

**Interim Report of the System Reference Group (SRG)** in the form of:

**DRAFT Recommendations from SRG to the November CGIAR System Council**

## **One CGIAR**

### **Introduction**

The System Reference Group (SRG) has arrived at a set of bold recommendations for One CGIAR – fit for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and equipped to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The proposed changes – to be implemented with urgency – build on the success of changes made to System governance in 2016. Together these amount to the biggest change in CGIAR’s history, building on its strengths while not being constrained by its long and successful past.

The SRG’s vision for One CGIAR is that of a global leader and recognized brand, accomplished through 5 interconnected and co-dependent elements:

1. A compelling and aligned mission
2. Unified governance
3. Institutional convergence
4. More and better funding
5. A new way of organizing transformative research programs

This is ultimately about people in delivering our mission: to harness the passion of our staff and commitment of our partners in the most effective way, to create an institutional environment that enables our scientists to thrive, and to support research that better responds to the needs of our beneficiaries – people who are bearing the brunt of the climate emergency.

Inspired by a hallmark moment at the 6<sup>th</sup> System Council meeting in Berlin and encouraged by the establishment of new Center alliances, the SRG was set up to engage in high-level strategic thinking and dispassionate analysis of options to raise the System’s level of ambition and funding.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CGIAR System Council Chair’s 6<sup>th</sup> meeting summary:  
[https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SC6-08\\_Chairs-Summary.pdf](https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SC6-08_Chairs-Summary.pdf)

This bold proposal from the SRG has emerged from a process of co-creation between members of the System Council and the CGIAR System Management Board. It has been informed by consultations with Science Leaders, Corporate Service Executives, and many others. Its initial ideas were surpassed in ambition by the Rome workshops of Center Board Chairs and Directors General, followed by a three-day retreat of the SRG itself.

### **Element 1 – A compelling and aligned mission**

Agriculture offers a major solution to grand planetary challenges – notably the tightly interlinked challenges of hunger (SDG2) and climate change (SDG13). CGIAR has a vital role to play with partners to transform agri-food and land systems in the face of the climate emergency, to empower and benefit the low-income producers and consumers who are most at risk. Landscape and waterscape management are fundamental elements of sustainable production<sup>2</sup>.

CGIAR will create a compelling research-for-development agenda, towards a mission of transforming agri-food systems for healthy diets and a climate-resilient future. Timebound, results-based research programs will be developed under four broad themes: genetic resources, sustainable production, inclusive economies, and food, nutrition and health.

All research will deliver on multiple outcomes, building on CGIAR's dynamic comparative advantage. Among the Sustainable Development Goals, CGIAR's heartland is SDG2, which will be central to program design and delivery, as will climate resilience and greenhouse gas emissions reductions, environment and biodiversity, gender equity and social inclusion, and improved livelihoods.

### **Element 2 – Unified Governance – 'One-CGIAR' common Board**

To deliver on the mission above, CGIAR needs a governance system that incentivizes more collaboration and research focus. Moving quickly towards unified governance is therefore essential.

A 'One-CGIAR Board' will be established for the CGIAR System Organization and all Centers. All discretionary<sup>3</sup> roles on the Boards of each legal entity (Centers/Alliances/System Organization) will be filled by the same board members. The minimum legal requirements of each entity that relate to Board membership will be met.

### **Element 3 – Institutional convergence**

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<sup>2</sup> This sentence was omitted in an earlier version circulated to stakeholders on July 22, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Discretionary members being those that can be appointed by the Board itself excluding a Centers' Director General (noting that AfricaRice has specific non-common provisions that will need to be considered). Non-discretionary members are ex-officio member roles filled at the sole decision of the nominating entity (e.g. host country representative, or partner organization)

I. Operational Structure: four to six “CGIAR business units” will be formed around groups of Centers, each with a unified management team under a single head, and no new layers of governance. To ensure effective cross/trans-disciplinary collaboration and delivery for impact, One CGIAR will invest in developing horizontal coherence and linkages within and across the business units.

II. Shared Services: for more efficient operational coordination and effective delivery as One CGIAR, relevant policies (e.g. travel, intellectual property and branding) and services (e.g. IT, finance, and HR) will be developed and applied globally across the System Organization and Centers by 2021.

III. Country and Regional Engagement: early and active involvement of countries (including National Agricultural Research Systems - NARS) in program design and governance is critical. One-CGIAR at the country level will include the adoption of a single brand and voice with unified country priorities and strategies developed in close partnership with NARS, key private sector actors and international agencies. These strategies will draw on the breadth of CGIAR’s capabilities to develop a focused response to country priorities, including the need to develop the capacity of NARS. To enable cross-country support and learning, regional/sub-regional hubs and strategies with a small shared physical presence will be created.

#### **Element 4 – More, and pooled, funding**

One CGIAR should be a \$2 billion organization. Responding to the development and implementation of a robust, consultative, focused, and accountable research programming modality – with a clear result framework – Funders will aim to work collectively towards a fully pooled funding model. Future funding modalities will be simpler to use and understand, while enabling longer-term funding arrangements for research activities. A share of funding will also be provided in the form of core institutional support.

#### **Element 5 – A new way of organizing transformative research programs**

More focused, agile and collaborative global programs will be developed under a new program modality – with phased program design and approvals, arranged around ‘transformation funds’ (working title) through major grants. Robust stop-start decision-making will be informed by stage-gating<sup>4</sup> and a three-step process for priority-setting (relevance, effectiveness, and value).

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<sup>4</sup> Stage-gating is a technique in which an initiative, program or project is divided into distinct phases separated into decision points, with each gate continuation is decided according to clear criteria.