culture and Engagement (C&E) in CGIAR's Workplace 2023-2024. [GDI-Action-Plan-2334-31-May.pdf](#)
3. Action Plan for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion within CGIAR Workplace 2020-2021. <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/fe9d57ac-6d1a-4eee-aa32-10b80db15c2d/content>
4. CGIAR Evaluation Framework. 2022. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications/cgiar-evaluation-framework>
5. CGIAR Evaluation Policy. 2022. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications/cgiar-evaluation-policy>
6. CGIAR GENDER Platform: Evaluation Report. 2023. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications/cgiar-gender-platform-evaluation-report>
7. [CGIAR 2023 Research and Innovation Strategy](#).
8. Conducting and Using Evaluability Assessments in CGIAR: CGIAR Evaluation Guidelines. 2022. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications/conducting-and-using-evaluability-assessments-cgiar-cgiar-evaluation>
9. Evaluation of CGIAR Science Group: Synthesis Report. 2024. [Evaluation of CGIAR Science Groups: Synthesis Report | IAES | CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services](#)
10. Evaluation of Gender in Research in CGIAR's Workplace. 2017. <https://iaes.cgiar.org/evaluation/publications/evaluation-gender-research-and-cgiar-workplace>
11. Framework for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR's Workplace. 2020. <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/items/eb197e49-c4a5-48a9-a016-6e9719b38c35>
12. IAES Consolidated 2025-2027 Workplan and Budget. 2024. [IAES Consolidated 2025-2027 Workplan and Budget | IAES | CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services](#)
13. Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptive Management. 2020. *Better Evaluation*. [Real%20time%20evaluation%20paper%20Dec%202020%20FINAL.pdf](#)
14. Terms of Reference: Summaries of Learning on CGIAR's Ways of Working. 2025. [Terms of Reference: Summaries of Learning on CGIAR's Ways of Working | IAES | CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services](#)
15. 2021 Synthesis of Learning from a Decade of CGIAR's Research Programs. 2021. [2021 Synthesis of Learning from a Decade of CGIAR Research Programs | IAES | CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Services](#)



## Annex 6. Team Biographies and Declarations of Interest

EVALUATION FUNCTION, IAES	
Team Lead	Donna Podems
<p>Professor Podems is a researcher and evaluator with 25+ years' experience. She holds a doctorate in interdisciplinary studies focused on Program Evaluation and Organizational Development. She is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University where she teaches Research Theory and Stellenbosch University, South Africa, in the Center for Research and Science Technology.</p> <p>Dr. Podems has worked with multiple organizations, such as various UN organizations, SIDA, DFID, USAID, the World Bank, the Gates Foundation. For the CGIAR in 2020, Dr Podems served as the evaluation team lead of the WHEAT CRP review (<a href="#">link</a>) and in 2023 as a Team Lead of the GENDER Platform evaluation (<a href="#">link</a>). She has also been involved in developing GESY evaluation guidelines (to be posted <a href="#">here</a>). Some of her relevant feminist and gender focused field work in the last few years includes reviewing the World Bank Gender Policy, serving as the Senior MEL Advisor for the Urgent African Fund, serving as the methodology advisor for the Global Affairs Canada for their global feminist evaluation, and she is currently evaluating a global program that examines the global backlash against the feminist movement.</p> <p>Donna's research focuses mainly on gender and feminist poverty interventions which often links to researching programs situated in the environment, agriculture, and education sectors. Her scientific research has resulted in publishing multiple papers, books chapters, books and journal articles. She is a former National Board Member for the American Evaluation Association (AEA), the National Board Member for the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA), and currently serves on an international evaluation Board and the International Evaluation Academy (<a href="#">link</a>).</p>	
Consultant	John Keiti
<p>John is a leading expert in leveraging digitalization and digital platforms to transform agriculture and rural economies. With extensive experience in building information systems and fostering digital entrepreneurship ecosystems, he has served as an international consultant in technology, innovation, and digital agriculture for organizations such as IFAD, CGIAR, the World Bank, FAO, and CTA. He served as an ICT and Data Management subject matter expert for the CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES), evaluating the 2021 Platform for Big Data in Agriculture (<a href="#">link</a>) and the joint activity with Internal Audit on 2023 Performance and Results Management System (<a href="#">link</a>). Under the PRMS study, he developed a case study on Quality Assurance (QA) under PRMS (available upon request). John has served as a reviewer for IAES publications, including the AI Evaluation Method Note (<a href="#">link</a>) and Digital Ways of Working learning study (<a href="#">link to TORs</a>). As Ashoka's Africa Chief Operating Officer, John established and managed partnerships crucial for supporting social entrepreneurs across Africa. As mLab East Africa's Director, he conceptualized and executed significant digital innovation challenges, notably CTA's Pitch Agrihack and PIVOT East, a digital startups entrepreneurship challenge for Eastern Africa. Holding an MBA and a BSc in Computer Science, John is committed to social justice and systems change, actively working to dismantle systemic inequalities.</p>	

Evaluation Analyst	Samriti Maharjan
<p>Samriti Maharjan has been working with the Evaluation Function under CGIAR's IAES from December 2022 and previously supported the Evaluation of CGIAR GENDER Platform and EA of CGIAR RILs. She has worked as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Officer in Nepal and a Junior Consultant to support the "Real-Time Evaluation of Gender Integration in UNICEF COVID-19 Response in South Asia". Further, she holds a master's degree in international cooperation and development. She is a grant recipient from the Cooperating and Development Network 2021/2022 for her research on "Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Health Care Workers in Kathmandu Based Hospital", conducted as part of her master's degree.</p>	
INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION, CGIAR	
Internal Audit	Charles Ndegwa
<p>Charles is a risk management and internal audit consultant. He holds a BSc in Computer science, is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Information Systems Auditor. He has extensive experience in training and consulting spanning various industries and has worked with clients in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking strategic planning and monitoring implementation of strategic plans.</li> <li>• Establishing and implementing risk management frameworks through identification, management and monitoring of key risks (strategic, operational and project risks) affecting the achievement of organizational objectives.</li> <li>• Undertaking risk-based internal audits on a co-sourced basis for various clients including the CGIAR System Organization. He has undertaken both assurance and advisory engagements involve review of governance, risk management and internal control processes, including review of automated controls embedded as application controls in information systems, that support achievement of an organization's objectives.</li> <li>• Quality Assessment reviews of internal audit functions to assess conformance with Internal Audit Standards.</li> </ul>	
Internal Audit	Daniel Muundu
<p>Daniel is a risk management and internal audit consultant. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree, is a Certified Internal Auditor and a Certified Information Systems Auditor. Daniel has provided training and consulting services to various clients in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning – by developing strategic plans, operational plans and funding plans. He has also been involved in monitoring the implementation of strategic and operational plans.</li> <li>• Governance – by developing board instruments, capacity building and facilitating performance reviews of boards and their committees.</li> <li>• Risk Management – by developing risk management frameworks; supporting organizations operationalize their risk management frameworks by lining them to their strategic plans and internal controls frameworks; undertaking strategic, operational and project risk assessments; and assessing risk management maturity levels of organizations.</li> <li>• Internal auditing – by undertaking risk-based internal audits, including information systems audits, on a co-sourced basis for various clients including the CGIAR System Organization.</li> <li>• Quality Assessment reviews of internal audit functions to assess conformance with Internal Audit Standards.</li> </ul> <p>Daniel also serves as a Board Audit Committee member for Umoja International.</p>	

S/N	Conflict of Interest Statements for IAES team	Donna Podems	John Keiti	Samriti Maharjan
		Independent Consultant	Independent Consultant	Evaluation Analyst
1	Main employer and any other organization that provides you with remuneration (which may be named participants in the project/ program/ proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate.	Michigan State University	Independent	No
2	Are you aware whether a relative, close friend, close colleague or someone with whom you have financial ties is receiving funding from or giving advice to a project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate?	No	No	No
3	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate cite any of your own current research?	No	No	No
4	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name researchers with whom you have active collaborations, recently published joint papers or are in regular email correspondence?	No	No	No
5	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name any of your past PhD students are active participants?	No	No	No
6	I declare that the information provided on this statement is true and complete.	Dated: 19 July 2025	Dated: 25 April 2025	Dated: 14 February 2025

S/N	Conflict of Interest Statements for Internal audit	Charles Ndegwa	Daniel Muundu
		Independent Consultant	Position: Evaluation Analyst
1	Main employer and any other organization that provides you with remuneration (which may be named participants in the project/ program/ proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate.	Independent	Independent
2	Are you aware whether a relative, close friend, close colleague or someone with whom you have financial ties is receiving funding from or giving advice to a project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate?	No	No
3	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate cite any of your own current research?	No	No
4	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name researchers with whom you have active collaborations, recently published joint papers or are in regular email correspondence?	No	No
5	Does any project/program/proposal you are being asked to review/evaluate name any of your past PhD students are active participants?	No	No
6	I declare that the information provided on this statement is true and complete.	July 2025	July 2025



Independent  
Advisory and  
Evaluation  
Service

**Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service**

Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Via di San Domenico, 1 00153 Rome, Italy

[IAES@cgiar.org](mailto:IAES@cgiar.org)

<https://iaes.cgiar.org/>