

Chair's Summary¹
13th System Management Board ('SMB') Meeting

**Dear Board Members and Active Observers,
Dear Center Board of Trustees Chairs, Directors General and other colleagues,**

The System Management Board came together in Montpellier on 2-3 April 2019 for its first in-person meeting of 2019.

Building on the November 2018 endorsement of the System's comprehensive [CGIAR 2019-2021 Business Plan](#) as an agreed means to achieve increased alignment in purpose and operations in the CGIAR System, our meeting was further informed by the rich and important conversations being had across the System on where CGIAR's focus should be for its collective efforts towards 2030, including reflections from the 3rd General Assembly of CGIAR Centers held in January 2019²; the questions that the System Reference Group (comprised of CGIAR Funders and System Management Board/Center colleagues) is challenging the System to reflect upon over the 2019 calendar year; and a clear sense from many that CGIAR is at a pivotal moment in terms of its historic juncture, and where it seeks to position itself for the future.

As the following meeting summary confirms, the Board is operating with a clear sense of the compelling need for the System to work in a more collective, aligned manner so that together with our Funders, we jointly set the right ambition, operational framework, and cross-Center institutional arrangements to take us forward to 2030 in a way that delivers most for the stakeholders that we are in existence to deliver greatest value to. As a Board, we acknowledge that this critical and time-sensitive focus on why, what, and how CGIAR undertakes its research, will involve addressing fundamental considerations, such as our common branding; System Management Board/Center governance arrangements; as well as the incentives and funding arrangements that impact how we operate to deliver our compelling shared agenda.

We take up that challenge knowing that the world we now live in is very different to the one in which CGIAR first saw the light of day almost 50 years ago. As we set our sights towards celebrating CGIAR's successes at '50 years' in 2021, the meeting gave us a positive insight into the challenging deliberations that lie ahead.

¹ Prepared pursuant to Article 9.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the System Management Board, accessible here: <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-organization/system-management-board/> Paragraph 24 of this Summary was updated on 15 May 2019, by addressing an earlier incomplete sentence.

² https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/GA3-07_Co-ChairsSummary.pdf

Against that rich background, and to broadly summarize the more detailed information that follows this Chair's overview, during our two days of wide-ranging and robust discussions, the Board:

- **Approved a [Call for Proposals](#) for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform** (closing date 2 July 2019), planned to be operational from 1 January 2020.
- **Endorsed the roadmap for the development of the CGIAR 2030 Plan**, emphasizing the need to focus on multiple research objectives and research foci being brought together into one roadmap that is transparent and consultative.
- **Adopted a target of at least 35% representation of women in professional roles by end-2020 for CGIAR Centers and the System Organization collectively**, with a longer-term aspirational goal of at least 40% for consideration in the context of the 2030 Plan.
- **Agreed the need to develop a CGIAR digital strategy**, as a key element of our forward thinking and planning.
- **Recognized** the need to ensure we are fully compliant with our **obligations under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** and related issues, from both a risk and a resource mobilization opportunity perspective.
- **Considered resource mobilization and delivery funding mechanisms**, including a potential opportunity with the **Green Climate Fund**, the **implementation of the 2019-2021 FinPlan** in terms of the partial delinking of Window 1 and Window 2 funding and the operation of a Liquidity and Stabilization Fund. These initiatives show the potential of what we can achieve when we collaborate across the System.
- **Acknowledged** the strength of the **partnership between CGIAR and the Global Crop Diversity Trust** and the need to continue exploring funding opportunities on a collaborative basis.
- **Endorsed** a proposed approach to route **funding of US\$ 1.3 million in 2019 to the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)**, to ensure that the valuable funding available for this mechanism is able to be fully accessed.

As additional important scene-setting events, the meeting was preceded by:

1. Signature of a **Memorandum of Understanding with Rural Development Administration, Republic of Korea**, with the very welcomed attendance of Dr. Kyeong Kyu Kim, Administrator, Rural Development Administration as the head of its delegation. This memorandum represents another example of the leadership that the System Organization is taking to align Funder interest with our shared agenda on agricultural

research and innovation that will contribute to the global response to address poverty, hunger, malnutrition and climate change.³

2. A **workshop**, which took stock of current conversations within the System Reference Group (that I and Tony Cavalieri co-chair) around the following three themes:
 - Work Group 1: **Research objectives and focus**, looking at: (a) how CGIAR's niche and comparative advantage will and should evolve through 2030; and (b) which research areas should be given priority/focus over that time. Issues under consideration include how areas such as nutrition, gender and youth could be better supported by CGIAR research.
 - Work Group 2: **Adding value through more effective research delivery models**, looking at pathway from research to impact, in terms of: (a) how CGIAR innovations lead to greater and measured impact to SDGs; (b) how CGIAR can work with the private sector and National Agricultural Research Systems; (c) how we can be greater than the sum of our parts at country level; and (d) what opportunities might exist for CGIAR in respect of technology transfer and commercialization. Issues under consideration for alternative end-to-end research delivery models include the potential for closer collaboration with the private sector.
 - Work Group 3: **Institutional arrangements – how to get organized to deliver**, looking at requirements to promote coherent research impact and consideration of CGIAR identity, efficiency and stability to deliver multi-year programs and strong operational systems in terms of: (a) Centers' governance structures; (b) flow of funds; and (c) corporate services arrangements. Issues under consideration for alternative potential organizational structures include how an 'SMB+' model could work in aligning incentives towards better collaboration across CGIAR.

I encourage colleagues to share this summary broadly across Center Boards of Trustees and Center management, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all during these exciting times.

Sincerely
Marco Ferroni
Chair, System Management Board

³ <https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/memorandum-of-understanding-marks-invigorated-partnership-for-cgiar-and-republic-of-korea/>

SMB13 - Selected key inputs and decisions and action points agreed

1. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP1:** The Board **adopted** the Agenda (meeting document SMB13-01, issued 12 March 2019).

Agenda Item 2: Big data as an element of the shared agenda

2. The Board heard a presentation by Brian King, Coordinator, CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture.
3. Subsequent discussion included focus on how data and tools might help deliver outcomes on food and farming, with a sense that, unless big data is at heart of its future transformation, CGIAR would be missing an opportunity. It was noted that, since most focus in this area is currently at national level and often driven by the private sector, there is a gap at international level for a global, public good coordination effort to pull the subject together.
4. It was also noted that different kinds of demand for digital extension services will define the next fifty years. In this respect, if CGIAR can develop its vision in this space, the potential for impact investment could be significant and could play to CGIAR's comparative advantage while affording potential monetization opportunities.
5. It was suggested that the real value with big data lies in the potential output in terms of public information, not data capture. There could be clear potential for CGIAR to meet the demand for high quality data sets that could be made available to users on different terms, always mindful of General Data Protection Regulation provisions and the need to respect and adhere to well established conventions around privacy protection.
6. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP2:** The Board **agreed** that a CGIAR digital strategy needs to be developed, identifying CGIAR's comparative advantage relating to big data. This will involve making 'deep dives' as required in relation to a number of the strategy's dimensions and the Platform for Big Data in Agriculture is **encouraged** to engage with the System Management Office to ensure relevant matters are addressed appropriately.
7. **Action: SMB/M13/AP1:** The Platform for Big Data in Agriculture is requested to articulate CGIAR digital strategy in the context of the 2030 Plan, for approval by not later than November 2020.

Agenda Item 3: Update to the SMB on the special initiatives for the current portfolio

8. The Board heard a presentation by Sonja Vermeulen, Director, Programs at the CGIAR System Organization.

9. Subsequent discussion included focus on the development, status, governance and funding of the six Special Initiatives referenced (i.e. Crops to End Hunger, Excellence in Breeding, Climate Change, Biofortification, Gender Equality in Food Systems Research and Response Preparedness), currently and in the context of the 2030 Plan.
10. It was clarified that there has been no special allocation of funding from the System to these Special Initiatives, other than what was previously budgeted, in the context of the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and Excellence in Breeding (EiB) budgets, respectively. It was also acknowledged that a clearer link for these initiatives to the 2030 planning process is required, in terms of identifying gaps and priorities for the CGIAR portfolio and that they should be considered as important, but in no way exclusive, inputs in this respect.
11. The Board:
 - i. **Noted** progress on the Special Initiatives, which include those mentioned in paragraphs 24 and 25 of the Business Plan.
 - ii. **Emphasized**, in addition to the specific activities underway to take forward the Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform and the Crops to End Hunger Initiative, the importance of ensuring that, as CGIAR looks to identify components of the portfolio going forward in the context of the 2030 Plan, multiple research objectives and research foci are brought together into one roadmap that is transparent and consultative.
12. **Action: SMB/M13/AP2:** Through the System Reference Group work group 1 and based on wider consultations considering 'Research Objectives and Focus', recommendations be developed for the future research portfolio as part of the CGIAR 2030 Plan based on consideration of hypotheses and insights on future directions for CGIAR's comparative advantage, informed by multiple inputs, including the current portfolio and the special initiatives.

Agenda Item 4: Genetic resources policy

13. The Board heard a presentation by Michael Halewood, Co-Coordinator, Policy Module, Genebanks Platform.
14. Subsequent discussion included focus on means by which CGIAR needed to ensure it was compliant with its obligations under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and related issues. It was also noted that, in addition to the downside risk element of not being compliant, there is also a potential upside resource mobilization opportunity in demonstrating policy coordination at System level.

15. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP3:** The Board **requested** Centers to:
 - i. Bring disclosures up to date related to Limited Exclusivity Agreements, Restricted Use Agreements and Intellectual Property Rights applications mentioned in recent annual CGIAR Intellectual Assets Management Reports by the end of July 2019;
 - ii. Provide requisite information to the System Management Office.
16. The Board **noted** the importance to CGIAR's partners, and CGIAR's reputation, of having clear statements related to CGIAR use of biotechnologies, genome editing and digital genomic sequence information (the latter referred to at the 2nd General Assembly of Centers as a 'dematerialization statement').
17. **Action: SMB/M13/AP3:** Noting the commitment at the 3rd General Assembly of Centers for identified groups to take this work forward, Barbara Wells, in her capacity as an SMB member, will work cooperatively with those groups and ensure that statements on biotechnology and gene editing are brought to the Board for approval by not later than its 2-3 October 2019 meeting.
18. **Action: SMB/M13/AP4:** Recognizing that the development of a digital genomic sequence information statement is a broader and more complex topic, the Board requested the Policy Module of the Genebank to develop this work for presentation to the CGIAR Centers for inputs by not later than the 4th General Assembly of Centers in February 2020.
19. **Action: SMB/M13/AP5:** The System Management Office, together with Genebank Platform Policy Module, is requested to support Centers, as necessary to develop public disclosures.
20. **Action: SMB/M13/AP6:** The System Management Office is requested to update the webpages on the CGIAR website that provide links to Centers' disclosures on Limited Exclusivity Agreements, Restricted Use Agreements and Intellectual Property Rights.
21. **Action: SMB/M13/AP7:** The Genebank Policy Module is requested to update Article 15 Directors General and the SMB after the June 2019 meeting of the 'Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System', highlighting the need, if any, for Center and SMB guidance regarding CGIAR participation in the November 2019 Governing Body meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Strategic conversation with the Global Crop Diversity Trust on funding the Genebanks

22. The Board heard a presentation by Charlotte Lusty, Genebank Platform Coordinator.

23. Subsequent discussion included focus on challenges faced in developing and maintaining a System-wide approach, notably in relation to funding of national Genebanks. In this respect, there was acknowledgement that CGIAR and the Global Crop Diversity Trust are in some respects, competing with each other for the same, relatively limited, pool of funding.
24. It was noted that both parties must consequently endeavor to ensure that their resource mobilization efforts are complementary to the greatest extent possible. This might include exploring the potential for some element of commercialization of Genebank activity, recognizing that Centers are local custodians of a global asset, and that rules concerning fees associated with the distribution of in trust germplasm are set out in Article 12(3)(b) of the Plant Treaty.
25. **Action: SMB/M13/AP8:** The Board requested the Genebank Platform to provide bi-annual updates (at 30 June and 31 December) on Genebank activity, and financial resources.

Agenda Item 6: Next step to elevate 'Gender Equality in Research' in the Portfolio

26. The Board heard a presentation by Sonja Vermeulen.
27. Subsequent discussion highlighted the strong commitment across the Centers for an increased focus on gender equality in research, which is an issue that commands great Funder interest and support. In particular, the level and quality of the work provided by the gender champions across the System was acknowledged, as was the potential for building on elements of the current flagship platform to achieve critical mass.
28. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP4:** The Board **approved** the call for proposals for a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform to be issued by 5 April 2019.
29. **Action: SMB/M13/AP9:** The System Management Office is to convey a message to office colleagues attending the 'Seeds of Change' conference in Australia from 2-4 April 2019 that discussion on appropriate governance arrangements for the Platform will be a subject that is determined by the Directors General of Centers involved in preparation of a proposal.

Agenda Item 7: Business Plan tracking and process for developing the 2030 Plan

30. The Board heard a presentation by Elwyn Grainger-Jones, who indicated that overall progress to the Business Plan 2019-2021 was satisfactory and that several specific issues were the subject of dedicated agenda items at the meeting.
31. Subsequent discussion included focus on the process to develop the 2030 Plan. In this respect, the need for extensive consultation within the System was highlighted, with attention being drawn to the various forums (e.g. Directors General, Board Chairs and Science leaders, as well as the System Reference Group) over the coming months that can be leveraged to this end as required and appropriate.

32. It was noted that a discussion on concrete steps to enhance country collaboration, on scientific as much as on operational issues, should be scheduled for a future meeting of the Board. The need for meaningful incentive structures was recognized as crucial to delivery of an ambitious 2030 Plan.
33. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP5:** The Board, noting that the successful delivery of the 2030 Plan will be underpinned by broad consultation across System stakeholders, **endorsed** the Roadmap for the development of the scientific elements of the new research portfolio for the 2030 Plan as set out in meeting document SMB13-05.
34. **Action: SMB/M13/AP10:** The role of the Centers Board of Trustees and Directors General Conveners in the System Reference Group will be clarified during the System Reference Group meeting on 4 April 2019.

Agenda Item 8: Gender diversity in the workforce

35. The Board heard a presentation by Elise Perset, Director, Legal and Office Services at the CGIAR System Organization.
36. Subsequent discussion included focus on the merit of establishing gender representation targets across the System, recognizing that a number of Centers will struggle to meet them in the short- to medium-term. It was also acknowledged that immediate focus is on a gender strategy, rather than a gender, diversity and inclusion strategy, which would cover a broader diversity of characteristics and identities within CGIAR's workforce, as well as inclusion in terms of how diversity is welcomed and embraced.
37. The need for culture change for CGIAR, as a global system, to challenge and push itself on gender and wider diversity issues was recognized. Discussion focused on the best practice examples led by a number of funders with a principle of achieving demonstrable improvements in gender equality in the workplace by adopting and delivering on firm targets (e.g. the 40/40/20 principle that a number of Funders now operate according to). It was also appreciated that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach may not lead to CGIAR – as a System – becoming the 'exemplar' it aspires to be in the context that in current/post-crises environments. That is, whilst CGIAR clearly aspires to be a global leader in gender equality in its global workforce as a whole (and it being recognized that many centers have their headquarters in countries that are also focused on strengthening gender equality in workplaces) – and thus the adoption of firm targets is an important benchmark to hold ourselves collectively to, the operational realities can be very different for those Centers who have on-the-ground staff in complex and hazardous settings, where a site by site approach may be required.
38. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP6:** The Board **adopted** the minimum target of 35% representation of women in professional roles by end-2020 for CGIAR Centers and the System Organization collectively.

39. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP7:** The Board **recognized** that:
- i. A gender balance of 40/40/20 (meaning a minimum of 40% male and minimum 40% female, with the remaining 20% to provide flexibility across genders) is a medium- to long-term aspiration for consideration in the context of the 2030 Plan.
 - ii. Gender, diversity and inclusivity are separate, albeit related workstreams.
 - iii. Gender, diversity and inclusivity are cultural issues above all and that it is incumbent on the System, as a global movement, to take a lead in bringing about change, by promoting constructive and proactive thinking about gender balance, diversity and inclusivity within the System. This means challenging stereotypes, assumptions and preconceptions, encouraging appropriate use of language and ways of framing issues, while acknowledging the need to be realistic about the constraints and requirements of operating in certain environments in terms of the System's commitment to ensure staff safety and wellbeing.
40. **Action: SMB/M13/AP11:** The Board is to provide feedback to the System Council meeting in May 2019 on the significant challenges faced by some Centers in making meaningful progress towards achieving gender diversity and equality in the workplace, together with an indication of the financial/technical support required to address them and enable measured, positive progress over time.

Agenda Item 9: SMB Audit and Risk Committee report to Board

41. The Board heard a presentation by Gordon MacNeil, ARC Chair, inviting input on selected issues scheduled for discussion at the SMB's Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting taking place, on an extraordinary basis, subsequent to SMB13.
42. Subsequent discussion included focus on the need for clarity relating to the role and responsibilities of, respectively, the Centers and the System Management Office. The need for good communication was also recognized, to ensure no overlap or conflict in how issues such as whistleblowing and other sensitive matters with System-wide implications are addressed.
43. It was noted that we are all aiming for the same goals and it will not always be evident to other stakeholders, including Funders, where boundaries lie. This means that some risks are shared and the approach to dealing with them must be coordinated at a System-wide level.

Agenda Item 10: Creating financial stability and growth

44. The Board heard a presentation by André Zandstra, Director, Funder and External Engagement, on which subsequent discussion included focus on the proposed approach relating to potential funding from the Green Climate Fund. The step change

that this initiative represents was noted, as was the potential that could be realized through more collaborative approaches to resource mobilization.

45. The Board also heard a presentation by Jamie Craig, Director, Finance and Digital Services on which subsequent discussion included focus on the challenges of resource mobilization facing CGIAR, notably relating to the pressures created by perverse incentive structures and pressure on Window 1 funding, which the creation of a Liquidity and Stabilization Fund and clarifications on partial delinking of Window 1 and Window 2 funding are designed to alleviate. Recognizing the inherent complexity in the topic, the Board proposed that the material be shared with CGIAR Directors General, to provide a short window of opportunity for comments or concerns to be raised before the Board considers the document for endorsement for submission to the System Council. There was also discussion on funding for potential alliance opportunities.
46. **Action: SMB/M13/AP12:** SMB members are to provide the System Management Office with input on resource mobilization and delivery funding mechanisms, particularly on the approach to engagement with the Green Climate Fund by 26 April 2019, based on which an electronic decision will be issued as appropriate.
47. **Action: SMB/M13/AP13:** The System Management Office is requested to continue exploration of two options for potential alliance opportunity funding mechanisms (Window 1 Special Initiative Fund and Window 3 and/or bilateral support for Centers) and develop a complete proposal and recommendations for review and decision by the Board at its 2-3 October 2019 meeting.

Agenda Item 11: Implement SC7 decision on advisory services

48. The Board heard a presentation by Jamie Craig.
49. Subsequent discussion included focus on the suitability of a recommended mechanism for the funding of the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), recognizing that it represents a temporary solution, pending development of a System-wide approach on impact assessment.
50. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP8:** The Board **endorsed** the proposed option 1 set out in Appendix 1 of meeting document SMB13-09 for routing SPIA funding of US\$ 1.3M in 2019 through a new module 'Improving and institutionalizing collection of data' to be administratively assigned to the Big Data platform.

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT MATTERS

Agenda Item 12: Consent Agenda items

51. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP9:** The Board **approved** the CGIAR System Cost Principles and Indirect Cost Guidelines as set out in meeting document SMB13-10.

52. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP10:** The Board **approved** the System Organization Personnel Policy Manual – Part A amendments as set out in meeting document SMB13-11.
53. **Decision: SMB/M13/DP11:** The Board **approved** the revised terms of reference for its Rules of Governance Working Group as set out in meeting document SMB13-12.

Agenda Item 13: Operating as an effective Board

54. Recognizing the importance of the Board having enough time to discuss this item, it was agreed to move this discussion to the Board's next in-person meeting in 2019 and schedule time for this discussion, taking into account inputs provided to the SMB Chair from the conveners of the Board Chairs and Directors General.

Agenda Item 14: Calendar review and recap

55. **Action: SMB/M13/AP15:** The System Management Office was requested to provide clarity on proposed dates (and attendance) at the planned System Reference Group meetings for the remainder of 2019.

[Annex: List of participants](#)**Members and Active Observers**

Marco Ferroni	Chair
Isatou Jallow	Independent Voting Member
Kanayo F. Nwanze	Independent Voting Member
Geoff Hawtin	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Gordon MacNeil	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Namanga Ngongi	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Yvonne Pinto	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Claudia Sadoff	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Barbara Wells	Center-affiliated Voting Member
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Executive Director, System Organization, Ex-officio Non-Voting Member
Izabella Koziell	Active Observer, Research program leader from the CGIAR Portfolio
Eric Witte	Active Observer, System Council Voting Member

Invited Guests

Nicole Birrell	Convener of the Chairs of the Boards of Trustees of CGIAR Centers
Aly Abousabaa	Convener of the Directors General of CGIAR Centers
Brian King <i>Presenter, Agenda Item 2 only</i>	Leader, Big Data in Agriculture Platform
Michael Halewood <i>Presenter, Agenda Item 4 only</i>	Co-Coordinator, Policy Module, Genebanks Platform
Charlotte Lusty <i>Presenter, Agenda Item 5 only</i>	Genebank Platform Coordinator, Global Crop Diversity Trust
Medha Devare <i>Agenda Item 2 only</i>	Senior Research Fellow, Big Data in Agriculture Platform
Andy Jarvis <i>Agenda Item 2 only</i>	Flagship Leader for Climate Smart Agriculture, CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and Co-founder, Big Data in Agriculture Platform
Jawoo Koo <i>Agenda Item 2 only</i>	Senior Research Fellow (IFPRI) and Co-founder, Big Data in Agriculture Platform

SMB Secretary and other technical leads/meeting support

Karmen Bennett	Secretary to the System Management Board, and Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
Jamie Craig	Director, Financial and Digital Services, CGIAR System Organization
Elise Perset	Director, Legal and Office Services
Sonja Vermeulen	Director, Programs, CGIAR System Organization
Andre Zandstra	Director, Funder and External Engagement, CGIAR System Organization
Andrew Smith	Deputy Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
Olwen Cussen	Senior Associate, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization

Apologies

Maggie Gill	Active Observer, Interim Chair, CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council
Mellissa Wood	Active Observer, System Council Voting Member