

Request for Proposal

Provision of services to assess performance management standards in CGIAR research programs

A. Purpose

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources and ecosystem services. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR centers in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector.

The CGIAR partnership is supported by the CGIAR System Organization that interacts on behalf of the Centers with the CGIAR Funders through their representative body, System Council. The System Management Board (SMB) is the governing body of the System Organization.

CGIAR research centers are independent legal entities, with CGIAR research programs (CRPs) being the modality by which research is conducted in CGIAR. Research programs are multi-year programs bringing together the work of Centers and external partners, under the leadership of one of the CGIAR Centers. Work carried out by each program all fit to respond to the challenges and mission as defined in the Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) of CGIAR.

Additional information about the CGIAR is available at www.cgiar.org.

Across CGIAR several bodies and units are in place to monitor, assess, and evaluate different aspects of the programs. The Advisory Services of CGIAR¹ are responsible for appraisal of research proposals prior to funding, commissioning independent evaluations of ongoing research programs, as well as ex-ante and ex-post impact assessment studies of CGIAR innovations. Concurrently, CGIAR Centers and CRPs regularly and systematically monitor, evaluate the programs, and report annually on progress.

Introduction of Performance Management Standards

Recently, performance management standards have been introduced to provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR research programs are managed according to high standards. This means, for instance, ensuring that research design and partnerships are fully focused on delivering impact; that research managers are taking tough decisions when

¹ Earlier known as the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) and the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC)

necessary e.g. to stop funding under-performing areas and reallocating funding to others; and that other aspects of management systems are in place to promote a variety of agreed system objectives.

These new standards aim to improve program performance management across CGIAR wherever needed. The effort required here - for programs to manage optimally to meet their programmatic objectives - should not be underestimated in a system where management of financial and human resources, projects, ethics and intellectual property are nearly all the responsibility of Centers rather than of program managers at program level. The requirement to meet the standards should serve as a give assurance that program performance management consistently meets expected standards across CGIAR.

The performance management standards being introduced will focus program efforts on a limited number of well-defined high-priority areas identified jointly by key stakeholders, in each program cycle, to complement (not replace) the more complex analysis carried out in program evaluations and appraisals carried out by the Advisory Services. The standards shine a light on specific aspects of management and provide a strong incentive for managers to fix any identified issues within the business cycle.

Principles underlying the metrics

The metrics for the Program Performance Standards have been developed according to the following principles:

- *Metrics should correspond to international audit/evaluation principles.*
- *Metrics should be agreed by Program and Center management, as well as by System Management and Governance bodies:*
- *Metrics should be assessable through online review of documentation:*
- *Metrics should not create a straitjacket for Program management by enforcing a rigid homogeneity across the System*
- *Metrics are specified in sufficient detail*

The performance management standards assessment will be conducted once during each three-year business cycle. The standards will be reviewed and revised to increasingly promote high quality management practices across CGIAR. The selected standards for the current business cycle focus on six areas, more detail on the standards, the definition, criteria and method for assessment (found in Annex). For the first phase, a pilot assessment will be undertaken.

A summary table of the standards to be assessed is found below:

TABLE 1 LIST OF PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT ²

Overarching aim	Agreed Management Standard for	Proposed metric
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that all projects in program are appropriate and relevant	1. Program has a transparent and logical process for selection, prioritization and inclusion of new projects and withdrawal of projects from program, based on the theory of change and factors such as comparative advantage, scientific merit, potential value for money.	Qualitative assessment (using agreed rubric) of quality of process and documentation.
CGIAR recognized as a global leader for the science of gender in agriculture, integration of high- quality gender research throughout the CGIAR research portfolio	2. Correct reporting of gender within the research portfolio. (Note that the management standard is part of a wider set of agreed actions toward meeting CGIAR gender objectives.)	Agreed target for OECD gender markers (defined by gender group) appropriately applied.
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR pooled budgets (W1/2) are effectively and efficiently managed	3. Program has transparent systems for planning and managing budgets to reach program objectives, and clear and efficient division of responsibility between Programs and their implementing partners (including Centers).	a. Annual Plan of Work and Budget makes clear logical links between budgets and activities b. Budget holder responsibilities for key Program staff are clearly assigned and documented for W1/2 funding.
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that the program is managed effectively to further stated objectives and Strategy and Results (SRF ³) targets.	4. Program progress and priorities are regularly reviewed, and logical and transparent decisions are taken about (re)prioritization of W1/2 funding, including activities to expand or cut back.	Qualitative assessment (using agreed rubric) of the quality of analysis and process.
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR results reporting is high quality and credible and supported throughout by high-quality evidence.	5. Program reporting to CGIAR (annual reports, common reporting indicators, outcome-impact case studies) is of adequate quality and the evidence presented is properly archived, linked and accessible.	Qualitative assessment (using agreed rubric) of the quality of program reporting, supported by random sampling to look at specific aspects in more detail.
CGIAR programs and projects adequately transparent to international standards, such as IATI https://iatistandard.org/en/about/iati-standard/	6. All key program and project documents accessible and findable to be viewed electronically by System Organization and system advisory bodies.	An agreed list of key documents is available in agreed CGIAR repositories, with working links.

² The standard on financial management is currently being finalized and will be made available before mid-August.

³ See SRF online:

<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/3865/CGIAR%20Strategy%20and%20Results%20Framework.pdf>

B. What we are seeking

The Advisory Services of CGIAR are seeking a corporate provider of audit services to pilot the assessment and rating of performance management for CGIAR research programs according to defined standards. This would entail assessment of CRPs with regard to achieving the defined six performance management standards, assessing which level (rubric) they achieved, providing explanation why they reached which level (nor not) and providing recommendation for further improvement of management with regard to standards. In addition to the individual assessments, this work will also include providing overall observations on how to revise or improve the performance management standards and their application, measurement and use for decision-making (funding, programming).

Assessment criteria for each of the six standards is provided in the Annex below, along with the expertise needed and methods to be used. The final set of assessment criteria will be provided to the agency/consultants in August 2019.

Assessments are to be conducted on 15 international research for development programs through online review of data and information made available by each program.

The bidding services to be provided will include:

- review of the selected performance management standards guidelines, and proposed methodology,
- recruitment of appropriate team, reflecting the expertise defined in the assessment criteria,
- design of implementation plan for pilot assessment, as well as quality assurance methods to be applied, and
- completion of pilot assessment with report in results produced for each of the 15 programs.
- capturing of overall lessons learned and documentation of processes.

The Advisory Services unit of CGIAR will manage and provide assistance inputs and guidance to the agency during this process and on expected quality of final products.

The assessment process will entail reviewing information provided and made available by the programs, under the management of the Advisory Services. The engagement will be undertaken in 4-6 weeks including preparation, assessment and reporting. Sufficient time and resources should also be included for preparatory discussions and debriefings with Advisory Services staff located in Rome, Italy. This can be arranged either virtually or in person.

Upon completion of pilot assessment, agency will provide:

- Pilot assessment results/ratings for each program
- Recommendations or suggestions for each program on areas in need of improvement
- Complete documentation of all stages of pilot assessment for each program

- Report to Advisory Services on lessons, overall findings, and identifying clarifications or modifications needed. Report will include recommendations for the future on the assessment exercise and its use in CGIAR to assess performance standards.

As this is a pilot assessment, bid should allow for both program and institutional learning, and engagement should include time and resources for debriefing and sharing of lessons, challenges, and identification of revisions and needed improvements or clarifications.

C. Deliverables and timeline

1. Delivery of 15 separate assessments (1 per program) covering the six defined program management standards following the guidance and assessment information provided by the Advisory Services, with information to each program on recommended areas for improvement.
2. Documentation of stages and processes of the assessment process for learning purposes
3. Overall report on lessons, findings, and recommendations for future assessments

Timeline:

The consultancy is anticipated to begin by not later than beginning of September 2019 (and preferably earlier). Delivery of reports will be no later than 22 October 2019.

D. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The ideal agency will have a proven track record in conducting management audits within complex international organizations.

Criteria for evaluation of proposals will be based on the following assessment:

Narrative proposal (70% weighting)

- Quality and relevance of the technical proposal
- Relevance and experience of proposed team members, with reference to expertise stated in assessment criteria ⁴

Budget proposal (30% weighting)

- Clarity and relevance of the proposal costs
- Value for money as perceived by the contacting body in the context of operating in a not-for-profit context.

Proposals will be reviewed by panel, with oversight and final decision made by CGIAR Advisory Services. Each proposal submitted should contain the bidder's best technical and budget terms to allow for thorough review of bid.

⁴ The bid should include proposed team members for the assignment and should state that the final selected team will have the same technical and professional experience as those found in the proposal.

E. How to submit a proposal

Please submit a narrative proposal and a budget proposal as two separate documents to ssas@cgiar.org. Both documents can be attached to the same email.

1. The **narrative proposal** must consist of no more than 10 pages (excluding annexes) using Microsoft Word or similar format. The format of the narrative proposal is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Format of Narrative Proposal

Contents
Executive Summary , specifically setting out the merits of your proposal
1. Understanding of requirements (informed by completing comparable assignments)
2. Suggested approach to deliver on the requirements
a. Approach to service delivery
b. Assumptions made in developing the approach
c. Resource allocation and service delivery management approach
d. Quality assurance measures
e. How you will maximize the value added and minimize effort/fees
3. Relevant Experience
a. List of similar assignments and experience gained by selected reviewers
b. Examples of relevant work done to-day (please attach an anonymized report of work similar to the engagements nature you are bidding for)
c. Profiles of team members to be recruited for assignment
d. Knowledge and/or experience of CGIAR/its Centers
4. Reporting and timelines
a. Timing and format of status updates
b. Proposed work timelines
5. Other Information
a. A statement disclosing any real, apparent or perceived conflict of interest
b. A statement of any fees earned from CGIAR or any CGIAR Center/program since 1 January 2017 to present
6. Appendices (any other/supplementary information you wish to submit)

2. The **budget proposal** must be presented using Microsoft Excel or similar format and consist of, at a minimum, the following line items: consultant time, resources, travel (if any). The budget must be presented in US Dollars.

Proposals must be received no later than 2 August 2019. Only electronically submitted proposals will be considered.

Enquiries on the consultancy may be submitted in writing only, addressed to ssas@cgiar.org.

ANNEX : Performance Management Standards: Assessment Criteria⁵

Part A - Background

1. **The agreed Standards are set out in Table 1** (following), having been developed during 2018 based on widespread consultation during key CGIAR System stakeholders, and endorsed by CGIAR's Research Leaders (September 2018), the System Management Board (10th meeting, 25-26 September 2018), and supported by the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (13th meeting, 23 October 2018) in advance of SC7 deliberations.
2. **The three main objectives of the Standards are to:**
 - To *provide assurance* to CGIAR System Funders and other stakeholders that program management standards are high, and that they can invest with confidence;
 - To *improve program performance management* across CGIAR wherever needed; and
 - To *focus Program efforts* on a limited number of well-defined high-priority areas identified jointly by key stakeholders, in each business cycle, to complement (not replace) the more complex analysis carried out in program evaluations and appraisals.

⁵ This annex is extracted from the System Management Board paper found online at: https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SMB12-05_Assessment-criteria-Performance-Standards.pdf

Annex: Assessment Criteria for Program Performance Standards

TABLE 1: LIST OF AGREED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR FIRST CYCLE, 2019-2021 (FROM SC7 PAPER)

STANDARDS FOR WHICH APPROVAL OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA REQUESTED AT SMB12	STANDARD WHERE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED BY AUGUST 2019	
Overarching aim	Standard for all programs to meet <u>in first cycle</u> (2019-2021)	
Proposed (<i>draft</i>) metric, assessed by appropriate independent body		
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that all projects in program are appropriate and relevant (by Cycle 1)	<p>1. Program has a transparent and logical process for selection, prioritization and inclusion of new projects and withdrawal of projects from Program.</p>	Qualitative assessment (using various agreed assessment levels i.e. 'a rubric') of quality of process and documentation.
CGIAR recognized as a global leader for the science of gender in agriculture, integration of high-quality gender research throughout the CGIAR research portfolio (by Cycle 2-3)	<p>2. Correct reporting of gender within the research portfolio. (Note that the management standard is part of a wider set of agreed actions toward meeting CGIAR gender objectives.)</p>	CGIAR cross-cutting gender markers fully and accurately applied.
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR pooled budgets (W1/2) are effectively and efficiently managed (by Cycle 1)	<p>3. Program has transparent systems for planning and managing budgets to reach program objectives, and clear and efficient division of responsibility between Programs and their implementing partners (including Centers).</p>	<p>a. Annual Plan of Work and Budget makes clear logical links between budgets and activities</p> <p>b. Budget holder responsibilities for key Program staff are clearly assigned and documented for W1/2 funding.</p>
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that the program is managed effectively to further stated objectives and SRF targets. (by Cycle 1)	<p>4. Program progress and priorities are regularly reviewed, and logical and transparent decisions are taken about (re)prioritization of W1/2 funding, including activities to expand or cut back.</p>	Qualitative assessment (using agreed rubric) of the quality of analysis and process.
Provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR results reporting is high quality and credible and supported throughout by high-quality evidence. (Cycle 2-3)	<p>5. CGIAR program reporting (annual reports, common reporting indicators, outcome-impact case studies) is of adequate quality and the evidence presented is properly archived, linked and accessible.</p>	Qualitative assessment (using agreed rubric) of the quality of program reporting, supported by random sampling to look at specific aspects in more detail.
CGIAR programs and projects adequately transparent to international standards, such as IATI https://iatistandard.org/en/about/iati-standard/ (Cycle 2-3)	<p>6. All key program and project documents accessible and findable to be viewed electronically by System Organization and System advisory entities.</p>	An agreed list of key documents is available in agreed locations, with working links.

Part B – Definitions

4. As terms are not always used consistently across CGIAR and our partners, in this paper, the following definitions are adopted:
- Pooled Program funding - Any pooled funds allocated to the 'Program' being assessed to support programmatic objectives. This currently refers to funding from Windows 1 and 2 of the CGIAR Trust Fund.
 - Program - Used to allow for future application of the standards to any initiatives or groups of projects that are managed as a Program. Currently, in CGIAR's terminology, 'Programs' means CGIAR Research Programs and Platforms. It is recognized that not all the individual standards can apply to 'Platforms', and the specific standards to be assessed will be agreed in advance with individual Platforms.
 - Program Management and Governance – The exact configuration will vary by Program. Management will normally include the Program Management team and representatives of the main Program Partners (including those outside CGIAR). Governance structures may be, for example, a combination of the Board of the Lead Center plus an Independent Steering Committee or Independent Advisory Committee. The specific management and governance structures used by each Program are defined and made available to assessors in Standard 6.
 - Project - An intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within a specified amount of funding and implementation period. A project is usually funded from a single source (either a bilateral grant or pooled funding) and has its own documentation⁶.
 - Rubric – A tool used to rank a set of assessment criteria (often qualitative) into different grades or levels of achievement. The objective is that both the assessor and the body/Program whose work is being assessed will be clear about the criteria that are being used and the level that is expected. Each rubric contains four levels which correspond to the following general concepts:
 - i. Level 1: Ad hoc or non-existent (possibly with some inconsistent formalization)
 - ii. Level 2: Formalized but inconsistent
 - iii. Level 3: Formalized and consistent
 - iv. Level 4: Excellent practice
 - Specified System Entity - One of a small number of specified entities of the CGIAR system with responsibility for advice or oversight. These include the CGIAR System Management Office, the CGIAR Internal Audit Function and the Advisory Services.

⁶ This is a standard international definition and sticks close to that of the CGIAR-MELCOP glossary but note it does not match the MARLO system definition of a 'project'.

Part C – Approach to assessment of the 6 agreed Standards (2019-21)

Metrics to form the basis of assessing the 6 Standards

5. **Each of the 6 Standards** includes a **proposed metric** for its assessment. Those metrics were proposed according to criteria set out below⁷.
- ***Metrics should correspond to international audit/evaluation principles***, i.e. be relevant, complete, replicable, unbiased, and understandable.
 - ***Metrics should be agreed by Program and Center management, as well as by System Management and Governance bodies***: If the standards are to lead to real improvements in Program Management, the associated metrics must be seen by Program Managers themselves as fair, aligned with Program and system goals, and (while challenging), manageable within the resources and time available. If this is not the case, metrics are likely to lead to gaming or goal displacement. At the same time, the metrics must be agreed by System Management and Governance to be sufficiently useful and challenging.
 - ***Metrics should be assessable through online review of documentation***: For cost, replicability, and transparency reasons, desk reviews are preferable to interviews and surveys of staff views.
 - ***Metrics should not create a straitjacket for Program management by enforcing a rigid homogeneity across the System***: Each Research Program is different, and the Management and Governance bodies of each program are responsible for the details of how to manage their Program. For example, in Standard 1 (example given in Annex 1) each Program may come up with a different set of detailed criteria against which to assess new projects.
 - ***Metrics are specified in sufficient detail to avoid the need for assessors to make individual judgments of quality and increase replicability***.
6. The **metrics will be piloted in late 2019** using available 2019 data, with no repercussions for Programs. This will give a chance for both Programs and assessors to fully understand the metrics, the pass level and the process of assessment, to tweak any aspects of the metrics that do not work well in practice, and to give the Programs a chance **to prepare for the official assessment in the second half of 2020**, which will be based on 2019-2020 data⁸. Since the pilot is a learning exercise for both sides, and some data used will have been prepared before the existence of the standards, the pilot results will be restricted to the assessors and the individual Programs assessed, and in no circumstances will be used for assessment or comparison of Programs.

⁷ Criteria and principles were discussed and endorsed during the 7th CGIAR System Council meeting, see [SC7 meeting paper](https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SC7-H_Program-Performance-Management-Standards.pdf) (https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SC7-H_Program-Performance-Management-Standards.pdf)

⁸ See 'Scope' section for each of the specific Standards for more details

7. The pilot will be arranged in the second half of 2019, at a mutually convenient time for Programs and assessors. Since this is a desk exercise, the main effort required from Programs will be to get existing documents online and available for assessors to read.

Assessment mechanism for the Metrics

8. The **evaluation senior specialist** in the new CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat will be the responsible officer for undertaking the periodic independent assessment of **whether Programs met the Standards**, working across other advisory bodies as required to obtain expert data⁹.
9. Referring to the definition of rubrics in part B above, **the proposed pass level for this first set of Standards is Level 3 for four of the six Standards that have ‘rubrics’ as their basis of assessment.** This reflects the considerable additional investment and time that is required to reach Level 4 – in particular, in management information systems, evaluation and impact assessment. *Level 4 is only defined in broad outline in the current tables, and it will be specified in 2020-2021 as part of the proposal for the next cycle of standards and metrics for 2022-2024.*

Part D – Introducing the 6 Standards and their assessment level(s)

10. The index below sets out the 6 agreed Standards, with the page referenced for the proposed metric and assessment rubric/methodology:

STANDARD 1: ADDING AND WITHDRAWING PROJECTS FROM A PROGRAM	12
STANDARD 2: IDENTIFICATION OF GENDER RELEVANCE	15
STANDARD 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF POOLED PROGRAM FUNDING	16
STANDARD 4: PRIORITIZATION OF POOLED FUNDING	20
STANDARD 5: HIGH-QUALITY RESULTS REPORTING	23
STANDARD 6: AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM/PROJECT INFORMATION	26

⁹ Refer SC/M7/DP6, item ii of the System Council Chair’s Summary of SC7: <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SC7-Chairs-Summary.pdf>.

STANDARD 1: ADDING AND WITHDRAWING PROJECTS FROM A PROGRAM

Full title of standard: Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 1: Program has a transparent and logical process for selection, prioritization and inclusion of new projects and withdrawal of projects from the Program.

Rationale for standard: The addition of a new project to a Research Program is a key decision point, which influences effective (implicit) AR4D priorities and Program coherence¹⁰. The unplanned withdrawal of a project also needs oversight.

Scope: This standard is applicable to projects added in the Business Plan period only (not applied retrospectively). The pilot exercise to be carried out in 2019 will be used to trial and hone sampling methods and may look at some earlier projects as well (as examples only).

Documentation required for assessment: Management documents and minutes of meetings of Program Management and Governance bodies and Center bodies; Project documentation. These should be clearly accessible and identifiable on line (internally in CGIAR) to pass the transparency requirement for this standard. (Also see Standard 6).

Expertise required for assessment: General management /organizational development; General understanding of international agricultural research for development; Access to statistician (for sampling).

Proposed method: Rubric, as set out below

¹⁰ Nearly all past evaluations of CGIAR Research Programs have recommended “more rigorous and transparent priority setting mechanisms at the CRP level for allocating W1/W2 funding and tapping W3 and bilateral funds” and noted that “Program coherence depends largely on the extent to which Program management has an ability to influence Program design....the size and use of the Window 1/Window 2 envelope ... and the theory of change (ToC) ...being co-developed and shared amongst the partners within a Program”. (CGIAR-IEA Synthesis of CRP Evaluations and Background Paper, 2016)

Draft Rubric for assessment

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
SUMMARY RUBRIC			
No consistent process exists for adding or withdrawing projects.	A process exists for adding or withdrawing projects, but it fails to meet one or more criteria (coherence, Program involvement, transparency and consistency).	There is a logical, coherent, consultative and transparent process for adding and withdrawing projects, that includes a check on how new projects fit with the Program Theory of Change and agreed Program priorities.	There is a logical, coherent, consultative and transparent process for adding and withdrawing projects, that includes an assessment of key Quality of Research for Development (QoR4D) criteria
SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO ASSESS FOR EACH LEVEL			
<p>One or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no consistent process and/or criteria for adding/withdrawing projects to/from the Program. There is a lack of documentation for projects explaining why they were included in the Program. Some projects appear to have been added and withdrawn in an un-transparent and/or ad hoc manner. Decisions have been made without the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a structured and recorded process consistently used for making decisions for adding/ withdrawing projects to/from the Program. Documentation for projects includes a short explanation of why it was included in the Program. However, the process fails one or more of the following criteria (see level 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical and based on clearly defined criteria Appropriate consultation Transparency 	<p>The decision-making process is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Logical and coherent: based on a set of clearly defined criteria* that are applied to the decision to include/exclude each project. Criteria must include, at minimum, that projects must make a clear contribution to the Program theory of change, fit with expressed Program priorities and have clearly defined and measurable plans for activities and outputs. (However, at Level 3 the criteria may be limited, cf. Level 4.) Based on appropriate Program involvement: Program Management and Governance have been consulted on the criteria for inclusion/withdrawal of projects, and no major outstanding objections are registered. Program Management are directly involved in decisions on inclusion of 'large' or 'important' projects (as defined in their agreed criteria) and in <u>all</u> decisions to withdraw projects from the program (i.e. before planned finish date), 	<p>All of the following should apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision-making process passes Level 3. There is recorded evidence that the criteria have been <u>thoroughly</u> considered in decision making. In addition, there is evidence from the records that the criteria include consideration of all the following areas (from QoR4D): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Relevance</u>: Each proposed new project* has been assessed for the relevance of the research objectives, processes and findings to the problem context and to society, associated with CGIAR's comparative advantage to address the problems. Scientific <u>credibility</u>: Each proposed new project has been assessed for its design (sound and defensible analysis and methodology) and evidence of building on past scientific/research knowledge and methodologies where relevant. <u>Legitimacy</u>: Each proposed new project has been assessed to check that there has been adequate consideration of stakeholder interests, in particular national governments and partners. The need for ethical

Annex: Assessment Criteria for Program Performance Standards

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
<p>appropriate involvement of Program management and Governance (see level 3).</p>	<p>d. Documentation as described in Level 3 available for every new project</p>	<p>and no major outstanding objections are registered.</p> <p>c. Transparent: i) Decisions about both inclusion/withdrawal or projects and selection of criteria are on <u>record</u> and accessible to specified System entities (see ‘Definitions’). ii) Documentation for <u>every new</u> project (added as from July 2019) includes a short clear explanation of why it was included in the Program and its contribution to the Program or sub-Program (e.g. FP) Theory of Change and priorities. This may be recorded in MIS.</p> <p>*The criteria should reflect ‘proportionality’, i.e. less detailed analysis would be expected for small projects, as defined in the Program’s agreed criteria (see points a and b).</p>	<p>clearance has been screened and any planned action (e.g. IRB) recorded.</p> <p>iii) <u>Effectiveness</u>: Each proposed new project has been assessed to check the positioning of the project within the appropriate Program Theory of Change; to ensure that it is adequately linked to other projects and programs, and that aspects such as leadership, capacity development, M&E and support to the enabling environment are adequately resourced, to position the research for use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Documentation for <u>every</u> new project should include the results of this assessment. <p>*The criteria and analysis should reflect ‘proportionality’, i.e. less detailed analysis would be expected for small projects.</p>

STANDARD 2: IDENTIFICATION OF GENDER RELEVANCE

Title of Standard: Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 2: Complete and accurate application of the cross-cutting marker for gender in Program results reporting.

Note - This standard and the associated guidance (see [this link](#)) has benefited from the recommendations and comments of the CGIAR gender network.

Rationale for Standard: Gender equality and women's empowerment is a key part of the Strategy and Results Framework of CGIAR and is being addressed in a variety of ways. This Cycle 1 performance Standard tackles a specific but crucial issue for reporting, which is the accurate identification of gender-relevant results in the research Programs, through the correct use of a gender marker (one of four 'CGIAR cross-cutting markers'). The markers are used by research managers, the CGIAR System Organization and System advisory services: a) to track the integration of cross-cutting issues into research portfolios over time, and b) to identify specific workstreams and outcomes where gender is a principal or significant element, for the purposes of facilitating learning across CGIAR. Correctly applying and writing a high-quality narrative justification of the gender score also requires researchers to reflect on the degree of integration of gender issues into their research, which is a useful step in 'mainstreaming' gender thinking.

Documentation required for assessment: Annual Program Reports and Outcome-Impact Case Reports. (online)

Scope: This standard is applicable to Annual Program Reports and Outcome-Impact Case Reports (OICR) from 2019, and will use the final guidance on application of cross-cutting markers (draft in [this link](#)) which is expected to be piloted and improved during 2018 annual reporting. (The pilot assessment of the standards will use emerging annual report and OICR data from 2019.)

Expertise required for assessment: Experience of gender in research, and especially, experience of gender issues that typically arise in Agricultural Research for Development; Access to statistician if needed for sampling.

Proposed method: A sample of milestones, policies and OICRs will be taken for assessment from available online reports. The specific process of sampling (and resampling, if required) will be agreed in the 2019 pilot of the standards.

Pass level for this standard:

- a. **100% of milestones, Outcome-Impact Case Reports (OICR) and Reports of Policy contributions are tagged** for gender, using one of the following scores: N/A, 0,1,2.
- b. **90%¹¹ of the above gender tags are accurately applied, as assessed by a sample¹².** 'Accurately applied' means that the assessor agrees that the score is correct, according to the narrative justification provided for the score and the definitions given in the guidance (see Annex).

¹¹ While 100% accuracy is of course the aim, the need for a qualitative judgement even when applying the guidance, and human error, make it difficult to require 100% accuracy as a pass level for a whole program.

¹² Sampling and resampling will be carried out to minimise the risk of a 'false negative' result – and if necessary a complete census will be used (n expected to be around 100 /CRP). This will be piloted in 2019.

STANDARD 3: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF POOLED PROGRAM FUNDING

As set out in the requested action at the beginning of this document, **there is a different request of the Board for this standard**. As the metrics have not yet been finalized, the Board is requested to endorse the creation of a working group on Standard 3 that will put forward revised metrics for approval by the Board at their 13th meeting (2-4 April 2019).

An initial draft set of metrics was put forward (see below for information), however comments were received from across the CGIAR that there is an opportunity to clarify the division of responsibilities in this area; and the perception noted that the issue is too complex to address with some edits to wording at this time.

Instead, the proposal is to constitute a small working group¹³ (comprising not more than 6 persons) including:

- Director, Finance, CGIAR System Organization;
- 1 Corporate Services Executive;
- 1 Chair of a Center Audit Committee;
- 1 Head of Internal Audit
- 1-2 CRP Leaders or their nominees (Head of Program Management Unit or Head of Finance)

The working group will be asked to come up with a detailed specification for this Standard for submission to the Board for its 13th meeting (2-4 April 2019). This specification should be in the Rubric format below, with most concentration on Level 3 (Pass Level for Cycle 1). In the event that the group cannot agree on a single specification, they will be asked to present two or more clear options to the Board for discussion and agreement.

¹³ Building on the premise that Centers have signed legal agreements that say funding will only be used for the purpose for which it was intended, the breadth of stakeholders proposed here is to enhance the System's ability to have confidence in this regard.

Draft metrics for financial management standard *** (Noting that these are for background information only at this time, pending the outcome of the working group's discussions)*

Title of standard: **Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 3:** The Program has transparent systems for planning and managing budgets to reach objectives, and clear and efficient division of responsibility between Programs, Centers and other implementing partners.

Rationale for standard: To provide assurance to Funders and other stakeholders that CGIAR pooled budgets (W1/2) are effectively and efficiently managed. This requires W1/2 budgets to be clearly linked to planned activities, budget-holders to be appropriately selected and trained, and systems to be in place to allow budget holders at all levels to track W1/2 expenditure related to their responsibilities for Program delivery. This standard addresses some specific weaknesses identified in earlier internal audits of some CGIAR Programs.

Documentation required for assessment: Program Annual Plans of Work and Budget (POWB); Underlying W1/2 budget assumptions for POWB, Budgeting instructions, W1/2 budget monitoring/variance analysis reports, Documentation on delegation of authority for W1/2, Induction/training materials for budget holders of W1/2, Reports on training of budget holders, Minutes of budget discussions involving W1/2, and any other key documents identified following the pilot of these standards. These documents should be clearly accessible and identifiable on line (to specified System entities). *(Also see Standard 6)*

Scope: The assessment of the POWB section of this standard will be based on POWBs prepared for 2020. (The 2019 pilot exercise will use the POWB for 2019.)

Expertise required for assessment: Financial management specialist / Internal auditor

Proposed method: Rubric, as set out below

Draft Rubric for assessment

*** (Noting that this is for background information only at this time, pending the outcome of the working group’s discussions)*

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
SUMMARY RUBRIC			
<p>W1/2 budgeting process and criteria not clearly related to planned activities in Plans of Work and Budget (POWBs).</p> <p>Delegation of budgetary authority for W1/2 unrelated to responsibilities for delivery of results with those funds. Budget holders lack effective systems to track progress against budgets.</p>	<p>W1/2 budgets are related to planned activities, but lack transparent assumptions or involvement of relevant managers.</p> <p>Delegation of authority for W1/2 is broadly appropriate, but lacks some important elements.</p> <p>Budget monitoring is in place, but systems may be inadequate and frequency of reporting may be low.</p>	<p>W1/2 budgets are related to planned activities, clearly spell out assumptions underpinning calculations and budgeting involves relevant Program managers.</p> <p>Budget holder responsibilities for key Program staff (specifically, the CRP director, Head of PMU, Flagship Leaders or their delegates) are clearly assigned and documented for W1/2 funding where they have responsibilities for delivery of results</p> <p>Monthly budget monitoring is in place for activities supported by W1/2, although central systems may not be adequate to support this fully.</p>	<p>High quality “zero-based”, activity-based budgeting in use by Program for W1/2.</p> <p>Program budget holder powers at all levels are clearly linked to their accountabilities for results delivery with the respective W1/2 budget</p> <p>Budget holders for W1/2 have and use adequately functioning financial systems, information and tools to allow them to have a real-time view of their progress against the budget in terms of Program activities funded by W1/2.</p>
SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO ASSESS FOR EACH LEVEL			
<p>One or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a lack of clear documentation on how the budget has been prepared or who was involved, or on the calculations made. ● The documented budgeting process is not clearly related to planned activities, for example “incremental budgeting” (estimate based on previous year’s expenditure) is used. 	<p>1. A budgeting process exists for allocation of W1/2 in Plans of Work and Budget (POWBs).</p> <p>However, the W1/2 budget process fails to meet one or more of the criteria specified in level 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Evidence of involvement or consultation of relevant Program managers f. Budgeting tools available 	<p>All of the following should apply:</p> <p>1. Underlying calculations for the Annual Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) make clear logical links between budgets and activities for W1/2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Budgeting is based on planned activities for W1/2 b. Budgeting tools and instructions for individual budget-holders are available c. Budgeting assumptions (e.g. realistic expectations of expenses underpinning the budget estimates taking count of anticipated changes, unit costs, timing, number of units, exchange rates, inflation) are made clear. 	<p>All of the following should apply:</p> <p>A. The Program meets all criteria specified for Level 3.</p> <p>B. In addition,</p> <p>High quality “zero-based” budgeting in use by Program for W1/2.</p> <p>Program budget holder powers at all levels are clearly linked to their accountabilities for results delivery with the respective W1/2 budget. As in 2a-d – but for all levels, including project managers / Principal Investigators</p> <p>There is evidence that budget holders for W1/2 have and use adequately functioning harmonized financial systems, information and tools to allow them to have a real-time view of</p>

Annex: Assessment Criteria for Program Performance Standards

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delegation of authority documents for W1/2 do not mention individual's responsibilities in relation to delivery of the Program ● There is no evidence of regular reporting of expenditure of W1/2 linked to planned activities 	<p>g. Transparency of calculations and assumptions</p> <p>2. There is some evidence that key Program staff (or their delegates) have appropriate authority and capacity to manage relevant W1/2 budgets for delivering key Program outcomes However, it fails to meet one or more of the criteria specified in Level 3, 2a-2c.</p> <p>3. There is evidence that Program budget holders regularly track expenditure on W1/2. However, program budget holders lack effective harmonized systems to track Program W1/2 progress against budgets, for example there may be extensive reliance on offline spreadsheets independently developed and held by individual managers.</p>	<p>d. There is documented evidence that relevant Program managers (<i>as defined prior to assessment: in 2019 this would be CRP Director, Head of PMU, Flagship Leaders and their delegates</i>) have been involved in and sign off on decisions about budgets relevant to their responsibilities for delivery of results for those funds</p> <p>2. There is evidence that key Program staff (or their delegates) have appropriate authority and capacity to manage relevant W1/2 budgets for delivering key Program outcomes:</p> <p>a. 'Delegation of authority' documents for key Program staff clearly spell out the individual's W1/2 budgetary responsibilities for delivery of the Program</p> <p>b. There is evidence that the above delegation of authority has been communicated to relevant Program staff</p> <p>c. Program budget holders are given standard budget holder training/ induction for their responsibilities on W1/2 management</p> <p>3. Monthly budget / activity report available for each budget holder on use of W1/2 for Program purposes.</p>	<p>their progress against the budget in terms of Program activities funded by W1/2. Assessed by checking a sample of budget reports.</p>

STANDARD 4: PRIORITIZATION OF POOLED FUNDING

Title of standard: **Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 4:** Program progress and priorities are regularly reviewed, and logical and transparent decisions are taken about (re)prioritization of pooled Program funding, including activities to expand or cut back.

Rationale for standard: The effective and efficient use of Pooled Program funding to further Program and CGIAR objectives is a cornerstone of the Programmatic approach. For Funders to be able to invest further in pooled funding channels, it is essential that they can be confident that the decisions on the use of pooled funding are logical and coherent with agreed Program priorities, including investing in high performance and cutting back investment on areas which are not expected to deliver, and that these priorities are regularly revisited.

Documentation required for assessment: Management documents and minutes of relevant meetings of Program Management and Governance bodies. These should be clearly accessible to specified System entities on request (see group B in standard 6)

Scope: The assessment for this Business cycle will focus on documentation of decisions on Program pooled funding made in 2019-2020 as known at the time of the assessment. The pilot will use available information from 2019.

Expertise required for assessment: General management /organizational development; general understanding of Agricultural Research for Development

Proposed method: Rubric, as set out below

Draft Rubric for assessment

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
SUMMARY RUBRIC			
No consistent process exists for regular review and prioritization of pooled funds.	A process exists for regular review and prioritization of pooled funds, but it fails to meet one or more criteria (coherence, Program involvement, transparency and consistency).	There is a logical, coherent, consultative and transparent process for prioritization and reprioritization of the use of pooled Program funding.	There is a logical, coherent, consultative and transparent process for prioritization and reprioritization of the use of pooled funding (W1/2), and efficient systems exist to track expenditure and results from pooled Program funding
SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO ASSESS FOR EACH LEVEL			
<p>One or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no consistent process for regular review of the use of pooled Program funds in the Program. Reprioritization is normally ad hoc (for example, following announcements of funding cuts at System level). There is a lack of documentation explaining how decisions were made for prioritizing and reprioritizing pooled Program funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a structured and documented process used for making decisions on the prioritization of pooled funding in the Program. However, the process fails one or more of the following criteria required to pass Level 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Regularity i. Appropriate Program involvement j. Logical – for example funding cuts may be made as a “percentage across the board” rather than after consideration of specified criteria. k. Coherent with program priorities l. Performance-relevant m. Follow-up n. Transparency 	<p>The decision-making process on the use of pooled Program funding is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Regular: normally, annual e. Based on appropriate involvement: i) Program Management and key partners take a leading role in decisions on reprioritization of pooled Program funds. ii) Program Management and Governance have been consulted on the criteria to consider for (re)prioritization of funds, and no major outstanding objections are registered. f. Logical: based on consideration of a set of defined criteria (issues)*. Distribution of funding demands complex judgements, and there is no expectation that the criteria will be used simplistically, just that they should be explicitly considered. g. Coherent with Program Priorities: funds should not be allocated to areas of work that have been explicitly <u>not</u> approved by System governance bodies (SMB and SC). 	<p>All of the following should apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision-making process passes Level 3. Key documentation (<i>to be defined</i>) is publicly available Harmonized systems exist to track expenditure and results from pooled Program funding at regular (at minimum quarterly) intervals. <p>NB it may not be necessary to follow this standard though in Cycle 2, as the Cycle 1 standard should cover most of the desired criteria, and other standards exist (e.g. standard 3 on budgets and financial management) that can pick up missing aspects. (This would leave a ‘vacancy’ in the standards to be used for other issues next cycle.)</p>

Annex: Assessment Criteria for Program Performance Standards

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2)
		<p>h. Performance-relevant: The decision includes consideration of likely future performance of particular research areas/lines that have been funded or co-funded with pooled funding. This is a complex judgement that includes consideration of past performance (and factors affecting that) and potential future risk and return, and there is no expected 'right answer', but there should be some evidence of consideration of performance*.</p> <p>i. Transparent: The process and criteria considered for (re) prioritization of pooled funding, and the follow-up (revised budgets) are on <u>record</u> and accessible to specified System entities. (see Standard 6)</p> <p>*The decision-making process should be 'proportionate', i.e. with the level of effort and scrutiny related to the amount of funding involved in the decision making, and the defined criteria should reflect this. For example, decisions made about minor mid-year cuts in funding may not require scrutiny of performance. This is for each program to define.</p> <p>However, program budget holders still lack effective harmonized systems to track Program W1/2 progress against budgets, for example there may be extensive reliance on offline spreadsheets independently developed and held by individual managers. (see Standard 3)</p>	

STANDARD 5: HIGH-QUALITY RESULTS REPORTING

Title of standard: **Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 5:** CGIAR System Program reporting is of adequate quality and the evidence presented is properly archived, linked and accessible.

Rationale for standard: High quality and checkable annual reporting on results is an essential aspect of accountability for System level funding as well as an important input into learning and improving. The CGIAR System Annual Performance Report and the CGIAR Results Dashboard depend on having reliable, checkable inputs. For this cycle, the standard will concentrate on ensuring that reporting is comprehensive, that the evidence presented is properly archived, linked and accessible, and that output claims (innovations) are properly justified with evidence. For the future, further investment is required to ensure that all outcome claims (Outcome Impact Case Reports and policy contribution claims) are properly evidenced, but that requires considerable investment in M&E, and due to the time lags, this can only realistically be required for next cycle.

Documentation required for assessment: Annual reports and associated tables and online inputs, and Outcome Impact Case Reports for each program.

Scope: The assessment for this Business cycle in 2020 will focus on analysis of the annual report and associated reporting materials on 2019. (The pilot will examine available materials from early reporting. Prior to that, the System Organization will provide some analysis of the quality of 2018 reporting, which will highlight challenges encountered without specifying the source.)

Expertise required for assessment: Understanding of Agricultural Research for Development and the meaning and use of each area of reporting. Access to statistical expertise (for sampling).

Proposed method: Rubric, as set out below

Draft Rubric for assessment

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2 or later)
SUMMARY RUBRIC			
Programs don't carry out regular System-level reporting.	Programs regularly report on progress and results to the CGIAR System Organization, but reporting is not fully comprehensive and/or checkable.	Program reporting to the CGIAR System Organization is comprehensive, results claims are checkable, and the available evidence supports the statements made.	Reporting to the CGIAR System is comprehensive and fully supported by high quality evidence
SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO ASSESS FOR EACH LEVEL			
Programs do not carry out regular System-level reporting or do so on an adhoc basis.	<p>Programs regularly report on progress and results to the CGIAR System Organization.</p> <p>However, program reporting fails on one or more of the criteria listed in Level 3 i.e. that it should be</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive 2. Timely 2. Fully checkable. 3. Adequately evidenced, within current resource constraints 	<p>Reporting is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive: Information is provided for all parts of the relevant Program reporting template and the underlying tables and data requested. If expected data is not provided for a particular area, there is a reasonable justification given. 2. Timely: Final reports are delivered within agreed deadlines. (in the absence of convincing justification) 3. Checkable: Claims/statements of results, and summary data (e.g. totals), are supported by underlying data in tables and accessible databases. 'Accessible' means that these are at minimum available for immediate inspection by specified System entities (see Standard 6) 4. Adequately evidenced, within current resource constraints: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reporting on the <i>sphere of control</i> (specifically: innovations, and milestones that are in the sphere of control) is adequately evidenced, with links to relevant reports. Claims/statements made are supported by evidence. b. Evidence sources cited for Outcome Impact Case Reports are credible and high-quality (not blogs and 	<p>All of the following should apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting passes Level 3. ● Key documentation (<i>to be defined</i>) is publicly available ● High-quality evidence from evaluation, adoption and impact studies is available to support claims in Outcome -Impact Case Reports (including for contributions to policy) and to strengthen and broaden the evidence for other impact claims. <p>Meeting Level 4 would require <u>substantial</u> investment across the CGIAR in Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA), and the resource implications and trade-offs need to be seriously considered by CGIAR System Governance.</p>

Annex: Assessment Criteria for Program Performance Standards

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Proposed pass level for Business Cycle 1)	Level 4 (Potential pass level for Business Cycle 2 or later)
		<p>press releases, for example). The available evidence supports the claims/statements made.</p> <p>c. All evidence sources cited for Impacts (Report Table A1) are credible peer-reviewed studies, and/or supported by transparent, checkable surveys and models (see point 2). The available evidence supports the claims/statements made.</p>	

STANDARD 6: AVAILABILITY OF PROGRAM/PROJECT INFORMATION

Full title of standard: Business Cycle 2019-2021 Standard 6: Key Program and project information available, findable and accessible by specified System Entities.

Rationale for Standard:

- a. Program managers should have easy access to a set of key information and documentation on their Program and the projects within it, as an essential part of managing programmatically.
- b. Documentation on programs and projects is required for external assessments and evaluations, and it is inefficient and burdensome to have to request this from individual project managers. In particular, the assessment of these Program Performance Standards requires sampling of projects, which needs some basic information to be available regarding the list of projects in the Program.
- c. CGIAR is moving towards compliance with the International Aid Transparency Initiative and this standard dovetails with that.

Documentation required for assessment: The proposed list of required information is below. Information in List A should be clearly accessible and identifiable online (internally in CGIAR), for easy access by specified System entities. Information in List B should be easily accessible to Programs and should be provided to one of the specified System entities within 5 working days of being requested.

Scope: This standard is applicable to information on the Program (as listed below) and on all projects in the Program that are in operation at some time during the Business Plan period, up to the time of the formal assessment (mid 2020) (not just new projects).

Expertise required for assessment: General management /organizational development; access to statistician if required for sampling projects.

Pass level for this Standard: Information on Programs and Projects is available to specified System entities, as set out in List A (information accessible at all times) and List B (information accessible on request) below. This list may be modified to reflect lessons from the 2019 pilot exercise for assessment of the Standards. In the second Business Plan cycle, the intention is to meet IATI standards – there are already moves in this direction in various parts of CGIAR, however no specifics have been included in these metrics as the requirements need further clarification and agreement.

PROPOSED LIST OF REQUIRED INFORMATION

Notes:

- It is convenient to refer in the following list to some existing documents for CGIAR Programs, but this should not be interpreted to mean that these exact documents are required. The assessment of the Standard is about accessibility to the required information, not about specific named documents (such as a ‘CRP proposal’), since document types may change over time.

- Required information should be made available in its full original form (for example, minutes of a meeting as they were originally recorded, not only a brief summary of the conclusions).
- Details of this list may be modified after piloting this Standard in 2019.

LIST A: Information that should be accessible online to specified System entities

Information in List A should be up-to-date and clearly identifiable online (internally in CGIAR), for easy access by specified System entities. The location of this information is the decision of each Program and may change over time. For example, some information may be public (e.g. on a Program website), some may be held in Management Information Systems, while some information may be held in system repositories, and a permanent link provided to the specific System entities. *The key requirement is that the links provided are easily findable and accessible to the specific System entities directly, without it being necessary to ask Program management for clarification, links or further information. This means that each program should prepare a summary sheet with links to where relevant information can be found and share this with the specified System entities. This list (and the underlying information, if needed), should be updated at minimum annually.*

Program description

1. Program proposal (full description, including the theory of Change (ToC), structure, major activities and outputs planned, links to System targets and Outcomes)
2. Key external advice provided and decisions made on the original proposal (e.g. ISPC comments, record of discussion and approval by System Council) and on any changes since then (e.g. approval of an additional Flagship)
3. Up-to-date description and Terms of Reference of management, governance and advisory structures for Program, if different than the original Program Proposal
4. Up-to-date description of any major Program structural changes since original approval if relevant
5. List of key Program staff: leadership team, management unit, Flagship leaders or comparable, and Center/partner focal points (if they exist)

Program policies and processes

6. Minutes of meetings of management/leadership team, governance and advisory structures since 2017
7. Essential meeting records or correspondence required to evidence other Program standards in this Business Cycle, for example Standard 1 (addition of new projects to the program), Standard 3 (Management of pooled budgets), and Standard 4 (Process for prioritization of pooled funding)

Program inputs, activities and results

8. Annual Plans of Work and Budget as from (and including) POWB 2017, containing plans for activities, milestones, and budgets, according to the agreed templates
9. Annual reports to System Organization as from (and including) AR 2017, following the agreed templates and completing the agreed tables of information (also see Standard 5)
10. Outcome-Impact Case Reports, for at least the previous reporting year (also see Standard 5)

LIST B: Information to be provided on request

Information in List B should be easily accessible to Program Management and should be provided to one of the specified System entities within 5 working days of receiving a formal request. *(Note that this is not a complete list of all information that may be requested during the assessment phase by the senior evaluation expert or the CGIAR System Internal Audit Function if supporting that work).*

Program description

- Current list of key research staff associated with the Program, their job title (as regard to the Program), gender, Center and Flagship affiliation. 'Key' staff are PMU staff, Flagship and Cluster staff, Project leaders and Principal Investigators.
- Full list of current Program partnerships and the partners in each partnership (for preference), or a full list of Program partners
- Current full list of projects included in Program, and for each, where it fits into the Program (e.g. Flagship), source(s) and amount of funding, geographical scope/location and expected duration. (Note: this information is needed to sample projects for assessment.)

Project-level information for requested projects

Some standards (and other assessments) require project-level information, normally on a randomized or stratified randomized sample of projects. It is recognized that some documents linked to projects may be confidential (e.g. technical bids for grants may be commercially sensitive), and these must be handled and stored accordingly

- Project description: project memorandum or similar (this can be more than one document, including later updates). This should contain at minimum the following information:
 - Project Title,
 - source(s) and amount of funding,
 - geographical scope/location and expected duration;
 - where the project fits into the Program (e.g. Flagship) and an explanation of how the project fits into the Program theory of change and priorities (see Standard 1),
 - project partners;
 - planned activities and deliverables
- Project reports:
 - a full set of activity/results and financial reports (annual, quarterly etc.) since the start of the project.