Questions and Answers
ON THE TRANSITION TO ONE CGIAR

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.
Contents

1. What is One CGIAR?..................................................................................................................3
2. Why does CGIAR need this reform?.........................................................................................3
3. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s people?.................................................................4
   a. What does One CGIAR mean for my job/role?.................................................................4
   b. What does One CGIAR mean for my research/project?..................................................4
4. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances?...........................................4
5. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s funding?...............................................................5
6. Will bilateral funding remain as part of CGIAR’s funding mix?..............................................5
7. What is different from previous reforms?..............................................................................5
8. How will the transition to One CGIAR be implemented?.......................................................5
9. How will we ensure that One CGIAR is making progress against the intended outcomes of the change?.........................................................................................................6
10. How can CGIAR staff and stakeholders get involved?............................................................6
11. What is the timeline for the transition?..................................................................................6
12. How will unified governance be provided?............................................................................7
13. How are the risks facing One CGIAR being assessed and mitigated?.................................7
14. Are there structural or legal obstacles to making One CGIAR happen?...............................7
15. How is the One CGIAR transition being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?...................10
16. How was the One CGIAR destination defined and agreed?.................................................10
   The process.............................................................................................................................10
17. What analyses underpinned the SRG’s recommendations?...................................................11
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. It comprises (i) a sharper mission statement and impact focus to 2030, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG2 – Zero Hunger; (ii) unified governance under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’; (iii) institutional integration, including a more aligned management under an empowered Executive Management Team, common policies and services, and a unified 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. Why does CGIAR need this reform?

As CGIAR, we have an incredible 50-year track record of working with partners to translate groundbreaking research on agriculture, food, land, and water systems into tangible development outcomes on the ground. In the 21st century, however, we face a very different set of more complex and more interconnected challenges, evolving faster than before.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and – recently – COVID-19 are just some examples of global threats that have their roots in an unsustainable food system; and they pose immediate risks to our ability to end hunger and achieve or safeguard key development outcomes. Ultimately, we need to completely transform our food system to feed a growing population healthy diets without risking the stability of the natural processes that sustain our existence.

In the face of these momentous challenges, CGIAR’s offer to the world is more relevant than ever. Yet – to maximize our added value given the pace, scale, and complexity of the challenges we face – we need to come together as One CGIAR.

One CGIAR is based on the premise that CGIAR’s excellent leaders, scientists, and staff can deliver more when brought together under fewer institutional boundaries, supported by clearer, unified, and empowered management and governance.

More coherent decision-making and a streamlined operational structure will unlock opportunities for greater integration and collaboration within CGIAR and with partners.

For our people, this will be an opportunity to work for a truly global organization and leader in agricultural research for development, with greater interactions across disciplines and regions.

For our partners, One CGIAR will be more accessible and easier to work with both locally and globally, providing a one-stop shop to access all of our global capabilities.

One CGIAR will also mean more stable and predictable funding, given Funders’ strong commitment to and support for One CGIAR. In the long term, this will be an opportunity to significantly increase the overall volume of funding and make funding more stable and predictable, allowing us to focus on delivering impactful research.
3. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s people?

One CGIAR is about better harnessing the skills and passion of CGIAR’s excellent people. 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.”

As part of One CGIAR, staff will work for a global leader in agricultural research for development. For CGIAR’s world-class scientists, One CGIAR seeks to enhance collaboration across disciplines and regions, unlock more stable and predictable funding, and foster more effective partnerships. For CGIAR’s corporate services and functions, One CGIAR is an opportunity for staff to help build and operate best-practice common policies, services, and systems. For all staff, One CGIAR can open up new avenues for professional growth and development.

a. What does One CGIAR mean for my job/role?

For the great majority of CGIAR’s people, the detailed implications of the One CGIAR transition will not be known until 2021. They depend on the outcomes of the inclusive process currently underway to develop a 2030 Research Strategy; to put in place a unified governance arrangement and aligned management; as well as to design and roll out One CGIAR policies and services, and a country and regional engagement model.

In the near term, staff are encouraged to learn more about the transition process and get involved where possible (see Question 9 below).

b. What does One CGIAR mean for my research/project?

A 2030 Research Strategy, currently under development for System Council approval in December 2020, will articulate at a high level a new research agenda to be launched in 2022. A series of 3-year investment plans will then operationalize this agenda. The first of these, to be finalized in 2021, will set out in greater detail how the 2030 Research Strategy will be rolled out during the 2022—24 period, including an initial set of 3-year projects. In the meantime, existing CRPs and other projects will continue to be delivered as scheduled.

4. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances?

One CGIAR builds on the people, partnerships, knowledge, assets, global presence, and track record of CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances. It is based on the premise that these can and must be configured differently to allow for greater integration, collaboration, and — ultimately — impact in the face of today’s global challenges.

The inaugural CGIAR Executive Management Team (EMT), starting in September 2020, is tasked with working closely with Center/Alliance leadership to propose — by end-2020 — an integrated operational structure for One CGIAR, including a consolidation of CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances into a smaller number of operational units.

As a result, CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances will transition from self-standing institutions to the foundation and building blocks of a broader, dynamic, and more integrated One CGIAR that maintains and enhances their key assets.
5. What does One CGIAR mean for CGIAR’s funding?

The System Council, comprising CGIAR’s largest Funders, unanimously endorsed in November 2019 the One CGIAR recommendations set out by the System Reference Group (SRG). Those recommendations include an ambition to double overall investment in CGIAR research from 2018 levels, and the achievement of at least 50% pooled funding by 2022 and at least 70% by 2024. In addition, the Funders endorsed adopting a more effective and universally applied approach to cost recovery, as well as a shift to multi-year funding commitments and approvals.

Taken together, these measures would translate into much greater and more predictable funding for CGIAR research and – conversely – reduced fragmentation and unproductive competition.

6. Will bilateral funding remain as part of CGIAR’s funding mix?

Yes. Under One CGIAR, there will be a more coherent and coordinated approach to bilateral funding, enabling more ambitious and integrated funding that maximizes support for research activities and delivery of impact.

The profile of and conditions for bilateral funding opportunities will be redesigned under One CGIAR. In line with One CGIAR’s mission statement and impact focus to 2030, bilateral opportunities will need to contribute to at least one of the five impact areas for One CGIAR: nutrition, poverty, gender, climate and environment. Once the Executive Management Team (EMT) is operational, it will work together with Center Leadership and Funders to design and implement the exact bilateral funding modalities.

7. 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 CGIAR’s talented people, inter-disciplinary capabilities, strong partnerships for impact, and global 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.

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 20201, taking into account proposals made by the December 2019 Extraordinary General Assembly of the Centers2. As these evolve, updates will be provided on the CGIAR website, here.

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1 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)

With the institutional arrangements now largely in place, the roles and responsibilities in leading and stewarding the transition can be summarized as shown in Figure 1 below, with additional details provided here.

9. How will we ensure that One CGIAR is making progress against the intended outcomes of the change?

For each of the One CGIAR recommendations, the System Reference Group (SRG) articulated expected outcomes and associated impacts. We are committed to monitoring progress against these outcomes, with a dedicated team within the Transition Program Management Unit (TPMU) currently developing a results framework for the transition. This results framework will include a set of key performance indicators, for which we will set a baseline and target and monitor progress at defined intervals. The TPMU will report these on a regular basis to the EMT to inform management of the transition going forward.

10. 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 in Figure 1 below, 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 the EMT further defines modalities for engagement. An overview is provided here.

11. 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. 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 the Transition Consultation Forum (TCF).

In the near term, the focus of the transition is to put in place a unified governance and aligned management structure under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’ and EMT 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 December 2020, followed by an inaugural 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.
12. How will unified governance be provided?

An essential component of One CGIAR is a unified governance arrangement under a ‘One CGIAR Common Board’ that provides coherent strategic direction and oversight of CGIAR’s operations.

To bring about this arrangement, the General Assembly of the Centers decided on 31 July on the appointment of eight persons who will serve as the voting members of the CGIAR System Board for a three-year term from 1 September 2020. In September, the Boards of CGIAR’s Centers and Alliances will consider the appointment of those eight persons as a minimum 2/3 voting majority on their respective Boards, along with amendments of their governing instruments and of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization to enable a unified governance arrangement to take effect from 1 October.

As part of that arrangement, each Center and Alliance will thus retain their Board, consisting of the eight voting members of the System Board, up to four Center/Alliance-specific voting members, and a small number of Center/Alliance-specific non-voting members.

The eight common Board members have been identified through a transparent and inclusive nominations process, led by a Nominations Committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Centers. Collectively, those members hold the breadth of skills, backgrounds, and perspectives required to ensure effective, high-level strategic direction and oversight to ensure a successful transition to and operations of One CGIAR.

13. How are the risks facing One CGIAR being assessed and mitigated?

A comprehensive risk management framework has been developed to identify, assess and mitigate key risks facing One CGIAR. Risks have been segmented by their ‘threat level’ to ensure that risk ownership and mitigation follow-up are well defined. Once operational, the EMT will focus on the management and mitigation of critical risks, while low risks will be managed by individual workstreams. The Transition Program Management Unit plays a coordinating role to ensure that risks are managed and elevated appropriately.

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

CGIAR contracted Lalive Law, a global law firm, to deliver a comprehensive legal opinion on the proposed governance and management changes. Its summary findings, available on the CGIAR website, conclude that there are no legal impediments for implementing One CGIAR Unified Governance. The detailed legal opinion can be found [here](#).
Questions and Answers on 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 2/3 voting Boards, 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
- SMB to appoint in July 2020

### 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
- Launched in June 2020

### 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

### SMB to appoint in July 2020
- Launched in June 2020
- * On hold, pending appointment of EMT
Questions and Answers on 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**
- **In July: GA to appoint reconstituted SMB**
- **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**
- **SC to take stock of progress towards endorsed One CGIAR recommendations, opportunity to consider any course corrections**
- **SMB to recommend, SC to approve 2022-24 investment plan and research/funding modalities**
- **SC to approve 2030 Research Strategy**
- **Remaining TAG inputs presented to the inaugural EMT. EMT to shape the role of the TCF and TAGs going forward**

Key input/advice mechanisms: TCF, Transition Advisory Groups

**Completed**

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

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15. 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.

16. 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 2019⁴, and unanimously endorsed by the CGIAR System Council in November 2019⁵. Detailed aspects of the destination were further defined and the associated target dates adapted 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.

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 “efforts to deliver on these elements are directly linked to the System’s capacity to rationalize itself to remove ongoing fragmentation in effort”⁷.

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, 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 to in a comments log that was shared with the SRG as well as all Center Board Chairs and Directors General.

17. 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 also 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.
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.

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