CGIAR Ethics Framework

Purpose

This document sets out a proposed CGIAR Ethics Framework developed to strengthen the ethical foundations of CGIAR, including but not limited to governance, advisory bodies, resource mobilization, grant operations, project implementation people management, risk management, and innovative scientific research, by articulating and formalizing a System-wide approach to ethics.

Action Requested

The System Management Board is requested to review, and if thought appropriate, endorse the CGIAR Ethics Framework for presentation to the System Council for approval.

Special notice on 'Consent Agenda' status of this document
This paper is being presented to the SMB according to Article 7.1 of the SMB Rules of Procedure, permitting a 'consent agenda' of multiple items being presented for approval via a single vote of the SMB (not item by item). **Should a SMB member wish to remove an individual item from the Consent Agenda, that request should be communicated to the Secretary of the SMB by close of business Paris time on Thursday 26 September.**

Distribution notice:
This document may be shared without restriction.

Prepared by: A working group made up from members of the HR Community of Practice, in consultation with the full Community of Practice, and with guidance from an expert external resource.

Introduction

1. Action 4.2 of the CGIAR System 3-Year Business Plan 2019 – 2021 (Reinforce and strengthen our shared ethical frameworks) sets out a number of deliverables to ensure that the CGIAR System continuously strives to operate according to the highest ethical standards.

2. Aligned to the [CGIAR System Risk Management Framework](#), a CGIAR Ethics Framework has been developed to strengthen the CGIAR System focus on adhering to best practice ethical standards, ensuring a culture of continuous learning where incidents are quickly and appropriately responded to and effective preventative measures are regularly reinforced. It supports compliance with CGIAR's Risk Family 3, "Non adherence to appropriate values".

Background

3. This CGIAR Ethics Framework sets out the high-level shared approach, and there are no budgetary implications to its approval. A suite of policies, guidelines and tools to guide and support its implementation will be developed and come to the Board as relevant for approval in due course. These include a CGIAR Policy on Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Audits and a proposal to develop a CGIAR Ethics Function.

4. The CGIAR Ethics Framework has been collaboratively developed by a committed Working Group from within the CGIAR Human Resource Community of Practice with the assistance of an external consultant. The documents have benefitted from extensive feedback over a number of months, including informal feedback from external partners, and from the most recent round of extensive feedback from Center Board Chairs, Chairs of Center Audit Committees and Directors General.

5. At its virtual meeting on Monday 16 September, the Audit and Risk Committee of the System Management Board considered some key questions arising from the feedback received from Centers and provided guidance on these which will inform continued development of the suite of materials that fall under and are aligned with the CGIAR Ethics Framework.

Next Steps

6. Subject to System Management Board endorsement, the CGIAR Ethics Framework will be presented to the System Council at its 13-14 November 2019 meeting for final approval. Prior to that, it will be reviewed by the Council's Assurance Oversight Committee as part of their overall provision of advice to the Council on assurance in the CGIAR System.

CGIAR Ethics Framework

Leveraging our culture and values to achieve our vision

The Compelling Case for a System-Wide Approach to Ethics

1.   The scope of CGIAR's operations is significant, involving many national, regional and international partners, with a geographic footprint that extends across the globe, including into some of the world's most challenging environments. CGIAR's governing bodies and workplaces are multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary and multi-generational, populated by passionate individuals, working together towards a world free of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation.

2.   CGIAR recognizes that operating according to the highest ethical standards is a prerequisite to being able to deliver on our vision. We understand that an ethical organizational culture is key to building trust and to promoting improved job satisfaction and stronger employee engagement, better decision-making, improved morale, greater productivity, and enhanced stakeholder confidence. An ethical culture reinforces CGIAR's reputation for long-term success, by enhancing trust and reducing adverse claims. The ethical conduct of science and research is a necessary and essential condition precedent without which we jeopardize future food security.

3.   Conversely, the risks of not operating according to the highest ethical standards are significant. The Risk Management Framework of the CGIAR System[1] identifies "non-adherence to appropriate values" as a CGIAR-wide family of risks that has the potential to directly impact three of CGIAR's strategic operational objectives, i.e. delivery, reputation and reliability.

4.   It is well recognized that a lack of commitment and adherence to shared ethical values increases the risk of inappropriate behavior of staff members, governance officials and key stakeholders. This can lead to poor decision-making, failure to recognize and address ethical dilemmas and challenges, a culture of entitlement rather than accountability, decreasing staff well-being, incidents of fraud, waste, abuse of power and corruption, misrepresentation in reporting, stewardship failures, and as a consequence significant reputational damage, as well as legal or regulatory exposure.

Purpose of this Framework

5.   The purpose of this Framework is to strengthen the ethical foundations of CGIAR, including but not limited to governance, advisory bodies, resource mobilization, grant operations, project implementation people management, risk management, and innovative scientific research, by articulating and formalizing a System-wide approach to ethics.

6.   To further this purpose, we use common terminology to ensure a shared understanding across the System, as set out in Appendix 1.

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[1] https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Risk-Management-Framework-APPROVED.pdf

An Integrated Approach to Ethics

7. Our System-wide approach to ethics is based on the following four key components shared throughout the CGIAR System, as further described in this document:

    - Core Ethical Values;
    - A set of CGIAR Codes of Conduct;
    - A suite of CGIAR Policies on specific ethics-related topics; and
    - A platform of shared ethics structures, resources, guidelines, and services that support the integration of our Core Ethical Values, Codes of Conduct and CGIAR Policies throughout all CGIAR Entities.
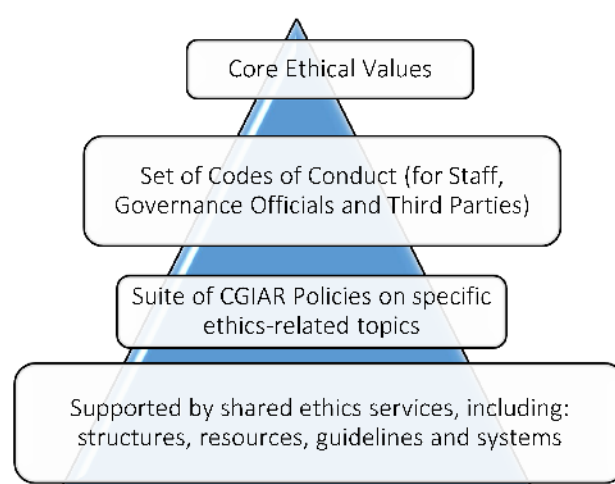
8. Our approach is to (i) be sufficiently flexible to accommodate and cover emerging ethical considerations and risks; (ii) allow CGIAR Entity-specific applications and customizations as necessary to address the demands of cutting-edge scientific research and other specific issues; and (iii) include both proactive and reactive elements.

9. Our approach requires that we collectively (i) clearly communicate our shared ethical expectations; (ii) publicly commit to live, work and abide by our shared ethical expectations; (iii) support individual and institutional accountability for the consequences and outcomes of decisions; (iv) anticipate ethical risks and take preventive steps to limit adverse outcomes; and (v) quickly and appropriately respond when behavior fails to meet our standards.

10. Each CGIAR Entity should integrate this System-wide approach and its various components into their own operating environments.

Our Core Ethical Values

11.   As a result of the diversity of interests and perspectives represented by CGIAR stakeholders, we must operate in a balanced, ethical, collaborative, transparent and open manner. We must set, communicate and enforce global ethical norms, promote behavioral integrity, and establish common ethical standards across all CGIAR Entities and CGIAR's stakeholders, wherever in the globe we operate.

12.   CGIAR adheres to Core Ethical Values that make working within CGIAR uniquely valuable and transcend each CGIAR Entity's specific organizational and operational values. Our shared Core Ethical Values are as follows:

   a.   **Integrity**. We are honest, tell the truth, keep promises, pursue objective scientific research, admit mistakes, earn trust, and always act professionally by being accountable and transparent.

   b.   **Dignity and Respect.** We value and embrace diversity and inclusion, treat all stakeholders with respect and dignity, promote equity, avoid all forms of discrimination, and promote human rights.

   c.   **Sustainability.** We plan responsibly for the long-term, and are committed to environmental, social and economic food security, safety and global prosperity.

   d.   **Excellence and Innovation.** We strive for excellence by maintaining high standards of scientific rigor, actively encouraging innovation and creativity, and pursuing our passion for learning and discovery.

   e.   **Partnership.** We value the diverse voices of our internal and external stakeholders, and seek all forms of engagement, collaboration and teamwork.

Other Key Components of our Approach

13.   Our integrated approach to ethics also includes the following key components:

   a.   **A set of Codes of Conduct, for staff, governance officials and third parties[2]** that guide all CGIAR activities and operations, regardless of where or how work is performed. These Codes are utilized to address the unique roles, ethical risks, and opportunities that arise from the conduct of staff members, governance officials, and third parties, such as vendors and CGIAR System Partners. Each Code outlines the mutual and reinforcing ethical rights, duties, and obligations of each of these three stakeholder groups. The Codes are written simply, in plain language, to describe behavioral expectations, resources for help and guidance, and reporting systems to address misconduct and unethical behavior.

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[2] These Codes will be developed in 2020.

b. **A suite of CGIAR Policies on specific ethics-related topics** that reflect CGIAR's Core Ethical Values and that are operationalized by each CGIAR Entity. The initial suite of policies includes but is not limited to: 1) safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults; 2) interpersonal misconduct; 3) whistleblowing and protection against retaliation; and 4) grievances and internal justice system. Other ethics-related CGIAR Policies may be adopted that address other key ethical risk areas, such as conflicts of interest, research integrity and ethics; scientific misconduct; use of information and resources; privacy, confidentiality and transparency; stewardship and accountability for Funders' resources; and accuracy of books and financial records.

c. **Ethics structures, guidelines, resources and systems**, supported by a CGIAR ethics function, enable the provision of confidential ethics advice, outreach, training and education, whilst at the same time supporting the capacity to respond to emerging ethical challenges, concerns, and reports of unethical behavior and misconduct. These structures and resources permit CGIAR to focus both on prevention of ethical risk and prompt response to conduct that deviates from expectations.

d. **A focus on transparency,** with a commitment to sharing aggregate data and annual assessments of the impact of the CGIAR Ethics Function, while maintaining appropriate CGIAR Entity anonymity.

Roles and Responsibilities across the System

14. **CGIAR Entity Boards** are responsible for:

a. Supporting an ethical organizational culture by setting the "tone at the top" and leading by example
b. Overseeing effective notification, risk evaluation, and referral of specific ethical concerns or reports to support a common ethical escalation framework with appropriate controls
c. Holding itself and management accountable for supporting ethical conduct at the individual and institutional level
d. Committing to periodic ethics training and knowledge-sharing on best practices
e. Setting and sustaining a strategic ethics governance agenda that is in line with CGIAR's Core Ethical Values
f. Ensuring that adequate resources are made available to support the ethics function within the CGIAR Entity

15. **CGIAR Entities' executive leadership** is responsible for:

     a.   Reinforcing an ethical organizational culture and adopting best practices in ethical leadership

     b.   Promoting the implementation of this Framework and its various components

     c.   Ensuring that the principles and commitments expressed in this Framework are incorporated by reference into all applicable contracts and agreements with vendors, third parties, and other stakeholders

     d.   Providing adequate budgetary and human resources to ensure successful implementation of this Framework and its various components at each organizational level

     e.   Taking prompt action on incidents of unethical behavior and misconduct, including consultation and advice on the imposition of significant disciplinary action

     f.   Serving as ethical role models, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct as a core operational and strategic value

     g.   Regularly speaking about the ethical implications of their agenda and sharing with subordinates their decision-making about tough ethical choices

     h.   Ensuring that budgeted resources for ethics are made available and used as allocated

The System Management Board (and its members and active observers as relevant) is (are) responsible for:

     a.   Actively embracing "tone from the top" leadership

     b.   Acting in accordance with CGIAR's Core Ethical Values and promoting their incorporation into decision-making throughout the CGIAR System

     c.   Approving, and revising in consultation with CGIAR System stakeholders from time to time, this Framework, a set of Codes of Conduct, and CGIAR Policies on specific ethics-related topics

     d.   Ensuring that adequate financial and human capital resources are made available to support and implement this Framework

16.   **The System Council (and its members and active observers as relevant)** is (are) responsible for:

     a.   Actively embracing "tone from the top" leadership

     b.   Acting in accordance with CGIAR's Core Ethical Values and promoting their incorporation into decision-making

     c.   Approving, and revising in consultation with CGIAR System stakeholder, this Framework

     d.   Providing inputs into CGIAR System expectations regarding ethical standards

Avenues for Addressing Misconduct and Unethical Behavior

17.   CGIAR supports a culture where all people (staff members, governance officials, thirds parties, etc.) are empowered to speak up and challenge unethical or illegal practices that they observe. CGIAR also supports a culture where disagreements can be aired

with civility and compassion, in line with our commitment to dignity, respect, and fairness.

18.   Two key elements of our integrated approach to ethics are:

    a.   The development of reporting channels and routing principles amongst all CGIAR Entities so that ethical concerns are reported to and managed by the appropriate CGIAR Entity in a timely manner;

    b.   The establishment of common standards on how reported matters will be investigated and how disciplinary rules and procedures will be applied. These standards are generally reliant upon universally accepted standards of substantive and procedural due process, respect for individuals, and respect for rule of law. Local laws will impact the details of good investigation practices, which may require customization by each CGIAR Entity.

Continuous Improvement

19.   CGIAR accepts that change is constant. Not only are the internal and external environments we operate in continually evolving, but also the field of ethics and the maturity of each of our CGIAR Entities in their commitments to this Framework.

20.   CGIAR Entities commit to taking the lessons we learn while implementing this Framework and the developments in the ethics field to improve and transform our Framework and approaches to ensure success. This commitment to constant improvement will be supported by a formal assessment being performed at least once every CGIAR business cycle, leading to strategic updates and actionable and sustainable recommendations.

Appendix 1

Relevant Defined Terms

Certain terms and concepts used in the CGIAR Ethics Framework are defined below to ensure their shared understanding across the System[1]:

"abuse" means physical, sexual, emotional mistreatment or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, resulting in actual or potential harm to their health, survival, development or dignity, that arises within the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

"child" or "children" means any person under the age of 18 (in accordance with the internationally ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)

"CGIAR Entity" or "CGIAR Entities" means current and future CGIAR operating unit(s)[2].

"CGIAR System Partners" means all organizations external to the CGIAR System that contribute to, or support the delivery of, the CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework. They include national agricultural research and extension systems, universities and advanced research institutes, policy bodies, global and regional fora, intergovernmental organizations, non-government organizations, private-sector companies, farmers/producers and consumers.

"Core Ethical Values" means CGIAR's common ethics values as set forth in the CGIAR Ethics Framework

"discrimination" means the act of differentiating between people or groups and engaging in prejudicial treatment based on their actual or perceived membership in a certain diversity category.

"diversity" means the fact or quality of being different; having a variety.

"equity" means treating people fairly based on their needs. Ensuring equal outcomes.

"exploitation" means actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust to profit monetarily, socially or politically. Types of exploitation include sexual exploitation, child labor, trafficking, survival sex, and radicalization.

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[1] These definitions can also be found in the CGIAR Glossary available at [to be added].
[2] As at the date of approval of this document, 'CGIAR Entities' include the CGIAR System Organization and individual CGIAR Centers, except where an alliance between Centers has been formed in which case 'CGIAR Entity' refers to the alliance. 'CGIAR Entities' exclude Funders.

"harassment" means belittling or threatening behavior directed at an individual worker or a group of workers. Workplace harassment is also known by many other names including "mobbing", "workplace bullying", "workplace mistreatment", "workplace aggression", "workplace molestation" and "workplace abuse". These are all either synonymous or belong to the category of workplace harassment. Harassment can be emotional, physical or both.

"safeguarding" means promoting and protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, exploitation and abuse.

"sexual exploitation" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment

"values" means shared principles that underpin the work of an organization and guide the actions of its workforce.

"vulnerable adult" means individuals aged 18 years and over who are at greater risk of significant harm due to factors such as age, gender, mental or physical health, or as result of poverty, inequality or experience of displacement or crisis, including people encountering domestic abuse, substance misusers and asylum seekers.

"workforce" means individuals who have a contractual relationship with a CGIAR Entity, such as members of regular staff cadres, members of non-regular special assignments categories, holders of short-term contracts, holders of job-contracts, learner-participants and third-party contractors; regardless of their position, type of employment, or duty station.

"workforce engagement" means a workforce member's involvement with, commitment to, and satisfaction with work.

"workplace" means the locations within a CGIAR Entity at which workforce members complete duties.

Appendix 2

Library of Resources[1]

1. CGIAR Frameworks

    a. [Risk Management Framework for the CGIAR System](#)

    b. Framework for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR's Workplaces (under development)

2. CGIAR Policies

CGIAR Codes of Conduct

    a. CGIAR Code of Conduct for Staff (to be developed)

    b. CGIAR Code of Conduct for Governance Officials (to be developed)

    c. CGIAR Code of Conduct for Third Parties (to be developed)

CGIAR Policies on Ethics-Related Topics

    d. Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults (including protection of children and adults, and anti-trafficking obligations) (under development)

    e. Interpersonal Misconduct (including harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, abuse of power/ abuse of authority, bullying and shaming, anti-trafficking) (to be developed)

    f. Whistleblowing and Whistleblower Protection Against Retaliation (including prevention of retaliation and operation of hotlines/helplines) (to be developed)

    g. Grievance Processes and Internal Justice System (to be developed)

3. Other Relevant Resources

    a. CGIAR Glossary (under development)

    b. Terms of Reference for CGIAR Ethics Function (under development)

    c. Job Description for Chief Ethics Officer, CGIAR Ethics Function (under development)

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[1] As updated from time to time by the CGIAR System Organization