

Chair's Summary¹

21st CGIAR System Board Meeting 18 October 2021; Virtual

Colleagues,

There has been tremendous progress since the Board last formally met in May 2021 and approved the CGIAR Investment Prospectus 2022-2024 and concepts for its Initiatives to be taken forward for development. In summarizing that meeting, I emphasized that it was incumbent on us all to keep looking forward and truly deliver on the operational reality to ensure that the potential of One CGIAR can be realized.

In the opening portion of the Board's 21st meeting we heard highlights from the in-depth work that has taken place since that time to precisely do that, notably:

- **Proposals for an initial set of 19 CGIAR Initiatives delivered by 30 September** – currently undergoing external review facilitated by CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council – with the final complement of Initiative proposals to be submitted by 30 November;
- **The exciting and increased presence and visibility of One CGIAR on global platforms**, including an event taking place at the 2021 World Food Prize celebrating 50 years of CGIAR's achievements and looking ahead to what the 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus promises to deliver;
- **A first 'One CGIAR Leadership Retreat'** concluded just prior to this Board meeting – impossible earlier in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and providing a timely opportunity of the One CGIAR leadership group to gather and reflect deeply on the challenges and opportunities ahead; and
- **Teams focusing on the more enduring and complex tasks required to deliver the operational reality** that our exciting new Investment Prospectus requires.

On the latter point, the Board expressed deep appreciation for the work of CGIAR's legal colleagues, and their engagement in many briefings and bilateral discussions to take forward **Implementing Arrangement #1 ('IA#1') – a template for integration of CGIAR's people under One CGIAR** so that CGIAR can deliver on a greater scale and to a greater extent than would have been possible by individual Centers acting alone. IA#1 represents an unprecedented step in international organizations, and thus a symbol of the reconfiguration of CGIAR as an organization that can be responsive to the challenges of the 21st century.

As a critical enabler of transforming how CGIAR operates **the Board approved Implementing Arrangement #1 as a CGIAR Policy**, recognizing that as deliberations take place among Center and Alliance Boards to adopt it as part of their internal legal framework, non-substantive

¹ Prepared pursuant to Article 9.2 of the [Rules of Procedure](#) of the CGIAR System Board.

adjustments may occur, provided that these do not alter the fundamental underlying legal basis.

As a Board, we also welcomed an opportunity to interact with several of the **One CGIAR Regional Directors**. We heard their initial reflections on key priorities as they work together to shape a more visible CGIAR presence, that works as a stronger and more collaborative partner in the regions and countries in which we operate. They also articulated the key role they will play in ensuring that CGIAR's research and innovation is aligned to national priorities and responsive to local needs and by elevating CGIAR's voice in regional and national platforms and processes. It was the first discussion in what will be an important area of focus as we embed One CGIAR and our relationships with host countries and networks of partners.

The meeting also provided an important **consultation step with CGIAR's Advisory Services Shared Secretariat on priorities for a multi-year workplan for the evaluation workstream** over the coming business cycle, and development of a **refreshed CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Policy** that aligns to One CGIAR systems and structures, stakeholders' needs and evolving best practice.

Our final area of deliberations was on the critical topic of **Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization for One CGIAR**, where the Board had a comprehensive discussion on the funding outlook for 2021 and 2022 as well as the medium- and longer-term strategies and ongoing activities to reach CGIAR's target of \$2bn. **We were reassured by the strong basis the One CGIAR team is building on in 2021 and 2022** – and excited by the opportunities identified to further explore innovative financing and diversify our funding sources. The discussion highlighted the time sensitive need to move to the integrated One CGIAR institutional structure to bring CGIAR's talent to bear on making the target a reality.

The following pages record the formal decisions taken by the Board, actions agreed and summary points from our conversations.

Colleagues, as a Board we are committed to ensuring that the issues considered the most delicate or challenging are concluded, to make One CGIAR the success we all want and the world needs. We look forward to our next meeting – a key decision-making moment on CGIAR's programs and funding from 2022 – and restate our commitment to delivering on the promise of One CGIAR.

Sincerely
Marco Ferroni
Chair, CGIAR System Board

Meeting Summary

1. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting. A quorum was present.
2. **Decision: SB/M21/DP1:** The System Board adopted the Agenda (as set out in meeting document SB21-01, issued on 11 October 2021).
3. The Chair referred to the 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 – Empowering the One CGIAR Integrated Operational Structure – Implementing Arrangement #1

Key discussion areas

4. The System Board heard framing from the EMT Convener on the context in which a decision is requested to approve Implementing Arrangement #1 ('IA#1') as a key tool to make CGIAR's operating structure a reality, highlighting the increased presence and visibility of One CGIAR on the global stage, not least at the 2021 World Food Prize events taking place during the week of this meeting. The recent One CGIAR leadership retreat was characterized as a highly positive moment that had enabled the senior team to build trust and align around the vision beyond what had been possible in a solely virtual environment. The fundamental need for IA#1 was emphasized so that work already started to bring together CGIAR's people and operations can be properly authorized and empowered.
5. In discussions that followed, System Board members expressed strong support for the proposed IA#1, with additional reflections including:
 - a. Appreciation for the collaborative nature of what is proposed – emphasizing the encouraging engagement observed among CGIAR's staff and management to operate in an integrated way in practice;
 - b. That IA#1 is critically important in that it makes operating as One CGIAR real – moving it into a situation where the principles spoken about since the SRG recommendations were being developed become reality;
 - c. Highlighting the strong signal that IA#1 sends for all other aspects of the SRG recommendations, as an essential underlying piece of them. Clear communication of what IA#1 is, and what it is not, is essential for building trust and confidence in how One CGIAR will operate;
 - d. A suggestion to complement IA#1 as a legal instrument with a supportive and positive document for all One CGIAR personnel that clearly communicates its principles and aims;

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

- e. The importance of rigorous monitoring and review going forward, with a suggestion made that the System Board review the operation of IA#1 after one year to ensure that it is operating effectively in practice and that any potential redundancy can be addressed;
 - f. A question raised on planning regarding further implementing arrangements to enable the functioning of the integrated operational structure;
 - g. That where the version of IA#1 under consideration has evolved in response to feedback, it will be important to understand any potential risks arising from changes made to effectively monitor its operation in practice; and
 - h. The importance of carefully considering conflicts of interest considerations around the composition of the proposed panel to resolve any question of application or interpretation arising from IA#1.
6. The Managing Director, Institutional Strategy & Systems echoed the EMT Convener's comments on the value of the One CGIAR Leadership retreat in building trust and social capital – and noted that the consultative approach will be supported and clearly signaled by One CGIAR leaders in their capacities as Directors General being co-signatories on relevant communications on IA#1.
 7. The EMT Convener reflected on the question raised on potential risks arising from the IA#1 revised drafting, including whether compromises were felt to have been made. It was noted that good faith efforts had been made to ensure that there was greater comfort across CGIAR in order that the final version would serve to strengthen trust, and acknowledged that vigilance will be required to ensure that later decisions align with the original intent to empower an integrated structure.
 8. It was noted that oversight of the management of risks arising across CGIAR, including how these are escalated, is part of the role of the common CGIAR Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. It was proposed that documenting identified risk indicators and success criteria would be important to support the Board's oversight of IA#1 implementation.

Session outcomes

9. **Decision: SB/M21/DP2:** The System Board:
 - Strongly supported the 17 October 2021 version of One CGIAR Implementing Arrangement #1 ('IA#1');
 - Noted that IA#1 will be discussed at the forthcoming Q4 2021 Center/Alliance Board meetings, and recognizes that there may be non-substantive adjustments as a result of these discussions;
 - Approved Implementing Arrangement #1 as a CGIAR Policy with effect from 31 October 2021, pursuant to Article 8.1 p) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, provided that any adjustments do not fundamentally alter the legal basis of IA#1; and

- Requested that the final version be notified to the Board and form the final record of System Board deliberations³.
10. **Agreed action: SB/M21/AP1**: The Board requested that success criteria and associated risk indicators for the operation of Implementing Arrangement #1 be developed and shared in early 2022.

B. Agenda Item 3 – Empowering the One CGIAR Integrated Operational Structure – Regions and Countries

Key discussion areas

11. The Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation introduced four of One CGIAR's Regional Directors⁴, highlighting the pivotal role they will play in shaping the value proposition of One CGIAR by engaging in national and regional dialogues in countries, debating policies and bringing together regional and national partners and the regional research communities. It was noted that the 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy places great emphasis on scaling up and bringing about greater innovation for impact within partnership and in collaboration with actors 'on the ground'- and the unique positioning of the Regional Directors to deliver this in collaboration with the Global Science Directors.
12. It was noted that the remaining two Regional Director appointments (for Latin America and for South Asia) are expected to be announced imminently and that next steps will include focus on strategies and more in-depth plans for each region.
13. The Regional Directors shared reflections on their vision for their respective regions. Highlights of those thoughts included:
- a. A shared goal to bring alignment between CGIAR's research and innovations with demand from the countries and regions – including leveraging the necessary resources, both human and financial, at region and country levels for effective and efficient delivery;
 - b. The work already undertaken to support Initiative Design Teams to embed regional and countries' perspectives into the design process for CGIAR Initiatives including through organization of country consultations, and high-level regional consultation meetings involving key sub-regional research organizations;
 - c. The potential for the regional integrated Initiatives as a precursor to leverage additional solutions from other Initiatives in CGIAR's portfolio;
 - d. Emphasis on building on the strong existing regional relationships with Centers/Alliances to enhance the offer presented by One CGIAR as a whole and establish CGIAR's comparative advantage;

³ Once Center/Alliance decision-making is concluded, the final version of Implementing Arrangement #1 will be annexed to this summary as part of the formal record of the meeting.

⁴ Aly Abousabaa, Regional Director, Central and West Asia and North Africa; Harold Roy-Macauley, Regional Director, East and Southern Africa; Jean Balié, Regional Director, South East Asia and Pacific; and Nteranya Sanginga, Regional Director, West and Central Africa.

- e. Excitement about presenting a One CGIAR value proposition going beyond CGIAR's traditional partnerships to also incorporate new dimensions and renew our commitment to an ambitious relationship moving forward - with CGIAR as the preferred partner of country governments and a trusted advisor on policy and on the transformation required in food, land and water systems;
 - f. An example provided of work to establish a regional hub that can leverage the rich and diverse legacy of CGIAR Centers/Alliances – including development of a region and country strategy program that builds a common research agenda with countries while leveraging the potential of regional economic organizations; and
 - g. The importance of moving 'beyond research' to focus on impact through effective resource mobilization, scaling-up, advocacy.
14. In discussions that followed, System Board members provided comments and questions, including:
- a. Congratulations and deep appreciation expressed to the Regional Directors, acknowledging the high-level of interest from the Board in understanding how the 'first 100 days' are planned. The 'ambassadorial' nature of the Regional Director role was stressed, with emphasis on the need to ensure buy-in from governments and instill confidence in One CGIAR through clearly communicating the value that One CGIAR can bring – with a request made to see a plan and key priorities;
 - b. The need for Regional Directors to be quickly and appropriately empowered to deliver their roles, in close collaboration with the Global Science Directors. Emphasis was placed on the importance of setting out clear accountabilities and responsibilities to ensure that there are not unintended gaps. It was highlighted that specific instruments, mechanisms and tools to articulate the global effort in research with regional priority-setting and engagement would be required for the Board and all One CGIAR Leadership;
 - c. That setting out the business model for each region both in terms of science and operational support developed in collaboration with the Global Directors from Institutional Strategy and Systems would be important;
 - d. Appreciation for the starting point articulated as what action will be required in each region to deliver impact in countries – and the prioritization that will be required to ensure that those activities with the highest rate of return, including potentially reducing the number of countries worked in, should be considered;
 - e. The important 'conduit role' of the Regional Directors between the global dialogue and events on the ground was noted – as well as the 'champion role' to clearly bring out where the value of One CGIAR can be demonstrated in regions and countries;
 - f. A suggestion made to clearly identify those things that can best and most efficiently be done on a regional basis, and what is best done nationally or globally;
 - g. Support for work undertaken to benchmark partner databases from Initiative Design Teams, and a request that this continue to ensure that the pipeline is filled from existing value in CGIAR. A suggestion was made to track relationships with partners to be able to focus support including from the Board where most effective;

- h. A question raised regarding KPIs and how these could be established, in particular in areas where they might conflict in concept and need prioritization (noting that there would likely be variation in these by region);
 - i. How quality control of partnership engagements – and conflict resolution (including among competing priorities) – would be managed, with a call for a proposal on this; and
 - j. How existing Funders' regional networks might be leveraged, noting appetite expressed by some Funders for increased engagement with regional groups.
15. The following reflections from the Funder community were shared by one of the Funder representatives, including:
- a. That the work in regions and countries is of great interest to CGIAR's Funders, with the Regional Directors' role seen as addressing a perceived weakness in the previous CGIAR Research Program ('CRP') model by establishing a clear link between CGIAR's work and national and regional policy frameworks, demand articulation and priority setting;
 - b. That there is strong appetite to see integration of CGIAR capacities in regional programs including how these could be part-funded through thematic programs focusing on regional priorities; and
 - c. Support for an earlier reflection on prioritization among countries where CGIAR's work is focused, particularly in relation to the research agenda, differently from the policy or advocacy agenda.

Session outcome

16. The Chair emphasized the Board's strong support for the role and priorities of One CGIAR's Regional Directors, noting appetite for future discussion on the aspects raised, including deeper exploration of approaches by region.

C. [Agenda Item 4 – Evaluation in One CGIAR](#)

Key discussion areas

17. The Director, Advisory Services Shared Secretariat presented highlights of two items in development on which the System Board's inputs were sought as part of a formal consultation process: i) proposed revisions to CGIAR's Evaluation Policy; and ii) an evaluation multi-year workplan for 2022-2024. It was noted that:
- a. Work on the policy has been informed by the 2019 MOPAN independent assessment of CGIAR and CGIAR's organizational response, as well as the 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy and Performance and Results Management Framework to ensure that evaluation planning aligns well with these to drive efficiency;
 - b. A One CGIAR Evaluation Policy would be developed in line with CGIAR's overall assurance framework including development of related policies and standards;

- c. The policy will focus on supporting enhanced learning and be aligned to updated OECD DAC criteria⁵ including on coherence – as well as cross-referenced with the ISDC's Quality of Research for Development Framework⁶;
 - d. That development of the draft workplan has involved consultation with the EMT, Global Science Directors, the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring & Evaluation Committee ('SIMEC') and the Monitoring and Evaluation community within CGIAR. To aid finalization of the multi-year workplan, the Board's inputs were requested on its needs from external evaluation and whether there are any areas where additional assurance from evaluative work would be of most use.
18. In discussions that followed, the following observations and inputs were provided:
- a. That a clearer understanding of the interface between monitoring and evaluation work as part of program delivery and external evaluation work would be helpful to inform inputs;
 - b. The value of reviews such as MOPAN for decision-making in the Funder community, and thus the importance of demonstrating how its findings have been taken forward;
 - c. The benefit of integrating external evaluative services into the overall assurance map and delivery plans for CGIAR, appreciating that a One CGIAR internal control and governance framework will be forthcoming, and recognizing that internal audit arrangements in CGIAR as a key provider of assurance are currently undergoing review and adjustment to align with the One CGIAR operational structure.
19. The Director, Programs, shared an overview of the Performance and Results Management Framework and how this has influenced the design of key related elements of the portfolio including Monitoring and Evaluation, impact assessment and measurement of theories of change. The Director, Advisory Services Shared Secretariat echoed appreciation for the continued collaboration as this has been put in place and will move into implementation from 2022.

Session outcome

20. Summarizing, the Chair expressed appreciation for the reflection and collaboration undertaken to articulate the proposed priorities for a One CGIAR Evaluation Policy and evaluation multi-year workplan for 2022-2024, and inputs provided to finalize these.

D. Agenda Item 5 – Innovative Finance, Resource Mobilization, Stability & Growth Prospects for One CGIAR

Key discussion areas

21. The Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation framed the session, highlighting the importance of a strengthened funding position to ensure a fully funded

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

⁶ <https://cas.cgiar.org/isdc/QoR4D>

2022-2024 research agenda, and provide confidence to underpin the move to the early state operating model for a truly integrated One CGIAR operational structure. It was noted that the anticipated 'steady-state' in 2022 permits space to focus on medium- to longer-term strategies for funding expansion including diversified, creative, and risk-taking approaches.

22. The Board congratulated the newly appointed Global Director⁷, Innovative Finance & Resource Mobilization ('IFRM'), who shared reflections on the overall enterprise approach to resource mobilization, highlighting:
- a. The sustainable approach being taken to fundraising, to provide long-term results and returns on investments made;
 - b. That the approach takes into consideration the One CGIAR integrated operational structure, how reporting is organized and how targets and activities are set, focusing on a coordinated rather than centralized approach with clear responsibilities and accountabilities for delivering on specific elements of the [CGIAR Resource Mobilization, Communications and Advocacy Strategy](#);
 - c. That tools to support the approach are continuing to be developed, including a grants database permitting analysis of all funding committed to CGIAR, and One CGIAR pipeline which can be analyzed by region, action area, impact area and year;
 - d. That a series of transition teams are supporting the move from current operations to a One CGIAR integrated approach including teams working on advancing new impact areas and diversification strategies, project origination and decision flows on coordination of resource mobilization efforts and on consistency in process around pipeline information. A culture of innovation across CGIAR was emphasized as a key enabler of this work;
 - e. The changing nature of the \$2 billion target as One CGIAR, noting that should the Board decide to focus on reaching it by 2025 (rather than 2030) this will require an unprecedented level of growth in CGIAR consistently for 5 years and thus appropriate resources and clear accountabilities in place to deliver it;
 - f. The important moment of COP26 at which several Funders are preparing to announce commitments and pledges to CGIAR; and
 - g. That the greatest risk remains not delivering on the transition to One CGIAR, and that moving swiftly to put in place key capacity in the integrated operational structure is essential to delivering on that commitment.
23. In discussions that followed, the Board shared reflections and questions included:
- a. Whether there had been a perceived improvement in information sharing and transparency across CGIAR relating to fundraising, with it being noted in response that this was improving and that a more marked shift is expected as roles and responsibilities in One CGIAR are aligned to the integrated operational structure;
 - b. Whether any additional funding support towards transition to One CGIAR was anticipated. It was advised that initial funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation had been augmented by support from Belgium, Norway, Sweden and

⁷ [André Zandstra](#)

the United Kingdom. It was further noted that an additional tranche of support is in the process of being finalized subject to matching from other Funders.

- c. On resourcing, whether mapping of existing skills in IFRM across CGIAR has taken place and whether any external specialist support or mentoring would be of value;
- d. Acknowledgement of the challenge presented by aiming to reach \$2bn by 2025 and the need to ensure that if this target is retained, serious consideration will need to be given to enablers required to ensure it is a realistic target;
- e. Whether in the medium- and longer-term CGIAR could create additional value through sale of products or services on the market;
- f. An ask that preparation for the Q4 2021 Center/Alliance Board meetings include specific guidance on IFRM matters relevant to each entity to support the respective Boards' conversations;
- g. That clear and nuanced communication with Center/Alliance Boards and management on the anticipated funding stability in 2022 will be important to ensure that expectations are clear, noting that the projected funding position continues to evolve; and
- h. That as diversified funding sources are explored, it will be important to ensure that appropriate due diligence is undertaken to avoid adverse reputational risk. It was noted that the Board stands ready to support any decision to not work with a prospective Funder should they not align with CGIAR's values and goals, particularly around ethics, environmental concerns, conflict, or sanctions risks.

Session outcome

24. **Agreed action: SB/M21/AP2:** The Chair expressed appreciation for the rich discussion on IFRM and proposed that a concise written response to points raised be prepared and shared with the Board to ensure that points can be explored in more depth.

E. Closed Session – Agenda items 7 and 8

25. All System Board voting members, and on the decision of the Chair pursuant to Article 9.9 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the Executive Management Team and the System Board Secretary participated in a closed (executive) session of the System Board.
26. The Board took note of an initial KPI framework for the Executive Management Team and agreed to take that work forward with the support of a sub-group of the Board.
27. No decisions were taken in the closed session that have a material impact on the CGIAR System.
28. The Chair thanked Board members and closed the meeting.

Appendix: List of participants

Members

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

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
Renee Lafitte	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Representative of System Council Voting Members
Wijnand van Ijssel	The Netherlands, Representative of System Council Voting Members
Holger Meinke	Chair, CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council
Frank Place	Research program leader from the CGIAR Portfolio

System Board Secretary

Karmen Bennett	Global Director, Governance & Assurance (a.i.)
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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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Invited Guests – Agenda Item 3

Aly Abousabaa	Regional Director, Central and West Asia and North Africa
Harold Roy-Macauley	Regional Director, East and Southern Africa
Jean Balié	Regional Director, South East Asia and Pacific
Nteranya Sanginga	Regional Director, West and Central Africa

Other invited guests/Content providers

André Zandstra	Global Director, Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization
Marion Barriskell	Global Director, Business Operations and Finance
Elise Perset	System Organization General Counsel & Director, Legal and Office Services
Sonja Vermeulen	Director, Programs, CGIAR System Organization
Christine Larson-Luhila	Deputy Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization (Agenda Item 2)
Roland Sundstrom	Senior Advisor, Executive Director's Office, CGIAR System Organization
Peter Quayle	Legal consultant (Agenda item 2)
Andrea Stumpf	Legal consultant (Agenda item 5)

Operational support

Olwen Cussen	Board and Council Relations Officer, CGIAR System Organization
Victoria Pezzi	Meetings & Events Coordinator, CGIAR System Organization