

## Taking forward the creation of a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform - A Provisional Plan

### Purpose

This document presents a Provisional Plan for the creation of a CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform, based on recent discussion of the System Management Board (SMB11) and the System Council (SC7).

### Action Required

The Board is requested to consider and provide input to the Provisional Plan, with a focus on the following questions:

- Question 1: Given changes in the governance and advisory services landscape since 2016, does the Provisional Plan have the right processes and roles for a call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?
- Question 2: Is the approach (elements, format, length) used for the call for proposals for the 2017-2022 Portfolio fit for purpose for the call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?
- Question 3:
  - A. Are the 2015 Platform assessment criteria still relevant for the call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?
  - B. If the 2015 Platform assessment criteria should be reviewed, what is the appropriate consultation process for reviewing the assessment criteria that should be undertaken?

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## Background

1. A 'Collaborative Platform' on gender was established within the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) as part of the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Portfolio.
2. At the 6<sup>th</sup> System Council meeting, held in Berlin in May 2018, the System Council **endorsed** the concept that the currently named 'CGIAR Collaborative platform for gender research' become elevated to a fully-fledged **CGIAR Platform**, making it of equivalent status to the Excellence in Breeding, Big Data and Genebanks Platforms.
3. The various stages in the process between SC6 and this 12<sup>th</sup> System Management Board meeting are outlined in Appendix 1 of this document.
4. With effect from 1 January 2019, the mandate of the System's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) with respect to 'Guidance for periodic proposal assessment processes', is as follows:

*"The ISDC is responsible for providing strategic guidance and oversight to ensure a robust impartial assessment of the focus, scientific excellence, adequacy of scientific and institutional research resource capacity, and potential for impact of funding requests for research proposals in accordance with the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework and such other research frameworks intended as mid-term guidance and approved by the System Council on the recommendation of the System Management Board." (TOR, paragraph 3.5)*

## Further

***Moderating the proposal review assessment process undertaken by external subject matters experts, which experts are contracted by the Shared Secretariat, to undertake independent proposal assessment. The profile of experts and consequent search process for such experts to undertake proposal assessments will be developed by the ISDC with support from the Shared Secretariat. This process will be informed by suggestions from other bodies as necessary and considering System Council needs and the development relevancy analog. The final selection of experts will be made by the ISDC itself. With respect to the moderation of the expert assessments, Conflicts of Interest of individual ISDC members must be declared with the decision on recusal of individual members from specific expert assessments to be decided by the ISDC Chair and Head, Shared Secretariat. (TOR, paragraph 3.6 c)***

## Provisional Plan

- A. Establishing proposal submission, assessment and selection processes and responsibilities

Question 1: Given changes in the governance and advisory services landscape since 2016, are these the right processes and roles for a call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?

### **Proposal submission**

5. According to the endorsed timeline, the call for proposal will be **issued by the System Management Board** immediately after its approval of the call at its 13<sup>th</sup> meeting on 2-4 April 2019.
6. The call for proposals will be issued via:
  - a. Posting on the CGIAR website
  - b. Sharing via email with the Board of Trustees Chairs and Directors General of the 15 CGIAR Centers
7. With provision made for a 12-week development timeframe, the submission deadline for the proposals will be 1 July 2019.
8. Proposals will be submitted via email to a dedicated email address managed by the System Organization.

### **Proposal assessment**

9. There will be one month from submission of proposals for the assessment of the proposals.
10. The results of the proposal review assessment will be shared with the System Management Board for it to determine whether to:
  - a. Select a preferred proposal, based on submitted proposal(s) and assessment(s); or
  - b. Require re-submission of one or more of the proposals, based on the ISDC assessment(s) and any deliberation of the SMB on an optimal solution, and providing comments to support such re-submission. If required, a possible re-submission of proposals may take place during August 2019.
11. At its meeting on 2-4 October 2019, the System Management Board will be asked to consider, and if appropriate endorse, a final selected proposal.

12. At the 9<sup>th</sup> System Council meeting in November 2019, approval of the selected proposal will be sought as well as approval for funding for the Platform for the 2020-2021 period.

B. Developing the call for proposals

Question 2: Is the **approach (elements, format, length)** used for the call for proposals for the 2017-2022 Portfolio fit for purpose for the call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?

13. The call for proposals for the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Program Portfolio (CRP2)<sup>1</sup> that was issued on 19 December 2015, included guidance for full proposals for Platforms.
14. In Section 4 on Platforms in the call for proposals the following elements were requested:

Element	Description	Pages
<b>Title of Platform.</b>		
<b>Rationale and scope</b>	A strategic case should develop the relevance of the proposal to meet CGIAR science priorities and to contribute service functions useful for the improvement of agriculture internationally. State the overarching case for the Platform for adding value in line with the international public goods nature of CGIAR; include problem statements; as part of the background analysis identify competitive/ comparative advantage i.e. why the proposing institute(s) should provide the requested capability (skills and resources required); provide scientific rationale; scope and concepts.	Max 4 pages
<b>Platform structure and modules.</b>	Provide brief overview and show how the collective of modules will contribute to a coherent, outward-facing capability for CGIAR. In addition, describe the interface of this platform with other CGIAR platforms and programs.	Max 2 pages
<b>Impact pathway and contribution to theory of change of the CGIAR and its programs</b>	Describe how the Platform outputs will be provided to CGIAR and other users to contribute to overall CGIAR outcomes, and how those impacts will result.	Max 1 page

<sup>1</sup> Available at: [https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4127/CGIAR-2ndCall-GuidanceFullProposals\\_19Dec2015.pdf?sequence=1](https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4127/CGIAR-2ndCall-GuidanceFullProposals_19Dec2015.pdf?sequence=1)

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Element	Description	Pages
<b>Capacity development</b>	Provide a CapDev strategy as it applies to the Platform with proposed activities. (An Annex with more details)	Max 1 page
<b>Platform leadership, management and governance.</b>	Describe the scientific leadership, how the Platform will be managed and how it will be effectively linked to the overall arrangement for genetic resources platforms governance in CGIAR (where this applies).	Max 2 pages
<b>Business case</b>	<p>The business case should describe the capabilities of the Platform proposed, identifying a number of clear, measurable, high-level objectives which justify its establishment, and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statement of the relevant <b>expertise and track record</b> of institutes and key personnel who will be involved (linked to an Annex with cvs), and how this expertise will be maintained.</li> <li>• A statement of how <b>access</b> to materials, sites, services and networks will be carried out, supported and maintained.</li> <li>• A description of the <b>interactions between the Platform with users</b>, beneficiaries and other key institutions and how these will be maintained. (An Annex on listing cross CRP collaborations)</li> <li>• <b>Intellectual asset management.</b> Explain adherence to CGIAR principles, guidelines. (An additional Annex with more specific objectives for the Platform in IP management.)</li> <li>• <b>Open access management.</b> Explain adherence to CGIAR principles, guidelines. (An Annex with more specific objectives for the Platform in data management.)</li> <li>• <b>Communication strategy.</b> Explain communication strategy for the Platform.</li> <li>• <b>Risk management.</b> Describe risks to platform function and sustainability.</li> <li>• A more <b>detailed breakdown of the costs</b> specified in the Budget summary.</li> </ul>	<p>6-7 pages</p> <p>Max 1 page</p> <p>Max 1 page</p> <p>Max 1 page</p> <p>Max half page</p> <p>Max half page</p> <p>Max half page</p> <p>Max 1 page</p> <p>Max 1 page</p>

Element	Description	Pages
<b>Budget narrative summary</b>	Provide the cost structure, expected sources of budgetary support for the Platform and necessary planning for its sustainability. Fill out the Platform budget narrative template.	Max 1 page

15. The expectation for the format of the submissions was that it would be **20 total pages**, noting that proposed page limits are for **text only (Calibri, font size 11)**; excluding tables and figures.
16. A possible adaptation of this template that could be used for a call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform based on the principles and requirements endorsed by the SMB and SC can be found in Appendix II.

### C. Confirming criteria for assessment

Question 3a: Are the **2015 Platform assessment criteria** still relevant for the call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform?

17. In the '2017-2022 CGIAR Research Program Portfolio: Final Guidance for Full Proposals' issued on 19 December 2015, the assessment criteria for platforms (section 4.4) included:
  - a. A statement that "The platforms are envisaged as CGIAR system-level service platforms and will therefore be judged (and ultimately monitored) on the appropriateness and efficiency of their services and outputs to users, rather than the outcome focus of the programs-nevertheless a clear relationship should be established in terms of platform goals and illustrated demand from programs.
  - b. Criteria for assessment of Platforms including:

2015 agreed Criteria for Platforms	Description/notes/examples
The extent to which the platform will <b>contribute to key strategic needs of CGIAR</b>	i.e. alignment with SRF and feasible contribution to targets described in the Results Framework
<b>Comparative and competitive advantage of CGIAR and ability to deliver</b>	Evidence - e.g. summary of the state of the art in the area and any lessons learned from previous or related efforts - to explain why CGIAR should lead the proposed platform

<b>2015 agreed Criteria for Platforms</b>	Description/notes/examples
<b>Partnerships</b>	Including such elements as the underlying strategy and advantages of partner choices, recognition of particular strengths and weaknesses—and how these will be addressed.
<b>Coherence and added value of the platform to the CRP portfolio and external users</b>	The extent to which the organization of the platform can add value to CGIAR programs and the cross-cutting interactions between other platforms and programs.
<b>Track record and credibility of the team</b>	e.g. skills, experience, and capacity of the proposed lead as well as partners and collaborators to deliver fully and in a timely manner on the proposed activities.
<b>Mechanisms for assuring the quality of data and of science.</b>	e. g. demonstration that effective means for data collection, and for ensuring data curation and its utility for sharing are in place; the adequacy of the plans for engagement with the research community; the adequacy of linkages to other institutes and providers; the quality and efficiency of platform arrangements, outputs and services.
<b>Governance and management</b>	Are the leadership, management and governance arrangements appropriate to CGIAR responsibilities for stewardship and IPG use, including for partnership management.
<b>The business case</b>	Whether the proposed business case will ensure sustainability of the CGIAR capability.
<b>Appropriateness of budget in relation to the activities proposed</b>	No descriptor provided

18. At the 7<sup>th</sup> System Council meeting, the Chair of the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) raised the question of whether the 2015 agreed criteria for assessment of a CGIAR Platform should be revisited, and the System Council requested that this be considered in the developing of the call for proposals.

Question 3b: If the 2015 Platform assessment criteria should be reviewed, what is the **appropriate consultation process for reviewing the assessment criteria that should be undertaken?**

19. In order to confirm the criteria for assessment of the proposal(s) for a Gender Equality in Food System Research Platform, the following consultation process is envisioned:

- a. **December 2018- Action requested from SMB12:** The Board is asked to consider the criteria used for assessing Platforms for the 2017-2022 CGIAR Research Portfolio and provide any inputs as necessary.
  
- b. **January-February 2019-** Engaging with:
  - a. The **Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)**, noting that in the ISDC TOR, in article 3.6 a, it states that:

*“For new calls for proposals for a whole portfolio or major additional elements, and based on System Council deliberations on foresighting studies and horizon scanning activities, identifying for consideration and strategic direction by the System Council in advance of System Management Board adoption for the call for proposals:*

    - iii. *Efficient processes for calling for and assessing proposals, including the appropriate proposal assessment metrics as well as linkages between proposals to achieve the high-level outcomes of a call for proposals;”*
  
  - b. The **System Council and particularly key, interested Funders**, to gather any inputs to make sure that the process overall, and in particular on how proposals will be assessed, align with the expectations that the System Council has expressed in SC6 and SC7.
  
- c. **March 2019- Approval sought from System Council:** If required, approval of the criteria for assessment for the Platform will be sought via electronic means before the call is issued.



## Appendix 1. Outline of steps taken

1. At the 6<sup>th</sup> System Council meeting, held in Berlin in May 2018, the System Council **endorsed** the concept that the currently named 'CGIAR Collaborative platform for gender research' become elevated to a fully-fledged **CGIAR Platform**, making it of equivalent status to the Excellence in Breeding, Big Data and Genebanks Platforms.
2.
  - Global leadership on gender equality and agriculture research that has transformative impacts
  - Greater visibility for innovative work on gender equality research conducted across CGIAR
  - Stronger convening power of the Platform
  - Full embedding of gender equality in the fabric of CGIAR
  - Greater ability to absorb and deploy finance to leverage gender equality integration across CGIAR
  - Facilitating more extensive engagement of CRP directors and other program elements
  - Access to a wider set of funding pathways
  - More prominence in System reporting
3. As a related action, the System Council further asked that by not later than the System Council's 7<sup>th</sup> meeting (15-16 November 2018) **the System Management Board ('SMB') will advise the System Council on the outcome of SMB discussions/decision-making** on the following themes for a **Gender Equality Research Platform**, with the same status as the three other CGIAR Platforms:
  - Arrangements: hosting, leadership and partnerships and timing
  - Funding modalities
  - Scale and scope of activities
4. After SC6, the Gender Champions of the System Management Board, supported by the System Management Office, convened a workplan focused on strengthening gender equality in CGIAR's research and workplaces with the support, including financial resources, of ACIAR, BMGF and IDRC. The planning was undertaken with a Gender Equality and Diversity Reference Group composed of representatives of stakeholders across the CGIAR System, which resulted in:
  - a. A stock-take on gender-related activities and testing of various future scenarios with stakeholders across the System
  - b. Distinct workstreams for gender in research and gender in the workplace, recognizing the importance and possible synergies between the two, but that the development of each should take place separately.
  - c. The identification of key elements for a framework for CGIAR's gender in research to make a business case.
  - d. A series of options for achieving an elevated CGIAR Platform on Gender Equality in Research for consideration and adoption by the SMB (in October 2018)

- e. The integration of gender equality, diversity and inclusion principles more prominently in the inaugural 2019-2021 CGIAR System 3-year Plan than seen at SC6
5. At the System Management Board's 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, held virtually on 25 October 2018, the Board considered perspectives from the 'Gender Equality and Diversity Reference Group' on strengthening gender equality and inclusion in CGIAR's research and workplace, particularly:
    - a. Options for a possible organizational structure of a 'Gender Platform'; and
    - b. Possible arrangement to advance gender, diversity and inclusion in CGIAR's workplaces.
  6. The Board **adopted the recommendation** that for SMB12 (13 December 2018), the Board be presented with a more articulated plan for issuing a call for proposals for a new Platform that would respond to the following agreed set of principles and requirements:
    - Overall the Platform should demonstrate **CGIAR as a clear steward** of its gender research work
    - The Platform should **address the strategic and operational objectives** outlined in the business case.
    - Proposals should be submitted by a **CGIAR Center as Lead Center**, which would carry overall fiduciary and programmatic responsibility for the Platform vis-a-vis the System Organization, and which would preferably work in **partnership with one or more CGIAR Centers as significant implementing partners**
    - **Platform Director** with senior-level gender expertise
    - Platform should be **hosted by a CGIAR Center, preferably in a multi-Center location (not necessarily in Lead Center HQ)**
    - **Arrangements for Platform activities** should be clearly articulated in the proposal, and should maximize involvement of other CGIAR entities
    - Additional governance through **advisory body** with a balance of perspectives from within CGIAR and from outside.
    - **Adequate funding** to be provided via the FinPlan with a resource mobilization strategy to outline additional fundraising by the Platform, plus a strategy for using funding to support wider gender research
    - **Platform should have specific mechanisms for engaging gender researchers** including building on positive activities undertaken currently by the Gender collaborative platform and ensure robust mechanisms for monitoring and reporting at System-level. A clear plan to outline necessary transition between current and future structures
  7. **The Board recommended the following timeline:**
    - SC7 (15-16 November 2018) – strategic inputs from SC on overall scale, scope of activities and funding modalities

- SMB12 (13 December 2018) – detailed plan presented for SMB approval
  - Feb-March 2019 – Preparing call for proposals taking into account ISDC inputs on assessment criteria
  - SMB13 (2-4 April 2019) – Approve and issue call for proposals (12-week development timeframe)
  - 1 July 2019 – Proposal submission deadline
  - During July – Proposal assessment process
  - During August – Possible proposal re-submission period (if required)
  - SMB Sept 2019 - for endorsement of selection
  - SC9 November 2019 – approval of proposal and funding for 2020-2021 period (within business plan period)
8. The System Council endorsed at its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in November 2018 the System Management Board’s recommended timeline and process to call for an elevated ‘Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform’, to commence from 1 January 2020 (SC/M7/AP1). And as a related action the System Council requested that, in developing the call for proposals, the 2015 agreed criteria for assessment of a CGIAR Platform be revisited, and if required, that the System Council be requested to approve revised proposal assessment criteria before the call is issued.

Appendix II. For consultation: A possible adaptation of the 2017-2022 Call for Proposals for a call for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform

1. The call for proposals would be framed by an **overarching business case** for the Platform which should work towards:
  - a. The Vision: CGIAR will provide global leadership on strategic gender and inclusion research in food systems
  - b. Goal: Agricultural research for development (ARD) innovations and impacts are amplified by the CGIAR's engagement of world-class gender expertise and global stewardship of cutting-edge gender research
  - c. Two important, interdependent strategic objectives are to:
    - i. Promote and integrate high-quality gender research within the CGIAR's research programming (CRPs, Platforms, Centers)
    - ii. Address through global leadership the evidence gaps on what works for gender equality in ARD
  - d. The operational objectives to be worked towards should be to:
    - i. Provide global leadership on strategic gender research in food systems
    - ii. Strengthen the quality, rigor and uptake of gender research by CRPs and other CGIAR programs
    - iii. Support opportunities for scientific exchange among gender researchers, CGIAR and external
    - iv. Strengthen CGIAR's capacities to deliver strategic gender research
    - v. Ensure robust monitoring, reporting and influence of CGIAR's gender research
    - vi. Increase the ability to attract funding in support of strategic gender research
  - e. Aiming at an outcome of 'closing the gender gap in equitable access to resources, information and power in the agri-food system by 2030', as included in the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework 2016-2020
2. The call for proposals would ask for the same elements to be articulated as in the 2017-2022 call for proposals with some modifications and additions to reflect the endorsed principles and requirements, as follows:
  - a. **Title of Platform.** Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform
  - b. **Rationale and scope.** [Max. 4 pages text]
    - The proposal should articulate the **strategic case** for a Platform that addresses the vision, goal, strategic and operational objectives and outcome outlined in the business case.

- Demonstrate CGIAR as a clear **steward of its gender research work** through this Platform.
  - Identify **competitive/comparative advantage** of the CGIAR Center which as the Lead Center would carry overall fiduciary and programmatic responsibility for the Platform vis-à-vis the System Organization, as well as the other CGIAR Centers which would work as significant implementing partners.
- c. **Platform structure and arrangements.** [Max. 2 pages text]
- **Describe arrangements for hosting of the Platform**, noting:  
Requirement: The Platform shall be hosted by a CGIAR Center  
Principle: Preference for hosting in a multi-Center location (not necessarily in Lead Center HQ)
  - **Describe how the Platform will be structured and arrangements for its activities**, noting:  
Principle: Arrangements for the Platform's activities may follow current CGIAR Platforms' use of a modular approach or adopt another approach that supports the strategic and operational objectives outlined. Intended arrangements should be clearly articulated in the proposal, and should maximize involvement of other CGIAR entities.  
Requirement: A clear plan to outline the transition of successful activities and processes of the current collaborative platform into arrangements of the proposed Platform.
  - **Describe the interface of this platform with other CGIAR programs and platforms.**
- d. **Impact pathway and contribution to theory of change of CGIAR.**  
[Max. 1 page text]  
Describe how the Platform outputs will be provided to CGIAR and other users to contribute to overall CGIAR outcomes, and how those impacts will result.
- e. **Capacity development.** [Max. 1 page text; link to more detailed annex]  
Provide a CapDev strategy as it applies to the Platform with proposed activities.
- f. **Platform leadership, management and governance.** [Max. 2 pages text]  
Describe the scientific leadership, how the Platform will be managed and how to will be effectively linked to overall arrangements for governance in CGIAR, noting:  
Principle: The Platform will have an advisory body with a balance of perspectives from within CGIAR and from outside.  
Requirement: The Platform Director shall be a senior-level position with substantial gender expertise.
- g. **Business case.** [10 pages text]

The proposal should describe the capabilities of the Platform proposed, identifying a number of clear, measurable, high-level objectives which justify its establishment, and should include:

- A statement of the **relevant expertise and track record of institutes** and key personnel who will be involved (linked to an Annex with CVs), and how this expertise will be maintained. [Max. 1 page text]
- A statement of how **access** to materials, site, services and networks will be carried out, supported and maintained. [Max. 1 page text]
- A description of the **interactions between the Platform with users**, beneficiaries and other key institutions and how these will be maintained. Outline specific mechanisms for engaging gender researchers. [Max. 1 page; cross CRP collaborations listed in an Annex]
- **Adherence to key CGIAR policies.** Explain adherence to CGIAR principles, guidelines including Intellectual asset management, Open access management [Max. 1 page; links to Annex with specific objectives for data and IP management]
- **Communication strategy.** Explain communication strategy for the Platform. (Max. 1 page; link to annex as needed)
- **Risk management.** Describe risks to platform function and sustainability and how these may be mitigated or addressed. [Max. 1 page text]
- **Monitoring and reporting**<sup>2</sup>. Explain how the Platform will ensure robust mechanisms for monitoring and reporting at the System-level, including complying with reporting requirements for Platforms. [Max. 2 pages text]
- **Resource Mobilization strategy**<sup>3</sup>. Outline additional fundraising to be undertaken by the Platform, plus possible mechanisms for using funding to support wider gender research across CGIAR. [Max. 2 pages text]

**h. Budget narrative summary.** [Max. 1 page text]

Provide the cost structure, expected sources of budgetary support for the Platform and necessary planning for its sustainability. Fill out the Platform budget template.

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<sup>2</sup> Note-this would be a new element added

<sup>3</sup> Note-this would be a new element added