

# System Management Board Self-Assessment 2017-2018

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**Purpose:** This document presents:

1. Background to the undertaking of a Board self-assessment
2. Lessons learned from the survey undertaken in June 2017
3. A proposed process for an assessment of the performance of the Board as configured from 1 July 2017 to 31 August 2018

**Action requested:** The Board is requested to endorse the proposed assessment process for the period July 2017-August 2018.

**Prepared by:** Board and Council Relations unit in its role as Secretariat to the SMB

## 1. Background to the undertaking of a Board Self-assessment

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*Effective boards are those that regularly and candidly ask themselves:*

***“How can we do better?”***

<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org>

- The Board’s Rules of Procedure (Article 13.5) state that *“The Board shall review periodically its own performance and shall take such action as may be necessary to improve it.”*
- The Board should make time in its meeting agendas to reflect on results of assessments to generate informed discussion and focus on commitment to address future priorities identified.
- Best practice seeks inputs from management/key stakeholders as well as Board Members

## 2. Lessons learned from the survey undertaken in June 2017

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- The 10 members of the SMB for the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 were asked to complete an online survey (anonymously)
- 90% response rate was obtained

### Perceived areas of strength

- ✓ Understanding of the mission and vision of CGIAR
- ✓ Management and oversight of financial resources
- ✓ Agreement on distinction between responsibilities of each of CGIAR's governing bodies

### Perceived areas where challenges exist

- Partnership engagement and resource mobilization
- Level of discussion, innovative ideas and strategic thinking generated by Board meetings

### 3. Proposed process for an assessment of the performance of the Board as configured from 1 July 2017 to 31 August 2018

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At SMB8 (December 2017) the Board reviewed the results of the June 2017 assessment and asked that the following modifications be enacted for the 2017-2018 assessment:

- **Additional respondents**: Send to 10 members, active observers and Center DGs/BC who are not on Board – ask respondent to identify their group before responding.
- **Modified questions for Center Leadership** to explore how effective they perceive the Board to have been in representing them and whether the correct priority areas are being addressed.

### 3. Proposed process for an assessment of the performance of the Board as configured from 1 July 2017 to 31 August 2018

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- At the Board Secretaries Community of Practice meeting (7-8 September 2018) there was agreement to move towards alignment of assessment methodologies across Centers to facilitate sharing of lessons learned and review of overall results by the SMB and the General Assembly
- **5 broad areas of questions** were discussed:
  - i. Whether the Board is providing effective direction, control and advice in a manner consistent with its role and responsibilities (under the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization)
  - ii. Whether Board members are fulfilling their individual fiduciary responsibilities
  - iii. Whether the Board's structure and operating processes are effective
  - iv. Whether the Board's culture is conducive to good decision-making
  - v. Where there might be gaps in expertise on the Board
- **Annex 1 sets out the proposed questions for the SMB Self-Assessment 2017-2018, which ensure that these 5 key areas are incorporated.**

## 4. Request of the SMB

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The Board is requested to:

- Endorse the assessment process set out in this document to take place in October 2018
- Ensure that the agenda for its next in-person meeting includes time to review and reflect on the outputs of the self-assessment.



## CGIAR System Management Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2017-2018

### Introduction

Please indicate which respondent group you fall into:

*[SMB member/Active Observer/Center Board Chair or DG who did not serve on the SMB in the assessment period]*

### Section A - Performance of the Board against its core responsibilities

For each of the following questions, please indicate which description of the Board's performance best matches your own assessment. If you do not feel able to answer, please indicate 'Don't know'. If you do not feel the area is relevant to the mandate and work of the System Management Board, please indicate 'Not relevant'. Each comments section can be used to provide any further detail as required.

#### 1 - Board members' common understanding of the mission and vision of CGIAR

Poor - active and open disagreement/lack of understanding of difference between mission and vision

Average - Surface understanding but deeper or unvoiced disagreements

Good - Common understanding, although not stress-tested or not well documented

Distinctive - All share common understanding; well documented and discussed

Don't know

Not relevant

#### 2 - Agreement on distinction between Board/Council/General Assembly responsibilities

Poor - Frequent disagreement on authority and processes; Board disconnected from wider stakeholders

Average - Disagreements limited to one/a few members; engagement takes place but limited/inconsistent

Good - High-level understanding/agreement of roles/responsibilities; few surprises/points of contention

Distinctive - Good shared understanding across stakeholders; frequent interaction, 'no surprises'

Don't know

Not relevant

#### 3 - Partnership engagement and resource mobilization

Poor - Little engagement; examples of advancing own interests/failure to 'speak with one voice' on CGIAR

Average - Some strategic promotion of CGIAR mission/activities and partner engagement; no formal plan

Good - Board members feel 'ownership'; often take opportunity to promote CGIAR; good coordination

Distinctive - Clear plan; Board members proactively 'open doors'; champion speaking as one System

Don't know

Not relevant

#### 4 - Management and oversight of CGIAR financial resources

Poor - Inadequate/infrequent information on financial performance available; poor Board understanding

Average - Adequate information but gaps/time lags; big picture not always clear; some 'surprises'

Good - Data/discussion behind financial decisions documented; 'Big picture' / forward-looking thinking

Distinctive - Complete, clear, timely data available and well-understood; 'No surprises' culture

Don't know

Not relevant

#### 5 - Are there any additional comments or feedback on the Board's performance against its core responsibilities that you would like to provide?

[Free text]

### Section B - Performance of the Board, its Chair, and Standing Committees/Working Groups

#### 6 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with the performance of the whole Board in the following key areas

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Level of discussion, innovative ideas and strategic thinking generated by Board meetings					
Outcomes of the Board's work in relation to the Board's fiduciary oversight role					
Level of communication between Board Members, and between the Board and Office/Center staff					
The informal culture of the Board – whether participation of all members is encouraged					
The composition of Board – whether there is adequate expertise in key areas and diversity among members					



**7 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with the performance of the Chair (NOTE - The Chair should not respond to this question)**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Set a relevant and strategic agenda					
Displayed leadership among the Board and promoted a shared vision					
Communicated clearly and listened effectively, kept others informed					
Dealt effectively with conflict issues					
As far as I can perceive, facilitates an effective working relationship with the ED (to enable their respective mandates)					
Understood, supported, promoted and upheld the Board's policies					

**8 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with the performance of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).**

[Note this question will only be visible to Board members/Active Observers, recognizing that those external to the Board will not have visibility of this]

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Process for selecting ARC membership					
Quality of information provided by the ARC reports to the Board					
Relevance of the ARC's work to the Board's mandate					
Level of discussions during ARC meetings					
The outcomes/reports delivered by the ARC to the System Management Board					

**9 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with the performance of the Board's ad hoc working groups (WG's) (For the 2017-2018 period, this question relates to the Rules of Governance Working Group)**

[Note this question will only be visible to Board members/Active Observers, recognizing that those external to the Board will not have visibility of this]

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The use of the WG to initiate key Board discussions					

The quality of materials/advice brought to the Board from the WG					

**10 - Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the performance of the Board, its Chair, or its Committees/working groups?** [Free text]

### Section C - Perceived importance of responsibilities for the next 1-2 years

In order to best prioritize the Board's focus and activities over the next 1-2 years, please indicate how important you feel it is for the Board to focus its attention on each of the following. If there is any key area you feel is missing from this list, please use the comments space below to indicate this, or to provide any further detail or rationale on your ratings.

**11 - How important is it for the System Management Board to focus on:**

*[These possible options will appear in a randomized order]*

	Low	Medium	High
A clearer articulation of CGIAR's mission/vision			
Enhancing the current portfolio			
Ensuring a robust Risk Management Framework is approved and well-embedded			
Ensuring that all CGIAR System-wide policies are strategic, up-to-date and streamlined			
Expanding CGIAR's resource base			
Fixing the Funding model to improve System financial stability			
Streamlining reporting across CGIAR			
Developing innovative ideas and improving the Board's strategic thinking			
Improving financial oversight and transparency mechanisms			
Improving CGIAR's cost efficiency			

**12 - Are there any additional comments or feedback on the Board's priorities that would you like to provide?** [Free text]

### Section D - Logistics and facilitation

**13 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with Board meeting logistics.**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Travel arrangements					
Expense reimbursements					
Choice of locations/venues					

**14 - Please indicate how satisfied you are with the meeting process and facilitation.**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Information received prior to each meeting					
Time allocated to each session					
Opportunity for informal interactions with Board colleagues/other staff & stakeholders					

**15 - Are there any additional comments you would like to make on what works well or could be improved regarding Board meetings?** [Free text]

**16 - Finally, do you have any suggestions for how this self-assessment exercise could be improved in the future?** [Free text]