One CGIAR Advice: A conversation on learning, accountability and evidence-based planning and programming

Side Event Overview

CGIAR Advisory Services (CAS) seizes the opportunity of the 11th meeting of System Council, on the eve of rolling out the One CGIAR research and innovation portfolio, to engage with System Council members and to ensure that CAS meets their needs.

The aim of this side event is to demonstrate how CAS adds value by generating, gathering and providing methodological guidance on evidence, and discuss how such evidence feeds into advice that boosts CGIAR management and governance decisions.

Join us for 'rapid fire' presentations on some current CAS work and a moderated conversation that will include System Council members and external advisors for a 75-minute, interactive discussion. *Participants are encouraged to send questions in advance in the registration platform to address during the moderated discussion.*

December 2020

1 Rationale

One CGIAR requires timely advice based on strong evidence. The impact emphasis articulated in the One CGIAR Research and Innovation Strategy underscores the need for a deep understanding of how Impact Areas are being pursued, and how to measure and assess contribution to impact. Meanwhile, 2020 Evaluative Reviews of CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) are coming on-line and offer not only an accountability mechanism to funders for CRPs winding down in 2021, but have brought to the surface well-substantiated recommendations to support future learning.

The 2019 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of CGIAR flagged evidence-based planning and programming as an area for improvement. Key areas to strengthen relate to feedback loops between evaluative work and program design: How are lessons from past interventions considered in the design of new interventions? Which feedback loops exist to feed lessons into new intervention design?

CAS needs to better understand System Council's present needs, including how different groups in System Council would like to use evidence and advice from CAS. Such knowledge will inform our priorities, plans and ways of working. Therefore, in keeping with the exciting developments towards a One CGIAR portfolio, CAS is convening a side event to present a snapshot of current work and to spur discussion.

2 Purpose

The purpose is to spur a discussion among the System Council funders and partners and external advisory bodies about how CAS evidence generation/gathering and independent advice activities will best support planning and programming, accountability and learning, and deepen understanding of CGIAR impact.

3 Convener

CAS comprises three independent advisory functions: Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC), Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), and Evaluation Function. CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat (CAS Secretariat) facilitates and supports these advisory functions. CAS provides external, impartial, evidence-based and expert advice on strategy and positioning, evaluation, and impact assessment. CAS activities gather and generate evidence for decision making at all levels of the System, through evaluation and impact assessment activity.

4 Format and Agenda

The session will provide an overview of selected outputs generated by CAS functions in support of evidence-based planning and programming, understanding impact and framing in the new research portfolio. The side event will consist of a moderated roundtable designed to discuss System Council needs and inputs of the external advisory services on evidence-based planning and programming.

The session will start with a series of short 'rapid fire' presentations to set the stage, followed by any questions and remarks to inform the roundtable discussion. **A 75-minute session from 0630-0745 EST on 15 December is foreseen, with agenda covering:**

- **Setting the Stage** CAS rapid-fire presentations
  Evaluative reviews of 12 CGIAR Research Programs • Learning and accountability through rigorous methods to generate credible and relevant evidence of impacts • Dynamic advising around One CGIAR portfolio using quality framework and evaluative evidence
- **Overview of participant questions and remarks**
- **Moderated roundtable**
  Bringing rigorous evidence to independent advice for the System Council
- **Summary and close**
  Output: high-level summary report to all participants