

TOWARDS ONE CGIAR

28 APRIL 2020

This is a bi-weekly newsletter on the transition to One CGIAR from the co-chairs of the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF). One CGIAR refers to a future, more unified and integrated CGIAR, initially set out in the System Council-endorsed recommendations of the System Reference Group.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE TRANSITION CONSULTATION FORUM (TCF)

Dear CGIAR colleagues and stakeholders,

We hope you and your families and friends remain safe and well.

Over the past weeks, we have seen robust, coordinated action across CGIAR Centers, the System Organization, Funders, and partners in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

These joint actions are grounded in the imperative to protect the safety, health, and well-being of staff and stakeholders as our first and highest priority. Centers and the System Organization – in conversation with Funders – are also proactively assessing the impacts on CGIAR’s operations and financing and identifying ways to secure our key assets and research capabilities.

At the same time, CGIAR has a critical role in supporting evidence-based decision-making in the face of this crisis. Overseen by the System Management Board (SMB), CGIAR is preparing [a coordinated research response](#) to help understand, mitigate, and recover from the public health, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic, particularly on the world’s poorest and most vulnerable.

Amid all of this – and perhaps in part because of it – we see a growing resolve to implement the transition to One CGIAR as soon as possible. The coordinated response to Covid-19 has once again reinforced the essential need for and value of alignment in action and decision-making across CGIAR Centers, the System Organization, and Funders. As a truly integrated One CGIAR, our ability to step up at a moment like this will be much further enhanced.

The transition continues apace. Over 14-17 April 2020, each of the Transition Advisory Groups (TAG) reported to the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF) on progress and sought input on its work. We were impressed by the progress made; the engagement of all TCF members in the week’s calls – with more than 80 participants joining each of the four virtual conversations; the quality of the interaction; as well as the open and transparent way in which TCF members are sharing their perspectives, questions, and concerns. A brief summary of that week’s discussions is provided below.

Encouraged by the experience of that reporting moment, we are exploring the possibility of holding a second ‘TAG report-back week’ in late May, between the SMB’s 17th meeting (5–7 May) and the 10th meeting of the System Council (8–11 June).

Looking ahead, work needs to continue with a very clear focus on key priorities for the year 2020. One such priority is the appointment of the inaugural Executive Management Team (EMT), empowered with responsibility and accountability to drive the transition to and operations of One CGIAR. With substantive input from TAG3 on unified governance, the SMB, at its 17th meeting, will consider a way forward to ensure that the inaugural EMT is in place on 1 July 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter. Other priorities include: (i) a unified governance arrangement under a One CGIAR Common Board, achieved by the appointment by Center/Alliance Boards of a minimum of 2/3rd voting majority of the members of the reconstituted SMB onto their own board, effective from 1 October; and (ii) a high-level 2030 Research Strategy, approved by the System Council in November 2020. A comprehensive [Legal Opinion](#), shared with Center legal experts on 23 April and discussed below, confirms that there are no legal impediments to either the empowered EMT (to whom Directors General shall report) or the One CGIAR Common Board.

As a reminder, this newsletter goes directly to all TCF and TAG members, CGIAR communities of practice, as well as TAG support team members. It is also posted on the [CGIAR website](#). Please circulate it broadly to others that would like to get an update on progress towards One CGIAR. For any feedback and suggestions related to this newsletter, please contact us at TCF-Support@cgiar.org.

With kind regards,

Gareth Johnstone, Convener, Center Directors General (from 2 April)
Nicole Birrell, Convener, Center/Alliance Board Chairs

Tony Cavalieri, Member, CGIAR System Council
Marco Ferroni, Chair, CGIAR SMB

REPORTS FROM TRANSITION ADVISORY GROUPS TO TCF, 14—17 APRIL

On 14—17 April, the TCF held a series of virtual meetings to allow TAGs to report back on their work. The aim of the week's discussions was to: (i) ensure that all TCF members are aware of the work underway in each TAG, and that linkages/dependencies across these groups are identified early and managed effectively; (ii) provide the TAGs with an opportunity to seek early feedback from the broader TCF; and (iii) assess the transition process as a whole, to identify risks and ways to mitigate them, and find avenues for more effective collaboration going forward. The schedule of the four calls was as follows:

Date	Topics
14 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TCF co-chairs' opening and overview of the week• Update on TAG1• TAG2: Research
15 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TAG2: Research (cont.)• TAG5: Country and regional engagement
16 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TAG6: Financial management and modalities• TAG7: Resource mobilization
17 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TAG3: Unified governance• TCF co-chairs' summary of next steps

The week proved a very useful early opportunity to check in on progress across the transition as a whole, and to gather TCF members' perspectives on key issues. It illustrated the value of the inclusive and transparent approach adopted by the TCF, with an open and honest exchange of views and concerns.

The conversations underscored the multiple linkages and dependencies across all TAGs, and the need for continuous information sharing and coordination, facilitated by TAG1. One example is the interface between the 2030 Research Strategy (TAG2), the funding modalities for its delivery (TAG6), and the underlying resource mobilizations considerations of Funder priorities and potential sources of funding (TAG7).

Participants also suggested a need to begin to engage partners and stakeholders more broadly, beyond the TAGs and the TCF, including in particular at the regional, national, and sub-national levels. These include partners that deliver research, adopt and apply research products, and define development priorities and desired outcomes. It was noted that each TAG needed to engage with relevant stakeholders to inform its work in the coming weeks and months. At the same time, TAG5 has a specific role in identifying the ways in which a future One CGIAR could maximize the value of its country and regional engagement and partnerships.

The discussions also underscored the need for prioritization over the months ahead (see also message from the TCF co-chairs above). Among those priorities, participants repeatedly pointed to the critical importance of having an empowered, inaugural EMT in place as soon as feasible to drive the transition. TAG3 presented its early thinking and received valuable input on the terms of reference of that inaugural EMT.

In their summary of the week's discussions, the TCF co-chairs encouraged all TAGs to be bold and ambitious, and to consider solutions for a truly integrated One CGIAR, going beyond what our System can deliver today.

A longer summary of the week's discussions, along with materials shared, is available to TCF and TAG members on MS Teams.

UPDATE ON TAG4: POLICIES AND SERVICES

Mindful of the near-term priorities identified, and reflecting on the early progress made across the six operational TAGs, the TCF co-chairs discussed the status of TAG4 on policies and services, which has yet to be launched. The co-chairs recognize and applaud the range of initiatives underway across CGIAR's communities of practice to coordinate and share information about policies, processes, and services across CGIAR Centers and the System Organization. The co-chairs believe it is critical that these efforts continue, consistent with the One CGIAR destination, particularly the endorsed One CGIAR recommendation 3.b on policies and services. At the same time, it is important that the work towards One CGIAR policies and services be led by the EMT and overseen by the One CGIAR Common Board. Therefore, rather than launch a 'TAG4' on policies and services now, the co-chairs believe the communities of practice should simply continue their important preparatory work pending the appointment of the EMT.

EXTERNAL LEGAL OPINION ON DELIVERING UNIFIED GOVERNANCE UNDER ONE CGIAR

As set out in our [30 March 2020 \(3rd\) newsletter](#), at its 16th meeting and for and on behalf of the CGIAR System as a whole, the SMB commissioned an independent legal opinion on **One CGIAR Unified Governance** (SRG recommendation 2), and an **Integrated Operational Structure comprised of a small number of operational units formed and led by an empowered One CGIAR Executive Management Team** (SRG Recommendation 3.a).¹

Since its establishment, TAG3 has overseen delivery of the independent opinion, including – on 26 March 2020 – having had the opportunity to consider an advance version of Lalive Law's *Initial Summary Findings on the Legal Opinion on Delivering Unified Governance under One CGIAR*, and to discuss that opinion with the senior partners of Lalive Law on that call. Since 30 March 2020, the TAG3 MS Teams channel has provided access to that Initial Opinion.

As advised during TAG3's report back to the TCF on 17 April 2020, the now completed whole of CGIAR System legal advice (20 April) comprises the following three (4) key parts:

1. **Final Summary Findings document** – serving as an Executive Summary of the Legal Opinion on Delivering Unified Governance (now available on the [CGIAR website](#)), and accessible on the TCF MS Teams site of TAG-3.
2. **Full Legal Opinion** – providing detailed legal analysis on the 5 questions set out in the summary (on the TAG3 MS Teams channel)
3. **A Glossary** – setting out common terms (also on MS Teams)
4. **Annex** – setting out information on a Center-specific basis, to provide full legal due diligence transparently to all Centers. These Annexes, based on information available to the external lawyers as at 20 April 2020, are being reviewed by each Center first, and then will be shared across all Centers shortly.

To summarize the main findings of the opinion:

- a. There are no legal impediments for implementing One CGIAR Unified Governance as endorsed by the System Council; and
- b. The implementation of the One CGIAR Unified Governance presents an opportunity to enhance the governance of the Centers and the CGIAR System Organization, and thus the CGIAR System, and to bring it in line with international governance standards and best practices.

¹ Refer Action Point 'AP3' from SMB16: [from the SMB 16th meeting Chair's Summary](#)

TRANSITION ADVISORY GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP

The Transition Advisory Groups (TAG) represent an extension of the advisory role of the TCF. They will bring multi-stakeholder input and advice across the specific dimensions of the One CGIAR transition. The TAGs, their members, and co-stewards – as of 28 April 2020 – are available [here](#).

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

This is a non-exhaustive overview of recent and upcoming meetings and events related to the transition to One CGIAR. More detailed information will be made available on the dedicated MS Teams workspace for the TCF and shared with additional stakeholders as relevant.

When	What	Who
RECENT		
5–7 February 2020	CGIAR ‘Big Lifts’ workshop in Eschborn, Germany, provided multi-stakeholder input towards the implementation of SRG recommendations 1 (mission) and 4 (new research modality)	Invited guests, including representatives of Funders, Centers, ISDC, and the System Organization
12 February 2020	Virtual meeting of the General Assembly of the Centers to consider process to reconstitute the SMB and approve associated amendments to the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization	Members of the General Assembly, Secretariat support
19 February 2020	1st call of the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF) to discuss proposed forward directions for TCF and TAGs	TCF members, support
17 March 2020	2nd call of the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF) to share early updates across TAGs, to review time lines, and to discuss the implications of COVID-19 on the transition	TCF members, support
14-17 April 2020	TAG reports to the TCF to share progress and seek input	TCF and TAG members, support
UPCOMING		
30 April	System Council ad hoc call to provide a progress update (to include Funders beyond TCF membership)	System Council members, active observers, and Secretariat support
5-7 May 2020	17th meeting of the SMB (virtual), with a priority focus on approving the EMT search process & TPMU appointment decision	SMB members, active observers, invited guests, and Secretariat support
Week of 25 May (TBC)	TAG reports to the TCF (virtual) to share progress and seek input	TCF and TAG members, support
3–5 June 2020 (TBC)	Research Strategy Workshop (virtual)	TAG2 members, support, Science Leaders, invited guests
8–11 June 2020	10th meeting of the CGIAR System Council (virtual)	System Council members, active observers, invited guests, and Secretariat support

CONTACT US

TCF-Support@cgiar.org

GETTING INVOLVED

For CGIAR staff and stakeholders who wish to get involved in or be better informed of the transition to One CGIAR, relevant avenues are described [here](#).

BACKGROUND: WHAT IS ONE CGIAR?

One CGIAR is a dynamic reformulation of CGIAR's partnerships, knowledge, assets, and global presence, aiming for greater integration in the face of the interdependent challenges facing today's world. One CGIAR comprises (i) a sharper mission statement and impact focus to 2030, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals; (ii) unified governance under a 'One CGIAR Common Board'; (iii) institutional integration, including stronger management, common policies and services, and a unified country presence; (iv) a new research modality; as well as (v) more, and pooled, funding. For further details, please refer to the [TCF web page](#).