



SIMEC in 2019: Activities and achievements

Purpose: This document provides information on key activities carried out during 2019 by the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC) and what outcomes this has contributed to, with specific references to System Council processes provided.

Action Requested: The System Council is requested to take note of the activities carried out by SIMEC in 2019 in line with its roles and responsibilities to advise the System Council, provide strategic guidance and steward important processes.

Presentation sponsor: Chair, Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC)

Document category: This document can be shared without restriction

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4. Future role of SIMEC

1. Background: Roles and responsibilities of SIMEC as Standing Committee of the System Council



From SIMEC TOR:

- SIMEC - maximum of nine (9) persons who represent voting member constituencies of the System Council
- Purpose - assist the System Council in:
 1. reviewing research program evaluations;
 2. overseeing strategic direction and efficiency of the System Organization;
 3. monitoring efficiency, effectiveness and impact of CGIAR Research
- Key roles and responsibilities. SIMEC shall advise & make recommendations to the System Council on:
 - Strategy and Results Framework
 - Advisory Bodies of the System Council
 - Governance Related to Strategy, Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Performance Management and Reporting
 - Evaluations and Impact Assessment
 - Exercise of any other functions, at the discretion of the System Council

Some specific roles for SIMEC with respect to the advisory services as included in the System Council approved TOR (4 Oct. 2018)

- **SIMEC is the key forum for preparatory conversations with ISDC, SPIA and evaluation function on workflow design and the schedule of delivery to facilitate alignment with System Council workplans and priorities.**
- **As independent publications and other outputs of ISDC, SPIA or external independent evaluations studies or activities are available, SIMEC will be the forum for discussing think pieces prepared by ISDC/SPIA/evaluation to facilitate structured consideration and endorsement by the System Council on effective responses to such studies or advice, to strengthen decision making processes.**

2. Overview: SIMEC focus areas since formation

2017: 'Taking stock Phase'

SIMEC formed with approved TOR, Chair and membership

Focus on:

- Early look at Funder needs for independent science advice
- Designing the steps to be taken on the future of advisory services
- Understanding and providing guidance on portfolio matters
- Exploring needs and ideas for Results-based Management

2018: 'Establishment Phase'

Focus on:

- From planning to adoption of a future layout of the advisory services: Moving from a think piece to terms of reference
- Providing inputs on the development of the Business Cycle approach
- Contributing to the building of constituent elements of a Program Performance-based Management System
- Guidance on the periodic assessment of program performance standards
- Guiding follow-up to evaluation recommendations

2019- 'Embedding Phase'

Focus on:

- Supporting the transition plan for the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat
- Leading efforts towards optimal filling of vacancies in the ISDC, including Chair and members
- Providing a forum for discussing workplans, budgets, membership matters and outputs of advisory services to go System Council
- Finding ways to achieve appropriate integration of independent advisory services in the CGIAR system

3A. Activity: Advising the System Council on ISDC member appointment process



Activity: SIMEC deliberated on and mapped out key roles, competencies and arrangements needed for ISDC, to inform development of key elements for ISDC appointment process (Feb 2019)

Achievement: Key building blocks in place to support the ISDC appointment process for 2019 and beyond =

Terms of reference for Nominations Panel

Advertisement and advertising strategy

Competency Framework for the Members of the ISDC

Terms of reference for Chair of ISDC

Approved by System Council on 8 April 2019 [SC/M7/EDP6]

Activity: Chair of SIMEC chaired the 2019 ISDC Nominations Panel towards making recommendations for new Chair and members of ISDC (June-August 2019)

Achievement: As of 1 October 2019 a fully constituted ISDC of world-class members covering key expertise and experience domains, including

- **ISDC Chair**: Holger Meinke (former ISPC member)
- **5 new ISDC members**
 - Chris Barrett
 - Suneetha Kadiyala
 - Mandefro Nigussie
 - Lesley Torrance
 - Andrew Ash
- Leaving 8th seat vacant to be filled when specific gap or need for expertise is identified by ISDC

Joining Nighisty Ghezae as continuing member

Approved by System Council on 26 August 2019 [SC/M8/EDP4]

3B. Activity: Stewarding approval of SPIA membership and funding mechanism



Activity: SIMEC discussed with SPIA Chair on proposed candidates for SPIA special initiative members at SIMEC M17 (May 2019)

Leading to: Special initiative members recommended to the System Council to lead important areas of SPIA work on improving and institutionalizing collection of data on diffusion and use of CGIAR innovations in national data systems designed to track progress on SDGs; and in learning-oriented studies on the environmental impacts of CGIAR innovations.

Name	Institution	Specialty	Sex
Travis Lybbert	UC Davis, USA	Agriculture, markets	M
Kelsey Jack	UC Santa Barbara, USA	NRM	F

Approved by System Council on 12 June 2019 [SC/M8/EDP1]

Activity: SIMEC worked with the System Management Office on exploring the means of funding of the SPIA budget, with a proposal to be presented for approval by the System Council

Achievement: Mechanism designed such that the program activities of SPIA are classified as a new module, 'Improving and institutionalizing collection of data', to be administratively assigned to the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture.

SC/M8/DP4: Impact assessment module in Big Data in Agriculture Platform

The System Council approved the creation of an additional module in the 'Big Data in Agriculture Platform', to provide a financing mechanism for impact assessment work to be undertaken as part of the SPIA work program

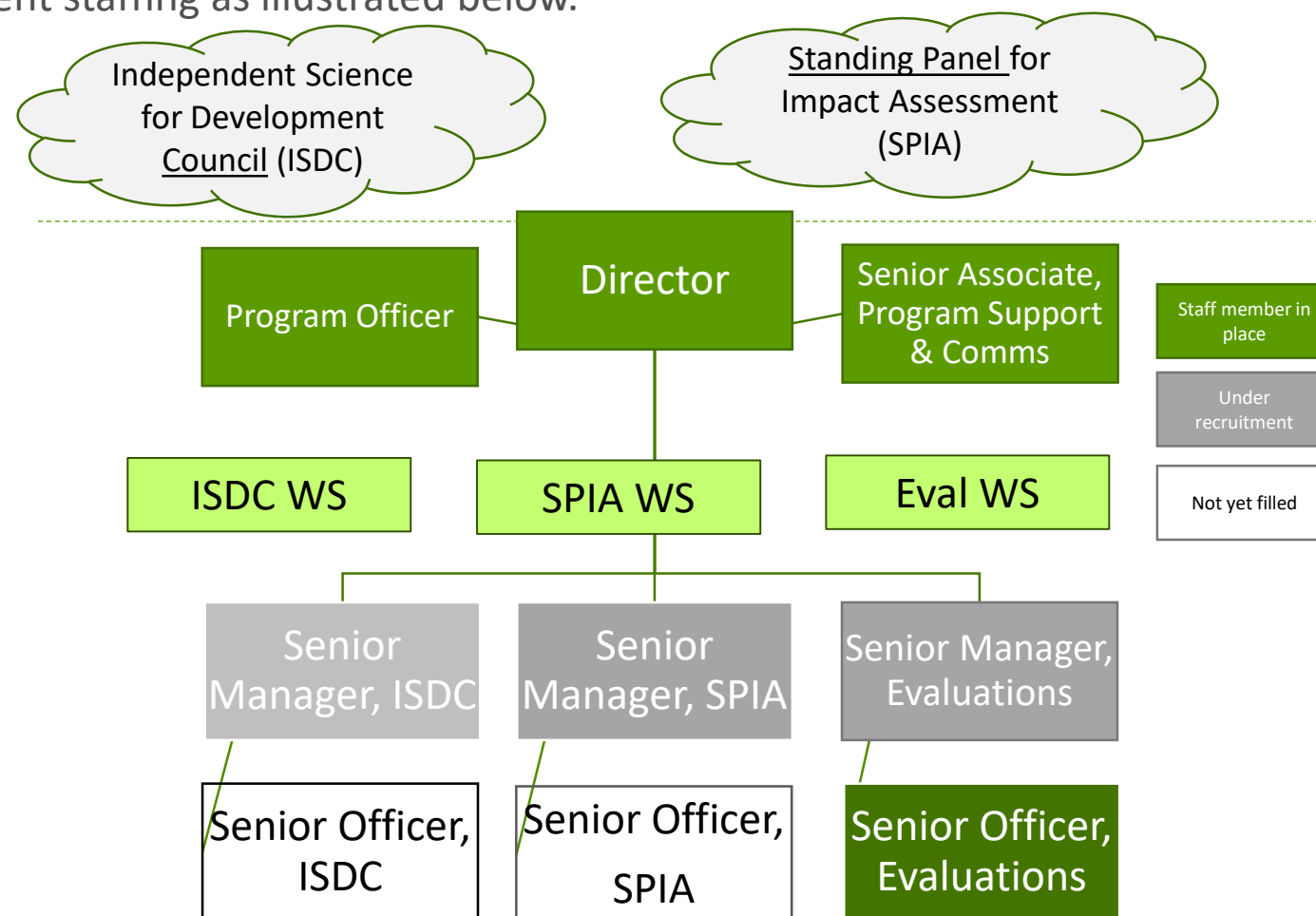
3C. Activity: Providing strategic guidance to the transition plan for the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat ('Shared Secretariat')

Activity: SIMEC supported the transition plan through:

- Chair and members participating in recruitment processes for Director and various other positions
- Providing guidance/oversight to Shared Secretariat and individual workstreams pending Director appointment
- Providing updates to System Council

Update provided to the System Council at SC8, Agenda Item 6
<https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2019/05/SC8-05-AdvisoryServicesTransitionMatters.pdf>

Achievement: The CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat was established in Bioversity International HQ, Rome as of 1 April 2019 with current staffing as illustrated below.



3D. Activity: Providing oversight of the Evaluation workstream of the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat

Activity: SIMEC reviewed and gave inputs into the development of an interim 2019 workplan for the Evaluation workstream (April 2019) building on strategic priorities emerging from the SIMEC-led ‘Connecting the Dots’ meeting and with an appropriate budget ceiling.

Achievement:

3. Shared Secretariat evaluation budget for 2019



SC7 – November 2018

SC requested further refinement of the workplan and budget to take into account the feedback provided during the System Council meeting session

SIMEC recommendation to SC8

- Recommend approval of the 2019 budget ceiling as presented – which takes up the two recommended priorities from the ‘connecting the dots’ meeting
- SIMEC proposes to oversee the further development of the evaluation workplan

Activity Area	People/Days	Budget
Review of CRP progress		
Evaluation Panel	3/30	130
Review Consultants (initiating review process)	10/20	165
Evaluation Analysts	2/60	70
Performance Management Standards		
Review proposal process	2/3	10
Contracting agency to completed assessments	5/30	150
Travel		30
Meetings		50
TOTAL		605

Decision session (agenda item 9) will include this proposal

SC/M8/DP11: CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat Evaluation Workstream

The System Council approved a 2019 budget ceiling of \$605,000 for the Shared Secretariat Evaluation Workstream for implementation of the agreed strategic priorities, with oversight by the System Council’s Strategic Impact, Monitoring Evaluation Committee (‘SIMEC’) until the Director, Shared Secretariat is in place

3E. Activity: Stewarding a ‘Connecting the Dots’ process towards aligning CGIAR’s advisory services with the CGIAR System Business Plan

Activity: SIMEC convened a workshop in Montpellier to develop an ‘operational framework’ to align CGIAR’s advisory services with the CGIAR System Business Plan (4-7 April 2019)

Snapshots of the results process of connecting the dots



Achievement: Identification of priority activities for the advisory services for the 2019-2021 CGIAR Business Plan

Proposal made (and accepted) for ISDC member (now Chair) to join the System Reference Group to provide science advice

	2019	2020	2021
ISDC activities (Independent Council, supported by Shared Sec. ISDC Workstream)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderating assessment of proposals for Gender Platform by panel of external experts Synthesis of foresight material to support System Reference Group discussions and 2030 Plan development Identifying horizon scanning needs for 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building QoR4D into key system processes Identifying future horizon scanning and foresight needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderating assessment of proposals called for as part of 2030 Plan Undertaking horizon scanning & foresight
SPIA activities (Independent Panel, supported by Shared Sec. SPIA Workstream)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning impact assessment studies for evidence of impact (available 2024 onwards) Developing a joined-up strategy on impact assessment across SPIA, Centers, Programs Gathering inputs on driving change toward an impact assessment culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing strategy on Impact Assessment Driving change toward an impact assessment culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing strategy on Impact Assessment Driving change toward an impact assessment culture
Shared Secretariat-Evaluation Workstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an interim evaluation workplan Assessment of programs’ performance against Performance Standards (Pilot) Revisiting the Evaluation Policy- undertake initial consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewarding delivery of external independent evaluation/review material, as requested by the System Council Facilitate assessment against Performance Standards Stewarding development of revised Evaluation Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewarding delivery of external independent Reviews, as SC requested Evaluation workplan and joined-up strategy for BP 2022-2024

Example of a product from ISDC emerging from CTD discussions



Summary analysis of key messages delivered by the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) from 2011 to 2018 on future directions for the CGIAR – 2030 and beyond

(The points made here are only some of the outputs generated by the ISPC over its 8 years of existence. Other material can be found at: <https://ispc.cgiar.org/publications/>)

Acknowledging the inputs over the years of the following Council members: Gassman (Chair), Buxton (Standing Panel of Impact Assessment) (PA) Chair, de M Santos, Dhillon, Gil (Chair), Ghezze, Golle (SPA Chair), Nassim, Kibrom, Aksoy (SPA Chair), Monte, Ode, Prigent, Sandoz, Sayer, Thomas, Tomich, Wabbi, and ISPC Executive Director, Gendron, Unger.

The CGIAR is a research-for-development (R4D) organization and as for any of such organization in the 21st century, it has to understand the interface between research and how research outputs are used both in practice and to inform policy, if it is to deliver impact on agricultural and rural development. In the case of the CGIAR the R4D undertaking has a focus on one or more of three System Level Outcomes:

1. Reduce poverty;
2. Improve food and nutrition security;
3. Improve natural resources and ecosystem services

In this context critical uses of research to address these goals in the 2030s are:

- Mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- Delivery of key sustainable development goals (SDGs) including “leaving no-one behind”

1. What has the ISPC said about what the CGIAR research agenda should focus on?
Outcome delivery: The 2017 CGIAR Annual Report shows 348 innovations ready for use and only about one fifth (68) adopted. Not all will be valuable for adoption but too much change in the next phase of programs risks losing those that are. Hence, it is imperative that the CGIAR provides clear priorities for where it can add most value by operating collectively, while at Center level ensuring the right balance between continuation of current core business, emerging opportunities and a future focus that creates viable options for the 2030s and beyond. Thus at the System level there is a need for:

- Urgent focus on accelerating uptake of existing outputs through maintaining continuity in programs and partnerships in key areas.

Facilitating consideration of beneficiaries: The agricultural research for rural prosperity special issue published in the wake of ISPC’s Science Forum 2017 (SF17) revisited food and agricultural innovation pathways for prosperity and introduced a set of 18 plausible pathways – the next phase of CGIAR programs needs to expand beyond thinking predominantly of “smallholders” as the main beneficiaries of their research. In addition, there needs to be greater recognition that smallholders are a very heterogeneous group. The analysis in the special issue highlighted evidence to suggest, the biggest bottlenecks for effective agricultural development are often located beyond the farm gate within suboptimal and underperforming value chains. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacv.2018.12.005>). At the System level.

4. Future role of SIMEC

Forthcoming changes:

- **SIMEC membership:** over the next year there may be a number of current members that will rotate off of SIMEC for various reasons; so membership will need to be revisited
- **One CGIAR:** with the recommendations of the System Reference Group being presented at SC9 there will be various new/changed contextual, institutional and operational elements across CGIAR

SIMEC intended approach moving forward:

- Use post SC9 and Q1-2020 period to take stock of relevance/focus of SIMEC role for 2020-2021 period in context of One CGIAR conversations
- Come back to the System Council in advance of, or at, SC10, to set out an appropriately tailored role of SIMEC for 2020-2021
- Anticipate a reduced level of effort given the heavy lifting that was required over 2018-2019 to provide oversight of the transition to CGIAR's revised advisory services approach