

Chair's Summary¹

18th CGIAR System Board Meeting

23 November 2020; Virtual

Colleagues,

At the outset of the deliberations just concluded by the CGIAR System Board, I characterized these as 'historic' – not only in the sense that they represented the first formal meeting of the System Board including its members common to all CGIAR's boards and with CGIAR's inaugural Executive Management Team ('EMT') in place, as envisaged under unified governance – but also as a key decision moment for delivering on the promise of One CGIAR, namely recommendations 1 and 4 of the System Reference Group, to present a compelling new mission for One CGIAR, and a new research modality to deliver on it.

In this meeting, the System Board:

- **Approved the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy and its companion CGIAR Performance and Results Management Framework 2022-2030** and recommend them to the System Council for its approval
- **Agreed that the draft process to develop the 2022-24 Investment Plan and CGIAR Initiatives and an outline for the 2022-24 Investment Plan** were in a good format to take to the System Council for a strategic steer

In addition to the universal backing from the System Board members we were encouraged to hear support from CGIAR's communities of Science Leaders, our System Council representatives and the ISDC for the Research and Innovation Strategy.

The System Board members noted that feedback provided on iterations of the documents during informal sessions had continually strengthened the materials. Strong appreciation was also expressed for the depth of consultation and engagement with stakeholders and partners, whose rich feedback was carefully reflected, with the System Board particularly acknowledging the dedicated work of Transition Advisory Group 2 and its Co-Conveners and the Transition Consultation Forum and its Chairs, taken forward diligently by the EMT since 1 September 2020, underpinned throughout by the dedicated work of the System Organization's Director, Programs.

The System Board supported the thoughtful process set out to develop, prioritize and sequence CGIAR Initiatives in a way that truly builds on the strength of the system – and the

¹ Prepared pursuant to Article 9.2 of the [Rules of Procedure](#) of the CGIAR System Board. Approved by electronic decision of the CGIAR System Board with effect from 9 December 2020 (Decision Ref: SB/M18/EDP2).

proposed outline designed to ensure that CGIAR's existing and potential Funders have the information they need to invest in One CGIAR.

The decisions taken were an important step in setting out a new vision for both research and innovation where 'form follows function'; we will continue to realize this as the detailed investments plans are developed and an integrated operational structure for One CGIAR is finalized. The System Board was supportive of the emphasis given to leveraging CGIAR's existing talent as a key principle of a series of Design Working Groups shortly to commence operation to further develop that integrated operational structure. Appreciation was also expressed for a set of additional change management activities identified in response to feedback from CGIAR leadership and other colleagues.

In addition to key One CGIAR deliverables, the System Board heard an update from the Chair of its Audit and Risk Committee ('ARC') on key messages on risk and assurance matters from the ARC's work over recent months, including close engagement with the CGIAR Audit Committee Chairs Community of Practice with a focus on moving towards a common committee in 2021.

The System Board also **reviewed and approved for submission to the System Council a 2021 Revised Research Financing Plan ('2021 FINPLAN') and approved accompanying guidance.** The full text of that decision and others, reflecting related issues discussed are set out in the following summary material.

As a final reflection, my thanks go to all who have played their part in the One CGIAR journey thus far. As a System Board we are both invigorated by the vision now clearly set out for CGIAR's future and dedicated to delivering on it as One CGIAR.

Sincerely
Marco Ferroni
Chair, CGIAR System Board

Meeting Summary

Decision: SB/M18/DP1: The CGIAR System Board adopted the Agenda (as set out in meeting document SB18-01, issued on 19 November 2020).

1. The Chair acknowledged declarations of interest made on the agenda and noted that the standing register is available on Diligent Boards. Participants were reminded of their obligations under CGIAR's Code of Conduct for Governance Officials² including their continued responsibility to draw any actual or potential perceived conflict to the attention of the Chair should one arise during discussions.

A. Agenda Item 2 – One CGIAR – Matters for decision

Key discussion areas

2. The System Board highlighted the value of the simple visual description of the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy as a powerful communication tool – that clearly sets out what CGIAR research and innovation will deliver.
3. The emphasis on resilience, as well as ambitious partnerships, innovative finance and transformation pathways coming together were appreciated, with it being highlighted that opportunities exist for CGIAR to be a partner in blended finance initiatives to scale up innovation.
4. It was recognized that while the 'ask' had been for a strategy out to 2030, there is a need to be explicit that much of the work will have impact beyond 2030, noting that many countries' goals, particularly around climate action, are expressed out to 2050 or 2060. Additional clarity was also proposed in the definition of the scope of the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy as being across all CGIAR's research activities.
5. There was a call to ensure that as the CGIAR Initiatives are developed, that the Performance and Results Management Framework be refined to ensure greater specificity including around quantifiable indicators, and to consider further integrating learning-based methodologies to better measure innovation as a complement to the stages and gateways approach (noting that not every research discipline is inherently suited to stage-gating).
6. The importance of reporting of results during the 2022-2024 period for CGIAR's Funders was recognized, noting that the investment plans and CGIAR initiatives would include more robust, evaluable and specific sets of results and indicators that would enable CGIAR to 'push the envelope' in terms of attribution and rigor.

² Available at <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2020/11/CGIAR-Code-of-Conduct-Gov-Officials-Approved-03.11.20.pdf>

7. The System Board supported the stage-gated approach set out for the 2022-24 Investment Plan and CGIAR Initiatives, such that a 6 month 'fast-track' process can take place to enable a partial prospectus of CGIAR Initiatives to be approved in time to commence in early 2022, parallel to a longer process for a full 2022-2024 Investment Plan.
8. Appreciation was expressed for the comprehensive approach set out and the 'top-down/bottom up' two phased nature of this to deliver at pace and also gather the required input to ensure the full 2022-2024 Investment Plan is truly demand-driven.
9. The System Board decided the following as set out below, subject to inclusion of minor submissions to aid clarity made during the session.

Formal decisions taken on One CGIAR matters

Decision SB/M18/DP2:

Pursuant to Article 8.1 kk) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the CGIAR System Board approved the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy and recommended it to the System Council for its approval.

Decision SB/M18/DP3:

Pursuant to Article 8.1 gg) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the CGIAR System Board approved the CGIAR Performance and Results Management Framework 2022-2030 and recommended it for submission to the System Council for its approval.

Decision SB/M18/DP4:

Pursuant to Article 8.1 z) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the CGIAR System Board agreed that the following materials were in a good format to take to the System Council for a strategic steer:

- i. The process to develop the 2022-24 Investment Plan and CGIAR Initiatives; and
- ii. The outline for the 2022-24 Investment Plan.

Agenda Item 3 – Finance, Risk and Assurance matters

Key discussion areas

10. Building on framing by the Director, Finance & Digital Services, the Board reflected on the 2021 Revised CGIAR Research Financing Plan and accompanying guidance, noting that the principles set out therein were designed to: i) facilitate effective and prudent use of funds in the final year of programming for the 2019-2021 CGIAR Research Portfolio; ii) ensure that previous years' carry-over was fully integrated; and iii)

accommodate revisions in early 2021 to System entity budgets to align with forthcoming decisions on an integrated operational structure.

11. Discussions also explored complexities and trade-offs related to the degree of linking (fully, partial, or de-linked) applicable to Window 1 and Window 2 investments in 2021, with the suggestion made that calls be held with several Funders to understand their intentions.
12. The benefit of the Window 1 Liquidity and Stabilization Fund ('reserves') was highlighted, namely an important tool in ensuring that all 2020 Window 1 disbursements to Lead Centers have been made at the date of this meeting, earlier than in previous years. Appreciation was expressed on behalf of Science Leaders for the commitment made for 90% funding in the 2021 FinPlan. Efforts by key Funders to deliver on commitments earlier in the year were particularly appreciated.
13. It was recommended that any call made on reserves be kept to a minimum, given their importance as seed funding for future CGIAR Investment Plans.
14. The role of the common board members to support communication with Center and CRP/Platform management based on clear guidance was highlighted, to ensure that there is clarity on where fundraising efforts and incentives should lie, particularly to ensure coordination of bilateral funding activities. It was also identified that such guidance would also be beneficial for Funders to avoid any unintentional drivers of behavior that would run contrary to such coordinated efforts, and suggested that a clear signal from the System Council of their expectations would be valuable, specifically that there will be far fewer separate bilateral proposals reviewed, with these instead forming part of future CGIAR Initiatives.
15. The decision and related action agreed by the System Board on the 2021 Revised CGIAR Research Financing Plan and accompanying guidance are set out below, subject to inclusion of clarifications requested during the session.
16. The Chair of the System Board's Audit and Risk Committee ('ARC') provided an insightful overview of key messages on risk and assurance matters from the ARC's work over recent months. The increased collaboration among CGIAR's Internal Audit Community of practice in support of coordinated internal audit planning, and that of the CGIAR Audit Committee Chairs Community of Practice were highlighted. The EMT's ownership of risk management was also recognized, noting the need to align ownership with authority for driving change, and the inherent challenges in doing so pending the move to a new operational structure. The System Board Chair expressed appreciation on behalf of the System Board for the continued diligent work of the ARC.

Formal record of decisions taken, and actions agreed

Decision SB/M18/DP5:

Pursuant to Articles 8.1 cc) and ee) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the CGIAR System Board:

- i. approved the 2021 CGIAR Research Financing Plan, and the updated implementation guidance for 2021 subject to observations from the Board session being incorporated therein; and
- ii. decided that the System Organization's power to disburse W1 & W2 funds, for which the CGIAR System Board has fiduciary responsibility, is subject to the Executive Management Team's review and endorsement of the 2021 Programs of Work and Budget of each operating entity.

Action Point SB/M18/AP1:

The Corporate Services Executives Community of Practice was requested to develop a proposed set of principles for use of W1/2 funds for co-financing, for CGIAR System Board review and approval.

B. Agenda Item 3 – One CGIAR - Taking forward institutional structure

Key discussion areas

17. The Chair recognized that System Board members had provided inputs on the draft integrated operational structure shared earlier with CGIAR leadership and other colleagues for consultation, and noted that the System Board is asked at this juncture to offer strategic guidance on the proposed change management process to guide its further development.
18. The Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems, highlighted the broad range of conversations that had taken place to develop and refine the approach, including with System Board and Center/Alliance board members, Directors General, staff, Communities of Practice, Science Leaders and Funders. Key takeaways heard from these discussions included convergence around the need for functional integration in CGIAR and the 'form follows function' approach designed around the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy.
19. Inputs on the time available for consultations and how a process of transition would take place given current contextual challenges were acknowledged, noting that these have fed into the change management approach set out, including the formation of inclusive Design Working Groups (DWG's) that draw on CGIAR's internal pool of talent and expertise and a range of staff engagement activities. System Board members highlighted the importance of these activities for building and maintaining trust across

the System. The value of clear written materials to support webinars and verbal updates was emphasized.

20. The EMT was encouraged to consider additional business model analysis to inform the detail of how the proposed structure will be operationalized. The related need for clear decisions on delegations of authority, building on work commenced by Transition Advisory Group 3, was noted.
21. In summarizing, the Chair echoed the System Board's support for the change management process set out, and emphasized the importance of an orderly transition, business continuity and financial stability supported by coordinated fundraising as key tenets of the approach.

Closed session: All System Board voting members, the System Board Secretary, and on the decision of the Chair, the Executive Management Team, participated in a closed session of the System Board pursuant to Article 9.9 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization. There was no decision taken in the closed session that has a material impact on the CGIAR System.

Appendix: List of participants

Members

Marco Ferroni	Chair and Voting member
Alice Ruhweza	Voting member
Alyssa Jade McDonald-Baertl	Voting member
Hilary Wild	Voting member
Neal Gutterson	Voting member
Patrick Caron	Voting member
Shenggen Fan	Voting member
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems Ex-officio non-voting member in capacity as Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization
Clarissa van Heerden	Ex-officio non-voting member (Independent Chair, Audit & Risk Committee of the CGIAR System Board)

Active observers pursuant to Article 7.8 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization

Claudia Sadoff	Executive Management Team Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery and Impact
Kundhavi Kadiresan	Managing Director, Global Engagement and Innovation
Stephen Potter	Canada, Representative of System Council Voting Members
Wijnand van IJssel	The Netherlands, Representative of System Council Voting Members
Michael Phillips	Research program leader from the CGIAR Portfolio
Holger Meinke	Chair, CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)

System Board Secretary

Karmen Bennett	Secretary to the CGIAR System Board, and Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
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Invited Guests pursuant to Article 7.9 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization

Allison Smith	Director CGIAR System Advisory Services Shared Secretariat
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Other Invited Guests at discretion of the Chair pursuant to Article 4.2.b) of the Rules of Procedure

Nicole Birrell	Convener of the Chairs of the Center Governing Boards/Boards of Trustees
Gareth Johnstone	Convener of the Directors General of CGIAR Centers

Important note: Pursuant to Article 7.10 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, all CGIAR System Board members and Active Observers shall act in good faith in the interests of the 'CGIAR System' (as defined to include all the Centers, Funders, the System Council, the System Organization, the advisory bodies to the System Council, and CGIAR Research – Article 2.h). Meeting participants are thus required to disclose all potential conflicts of interest in respect of the meeting agenda, in advance of the meeting, and during its occurrence if a previously unforeseen conflict of interest arises during deliberations. Meeting participants may be requested by the Chair to recuse themselves from opining on matters where the potential conflict is significant, and mitigating actions are not available.

Content experts

Jamie Craig	Director, Financial and Digital Services, CGIAR System Organization
Elise Perset	Director, Legal and Office Services, CGIAR System Organization
Sonja Vermeulen	Director, Programs, CGIAR System Organization
André Zandstra	Director, Funder and External Engagement, CGIAR System Organization
Madina Bazarova	Head, CGIAR System Internal Audit Function
Yorgos Solomos	Senior Advisor, Risk Management, CGIAR System Organization
Roland Sundstrom	Senior Advisor, Executive Director's Office, CGIAR System Organization
Wijnand de Wit (Agenda Item 4 only)	Operational Program Director, Transition Program Management Unit

Operational support

Olwen Cussen	Board and Council Relations Officer, CGIAR System Organization
Thomas Marius Müller	Meetings & Events Coordinator, CGIAR System Organization