

Chair's Summary¹
23rd CGIAR System Board Meeting
21 February 2022; Virtual

Colleagues,

Our 23rd meeting commenced with a moment of remembrance for Dr. Barbara Wells. Her passing is a colossal loss and leaves a void not only on a personal level for her family, friends, and colleagues – but also in her able leadership as CGIAR's Global Director, Genetic Innovation, and Director General of CGIAR's International Potato Center. Barbara believed strongly in what we – as One CGIAR – can achieve and worked tirelessly to make this happen. We honor her legacy by taking the transition of CGIAR forward the better to achieve the impacts on lives and livelihoods she cared deeply about.

The substantive business item of our agenda was continuing the Board's efforts to ensure the 2022-2024 Investment Portfolio is comprised of a high-quality, coherent set of Initiatives. At the outset of our deliberations on the second group of Initiatives before us, we received a presentation on the new portfolio as a whole. This demonstrated that CGIAR now has access to information to analyze and present data in a way that has not previously been possible and revealed a rich portfolio that is beginning to speak to our mission in a unique and integrated way. We recognized that this second set of Initiatives covers newer areas of focus for CGIAR. Whilst this set will require additional refinement as interdisciplinary teams are built to take forward the work, it presents exciting areas of research with considerable room for learning and adaptation.

Informed by advice from CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council ('ISDC'), valuable perspectives were shared during the Board's discussions on how management can take forward areas of clarification and strengthening identified during the 6-month 'inception phase' of the Initiatives, particularly as these relate to the role and positioning of the Regional Integrated Initiatives in the broader context of the 2022-2024 Portfolio, the role of partnerships, including in addressing identified internal CGIAR skills gaps, and specific needs relating to social scientists.

The Board's decision was to approve the set of 12 CGIAR Initiatives and to recommend them to the System Council for funding. In taking our decision we obtained assurance from the ISDC that this is a solid portfolio, and that areas for strengthening are highlighted in the spirit of continuous improvement and learning, which as a science and innovation organization we constantly seek. Once again, the ISDC undertook a significant volume of high-quality work in a constrained timeframe, and the Board is deeply grateful for their thoughtful and insightful analysis.

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

As the stewards of the transition process to realize One CGIAR we agreed to take the transition agenda item in closed session to facilitate a bold, open conversation on progress to date, and where we as the Board, and as Board members of all One CGIAR Boards, may need to focus and pivot. Whilst the Board will retain the confidentiality of those closed session conversations under the provisions of the Charter of the System Organization, the following summary confirms the formal decision taken during that session to purposefully move forward with evolving the executive management structure for One CGIAR, to adjust for the future to ensure our global science is appropriately connected with our local and regional partnerships.

The Board also welcomed Khuloud Odeh. Ph.D., and CGIAR's Global Director Digital Services, in her new additional capacity as interim Executive Director of the CGIAR System Organization. We used this opportunity to take a related decision to approve a revised System Board Delegations of Authority Policy to the Executive Director (a.i.) that aligns with the integrated operational structure approach of One CGIAR.

Colleagues, at the conclusion of the Board's 22nd meeting in late-November 2021, I reflected that we cannot successfully implement a transition to an integrated operational structure without truly unified governance. That remains an urgent area of focus, as does standing up the integrated operational structure approved early last year and ensuring that all sources of CGIAR's funding work towards a common goal. Our research and innovation prospect is an exciting one – and we must collectively do all in our power to deliver on the integrated structure, unified governance and aligned funding to make it a reality.

Sincerely
Dr. Marco Ferroni
Chair, CGIAR System Board

Meeting Summary

A. Agenda Item 1 – Opening and Agenda

1. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting. A quorum was present.
2. **Decision: SB/M23/DP1**: The System Board adopted the agenda (as set out in meeting document SB23-01, Revision 1, issued on 18 February 2022).
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.

B. Agenda Item 2 – Science and Research Matters

Agreeing final recommendation on second batch of 12 CGIAR Initiative proposals to the System Council taking into consideration advice received from the ISDC and reflecting on learnings from advice to date

Key discussion areas

4. The System Board heard framing remarks from the EMT Convener, who provided an overview of available portfolio analytics³ by geography, by partner network, by each of the SDGs mapped to the core CGIAR Results Framework, of core innovations and innovation packages and scaling readiness, and of interactions among the Initiatives which highlight how innovation packages are being co-delivered by several Initiatives.
5. It was recalled that following enquiries from Board members during SB22 about private sector partners, the dashboard had been updated to differentiate these types of partners in the analytics to provide greater visibility in this area and enable the team to dig deeper into these to ensure they are being effectively leveraged.
6. It was highlighted that the insights from the data will be invaluable during the 6-month inception phase of the Initiatives to nuance and refine the Initiatives in order to have the range of impacts hoped for. It was noted that revised documents, to update and replace the Initiatives proposals, will be prepared during the inception phase, building on the strengthening undertaken in response to the ISDC's advice.

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

³ Dashboards available in the CGIAR P&R KNOWLEDGE HUB Inception Phase, at <https://sites.google.com/cgexchange.org/performance/home>

7. The ISDC Chair introduced the reports on the ISDC's review of the second set of 12 Initiatives and provided an overview of the moderated external review process, and summary information on scoring against the 17 review criteria. His presentation emphasized that, while the ISDC's advice rightly focused on areas to strengthen to deliver the strongest possible research going forward, these suggestions did not detract from the overall high quality of the proposals.
8. The System Board Chair expressed appreciation for the thoughtful and constructive work of the ISDC and the reviewers, particularly under tight time constraints.
9. Martin Kropff and Jo Swinnen, Global Science Directors for Resilient Agrifood Systems and Systems Transformation respectively, shared reflections on the ISDC's reviews of Initiative proposals from these two action areas as well as the Regional Integrated Initiatives under consideration at this meeting, which included:
 - a. Appreciate for the careful and constructively critical ISDC feedback;
 - b. Recognition that the proposals in this second set do not build on the same long history of research programs within CGIAR as was the case for the initial set of 19;
 - c. That requests from Funders to merge some Initiatives had been carefully considered, with a decision taken to focus instead on ensuring that they are strongly linked at different levels;
 - d. That the Regional Integrated Initiatives focus on preparing for scaling and capacity strengthening rather than 'pure' research – working closely with Initiative Design Teams ('IDT's), Regional Directors and country conveners to ensure that they are truly integrating and linked to demand; and
 - e. In response to feedback on budget information provided, confirmation that more detailed budgets have now been submitted to the Global Director, Business Operations.
10. The System Board's discussions that followed focused on the following themes and key points:
 - a. Appreciation for the transparency and quality of the ISDC reviews to facilitate the Board's deliberations and decision-making as well as in providing quality advice to the System Council;
 - b. What might be required to address the feedback on gaps in social science capacity, including whether there are opportunities to explore around expertise and capacity being drawn from partnerships in some areas where the required skills do not exist in-house. Board members encouraged management to explore in more depth precisely what types and diversity of social scientists are needed to address specific research questions;
 - c. Whether feedback on perceived weaknesses in the Regional Integrated Initiatives might stem from differing views on that is expected of them and that a clearly expressed statement on this would be beneficial;
 - d. Encouragement to think beyond the three-year time frame of Initiatives to ensure that overall ambition in terms of expected impacts can be planned for in the longer-term;

- e. That there is space to enhance contribution to SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through strengthening to partnership and capacity building strategy approach across the portfolio. A question was raised on private sector partnerships, specifically whether the predominance of national or subnational partners had been by design, and whether consideration had been given to the assets and channels to market that multinational private sector partners could potentially provide;
- f. A reflection that the Regional Integrated Initiatives and the approach on partnerships are perhaps two areas where CGIAR is undertaking the greatest change in how it works to deliver impact, and thus continued focus on these would be beneficial to ensure there is clarity on the approach;
- g. A suggestion that the Board revisit important conceptual or philosophical questions raised from discussions, including in areas where different ideologies exist around key scientific themes. Support was expressed for CGIAR – as a science organization – to research different ideologies and allow multiple world views to co-exist and be informed by the science;
- h. A suggestion that ISDC reflect on what it has learned from the proposal development, submission, and review process to inform future improvements; and
- i. Appreciation for the receptivity to insights and feedback from the ISDC by management, which provides comfort that the proposals can be recommended, recognizing the strengthening work to be undertaken.

Session outcome

11. **Decision: SB/M23/DP2:** Pursuant to Article 8.1 aa) of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the System Board **approved** the proposals for a set of 12 CGIAR Initiatives and the indicative funding amounts set out therein and **recommended** these to the CGIAR System Council for approval.

C. Agenda Item 3 – Other Business

Key discussion areas

12. The Board Secretary introduced the revised System Board Delegations of Authority Policy, as set out in meeting document SB23-03, highlighting that the amendments are proposed to ensure full alignment with the Board's decision (effective 11 February 2022) to appoint an interim Executive Director, specifically that the interim Executive Director can delegate authorities outside of the System Organization (to be aligned to operating as One CGIAR). It was noted that the opportunity had been taken to concurrently make several nomenclature changes and permit the Executive Director to approve conforming nomenclature changes under One CGIAR in other internal Policy documents.
13. The Global Director, Digital Services and interim Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization, expressed appreciation for the Board's confidence and support, noting

that taking up the 'dual-hatted' role represents an opportunity to model that approach as part of the One CGIAR vision.

Session outcome

14. **Decision: SB/M23/DP3:** The System Board **approved** the revised System Board Delegations of Authority Policy with effect from 21 February 2022.
15. The Chair thanked Board members and closed the open portion of the meeting.

D. Closed Session - Transition Matters

Transition matters

16. All System Board 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, the System Board Secretary and relevant staff specific to the topic participated in a closed (executive) session of the System Board.
17. There were no decisions taken in this session that have a material impact on the CGIAR System, as would need to be published pursuant to Article 9.9 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization.

Other matters

18. The Board met in closed session, in which all voting members were present. In consultation with members, the Chair determined that ex-officio non-voting members would not be present, and nor would any Active Observers be present. At request of the Chair, the Board Secretary was invited to the session.
19. The following decision is presented as the outcome of this session pursuant to Article 9.9 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization:

Decision: SB/M23/DP4: The CGIAR System Board has **determined** that the apex management structure for CGIAR as One CGIAR will evolve from being a three-person Executive Management Team. The System Board is continuing to explore options for CGIAR's apex management structure, and its decision will be communicated by 30 June 2022.

Appendix: List of participants

Members

Voting members	
Marco Ferroni (Chair)	Lindiwe Majele 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, Finance, and Risk Committee
Khuloud Odeh	Global Director, Digital Services – participating in the capacity as interim 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
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems
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

System Board Secretary

Karmen Bennett	Secretary to the CGIAR System Board, and Global Director, Governance and Corporate Affairs (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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Other Invited guests/Content providers

All agenda items	
Elise Perset	System Organization, Director, Legal and Office Services
Christine Larson-Luhila	Deputy Director, Board and Council Relations
Roland Sundstrom	Senior Advisor, EMT Office
Agenda Item 2 only	
Martin Kropff	Global Director, Resilient Agri-Food Systems
Johan Swinnen	Global Director, Systems Transformation
Sonja Vermeulen	Director, Programs
Agenda Item 4 only	
Yorgos Solomos	Senior Advisor, Risk Management
Aly-Khan Jamal	Lead Program Director, Transition Program Management Unit

Operational support

Olwen Cussen	Board and Council Relations Officer
Victoria Pezzi	Meetings & Events Coordinator