This document sets out key questions and answers on the transition to ‘One CGIAR’. It will be updated regularly as a core resource for internal and external communications on One CGIAR. Questions and feedback can be addressed to TCF-Support@cgiar.org and up-to-date reference materials can be found on the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF) web page.
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1. 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 (SDG); (ii) unified governance under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’; (iii) institutional integration, including stronger executive management, common policies and services, and an aligned country and regional presence; (iv) a new research modality; as well as (v) more, and pooled, funding. Further information and reference documents can be found here.

2. Is the One CGIAR destination fully defined?

The overarching objectives and principles guiding the transition have been set. We are now undertaking an inclusive and consultative process of co-creation to define the destination in further detail, and the transition pathway to reach it. See also questions 5 and 8 below.

3. Why does CGIAR need another reform?

The growing pace of environmental, demographic, technological, economic, and geopolitical change – and the challenges they bring – are outpacing CGIAR’s ability to respond. A CGIAR composed of more than a dozen independently focused and operating Centers, historically formed around specific commodities or parts of the environmental solution, is holding us back. We need a broader and deeper integration of our assets and operations, and we need to become more agile. Ultimately, our people can have a much greater impact if allowed to operate with fewer institutional boundaries, stronger incentives for collaboration, and greater flexibility to act on emerging challenges, supported and empowered by more effective governance and management.

Many of the challenges that we seek to address through One CGIAR are not new, but they have become more pressing: the issues that CGIAR aims to address are increasingly complex and transboundary; CGIAR faces growing competition in the agricultural research for development (AR4D) space; its funding model continues to incentivize unproductive competition and drives fragmentation; and it needs to strengthen its ability to attract and retain talented people.

4. What is different from previous reforms?

One CGIAR builds on and goes beyond previous reforms in its ambition. It aims to elevate and fully harness our talented people, inter-disciplinary capability, strong partnerships for impact, and global—local presence, by putting in place a truly unified and integrated governance and management structure under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’ and a small Executive Management Team.

For further details, please see the System Council-endorsed One CGIAR recommendations, the message from the System Council to CGIAR staff, and other reference documents available here.
5. How was the One CGIAR destination defined and agreed?

The One CGIAR recommendations were developed by the multi-stakeholder System Reference Group (SRG) from late 2018 to October 2019, supported by the CGIAR System Management Board (SMB) in October 2019,1 and unanimously endorsed by the CGIAR System Council in November 2019.2 Detailed aspects of the destination were further defined and the associated target dates adapted by the SMB at its 16th meeting in January 2020, taking into account proposals made by the December 2019 Extraordinary General Assembly of the Centers4.

The process

The System Council, at its 6th meeting in Berlin, Germany in May 2018, acknowledged that there was “Funder appetite for an expanded shared agenda with increasing shared agenda/ pooled funding over time” and that “[e]fforts to deliver on these elements are directly linked to the System’s capacity to rationalize itself to remove ongoing fragmentation in effort”5.

The System Council agreed to take these conversations forward through a whole-of-system reference group, which was formed in late 2018. The SRG was co-chaired by Tony Cavalieri of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Marco Ferroni, Chair of the SMB, and it comprised 22 members: ten members of the System Council, including Funders as well as representatives of regional constituencies; all ten members of the SMB, including six Center-affiliated members; and the conveners of Center Board Chairs and Directors General. Representatives of the CRP and Platform Leaders as well as the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) also participated in the SRG’s deliberations.

From late 2018 to October 2019, the SRG undertook a highly consultative and collaborative process of co-creation to set out its One CGIAR recommendations to the System Council. Apart from intense collaboration within the broad and representative SRG itself – including through three working groups – the SRG co-chairs engaged stakeholders across CGIAR and its key partners, including Center Board Chairs and Directors General – who were engaged through numerous calls as well as in-person workshops in July 2019 – Science Leaders, communities of practice, Funders, the regional constituencies of the System Council, as well as national agricultural research and extension services (NARES) and their networks.

Overall, the SRG process spanned more than 70 group calls and many more bilateral calls in 2019, five in-person SRG meetings and two retreats, and its recommendations benefited from in-person workshops of Science Leaders, on shared services, and of the SMB’s Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and the System Council’s Assurance and Oversight Committee (AOC) on risk. Draft versions of the SRG’s recommendations were circulated on four occasions before they were posted on the CGIAR website for System Council consideration on 30 October. Written comments were logged and responded in a comments log that was shared with the SRG as well as all Center Board Chairs and Directors General.

1 Chair’s Summary, 15th System Management Board Meeting, 28 October 2019
2 Co-chairs’ Summary, Extraordinary General Assembly of the Centers, 12—13 December 2019, Rome, Italy
3 Meeting Summary, 6th System Council Meeting, 16 and 17 May 2018
   (https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2018/05/SC6-09_MeetingSummary_APPROVED-1.pdf)
6. What analyses underpinned the SRG’s recommendations?

The SRG’s recommendations were based on years of cumulative analysis and evaluative evidence of CGIAR. The SRG formed working groups to carry out deep-dives into research focus, modalities, and institutional arrangements. It commissioned studies on governance options and AR4D modalities, and its recommendations benefited from technical workshops on science, shared services, and risk. The SRG itself encompassed centuries of combined experience of CGIAR, and it systematically reached out to others to benefit from a wider range of ideas and perspectives. Importantly, the SRG recognized that many questions would need to be answered in further detail as part of the transition to One CGIAR.

7. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s people?

The One CGIAR recommendations were endorsed with the aim to better harness the passion of CGIAR’s staff and the commitment of its partners, creating an institution that enables scientists to do their best work to improve the life of farmers and poor consumers who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. This was confirmed in the System Council members’ message to staff in November 2019: “The greatest assets of CGIAR — and a key reason for our support — are its talented people, its partnerships, its global presence, and its record of impact. If CGIAR comes together as one, we believe our work can have even greater value.”

The transition to One CGIAR entails far-reaching change in terms of CGIAR’s culture, entails a far-reaching, System-wide change process that addresses people, culture, values, systems, policies, and structures. An inclusive process is underway to define those changes in further detail, with continuous updates to staff and stakeholders, and various avenues to get involved (see Question 9 below).

8. How will the transition to One CGIAR be implemented?

The guiding principles, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and resourcing of the transition have been set out in the endorsed One CGIAR recommendations and subsequent decision-making by the SMB at its 16th meeting in January 2020⁶, taking into account proposals made by the December 2019 Extraordinary General Assembly of the Centers⁷. As these evolve, updates will be provided on the CGIAR website, here.

With the institutional arrangements now largely in place, the roles and responsibilities in leading and stewarding the transition can be summarized as follows (see also Figure 1 below):

Decision-makers

The SMB will sponsor and oversee the transition to One CGIAR, both in its current and in its reconstituted form. Its role encompasses, inter alia, appointing an Executive Management Team (EMT), reviewing and approving System-wide work plans and budgets, and overseeing the effective monitoring of progress. During the first year of implementation, the Board will update the System Council on at least a quarterly basis on progress against the endorsed timeline.

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⁶ Chair’s Summary, 16th System Management Board Meeting, 28—29 January 2020, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2020/02/SMB16-10_ChairSummary-Final.pdf)
The System Council endorsed the SRG’s recommendations and will periodically review progress in their implementation. The System Council also has an established decision-making role with respect to several elements of the SRG’s recommendations, including but not limited to a 2030 Research Strategy, three-year investment plans, and CGIAR Projects. The System Council will be represented in the Nominations Committee for a reconstituted SMB as well as the Search Committee for the interim One CGIAR Executive Management Team.

The General Assembly of the Centers has a role in appointing the membership of a reconstituted System Management Board to also serve as members of the One CGIAR Common Board, once appointed to Center/Alliance Boards. The General Assembly will also consider facilitative changes to the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization to enable the above. In addition, the General Assembly has provided a valuable forum for discussion on and input towards the transition in a way that brings together all Centers.

Center/Alliance Boards: To bring about the recommended unified governance arrangement for One CGIAR, Center/Alliance Boards decide on the appointment of the members of a reconstituted SMB to Center/Alliance Boards, as a 2/3 voting majority, with an effective date of 1 October.

Advisory roles

The Transition Consultation Forum (TCF) is a high-level consultation mechanism for the transition. It includes members of the former System Reference Group (SRG), as well as all other Center/Alliance Board Chairs and Directors General, all other interested voting members of the System Council, and the ISDC Chair. Chaired by four co-chairs representing Center/Alliance Boards, Directors General, the SMB, and the System Council, the TCF provides multi-stakeholder input and advice on the transition in support of the decision-making above entities. The TCF itself is not a decision-making body, nor is it held accountable for decisions taken by others.

Transition Advisory Groups (TAG) are smaller, thematic groups that provide multi-stakeholder input and advice on specific dimensions of the transition. TAGs are made up of the members of the TCF and additional invitees. As of 11 May 2020 there were six TAGs:

1. Cross-cutting communication and change management
2. Research
3. Unified governance
4. Country and regional engagement
5. Financial management and modalities
6. Resource mobilization

Operational roles

An Executive Management Team (EMT) will be appointed by and directly accountable to the SMB. It will lead the transition, once established, and provide coordinated leadership of One CGIAR. The EMT will be supported by the Transition Program Management Unit and TAG support teams. The SMB approved the terms of reference of the inaugural EMT at its 17th meeting in May 2020.

The Transition Program Management Unit (TPMU), led by a senior Program Director, will coordinate the transition to One CGIAR as a program of interconnected projects. The TPMU will be responsible for program planning, monitoring, reporting, communication and stakeholder engagement, risk...
identification and mitigation, and change management. It will report to the SMB and the EMT once in place, and it will coordinate the work of the thematic TAG support teams. A request for proposals for a firm or consortium to provide the TPMU and its Program Director was issued on 21 February and closed on 23 March. A Search Committee has been formed by the SMB to make a recommendation for SMB appointment11.

**TAG support teams** will support the TAGs and the implementation of the transition in their respective areas. The support teams will be responsible for providing secretariat support to the TAGs as well as work planning, monitoring, reporting, risk management in their respective areas under the coordination of and in line with the methodology set out by the TPMU. TAG support teams are led by co-stewards from Centers and the System Organization.

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11 Chair’s Summary, 16th System Management Board Meeting, 28—29 January 2020, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2020/02/SMB16-10_ChairsSummary-Final.pdf)
Figure 1: Leading and stewarding the transition to One CGIAR

**System Management Board (SMB)**
- sponsors, oversees transition to One CGIAR
- Appoints EMT, reviews and approves work plans and budgets, oversees effective monitoring
- during the first year of implementation, updates SC on at least a quarterly basis on progress against the endorsed target dates

**System Council (SC)**
- periodically reviews progress in implementation of One CGIAR recommendations
- decides, inter alia, on a 2030 Research Strategy, three-year investment plans, CGIAR Projects, and pooled funding modalities

**General Assembly of the Centers (GA)**
- appoints membership of a reconstituted SMB to also serve as members of One CGIAR Common Board, once appointed by Center/Alliance boards to their own boards
- approves facilitative changes to the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, along with SMB and SC

**Center Boards**
- decide on the appointment of reconstituted SMB members to Center/Alliance Boards, as a minimum 2/3 voting majority, with an effective date of 1 October

**One CGIAR, CGIAR Executive Management Team (EMT)**
- coordinated leadership of One CGIAR, overseen by and reporting to the SMB/One CGIAR Common Board
- leads transition to One CGIAR
- manages the TPMU and TAG support teams

**Transition Program Management Unit (TPMU)**
- overall coordination of the transition to One CGIAR as a program of interconnected projects
- planning, budgeting, risk identification and mitigation, change management, communication, training, monitoring, and reporting
- reports to SMB/One CGIAR Common Board and EMT once in place, facilitates work of TCF, coordinates work of TAG support teams

**TAG Support teams**
- support TAGs in advancing specific dimensions of the One CGIAR transition
- comprised of System Organization and Center staff, as well as external experts

**Transition Advisory Groups (TAG)**
1. Cross-cutting
2. Research
3. Unified governance
4. Policies and services*
5. Country, reg. engagement
6. Finance
7. Resource mobilization
- continuous input and guidance towards the implementation of specific dimensions of the transition
- formed by TCF members, with membership tailored to theme

**Transition Consultation Forum (TCF)**
- consultation, communication, and reference point
- includes members of the former SRG, as well as all other Center Board Chairs and Directors General, all other interested voting members of the System Council, and the ISDC Chair
- co-chaired by representatives of SC, SMB, Board Chairs, and Directors General, who form a small sponsor group to advise on cross-cutting transition communication and coordination

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* On hold, pending appointment of EMT

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Questions and Answers on the Transition to One CGIAR
9. How can CGIAR staff and stakeholders get involved?

Co-creation and collaboration are at the core of the transition to One CGIAR. In line with the roles and responsibilities set out above, there are several ways in which stakeholders and CGIAR staff can learn more about and get involved in the transition process and these will evolve as each TAG further defines modalities for engagement. An overview is provided below and regularly updated here.

| Table 1: Getting involved in the transition to One CGIAR |
|---|---|
| **Transition Consultation Forum (TCF)** | The TCF is a high-level consultation mechanism for the transition. It includes members of the former System Reference Group (SRG), as well as all other Center Board Chairs and Directors General, all other interested voting members of the System Council, and the ISDC Chair. **Membership in the TCF remains open to System Council members who have not yet joined.** TCF members are invited to join a TAG and provide input on the advice prepared by other TAGs. Stakeholders, in their capacity as TCF members, are **consulted and informed**, but not responsible or accountable for delivering the transition to One CGIAR. |
| **Transition Advisory Groups (TAG)** | TAGs are multi-stakeholder advisory groups applying the principles of System-wide collaboration and co-creation. TAGs provide input and advice in support of relevant decision-making entities, including the SMB, the System Council, the General Assembly of the Centers, and Center Boards. **TAGs remain open to any current and future members of the TCF that have not yet expressed an interest in joining a TAG, as well as other stakeholders that are not CGIAR staff and could bring a relevant contribution to the work of the TAG.** TAGs decide on their own membership, in accordance with guidance from the TCF co-chairs. Stakeholders, in their capacity as TAG members, are **consulted and informed**, but not responsible or accountable for delivering the transition to One CGIAR. |
| **CGIAR Communities of Practice (CoP)** | TAGs have been encouraged to engage with the CGIAR CoP(s) that can provide relevant input and expertise and act as CGIAR-wide ideas networks and feedback loops. Some TAGs have extended a standing invitation to the conveners of relevant CoPs to participate in their meetings as guests. The invited conveners and/or TAG co-stewards will ensure that CoP members are informed of the work of the TAGs and have opportunities to provide input on and contribute towards relevant work products. CGIAR staff, in their capacity as CoP members, are **consulted and informed**, but not responsible or accountable for delivering the transition to One CGIAR. |
| **TAG support teams** | The work of the TAGs is supported by cross-System support teams, led by co-stewards. The support teams are currently made up of their co-stewards and a small number of System Organization staff and consultants. **The co-stewards will be responsible for identifying and filling any capacity gaps, either through consultants or by drawing on additional Center/ System Organization staff time (typically 25—50% of their time, from a few months up to a year), compensated through dedicated transition funds.** Where Center staff are sought to join a support team, co-stewards will circulate an open call for nominations to Center DGs as the decision-makers on staff deployment. Support team members retain their existing reporting lines, but will be **responsible** for delivery in line with TAG guidance and coordinated by the Transition Program Management Unit (TPMU). |
| **Other means of engagement** | We will keep stakeholders up to date about transition progress through regular newsletters, the TCF web page, and other channels under development (e.g. a One CGIAR webinar series, Senior Manager information kits, up-to-date FAQ), with associated feedback mechanisms. TAGs, with their support teams, will identify and communicate additional ways to engage with stakeholders. |
10. What is the timeline for the transition?

The transition to One CGIAR is a program of multiple interconnected projects, each representing different but mutually supportive dimensions of integration (see list of TAGs above). While each project has its detailed timeline and work plan, Figure 2 sets out a high-level overview of key 2020—21 decision points and associated, expected inputs from the TAGs and TCF.

In the near term, the focus of the transition is to put in place a unified governance and management structure under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’ and an empowered Executive Management Team by October 2020 to provide coordinated governance and leadership of the transition. To launch a new research portfolio in 2022, a high-level 2030 Research Strategy will be presented for approval by the System Council in November 2020, followed by a three-year investment plan for 2022—24 and associated changes to our research and funding modalities. For policies and services, and country and regional engagement, the focus in 2020 will be on scoping and design, followed by a prioritized and phased roll-out starting in 2021.

The envisaged speed of implementation matches the urgency of the change needed. The System Council’s November 2019 message to CGIAR staff was clear in this regard: “As the climate crisis escalates, there is an urgency to maximize our collective impact. Working together, we still have a chance to avert the biggest losses, make a real difference in joint efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and transform the lives of vulnerable farmers and consumers”.

Questions and Answers on the Transition to One CGIAR
Figure 2: High-level timeline of decision points and expected multi-stakeholder inputs in the transition to One CGIAR

Key decision moments: SMB, SC, GA, Center Boards

- **SC endorsed One CGIAR recommendations**
- **GA proposed adaptations, input on transition process**
- **SMB decision-making on key transition steps; including EMT, TPMU, TAGs; taking into account GA input**
- **GA agreed to form an inclusive Nominations Committee to reconstitute SMB; approved amendments to the Charter of the System Organization**
- **SMB approved ToR, launched search for initial EMT**
- **SC to take stock of progress towards endorsed One CGIAR recommendations, opportunity to consider any course corrections**
- **In July: SMB to appoint EMT**
- **Aug-Sept: Center Boards to appoint reconstituted SMB members to Center / Alliance Boards, as a minimum 2/3 majority, with an effective date of 1 Oct**
- **SC to approve 2030 Research Strategy**
- **SMB to recommend, SC to approve 2022-24 investment plan and research/funding modalities**
- **SMB to recommend, SC to approve initial set of large 3-year CGIAR Projects**

Key input/advice mechanisms: TCF, Transition Advisory Groups

- **Completed**

- **TF and TAGs launched, agreed modalities for work, initial priorities**
- **by end-April: TAG3 to advise on the ToR for the inaugural One CGIAR EMT, (with phased approach)**
- **by end-May: TAG7 to guide the development of a scenario-based resource mobilization, communications, and advocacy strategy for One CGIAR**
- **16-19 June: Research Strategy Workshop: TAG2 to design and convene event to shape the 2030 Research Strategy**
- **By 1 August: TAG2 to deliver a draft 2030 Research Strategy**
- **By September: Remaining TAG inputs presented to the inaugural EMT. EMT to shape the role of the TCF and TAGs going forward**
11. What funding is needed and available to support the transition?

CGIAR Funders recognize that the transition to One CGIAR requires significant up-front investments. The System Organization has secured a US$9.9 million bilateral grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support key elements of the process from late 2019 to late 2021, as well as an additional pledge of US$1 million from Norway. These resources will support key transition steps, including towards the establishment of a One CGIAR Common Board and Executive Management Team, common policies and services, as well as cross-cutting change management and communication.

Discussions are underway to mobilize additional funder support, including for the period from 2021 onwards. Additional resources will be required to enable broad-based progress across all endorsed SRG recommendations, starting later in 2020 and following the establishment of a clear One CGIAR governance and management structure to drive the transition. The precise resource requirements for each work stream will be defined in greater detail in 2020.

12. Are there structural or legal obstacles to making One CGIAR happen?

At the request of the SMB and in response to key legal and governance questions received on the One CGIAR recommendation, CGIAR contracted Lalive Law, a Swiss-based law firm, to deliver a comprehensive legal opinion. Its summary findings, available on the CGIAR website, conclude that:

“There are no legal impediments for implementing One CGIAR Unified Governance as endorsed by the System Council [and that] implementation of the One CGIAR Unified Governance presents an opportunity to move away from the current complex system, which has several flaws from a governance perspective, to enhance the governance of the CGIAR Centers/Alliance and the System Organization, and thus the CGIAR System, and to bring it in line with international governance standards and best practices.” (Summary Findings on the Legal Opinion on Delivering Unified Governance Under One CGIAR, 30 March 2020, prepared by Lalive Law)

13. How is the One CGIAR transition being impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic?

The CGIAR System Council, SMB, and Centers have all acted quickly to assess and respond to the risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, including its implications for the transition to One CGIAR.

Recognizing the unprecedented nature of this crisis – and the overriding priority to protect the health, safety, and security of staff and partners – there is strong support to continue and to accelerate, where possible, the transition to One CGIAR. As a fully integrated, aligned, and operational One CGIAR we can maximize our contribution to addressing the world’s needs, today and in the future.

Further information on CGIAR’s response is available here.
CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources and ecosystem services. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR Research Centers in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector.

**CGIAR System Organization**

1000 Avenue Agropolis  
34394 Montpellier  
France

Tel: +33 4 67 04 7575  
Fax: +33 4 67 04 7583  
Email: contact@cgiar.org

[www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org)