



Document: SC9-03  
For Approval  
Issued: 30 October 2019

# A CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform: The recommendation from the System Management Board

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**Purpose:** This document sets out the basis of the System Management Board's recommendation on a Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform (to elevate Gender Equality Research in CGIAR), taking into account the results of a moderated assessment undertaken by ISDC.

**Action Requested:** Pursuant to Article 4(s) of the CGIAR System Framework, the System Council is requested to consider, and if thought appropriate, **approve** the recommended arrangements for a CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform under the GENDER proposal and transition plan.

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# 1. Summary of materials available to System Council for review

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## **Recommendation of the System Management Board (this document)**

### **GENDER Cover Letter and Transition Plan**

### **GENDER Proposal**

### **ISDC moderated proposal review assessment**

*Note: As agreed with the ISDC, an in-confidence set of comments was provided by an Expert Funder Review Group, and the ISDC moderated the review comments of both this group and the external expert panel commissioned by the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat.*

### **Additional proposals received**

- ENGAGE Proposal

### **Summary of external reviewer comments on each proposal**

N.B. The SMB also considered responses to the summary of comments from the external reviewers submitted by each of the proposal proponent teams

## 2. The business case for an elevated Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform

The vision: CGIAR will provide global leadership on strategic gender and inclusion research in agriculture

Goal: ARD innovations and impacts are amplified by the CGIAR's engagement of world-class gender expertise and global stewardship of cutting-edge gender research

Strategic Objectives

Track 1: Promote and integrate high-quality gender research within the CGIAR's research programs (CRPs, Platforms, Centers)

*These two tracks are interdependent with strong linkages*

Track 2: Global leadership to address evidence gaps on what works for gender equality in ARD

Operational Objectives

1. Provide global leadership on strategic gender research in agriculture
2. Strengthen the quality, rigor and uptake of gender research by CRPs and other CGIAR programs
3. Support opportunities for scientific exchange among gender researchers, CGIAR and external
4. Strengthen the CGIAR's capacities to deliver strategic gender research
5. Ensuring robust monitoring, reporting and influence of the CGIAR's gender research
6. Increased ability to attract funding in support of strategic gender research

Outcome

"To close the gender gap in equitable access to resources, information and power in the agri-food system by 2030" (CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework)

# 3. Call for Proposals for a CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform



The System Management Board, using the input from the Gender Reference Group, and the ISDC on criteria for assessment, endorsed a call for proposals at SMB13 and the call was made for CGIAR Center-led proposals (on 5 April 2019).



## Two proposals received:

### ENGAGE:

Enabling Global Agricultural Research for Gender Equality or ENGAGE Platform.

Led by IFPRI

### With:

- The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT;
- CIFOR/ ICRAF;
- IWMI;
- WorldFish;
- African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD);
- Royal Tropical Institute (KIT);
- Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA);
- The ISEAL Alliance

### GENDER:

Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results or GENDER Platform.

Led by ILRI

### On behalf of a consortium of eight CGIAR Centers:

- AfricaRice;
- CIMMYT;
- CIP;
- ICARDA;
- ICRISAT;
- IITA; and
- IRRI

## 4. Advice and recommendation from the ISDC-moderated review

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### The process:

- Two proposals were submitted by 21 August as per the schedule. Between 23 August and 18 September, the proposals were assessed by a group of anonymous external subject matter experts, moderated by the ISDC and using their criteria.
- By 18 September, the ISDC-moderated proposal review assessment(s) were submitted to the System Council Secretary to be shared with the System Council and the System Management Board for information, and with the proposal proponent(s) (Centers) who were invited to provide a written response to the review assessment.

### The outcome:

The Call for Proposals sought a forward-looking proposal that was not simply providing for a new administrative mechanism for funding ongoing and repetitive studies, but **rather a new approach that offered the potential for transformative change in both the research agenda and the research process in CGIAR.**

### The ISDC-moderated review:

- Indicates that both the ENGAGE and the GENDER proposals represent credible, fundable options for meeting the objectives as set out in the Call for Proposals....**the ISDC considers that the GENDER proposal has the best chance to deliver on the platform objectives and recommends that ILRI be named lead Center for the platform;**
- Agrees with Funder experts that ***“the talents and excellent ideas from both be fully leveraged going forward”***; and
- Considers that more detail and justification in the base budget will be needed moving forward. The uplift budget, however, is not reasonable without considerable justification.

## 5. The decision by the System Management Board on recommendation for a Gender Platform to the System Council



### SMB14 meeting

The System Management Board met for its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 3 October 2019, in Rome.

The Board considered the proposals, review outcomes and other strategic inputs and considerations to inform a recommendation to the System Council.

### SMB/M14/DP2: Recommendation for Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform

- With a quorum present, and taking into account declared conflicts of interest, the System Management Board delegated decision-making on SMB14 agenda item 4 to the three independent voting members of the System Management Board, for whom there was no perceived conflict of interest.
- **Those members unanimously agreed to recommend to the System Council the ‘GENDER’ proposal**, with a request that the proponents prepare for submission to the System Council by 29 October 2019, an updated cover letter and transition plan that lays out the means and process for a wider set of activities to be incorporated that includes all Centers and the most strategic elements from the ENGAGE proposal.
- **The System Management Board reinforced the need for strong leadership in the role of platform director**, to ensure strong delivery from commencement.
- In recognition of CGIAR’s strong community of researchers and partners that wish to collaborate on gender research, and in recognition of the ambition of the CGIAR System to elevate CGIAR’s efforts, **the System Management Board will also recommend in an updated FinPlan for 2020-2021 for the elevated gender platform to receive an increase in funding through window 2 allocations, beyond the US\$ 2 million already budgeted.**