CGIAR Advisory Services: 2021 Workplan & Budget

Introduction

The CGIAR Advisory Services (CAS) is comprised of three independent advisory functions:

- Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)
- Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)
- Independent Evaluation Function (Evaluation Function).

CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat (CAS Secretariat) facilitates and supports these independent advisory functions. Together, CAS provides external, impartial, and expert advice on strategy and positioning, program evaluation, and impact assessment. CAS activities gather and generate evidence for decision-makers at all levels of the System.

November 2020

1   CAS 2021 Workplan

This workplan aligns with CAS Terms of Reference (TORs) and Operating Principles and is tethered to year three of the CGIAR Business Cycle and to One CGIAR reform. The plan is supported by Exhibit A (SPIA Objective 2 grants) and Exhibit B (Working Budget).

1.1 ISDC

Operationalize QoR4D – ISDC will make QoR4D fit-for-purpose for a One CGIAR Research Initiative review process that is aligned with the Eschborn Principles. The process of operationalizing QoR4D includes consultations and communications with the Executive Management Team (EMT), System Organization Programs Unit, System Board, SIMEC, and Science Leaders. (output: metrics)

Assess Research Initiative proposals – ISDC will assess One CGIAR Research Initiative Concepts and Proposals against the metrics aligned with QoR4D and the Eschborn Principles. ISDC may convene and lead subject matter reviewers to collaborate on assessments when scientific capacity is outside of ISDC members' expertise. (output: ~10 assessments)

Onboard new ISDC members – ISDC will engage three new members who will be nominated during the first quarter of 2021 with an anticipated start of 1 April. ISDC is operating at 75% capacity from August 2020 through March 2021. One ISDC member will serve as an observer during the nomination process. (output: Council operates at capacity)

Hold Semiannual ISDC meetings – ISDC will craft agendas and bring in guests geared towards developing advice pertinent to One CGIAR. As soon as travel is safe, the new ISDC needs to meet in-person to provide maximum attention to advisory deliverables and build cohesion among the Council; therefore, ISDC is budgeting for two in-person meetings in the year. (outputs: advice prepared for, e.g., SC12 & 13)

Explore Science for Development 2022 symposium (no-cost consultations and planning) – ISDC will begin to codesign a Research for Development symposium in support of the One CGIAR Research and Innovation Strategy and new portfolio, in collaboration with EMT. Input and consultation with System Board and System Council via SIMEC will inform the agenda. (output: symposium plan)

Support One CGIAR – in keeping with adaptive management and codesign principles, ISDC will advise on science for development for arising and *ad hoc* needs. This includes standing ready to work closely with EMT and the System Organization Programs Unit on review of the Investment Plan (or if requested by System Council), and other plans and strategies related to One CGIAR.

Raise ISDC awareness and communicate advice – to prompt discussion grounded in timely and high-quality analysis, ISDC will prepare videos, podcasts and related materials that make advice more accessible. With major changes to the One CGIAR governance, ISDC needs communication tools to raise awareness on its purpose, capabilities, and outcomes for One CGIAR. Consistent communication is key among CGIAR entities.

1.2 SPIA

The multi-year SPIA plan approved by System Council (2018) sets the frame for SPIA's 2021 activities. The plan is divided in three objectives.

Objective 1: Support CGIAR's strong commitment to embed a culture of Impact Assessment into the System

SPIA activities in support of Objective 1 will be to:

Engage in One CGIAR reform process on stage-gating and measurement for five impact areas.

Issue guidance: Continue sharing and developing impact assessment (IA) guidance to CGIAR community, organizing webinars.

Launch fellowship program and continue matchmaking: Facilitate interactions of CGIAR early-career IA researchers and academic institutes.

Implement small grants program: Engage early career CGIAR researchers and graduate students, to support access and further use of existing SPIA data.

Conduct capacity strengthening: Support conceptualization and design of IA studies by CGIAR IA specialists.

Focus on uptake: Engage CGIAR managers in a broader use of IA results and to support investments in IA research.

Communicate: Reach out to multiple audiences (Funders, EMT, Monitoring-Evaluation-Learning Community of Practice/MEL-COP) to engage them in the use of rigorous evidence to challenge conventional wisdom and influence future directions.

Convene SPIA event: Hold a workshop with key external stakeholders to evaluate progress on the multi-year workplan.

Objective 2: Expand and deepen evidence of impact of CGIAR research investments (Refer to Exhibit 1)

SPIA activities in support of Objective 2 will be to:

Promote new methods: Support the development and use of new methods in remote sensing among study teams (onboard Remote Sensing/GIS expert by the beginning of 2021).

Support *Accountability Studies*: Technical and operational support to study teams (9 current) approved under *Long-term, large-scale impacts* and *Environmental impacts* calls. See Exhibit 1.

Support *Learning Studies*: Organize an inception meeting with study teams of approved proposals and facilitate revision and resubmission of promising but not approved proposals under the call to study *Adapted diffusion strategies and the impact of adapted strategies on uptake* (>6 proposals). See Exhibit 1.

Design and launch a call on *CGIAR Digital Decision Tools.*

Facilitate the implementation of additional studies to support the development of new methods for under-evaluated areas in the CGIAR.

Objective 3: Improve and institutionalize collection of data on diffusion and use of CGIAR innovations in national data systems

SPIA activities in support of Objective 3 will be to:

Communicate Ethiopia synthesis report: Further disseminate Ethiopia synthesis report, data, and lessons learned.

Test methods and develop protocols and standards on community surveys and use of M&E data in various IA studies in priority countries.

Expand guidance for CGIAR for institutionalizing the use of new standards and protocols in the regular collection of adoption/diffusion data at scale.

Implement Uganda National Panel Survey: Collaboration with World Bank and Uganda Bureau of Statistics to implement the 2021 wave of Uganda National Panel Survey; integrate accurate measures (including DNA fingerprinting) of CGIAR-related innovations in national survey.

Scope Vietnam as third country for country-level approach: pursue exploratory activities and assess the

feasibility to implement nationally-representative data collection in Vietnam in 2021 or later.

Expand country work: Consultation and analysis to identify fourth priority country.

1.3 Evaluation Function

The Evaluation Function, in the CAS Secretariat, will focus on four major activity groups in 2021: (1) External evaluative activities (2) Evaluation guidance and planning (3) Engagement across One CGIAR, and (4) Strengthening evaluation-related knowledge management and communications.

External evaluative activities

Create a synthesis of evidence from the 12 CRP 2020 reviews, drawing in a comparison to 2016 CRP evaluation synthesis (Birner and Byerlee, 2016), to assess decadal trends and enhance recommendations for One CGIAR. The synthesis will contain a range of complementary chapters/sub-reports. (output: synthesis developed)

Define targeted synthesis chapters through consultation with user groups, including SIMEC, System Board, EMT and System Organization Programs Unit, and MEL-COP, to respond to One CGIAR priorities. Potential topics include large program management and internal partnership arrangements, Quality of Science and the application of the QoR4D framework to evaluation, among others. (outputs: associated communication products tailored to user needs disseminated)

Conduct full-fledged external evaluations involving primary data collection: (1) Excellence in Breeding platform; (2) Big Data platform. (outputs: two platform evaluations conducted and associated communication products disseminated)

Identify and implement a third evaluation, through further SIMEC consultation, drawing on the results of the 2021 synthesis. CAS suggests a placeholder for discussion and planning with SIMEC in Summer 2021. For example, evaluation through a country frame of reference, to assess effectiveness of all CRPs implemented in a specific country context, or an evaluation of one of the cross-cutting themes of the CRPs (Climate, Gender, Youth, Partnership, or CapDev). (output: evaluation identified with SIMEC conducted)

Evaluation guidance and planning activities

Revise CGIAR External Evaluation Policy (2012) through a consultative and participatory process across CGIAR, based on industry standards and in line with revised OECD/DAC criteria. The rationale to conduct the revision in 2021 is to launch a new policy in tandem with One CGIAR. Adequate cross referencing of independent evaluation activity with the monitoring mechanisms of the One CGIAR Performance Results Management Framework will be in-built. (output: One CGIAR Evaluation Policy)

Develop multi-year evaluation plan that is evidence-based, in line with the CGIAR's response to MOPAN review, responsive to Funder and System needs, and with the aim to enhance use of evaluative evidence and accountability in line with revised Evaluation Policy.

Engagements with SIMEC, System Board, and EMT will be proposed, as well as with the broader MEL-COP, to ensure a well-informed plan that is responsive to System needs. (output: 2022-2024 Plan)

Provide and facilitate use of evidence to contribute to the design and implementation of Performance Results Management Framework in One CGIAR.

CGIAR engagement activities

Co-design evaluation recommendation response by engaging relevant parties vis-à-vis management responsibility. This is towards CGIAR implementing recommendations from independent evaluations past and present.

Conduct Quality Assurance (QA) of Center-/Program-commissioned evaluations, which may include travel. (output: QA engagements with a quantity to be confirmed with System Organization Programs Unit, MEL-COP)

Engage with MEL-COP to enhance demand for and use of evaluative evidence from independent evaluations commissioned by CAS Evaluation. Follow through on MEL-COP request to assist to integrate elements of OECD-DAC criteria by co-leading a sub-group.

Evaluation knowledge mg't and comms activities

Develop Knowledge Management (KM) system for evaluative evidence, promote and assess early lessons (related to engagement with relevant parties vis-à-vis management responsibility). (output: KM system)

Issue specific knowledge products, fine-tune dissemination mechanisms, and engagements related to evaluation function harmoniously with overarching CAS Secretariat communications and KM plans. (outputs: engagements, downloads, products, interactions with Rome-based Agencies through EvalFORWARD)

Maintain and expand roster of evaluation and subject matter professionals. CAS Secretariat will refine and build on the roster developed for the CRP 2020 Reviews. (outputs: roster database)

1.4 CAS Secretariat

CAS Secretariat facilitates and supports the above-mentioned independent advisory functions. Hence, the CAS Secretariat workplan concentrates on support activities that foster the outputs of ISDC, SPIA, and Evaluation Function. Continuous improvement to programmatic and financial management and transparency will be central to CAS Secretariat *modus operandi*, as is adaptive management and support for robust engagement with the One CGIAR governance and management.

Prepare CAS planning and monitoring system

CAS will develop a multi-year, multi-functional workplan and monitoring system for the 2022-2024 business cycle, for transparency in the assessment and accountability of advisory services to different groups.

Conduct cross-cutting communications and knowledge management (KM) Based on the 2020 user survey, the CAS Secretariat will launch a more nuanced, demand-driven communications and KM plan, comprising a periodic, concise newsletter; improved website search function and deeper cross-posting on CGIAR.org; and, better visualizations to describe and report on CAS. These tasks are all towards greater System engagement, interactivity and supporting of the three CAS functions' mandates and effectiveness.

Compile selected cross-CAS advice and evidence for One CGIAR governance and management entities, where appropriate, including related to portfolio and research modalities development (whenever cross-function advice will be useful to the System).

Build and reinforce bridges – there will be three tracks of work to expand linkages within One CGIAR (Centers, Programs, EMT and System Organization, Governance Entities), with Rome-based Agencies when relevant to CAS's mandate, as well as within CAS towards harmonized advice, e.g., informing ISDC advising with evidence generated through external evaluation workstream and to maximize use of resources.

Improve procedures and make them more efficient in consultation with the host institute and System Organization, workflows optimized and costs reduced for execution of standard procedures (e.g., travel, procurement, rosters).

Execute physical move to new Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT office, and related change management towards the 'Open Plan' design selected by the host institute.

Build CAS Secretariat as a team – with full complement of 9 FTEs on board from January 2021, a major focus in 2021 will be building up the team and onboarding new members to CGIAR.

2 CAS 2021 Budget

Table 1. Summary Budget (Refer to Exhibit 2)

CAS Functions	2021 Request
ISDC	782,123
SPIA*	5,329,321
EVALUATION	800,442
CAS SECRETARIAT	1,774,665
TOTAL**	**8,686,551**

*SPIA request represents the balance of budget for the first 3-year period of the SPIA multiyear plan, less an anticipated ~500K savings.

**CAS budgets have absorbed hosting costs at an estimated total of 500K per annum, compared to previous budget submissions in the business cycle.

Advisory Services

CGIAR

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Exhibit 1: SPIA Grants under Objective 2 (to date) (1)

Grantee	Title	Budget	Status	Start	End	Disbursed	To disburse	Academic partner
ILRI	Long term diffusion and impacts of Index Based Livestock Insurance	$294,071	ongoing	25.10.19	24.10.22	$147,036	$147,035	
ICRAF	Evaluating the Restoration of the Commons (IFPRI)	$299,183	ongoing	15.12.19	31.12.21	$149,591	$149,592	
IRRI	Evaluating the Impact of Stress-Tolerant Rice Varieties Through Remote Sensing and Econometric Methods	$299,999	ongoing	01.02.20	31.12.21	$120,000	$180,000	University of Arizona
ICARDA	Data collection on the historical dissemination of early-maturing lentil varieties in Bangladesh and India (scoping)	$16,017	ongoing	15.05.20	31.12.20	$8,009	$8,008	
TUFTS	Sustained Adoption of Environmentally-Sustainable Practices: Spillovers and Long-Run Impacts (ICRISAT)	$228,750	ongoing	01.03.20	31.12.21	$114,375	$114,375	UC Santa Barbara
CORNELL	Rangeland Health and Index-Based Livestock Insurance: Innovations in Measurement and Evaluation (ILRI)	$255,598	ongoing	01.05.20	31.12.21	$127,799	$127,799	
CIMMYT	Impact of a Second-Generation Conservation Agriculture Technology (Happy Seeder) on Crop Residue Burning and Air Quality in Northwestern Indo-Gangetic Plains	$270,563	ongoing	01.08.20	31.12.22	$135,281	$135,282	University of Michigan
IAMO	LULCC impacts of the sorghum and millet upscaling project in Mali (ICRISAT)	$233,324	ongoing	01.10.20	31.12.23	$116,662	$116,662	UC Louvain
AfricaRice	Data collection on the historical dissemination of ASI threshers in Senegal and Nigeria (scoping)	$12,870	ongoing	01.10.20	28.02.21	$5,148	$7,722	
WorldFish	Data collection on the GIFT dissemination process from hatcheries to farmers in Bangladesh (scoping)	$29,948	ongoing	15.09.20	31.12.20	$14,974	$14,974	

Grantee	Title	Budget	Status	Start	End	Disbursed	To disburse	Academic partner
CIMMYT	Impacts of blast resistant wheat in Bangladesh	$300,000	contracting	01.12.20	31.12.23	$0	$300,000	Tufts
ILRI	Demand and Liquidity Coordination to Foster the Adoption for Livestock Vaccinations: An Experiment with Small-Holder Dairy Cooperatives in Kenya	$329,594	contracting	01.11.20	31.10.23	$0	$329,594	UC Santa Cruz, Indian School of Business
IPA/ AfricaRice	Diffusion and adoption of labor-saving technology in the presence of complementarity with other inputs, intra-household frictions, and coordination costs (pilot)	$50,000	contracting	01.12.20	30.11.21	$0	$50,000	Northwestern U, UC Berkeley; University of Sydney
Berkeley/ ICRISAT	Diffusion of Machine-harvestable chickpeas and implications for labor markets in India	$581,881	contracting	01.12.20	31.12.23	$0	$581,881	JPAL
CIP	Scaling Pathways for Accelerating Adoption of the Sweet potato Triple S Technology in Dry areas of Mozambique	$400,000	pipeline	01.12.20	31.12.23	$0	$400,000	College of William and Mary
Williams College	Small Mechanization Impact Stimuli in Ethiopia (SMISE) (CIMMYT)	$500,000	pipeline	01.12.20	31.12.23	$0	$500,000	Amherst College
TOTAL	**Sixteen studies committed to date (including scoping and pilot)**	**$4,101,798**				**$938,875**	**$3,162,924**	

NOTES

(1) scoping studies without funds changing hands are excluded from Exhibit A (e.g. studies on biofortification, climate information services, policy research)

Exhibit 2: CGIAR Advisory Services 2021 Working Budget

CAS Business Plan Objectives	One CGIAR facing – contributing to learning for rolling out Action Areas and Approaches [1]	Core Business – primarily related to accountability on the ending portfolio	TOTAL
ISDC			
ISDC 1_Science & research guidance (publications including OA)	7,500	7,500	15,000
ISDC 2_Support One CGIAR research proposal assessment	98,800	0	98,800
ISDC 3_One CGIAR advising (including communications materials)	101,590	0	101,590
ISDC 4_ISDC general (ISDC meetings, attend CGIAR governance meetings, new member onboarding, honoraria)	283,367	283,366	566,733
ISDC Sub-Total	**491,257**	**290,866**	**782,123**
SPIA [2]			
SPIA 1_Supporting the impact culture in the CGIAR	396,809	396,809	793,617
SPIA 2_Expanding and deepening evidence of impacts of CGIAR research	1,038,268	1,038,268	2,076,537
SPIA 3_Improving and institutionalizing collection of data	1,115,322	1,115,322	2,230,643
SPIA 4_Oversight, management, monitoring & evaluation		228,523	228,523
SPIA Sub-Total	**2,550,399**	**2,778,922**	**5,329,321**
Evaluation Function			
EVAL 1_External evaluative activities	335,575	335,575	671,150
EVAL 2_Evaluation guidance and planning	0	42,750	42,750
EVAL 3_Engagement with the CGIAR system	12,675	4,225	16,900
EVAL 4_Strengthen KM and related communications	24,188	8,062	32,250
EVAL 5_Other evaluation function (engagement, overheads, professional bodies)	18,696	18,696	37,392
Evaluation Sub-Total	**391,134**	**409,308**	**800,442**
SUB-TOTAL	**3,432,790**	**3,479,096**	**6,911,886**
CAS SECRETARIAT SUPPORT			
Secretariat Personnel, Hosting Charges, Communications	880,778	893,887	1,774,665
TOTAL	**4,313,578**	**4,372,983**	**8,686,551**

NOTES

(1) An estimated division of CAS budget by One CGIAR facing activities and 'Core Business' shows an almost 50/50 split. As One CGIAR takes shape and operationalizes from 2022, we can expect an increasing percent directed to One CGIAR.

(2) SPIA is operating under a multi-year workplan spanning two business cycles. In the first business cycle (19-21), the Total 3-year budget value of the workplan is 9,122,362 dollars. A permanent savings realized, primarily related to COVID in 2020, is 486,402 dollars. With this permanent savings, the Total 3-year workplan is 8,635,957. Other activities delayed by COVID have been deferred to 2021 and out years. SPIA expenditures in 2019 and 2020 are projected to total 3,238,021 dollars. The original SPIA budget requested for 2021 in its multiyear plan was 3,562,804; however, as reported earlier, burn rate of SPIA budget was affected by (i) change management process in Shared Secretariat that affected SPIA support and throughput; (ii) slower than anticipated process to conclude what is now a committed 4 m dollars in committed grants to high quality studies (see Exhibit 1); as well as, (iii) COVID-19. The accelerating commitments from mid-2020 forward evidence SPIA's ability to conclude the first business cycle relatively aligned with the original planning, apart from the above-stated permanent savings related to the global pandemic. SPIA therefore requests the balance of the 3-year budget less the mentioned ~500K savings; thus 3,562,804 plus 1,706,969 deferred from first two years.