



CGIAR EVALUATION POLICY

Pre-Final Draft

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Key Related Documents

- CGIAR Evaluation Framework 2022
- CGIAR Evaluation Guidelines

Key Abbreviations

AR4D	Agricultural Research for Development
CAS	CGIAR Advisory Services
ISDC	Independent Science for Development Council
MEL/IA	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning/Impact Assessment
MYEP	Multi-Year Evaluation Workplan
SRF	Strategy and Results Framework
PRMF	Performance and Results Management Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
QoS	Quality of Science
QoR4D	Quality of Research for Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPIA	Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

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1 Introduction

CGIAR¹ is implementing its [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#) (CGIAR Strategy). The CGIAR Strategy is operationalized through investment [prospectuses](#) and measured in accordance with the [Performance and Results Management Framework 2022–2030](#) (PRMF). The CGIAR Strategy, which closely aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), calls for CGIAR to transform the way it delivers research and innovation. This transformation includes adaptation to rapidly changing situations, by enacting a timely and effective adaptive management approach which includes a culture of reflection, continuous improvement, and problem-solving. Evaluation plays a key role in generating evidence about what works and what does not in different contexts, and in identifying lessons for CGIAR stakeholders. The CGIAR Evaluation Policy positions CGIAR's evaluation practice within both CGIAR Evaluation Framework and internal governance and management frameworks, as well as relevant global frameworks and international industry standards.

The purpose of the CGIAR Evaluation Policy (the Policy) is to update or establish:

- The collective aim of a CGIAR-wide evaluation practice.
- Responsibilities related to evaluation, showcasing linkages with other assurance functions.
- The criteria by which CGIAR is evaluated, aligned with standards and principles that define a global approach.
- Complementarity between evaluation and PRMF, including the need for systems to respond to, and monitor implementation of, evaluation recommendations.
- Enhanced attention to evaluation quality assurance across CGIAR.
- Approaches that underpin evaluation utility and use.

The Policy and related evaluation guidelines will guide implementation within the CGIAR Evaluation Framework, which sets standard and principles and governs the overall evaluation approach.²

2 Scope and Applicability

This Policy applies to all parts of CGIAR, namely each of the legal entities and business units that, when taken together, comprise CGIAR as an operating entity.³

Other forms of assessment that are complementary to evaluation and provide inputs to it, which are not the subject of this Policy, include:

- Impact assessments, including those funded and/or conducted by the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA).
- Performance monitoring undertaken by management.
- Reports and evidence from other internal and external assurance functions.

¹ CGIAR is currently transitioning to [One CGIAR](#). For consistency it is referred to as CGIAR throughout.

² The CGIAR Evaluation Framework and Evaluation Policy come into effect upon the decisions of the CGIAR System Board and CGIAR System Council and supersede the 2012 CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluation.

³ This includes the CGIAR System Organization, all CGIAR Centers, and all the organizational business units being formed under One CGIAR.

3 Relevant Definitions

In this Policy, the following specific definitions apply:⁴

Evaluation is a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program, initiative or policy, or operational modality in CGIAR, its design, implementation, and results in line with evaluation criteria in line with this Evaluation policy and standards and principles under the Evaluation Framework.

Key evaluation types covered by this Policy include:

Process evaluations are evaluations of the organizational functioning, instruments, mechanisms, and management practices of institutional and procedural issues across CGIAR and assessments of experience with CGIAR frameworks, policies, criteria, and procedures.

Performance evaluations provide neutral assessments of organizational effectiveness and operating models by assessing progress towards the achievement of outcomes or processes by comparing performance data with the stated objective and reporting back on a predetermined schedule, to inform decision-making about how to best use or invest financial or technical resources, resolve challenges, and support ongoing progress.

CGIAR Evaluation Policy is (i) a strategic, system-wide policy, which is critical to maintaining the reputation of the CGIAR System, proposed by the System Board, and approved by the System Council, or (ii) any other policy that may be adopted by the System Organization in accordance with its procedures for the adoption of CGIAR policies.⁵

For other relevant definitions, consult the [CGIAR System Framework](#) and CGIAR's [PRMF/MELIA Glossary](#).

4 Policy Statement

Evaluations assure effective and efficient research planning, decision-making, and management across CGIAR along the five pillars presented in Figure 1 and described below. **CGIAR evaluation practice** refers to all activities across CGIAR to perform independent process and performance evaluations, no matter who commissions and conducts these evaluations, as presented in the Evaluation Framework. A management response (MR) is required for every evaluation where CGIAR has had a partial or complete decision-making power in the evaluation process, or CGIAR has fully or partially financed the evaluation.

Evaluation modality in CGIAR refers to an external, completely or largely independent study of an in-depth nature that uses evaluation criteria in line with this Evaluation policy and standards and principles under the Evaluation Framework. The approach to evaluations responds to evaluation industry standards and principles (meaning how evaluation is conducted) set out in the overarching CGIAR Evaluation Framework. In this Policy, evaluation criteria (section 5) set out the evaluative areas of investigation by which CGIAR is evaluated. These criteria and elements of the Quality of Research for Development (QoR4D) framework⁶ reflect the CGIAR context.

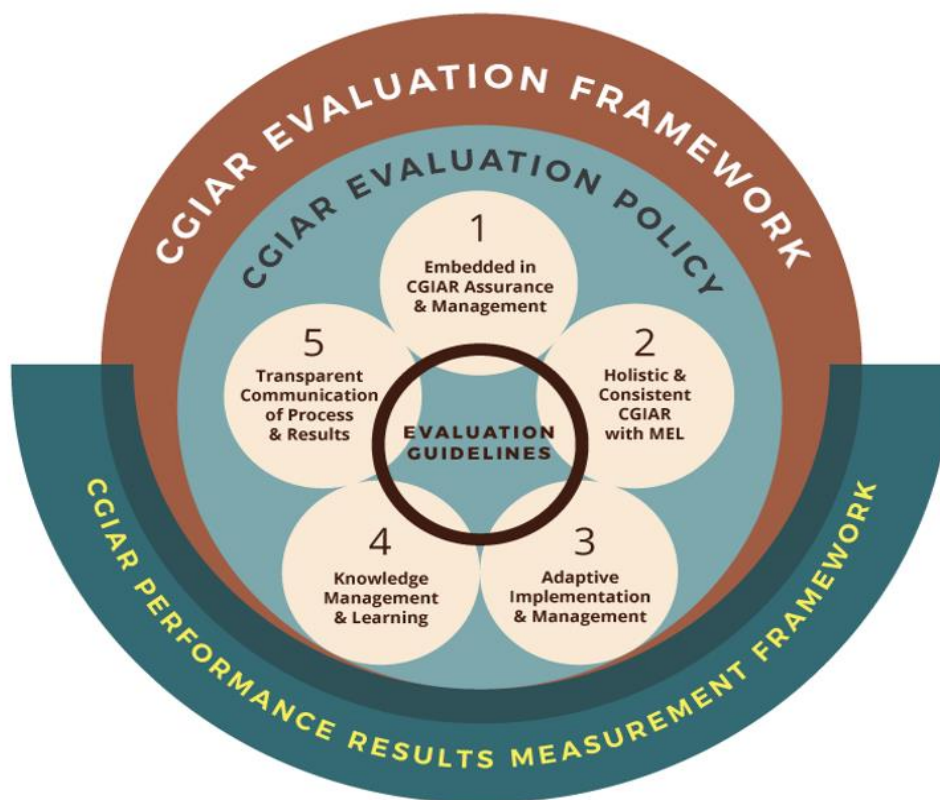
⁴ Source: the [Charter of the CGIAR System Organization](#) (2016) and CGIAR MELIA Glossary, November 2021.

⁵ Definitions ©, CGIAR System Framework, 2016

⁶ QoR4D elements: relevance, scientific credibility, effectiveness, legitimacy

Evaluations must consider all 15 standards and principles and three items flagged for special consideration in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) evaluation.⁷ Decisions on which evaluation criteria are the most appropriate will depend on the evaluation objective and the overall context.

Figure 1: Five Pillars of CGIAR Evaluation Policy



1. Evaluation Embedded in CGIAR Assurance and Management

- Evaluation underpins a results-based culture where decision-making is evidence-based.
- Evaluation recommendations are specific and actionable, with clear prioritization.
- Management response to recommendations informs operational and strategic, evidence-based decision-making.

2. A Holistic and Consistent CGIAR-wide Approach to MEL

- CGIAR follows a holistic and consistent approach to MEL aligned with evaluation standards and principles set out in the Evaluation Framework of CGIAR.
- Designs of initiatives, strategies, and policies consider how appropriate data and evidence can be collected to facilitate high-quality evaluations.
- Evaluations collect and/or use the best available primary and secondary data supplemented by other data as necessary.

⁷ Elaborated in Section 3 of the CGIAR Evaluation Framework: Relevance, use, and utility; Independence and lack of bias; Transparency; Legitimacy and Participation; Responsiveness to Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion (GDI); Ethics and equity; Evaluability; Credibility and robustness; Measurability; Mutual accountability; Efficiency; Comparative advantage; Fairness, confidentiality, and no harm; System-framing and complexity awareness; Capacity building; and the following items: Use of ToC, theory-based; Consideration of development impact; Consideration of attribution, contribution

3. Adaptive Implementation and Management

- Evaluations are conducted in a timely manner, and according to the multi-year evaluation and related MEL plans.
- Evaluation planning is consultative and Terms of Reference articulate identified areas of examination .
- Evaluative activities are systematic, iterative, and collaborative, using appropriate methods to draw on the knowledge and views of stakeholders, in line with evaluation standards and principles.⁸
- Funders, management, and other key stakeholders consider how to use evaluative evidence in decision-making to improve institutional and programmatic performance.

4. Knowledge Management and Learning

- CGIAR governance and management reinforce relevance, follow-up, knowledge management (KM) and learning from evaluations through their engagement with evaluation processes.
- Evaluation KM products are timely, differentiated, and tailored to meet the needs of targeted audiences including end-users and beneficiaries.

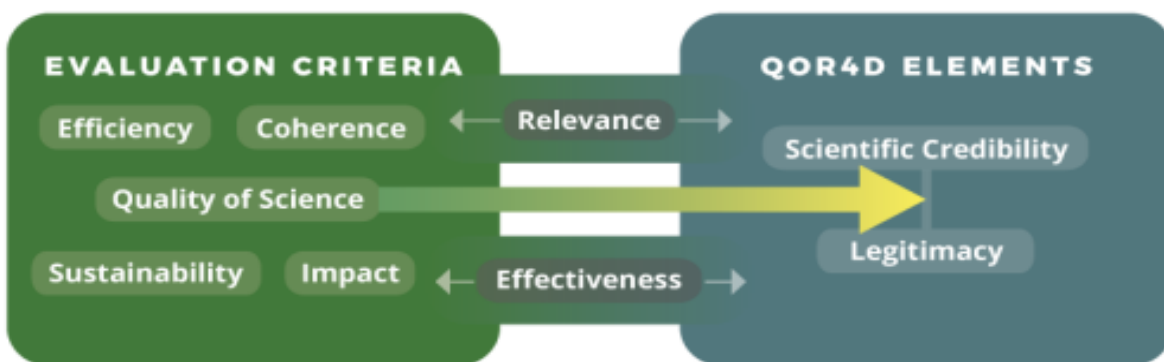
5. Transparent and Effective Communication of Evaluation Process and Results

- Effective communication mediums, channels, and formats around evaluation processes and results are used to target key stakeholders to improve institutional and programmatic performance.
- Transparency and confidentiality considerations around evaluations follow related policies on ethics and open access and others as applicable, according to the evaluation principles and standards outlined in the Evaluation Framework.

5 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgments are made to assess CGIAR interventions and processes. Evaluation criteria frame and provide structure to the substantive focus of key evaluation questions. The evaluation criteria of this Policy adhere to the [2019 OECD Development Assistance Committee \(OECD/DAC\) evaluation criteria](#)⁹ and also reflect the characteristics of research for development in the CGIAR context, consistent with the QoR4D framework elements. Figure 2 presents relationship between the criteria and QoR4D elements, explained in detail in Box 1.

Figure 2: Six CGIAR Evaluation Criteria and QoR4D elements



⁸ See Evaluation Framework (2022) for detail on standards and principles.

⁹ Consistent with the revised and updated OECD/DAC evaluation Criteria, 2019

The evaluation objectives drive the selection and application of the evaluation criteria. This selection must take into account applicable and most relevant results measurement framework requirements. Specific engagement may employ additional criteria in line with evaluation industry standards and CGIAR needs.¹⁰

Box 1: CGIAR Evaluation Criteria¹¹

Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to users/clients, global, regional, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. Consistent with the QoR4D framework, attention is given to the importance, significance, and usefulness of the work implemented in the problem context, associated with CGIAR's capacity to address the problems.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, and/or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across sub-groups of users/clients. Consistent with the QoR4D framework and in the CGIAR context, considers effectiveness of the extent to which research is 'positioned for use' and has generated knowledge, products, and services with high potential to address a problem and contribute to innovations, outcomes, and impacts. Effectiveness, therefore, implies that research has been designed, implemented, and positioned for use within a dynamic Theory of Change, with appropriate leadership, capacity development, diversity of research skills, and support to the enabling environment to translate knowledge to use and to help generate desired outcomes.

Coherence: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or within CGIAR; its overall fit. *Internal coherence* addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out within CGIAR, and the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which CGIAR adheres. *External coherence* considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context: complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with others, and its value-added, while avoiding duplication of effort.

Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economical and timely way, i.e. the overall use of resources. "Economic" is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the context. "Timely" delivery is within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe reasonably adjusted to the demands of the evolving context; and may include assessing operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed).

Quality of Science: The QoS evaluative criterion pertains to scientific credibility and legitimacy. The definition of the criterion derives from the QoR4D frame of reference, which records CGIAR's System-wide agreement on the nature and assessment of research quality. The QoR4D describes research quality according to four key elements: Relevance, Scientific credibility, Legitimacy, Effectiveness¹². Relevance and Effectiveness are treated as separated evaluative criteria above.

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue. Focus on continuation of benefits, not on external funding, and highlight the multidimensional nature of sustainability.

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to contribute to generating significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects. Impact addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention.

¹⁰ Examples may include criteria for evaluating (a) Transformation: Interconnectedness, Adaptive sustainability, Diversity/equity/inclusion, Full cost accounting, Transformation fidelity; (b) other criteria for evaluating research, (b) Connectedness, Coverage, and Coordination from the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) Manual on the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (2016).

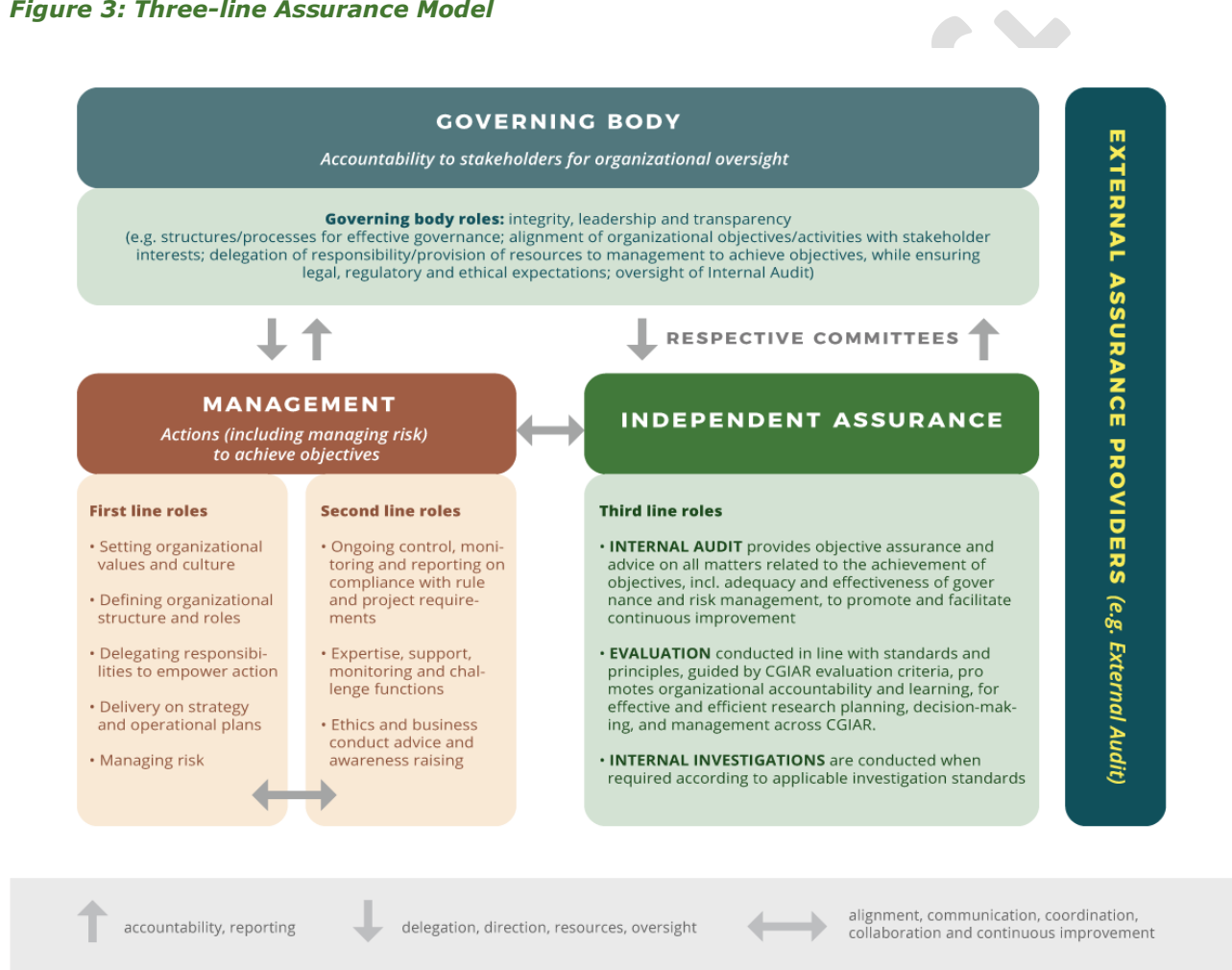
¹¹ Apart from Quality of Science evaluation criterion, extended guidance on other criteria is available under the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet).

¹² A co-designed guideline on evaluating Quality of Science in CGIAR details approach and methods to operationalize QoS evaluation criterion of this Policy.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for the conduct and use of evaluation in CGIAR lie at different levels. The Risk Management Framework (Figure 3) of the CGIAR System depicts independent evaluation at CGIAR within the three-line model, as one element of independent assurance.¹³ Other evaluation-related activities and functions may be present in first- and second-line roles.

Figure 3: Three-line Assurance Model



Specifically, the broad evaluation-related responsibilities of key stakeholders in the CGIAR System are:

- **CGIAR System Council and Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee ('SIMEC')**: SIMEC supports the System Council in the discharge of the System Council's responsibilities as set out in the CGIAR System Framework Article 6, regarding evaluations and impact assessment in the context of the System Council's role of supporting and guiding the CGIAR System's contribution to the United Nations SDGs and other related global initiatives.¹⁴
- **CGIAR System Board**: Responsible for providing strategic oversight and direction to CGIAR management concerning the effective and efficient implementation of CGIAR's Strategy and Results Framework and the results achieved through CGIAR's operations. In discharging its responsibilities

¹³ [Risk Management Framework of the CGIAR System](#) (requiring revision for One CGIAR, to be undertaken in 2022)

¹⁴ Charter of the CGIAR System Organization Article 6.c) and Articles 6.cc) to 6.hh)
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4371/CGIAR%20System%20Framework%20-%20WEB.pdf?sequence=7>:

under the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization¹⁵, the System Board relies and draws on all sources of monitoring and evaluation across the CGIAR System.

- **CGIAR Management:** Responsible for encouraging a robust culture of accountability and desire for learning and continuous improvement, and for ensuring that there are adequate resources for monitoring, evaluation and related learning across CGIAR, including adequate resources to ensure the proactive consideration of the findings and recommendations from evaluations, the preparation of management responses, and for timely follow up and implementation of agreed actions. Specifically, in relation to evaluation, CGIAR’s executive management is responsible for:
 - Leading the integration of evaluative evidence into the design of CGIAR activities and decision-making.
 - Ensuring that the necessary and appropriate resources are allocated *to evaluations*.
 - Assigning responsibility at appropriate levels within CGIAR for responding to recommendations from the independent evaluations conducted at the request of the System Council.
 - Ensuring implementation of and compliance with policies, *including this Evaluation Policy*, and procedures and suggesting improvements to manage changing risks, *also considering available and relevant evaluative evidence*.
 - Maintaining continuous dialogue with the CGIAR governing bodies, and reporting on planned, actual, and expected outcomes linked to CGIAR’s objectives.

CGIAR Group Operational Units: Instrumental MEL-related services are provided by professionals in CGIAR Group Operational Units. Operational units hold responsibilities for research coordination and portfolio performance, providing tools, services, and metrics to scientific and CGIAR leadership. Such units hold accountabilities for performance management and project coordination. These units ensure “compliance to CGIAR and external performance standards, monitoring and reporting within CGIAR systems (the PRMF), and final close-down of projects,”¹⁶ and engage with Science Groups for the effective delivery of projects via the provision of coordination and project-level MELIA services, setting (i) Direction (policies, standards) for the effective and efficient management of projects (ii) Common processes, systems, tools, and capacity building (iii) Key performance indicators to monitor project management performance. Further, these units serve as the custodian of a relevant results measurement framework and performance management data.

Evaluation function, CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat: Responsible for discharging its independent evaluation functions as set out in the Terms of Reference of the CGIAR Advisory Services (CAS) Shared Secretariat.¹⁷ As the custodian of this Policy, CAS/Evaluation will handle any questions pertaining to this Policy from MEL professionals across the CGIAR and others, to facilitate learning, accountability, and enhance synergies.

7 Implementation

7.1 Evaluation Quality Assurance

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Endorsed Integrated Operational Structure for One CGIAR, 2021

https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2021/03/SC12-02_Endorsed-Integrated-Operational-Structure.pdf

¹⁷ [Shared Secretariat - Approved Terms of Reference](#)

Evaluation practice quality assurance (QA) processes and mechanisms facilitate compliance and enhance quality, rigor, and credibility of an evaluation, as follow:

- Every evaluation terms of reference describes the engagement's QA approach, for instance commissioning of qualified subject-matter experts and peer reviewers knowledgeable about research for development in CGIAR and larger AR4D contexts.
- Use of an evaluation reference group to inform the design and conduct of individual or groups of engagements.
- Accessible and quality assured performance monitoring data available for evaluators' use, preferably supported and furnished by the evaluand's MEL expert.
- Transparent dissemination of evaluation findings, learning, and recommendations, with full and timely electronic publication of independent evaluations and management responses.

7.2 Management Response to Evaluations

Management response (MR) to evaluations underpins evaluation quality, rigor, and credibility. MR is a formal mechanism that helps ensure that evaluations are used, contributing to organizational effectiveness, learning and accountability. The MR strengthens the use of evaluation by CGIAR management and governance bodies and, to the maximum extent possible, its partners, thus fostering greater ownership over the process of change and ultimately ensuring accountability for results. It does so by facilitating strategic engagement on evaluation findings and appropriate follow-up actions through a formal process that includes:¹⁸

- Holistic consideration of the evaluation report, in its entirety.
- A timely indication of whether management agrees, partially agrees, or disagrees with the recommendations in the evaluation report.
- A publicly disclosed written formulation of time-bound action-plans, and those responsible for ensuring their implementation; and
- Implementation and monitoring of the planned actions.

A management response tracking system¹⁹ would document MR and follow-up actions to evaluations covered under Scope/Applicability of this Policy. It provides a written record of what actions are planned in response to evaluations and its implementation (what is done) is actively considered after a suitable interval²⁰. In this sense, MR strengthens organizational accountability for results and transparency in the process of determining how results will be achieved.

7.3 Periodic Assessment of CGIAR Evaluation Policy

System Council and its relevant standing committee(s) will regularly assess the effectiveness of this Policy and its implementation, bring any concerns regarding implementation to the attention of the System Board. CGIAR Advisory Service Shared Secretariat may recommend amendments to the policy, as appropriate, to the System Council and Board for approval. Policy revisions will be undertaken in compliance with CGIAR's prevailing policy adoption rules and procedures.

8 Related Documents

¹⁸ A co-designed guideline supporting Management Engagement and Response establishes a clear road map to operationalize sections 6 and 7 of this Policy.

¹⁹ In planning during development of this document, to be aligned with joint assurance system in CGIAR.

²⁰ To be specified in the TOR: varies by commissioner, evaluand, etc.

Evaluation-related terms can be found in the most-recent PRMF/MELIA Glossary.

CGIAR-wide definitions can be found in the relevant CGIAR frameworks and policies, as well other guiding documents of the functions that interact with this Policy and evaluation function; key ones are mentioned below. Related CGIAR resources should be consulted here in case of updates²¹:

<https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/accountability/legal-documents/>

8.1 Performance and Results Monitoring

In CGIAR, [2022-2030 Performance and Results Management Framework](#), a companion document to the 2030 Strategy, provides the conceptual framework and systems for effective measurement, learning, and accountability from performance and results.

8.2 Impact Assessments and Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

Impact assessment (IA) research results are an integral part of the inputs for independent external evaluation. Impact assessment in the CGIAR should be designed from the start as integral part of the research process to causally test the assumptions underlying the Theory of Change of CGIAR research to contribute to their improvement and increased impact. IA also causally tests impacts of CGIAR research on SDG targets and other indicators on the five impact areas. Although process and performance evaluations include IAs, when available, in their key evidence inputs, this Policy does not address the conduct and use of impact assessments. Thus, while the Evaluation Policy encourages the use of quality IAs to inform evaluations, this Policy does not apply to the impact assessments.

The Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA) is an external, impartial panel of experts in impact assessment appointed by the System Council and accountable to it. SPIA's mandate includes to provide rigorous independent evidence of CGIAR impacts and to provide strategic advice to strength the IA capacity of the CGIAR system and on the use of IA results.

8.3 Audit and Risk

Internal Audit

Charter(s) of internal assurance functions (s), encompassing internal audit.

Risk Management

- [CGIAR System Risk Management Framework](#)
- [CGIAR System Risk Appetite Statement](#)

8.4 Intellectual Assets and Open Access

[CGIAR Open and FAIR Data Assets Policy](#) (2021). CGIAR is committed to sharing outputs of its research that are as open as possible and always 'Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable' (FAIR).

[Intellectual Assets Management Principles](#).

8.5 Ethics and Conflict of Interest

All staff, external experts and members of governing bodies are required to act in accordance with applicable policies, procedures and guidelines regarding ethics and conflict of interest (COI) matters, which policies, procedures and guidelines may be tailored to particular operational groups or decision makers. CGIAR adheres to the Core Ethical Values of Integrity, Dignity, and Respect, Sustainability,

²¹ CGIAR System Framework 2016

<https://cgispace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/4371/CGIAR%20System%20Framework%20-%20WEB.pdf>

Excellence and Innovation, and Partnership, as set out in the [CGIAR Ethics Framework \(2019\)](#). Examples of such documents include

- [CGIAR System Board Framework for Declarations of Interest](#) (2020).
- [CGIAR Code of Conduct for Governance Officials \(2020\)](#)
- CGIAR Advisory Services (CAS) Shared Secretariat [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) (2021), describing related considerations and procedures for all individuals working for and with the CAS Secretariat, including the evaluation function.

8.6 Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

[CGIAR's Framework and Action Plan for Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) (GDI) provides the targets, strategy, and mechanisms to improve diversity in CGIAR workplaces.

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Annex: CGIAR Standards, Guidance and Technical Notes, and Reference Materials

Title	Date Issued
Guidance on Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)	2015
Guidance on Evaluation Inception Reports	2015
Guidance on Evaluation Final Reports	2015
Development, Use, and Assessment of Theories of Change in Agricultural Research Programs Lessons learned from CGIAR- Workshop	2017
Guidance on Evaluating Quality of Science in CGIAR building on IEA Workshop on Evaluating Quality of Science, 2015²²	2022
Guidance on Evaluability	2022
'Guidance on Management Engagement and Response' to replace 'IEA commissioned evaluations: process for feedback, finalization & decision-making (2017)'	2022
Guidance on integrating gender, diversity, and inclusion (GDI) aspects in evaluations in CGIAR	2023
Guidance on evaluation-related Knowledge Management and Learning	2023